

GENDER AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES IN POST-CONFLICT BURUNDI:  
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MACRO- AND MICRO-PROCESSES OF NORMS CHANGE

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Georgetown University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Master of Arts  
in Conflict Resolution

By

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Washington, DC  
April 24, 2014

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# GENDER AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES IN POST-CONFLICT BURUNDI: INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MACRO- AND MICRO-PROCESSES OF NORMS CHANGE

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## ABSTRACT

Security Council Resolution 1325 is the current climax in the development of a global norm on women's participation in peace and security processes. Though Resolution 1325 placed women's equal participation in decision-making firmly on the peace and security agenda, implementation has seen greater success in rhetoric than in practice. If Resolution 1325 is to fulfill its promise, greater engagement with normative processes at multiple levels, emanating in different directions and engaging various actors is necessary. Thus, this study aims to address gaps in the literature on implementation of Resolution 1325 norms during post-conflict reconstruction, specifically the inattention to micro-processes of norms change within the private realm and their interaction with macro-level changes to normative structures. This study presents a case study of the macro-level implementation of Resolution 1325 in post-conflict Burundi and insight from a grounded theory study on gender and women's participation in conflict resolution decision-making conducted with male and female community leaders in two Burundi provinces. Findings confirm a critical and dialogic relationship between macro- and micro-processes of norms change and indicate the necessity for a more dynamic and inclusive agenda for Resolution 1325 implementation. This paper concludes with a discussion of implications for sustainable norms change, directions for future research and recommendations for policy and programming.

Research for this study was possible because of a fellowship from Georgetown University Institute for Women, Peace and Security and support from Fontaine-ISOKO, and I sincerely thank them for their collaboration. I would also like to thank Melissa Adams and Rebecka Lundgren for inspiring this research project and Dr. S. Ayse Kadayifci for her support. This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Catalina Rojas for her commitment and encouragement and to my parents, Allen Chantelois and Chris Chantelois for all that you teach me.

With love,  
Heather Lynn Orina

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000 is the current climax in the development of a global norm on women's participation in peace and security processes. Transnational women's rights activists, advocates within the United Nations and a group of member states came together and, for the first time, formally recognized women as active participants in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Because Resolution 1325 recognizes women's experiences, perspectives and expertise as valid and essential to the creation of peaceful societies, it represents an unprecedented step in affirming women's citizenship. Though Resolution 1325 placed women's equal participation in decision-making on the peace and security agenda, implementation has seen greater success in rhetoric than in practice. If Resolution 1325 is to fulfill its promise, greater engagement with normative processes at multiple levels, emanating in different directions and engaging various actors is necessary. Thus, this study aims to address gaps in the literature on implementation of Resolution 1325 norms<sup>1</sup> during post-conflict reconstruction, specifically the inattention to micro-processes of norms change within the private realm and their interaction with macro-level changes to normative structures.

In order to examine the relationship between household gender norms surrounding participation in conflict resolution and decision-making and those situated in government and community structures, this study explores developments in gender dynamics and women and men's conflict resolution practices in post-conflict Burundi. Examining gender norms and

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this study, 'Resolution 1325 norms' is defined holistically as *women's equal participation in decision-making surrounding conflict resolution and peacebuilding* and includes all forms and spheres through which participants undertake conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities.

conflict resolution practices provides an illustration of the normative framework beyond formal structures already existing – or in the process of change – in which Resolution 1325 norms must negotiate space. Thus, the study investigates gender and conflict resolution decision-making in intimate partner relationships as well as in community peacebuilding practices, comparing norms change at the two levels and discussing their interconnections.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

Drawing from a desk review of existing literature and fieldwork with community-level conflict resolution practitioners, this study examines norms change at multiple levels of Burundian society. Research was conducted in July and August of 2013 in partnership with Fontaine-ISOKO,<sup>2</sup> a Burundian good governance and integrated development organization. Grounded theory, appreciative inquiry and feminist research praxis<sup>3</sup> informed study design, which involved participant observation and semi-structured group interviews. So as to investigate household and community norms around gender and conflict-resolution decision-making, several research questions guided this study:

- a) How do participants resolve conflicts with their spouses? What enables non-violent and collaborative conflict resolution decision-making?
- b) How do women and men practice conflict resolution in their communities? What are their different peacebuilding roles?

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<sup>2</sup> See: <http://fountain-isoko.org>

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 3: Methodology



- c) What effect have strengthened women's rights legislation and gender quotas at the local level had on women and men's participation in peacebuilding?
- d) What are the implications for implementation of Resolution 1325 norms?

### **Study Scope and Validity**

This study examines the practices of and changes to gender and conflict resolution in post-conflict Burundi among male and female community-level conflict resolution practitioners. Because of the methodology used and the small sample size, findings represent a particular population of middle-level community leaders. Analyses of the literature and context focus on gender and post-conflict reconstruction and are not comprehensive discussions of women's participation in peacebuilding broadly or of Burundi's gender or conflict resolution history. While this study aims to provide insight into women's participation in conflict resolution decision-making, it examines *gender*, defined as the socially-constructed differences between men and women and among women and among men. Thus, it understands men and women as both equally gendered and located within the same gendered power structure.<sup>4</sup> Due to study design and data availability, certain sections focus on women's experiences and gender roles, while others offer more insight into men's perspectives and masculinity practices. Ultimately, however, this study seeks to understand multiple aspects of gender norms within households and the community as they pertain to the implementation of Resolution 1325 norms.

Several factors make Burundi an excellent setting for this research project. First, Burundian women's organizations partnered with UNIFEM New York to lobby for inclusion in

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 2: Literature Review for an extended discussion of gender theory and definitions

the Arusha peace process, and UNIFEM subsequently presented the Burundi peace process as part of their case advocating the adoption of Resolution 1325. Despite being excluded from the majority of meetings, Burundian women were present in the final stages of the peace process as observers and were able to mainstream gender throughout much of the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (Anderson, 2010). Consequently, Burundi is one of the few cases that began work with Resolution 1325 even before its implementation. Second, Burundi is currently fourteen years past the Arusha Agreement and six years past the signing of the ceasefire with the last rebel movement (BBC, 2008).<sup>5</sup> This means that research in Burundi may investigate both the direct implementation of peace process provisions and two election cycles of the government and society's interactions with the gender equality norms that it inaugurated. Third, Burundi has yet to attempt a transition of power from one president or political party to another, and thus the vital stability of the new social contract among elites is unclear. As conflict in Burundi has historically been driven by political contest, consolidation of the post-conflict peace is also therefore tenuous. Consequently, implementation of Resolution 1325 in Burundi has traversed (or is currently traversing) all the major stages of conflict and peacebuilding.<sup>6</sup> These factors combined position Burundi as an important case for the study of Resolution 1325 norm localization during reconstruction and stabilization.

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<sup>5</sup> BBC. "Burundi rebels in ceasefire pact" BBC News. 26 May, 2008. Accessed 12 April, 2014. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7420067.stm>

<sup>6</sup> Conflict management through peacekeeping, conflict resolution through official peace processes, conflict transformation through reconciliation and socio-political initiatives, reconstruction and, in the prelude to the 2015 elections, conflict prevention

## **Study Organization**

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows: Chapter 2 analyzes existing literature on gender, women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction decision-making and on Resolution 1325 norm implementation and identifies a primary gap in the literature. Chapter 3 discusses study design, ethical considerations and methodological strengths and weaknesses. Chapter 4 provides an overview of Burundi's conflict and a gender analysis of the peace and reconstruction processes and of current gender relations. Chapter 5 analyzes findings from the study as they pertain to Resolution 1325 norm localization. Chapter 6 summarizes key findings and limitations of the study, presents implications for sustainable gender norm change and suggests directions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Gender in International Relations and Conflict Studies**

Anne Tickner and Cynthia Enloe are usually credited with bringing gender into international relations theory in the early 1990s, when they illustrated how prevailing security paradigms differently affect men and women and largely erase women's agency and voices from conflict and peacebuilding. By asking 'Where are the women?' in international politics (Enloe, 1989, p. 7), Enloe challenged the assumed gender neutrality of international security theory and practice. Tickner similarly questioned the dearth of women in diplomacy, military and foreign policy and argued that international relations operate on fundamentally masculine norms that disregard female knowledge and experience (Tickner 1992). Since then, other feminist authors have elaborated how attention to women and traditionally disregarded populations' experiences, interests, needs and contributions reshapes peace and security geography. Caroline Moser has played an especially critical role in expanding theorization and policy approaches from an isolated focus on involving women in order to improve policy outcomes to deconstructing inequitable and subordinating gender structures (Moser, 1993). Particularly as the nature of conflict shifted from intra- to inter-state and the burden of violence shifted from members of armed groups to non-combatants with the end of the Cold War, scholars began to pay greater attention to non-state actors and the privatization of violence (Kaldor, 1999). This opened the door to examination of the multiple oppressions experienced during conflict, leading feminist and critical theorists to reimagine peace beyond Westphalian security, but rather as everyday, plural emancipations (Richmond, 2010).

Since Tickner and Enloe first called attention to the invisibility of women in peace and security, gender has become an increasingly accepted component of international peace and security theory and practice. Responding to theoretical and programmatic assumptions that conflated sex – biological difference – with gender – socially constructed difference, authors such as Oakley (1972) and Rubin (1975) shifted focus from women to the social and structural relations between women and men (Moser, 1993). Then, in the late 1980s and mid-1990s, Raewyn Connell fundamentally expanded gender theory by explicitly centering men as the subjects of gender analysis. Seeking to understand gender as a manifestation and mechanism of power, particularly relating to masculinities (1987; 1995), he proposed the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity,’ which articulates a dominant socially validated way of being a man in contrast with disenfranchised or marginalized masculinities and all femininities. Numerous authors have since illustrated the practical and theoretical importance of taking men into account in gender analyses throughout peace and conflict studies (Ratele and Suffla, 2011; Jewkes and Lindegger, 2012; Theidon, 2009; Cahn and Ni Aolain, 2010; Vess, Barker, Naraghi-Anderlini, & Hassink, 2013; Kaufman, 2012).

Along a similar vein, critical race theory<sup>7</sup> has shown how gender difference interacts with other socially constructed differences, creating *intersectional* oppressions and vulnerabilities (Crenshaw, 1989). Thus, Moser and Clark write: “while gender is binary, its component parts have varied expressions” (2001, p. 7). This suggests that differences are constructed (and

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<sup>7</sup> Critical race theory is a school of thought originating in the 1970s that seeks to problematize the relationship between racism, race and power by situating discrimination and oppression within “economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious.” Though originating in the law, it has since expanded to numerous disciplines and to address other bases of discrimination and social differentiation, including gender. For an overview, see: Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. NYU Press.

meaning is attributed) both between men and women and within the category ‘man’ and the category ‘woman’ as gender intersects with other social categories. Continuing this discourse and highlighting the transformational potential within gender and conflict studies, Harders (2011) emphasizes how understanding gender in terms of socially constructed hierarchies that determine differential access to rights and duties takes into account gender’s structural and process dimensions. This perspective then provides a lens through which the relationships between women and men as well as “their different roles, responsibilities, opportunities, and needs” (p. 137) interact during conflict and peacebuilding. Thus, gender and conflict resolution authors have progressively built on the feminist starting point that ‘the personal is political,’ deconstructing conventional dichotomies and centering new forms and domains of violence and peace activism.

### **Gender Terminology**

Before discussing the literature on women and gender as it applies to specific aspects of conflict resolution, this section discusses key concepts within gender theory holistically, including *gender roles, gender identities, gender ideologies and gender power structures and relations*, as they are defined in this study and briefly considers their implications for conflict resolution.

Gender operates at various levels and through various forms. At the level of *roles*, gender receives a high degree of analytical attention, likely because it is observable and thus easier to define and investigate than many *identities, ideologies* or *power structures*. Gender roles pertain to the tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to women or to men (or to sub-

groups of women or of men) and thus determine access to rights and duties associated with certain activities and behavior. Bouta, Frerks and Bannon (2005) emphasize that roles are culturally and societally situated and vary according to context. Thus, they are dependent on other social constructs and organizations, such as class and ethnicity (p. 3). Because roles themselves exist independently from gender constructs and are integrated with gender socially, gender roles are changeable. Therefore, both men and women may share roles simultaneously or at different points throughout a particular situation and depending on interaction with changes in the meaning of other social categories. While other components of gender often present greater resistance to modification, gender roles tend to shift throughout the various stages of conflict in response to changing contextual factors, such as men's absence from households during active conflict or displacement.

The interdependency of roles on other social constructs and their socially constructed and learned nature mean that they are highly interactive with other aspects of gender. Though gender roles themselves are learned, and thus changeable, their dependence on other reifying and normalizing structures acts as a barrier to gender change at the level of roles. For example, Sanam Naraghi Anderlini notes how roles, identities and power interact in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes (2007, p. 109). Because women are not conceived of as having access to masculine combatant roles, they are often excluded from DDR programs and the economic and political benefits that they confer. *Gender identities*, “the expected or actual characteristics and behavior...classified as “femininity” and “masculinity”” (Stefanik, 2010, p. 6) are often perceived to exist within the bodies, minds and spirits of men and women and to therefore be less changeable than roles. However, gender identities are learned through socialization and traditionally accompany gender roles. While roles determine *what*

men or women do, identities determine *how* they do those things. Moser and Clark (2001) and Kaufman (2012) elaborate how, in conflict situations, identities have a strong impact on gendered responses to conflict and on coping strategies.<sup>8</sup> The social significance attributed to gender roles and identities results in violence and peacebuilding activities often becoming perceived as possible when they are undertaken through gender identities, such as *mother* or *father*, or through gendered roles, such as *nurturer* or *protector* (Naraghi Anderlini 2007).

*Gender ideologies* are the “the beliefs, values, and attitudes “that underpin gender roles and identities”” (El-Bushra, 2003, p. 265 as cited in Stefanik, 2010, p. 8). These ideologies lend resilience to gender roles and identities, particularly when circumstances change in ways that otherwise might indicate adaptations in gender at these levels. In peacebuilding contexts, it is often gender ideologies that pose the greatest barrier to women’s participation in decision-making processes, men’s participation in caregiving or lasting transformations beyond isolated changes in actions or rhetoric (Bouta et al., 2001). Because gender ideologies help to shape the lifeworld, they make certain gender organizations feel right and substantiate those feelings with values and beliefs, thus reinforcing gender norms on multiple levels.

Ideologies validate roles and identities as well as *gender power structures and relations*: the relative positioning of women and men and of masculinities and femininities (Harders, 2011). On one level, these structures determine how men and women relate to each other and what ability to access power and enact influence each group has in relation to the other. On another level, as individuals and social bodies may have multiple roles based on different identities that are thus intersectional, so too are gender power relations multiply-influenced. Operationally, power relations serve as the foundation for roles, identities and ideologies, all of

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<sup>8</sup> Such as delegitimizing men’s help-seeking behavior. See Kaufman (2012).



which reify the gender power structure. As such, gender power relations shape institutions and social bodies as well as inter-gender relations through “power, oppression and exploitation” (Moser and Clark, 2001, p. 28). These power structures determine which roles and identities are legitimate and which have access to various rights and citizenship. Power structures determine the hierarchy of status and membership along gender lines as well as within each category. Thus, hierarchies of masculinities and femininities impel intragroup policing in order to maintain access to the “patriarchal dividends” that accompany conformity to the power structure (Kandiyoti, 1988, cited in Harders, 2011, p. 140). In conflict and post-conflict situations, this social contract provides the impetus to maintain or return to traditional power relationships.

The development of complex understandings of how gender is constructed and operates to order social relations and power structures has suggested several major implications for peace and conflict studies and conflict resolution practice. Theidon and Phenecie (2011) and Myrntinen (2014) assert that the complexity of gender construction means that true gender sensitivity is contextual, responding to the specific needs and positions of different groups of women and men, girls and boys. Gender, as the system of roles, identities, ideologies and power structures that construct and direct the ways that women *and* men inhabit society and their bodies, necessitates critical examination of the experiences of men as well as women (Richter-Devroe, 2008). While initial gender and conflict studies often conflated *gender* with *women*, a growing body of literature aims at true emancipation from oppressive gender systems by targeting men and masculinities as well as women and femininities as gendered subjects and critical agents of change (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Sonke Gender Justice Network, 2013; Ni Aoláin,

2009; Duggan, 2006).<sup>9</sup> The intersection of gender and peacebuilding has also contributed significant analysis of the ways in which key institutions assumed to be gender neutral reify and reproduce gender binaries, exclusions and violence (Niarchos, 1995) and has thus problematized the use of military and state-centric conflict management and reconstruction practices (Ni Aoláin, 2009; Enloe, 1989). Importantly, the complexity and salience of gender as an ordering principle indicates that true and inclusive peace can not be achieved without transformation of the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional gender systems as they are (re)produced in our social, cultural, political and economic institutions.

### **Women's Participation in Peace Processes and Post-Conflict Decision-Making**

A small, but growing, body of literature examines and supports women's participation in peace processes and post-conflict decision-making specifically. This literature seeks to position women as agentic in making peace and reconstructing societies and reveals structural, normative and socio-economic sources of women's exclusion and invisibility (Manchanda, 2001; Moser and Clark, 2001; Naraghi Anderlini and Tirman, 2010; Naraghi Anderlini, 2000; Strickland and Duvury, 2003; Diaz et al., 2012; Selimovic et al., 2012; Bouta et al., 2005). Studies generally fall into one of three thematic groups: formal peace processes, informal peace processes and legal frameworks and political participation.

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<sup>9</sup> Women, Security, and the Patriarchy of Internationalized Transitional Justice: Ni Aiolain; Colleen Duggan, "Foreword," in *What Happened to the Women? Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations*, edited by Ruth Rubio-Marín (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2006), 18.

Literature on women's participation in formal peace processes has aimed to document and increase women's presence at peace tables and the contributions they are able to make to designing peace and reconstruction once formally included. Most of the literature utilizes qualitative research methodologies and case study analysis, resulting in a dearth of quantitative evidence of women's presence in and contributions to peace processes (Diaz et al., 2012). Across methodologies, these authors note a stark absence of women, who were found to constitute between 4 and 11 percent of negotiators in a 2008 review of 33 peace processes (Fisas, 2008, p. 20-22). Studies in this theme focus on the ways in which peace processes are themselves conceptually gendered and institutionalize gender exclusion (Bell, 2013; Lithander, 2000; Hunt and Posa, 2001). They investigate opportunities and challenges for improving women's representation at peace tables, primarily targeting the United Nations, state-level actors and those working in international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Bell, 2013; Diaz et al., 2012; Koppell, 2009), and they explore women advocates' experiences, challenges and successes (Asi et al., 2010; Nakaya, 2003; Lackenbauer and Harriman, 2013; Naraghi Anderlini and Tirman, 2010). These studies document emerging evidence of women's unique contributions to peace negotiations and call for greater problematization of gender power structures and barriers to women's inclusion.

The evidence base of women's participation in informal peace processes is similarly qualitative and case study-based but significantly more developed, largely because women tend to dominate informal peace processes, while men clearly dominate formal processes (Bouta et al., 2005). Studies in this theme document women's contributions to peacebuilding and implementation of peace agreements, focusing primarily on community-level advocacy, public awareness and lobbying. They also critique the obstacles to sustaining women's peace activism

and gender equality gains once the transition to post-conflict has begun (El-Bushra et al., 2002; Kumar, 2001; Anderson 1999).

During peace processes, women often lobby for legal reforms that strengthen protections against gender-based violence (GBV) and support gender equality. This frequently involves sensitizing legal systems to gender discrimination and violence, strengthening support for witnesses, instating gender quotas in transition and post-conflict government institutions and supporting women's political mobilization and inclusion (Bouta et al., 2005; Cahn, 2006). Correspondingly, the literature uses a gender lens to analyze governance reform and political transition and the implications for women's rights, political participation and peace sustainability (Bouta et al., 2005; Bessell, 2001). A large component of the literature highlights women's contributions to and positions in transitional justice and the legal development of sexual violence legislation (Mertus, 2004; Valji, 2010; Preston McGhie and Wamai, 2011). Currently, the literature indicates that support for women's rights is gaining ground as a component of peace processes and reconstruction, though not uniformly. Less clear is the ability of top-down state-level reforms to provide change in the daily lives of women throughout the world who continue to face de-jure and de-facto marginalization and oppression.

### **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325**

Literature on Resolution 1325 spans the themes of women's participation in formal and informal peace processes, legal reform and political participation and also contributes a particular focus on the development of women's participation in decision-making throughout conflict and peacebuilding specifically as a *global norm*. Mary Finnemore, one of the pioneers

of global norms theory, defines norms as “collectively held” and “intersubjective” (1996, p. 23) “standards of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (1998, p. 891). In many respects, Resolution 1325 has followed the developmental path that Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) propose. It first emerged after entrepreneurship by a “UN-initiated interagency network of women’s advocates; a group of member states...and a transnational advocacy network of women’s and human rights NGOs” (Tryggestad, 2009, p. 539-540). Since ratification, new actors have been incorporated into the community of advocates and practitioners (Binder, Lukas, & Schweiger, 2008), evidenced by its translation into over 100 languages<sup>10</sup> and the vast expansion of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (Shepherd, 2008, p. 388). The subsequent adoption of five resolutions that reinforce the mandate of 1325 and address some of its weaknesses<sup>11</sup> suggests that it has become further entrenched within the United Nations framework at the very least. Lastly, establishment of implementation and monitoring frameworks that involve international, national and civil society actors (Swaine, 2009)<sup>12</sup> indicates a new, though limited, level of institutionalized incentives and accountability.

However, scholars also note the weakness of Resolution 1325 and the problems with implementation. Swaine (2009, p. 410) compares the language in Resolution 1325 with that of Security Council Resolution 1372 on Counter-Terrorism and reports that, while 1372 ‘decides,’ ‘directs’ and ‘declares,’ 1325 ‘express[es],’ ‘emphasizes’ and ‘requests.’ Anderlini (2007) asserts that implementation of Resolution 1325 is voluntary and varies according to the political will of member states and thus often depends on the initiative, legitimacy and influence of civil

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<sup>10</sup> Correct at the time of writing. See [http://peacewomen.org/translation\\_initiative/](http://peacewomen.org/translation_initiative/)

<sup>11</sup> See

[http://www.unifem.org/gender\\_issues/women\\_war\\_peace/resolutions\\_instruments.html](http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_war_peace/resolutions_instruments.html)

<sup>12</sup> 43 National Action Plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325 have been established at time of writing. See <http://peacewomen.org/naps/list-of-naps>

society. Willet (2010) similarly remarks that 1325 lacks coercive powers and accountability mechanisms, broadly assigning responsibility to all, but accountability for none (p. 143). Limited funding and resources, lack of political will, the organizational culture and bureaucracy of the United Nations and a global divide in South/North politics (Tryggestad, 2009) also hinder implementation.

In addition to the weaknesses of the resolution and its implementation infrastructure, feminist scholars are raising growing criticism of the assumptions and politics of the resolution itself. The authors in Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011) variously argue that 1325 has legitimized certain, primarily liberal, forms of women's agency while rendering others 'deviant' (p. 498), erased the intersectional identifications that differently shape women's agency and experiences and ignores the "structures of global capitalism, imperialism and (neo-) colonialism" (p. 495) in favor of a "hegemonic...liberal 'women, peace and security' agenda" (p. 499). They suggest that greater space needs to be given to the multiple and context-specific experiences and forms of women's agency, including those that are non-liberal and that do not inadvertently support protectionist militarization. These criticisms of the content and politics of Resolution 1325 speak to the assertion that "the problem [with women's participation] is not so much the absence of relevant international standards, but the lack of implementation and respect for them" (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 83; ICRC, 2003) and that barriers to implementation lie deeper than the practical-operation weaknesses that receive such great attention.

Throughout the literature on women's participation in peace processes and reconstruction generally and on Resolution 1325 specifically, certain assumptions about the actors, modes and directions of change persist. As Charlesworth and Wood (2001) and Otto (2006) note, men and masculinities are nearly absent from examination of 1325 implementation, reflecting profound

under-appreciation of gender systems. The literature also focuses on the international, national and community levels, while ignoring the household, interpersonal and micro-levels and the connections between private and public realms. This is counter to fundamentals of critical feminist praxis and ultimately reaffirms the sovereign state and global governance assumptions that feminists seek to problematize (Shepherd, 2008). By privileging top-down change, 1325 often “co-opt[s] women into established processes rather than do[ing] what SCR 1325 envisioned – reform these processes” (Swaine, 2009, p. 422). Little is currently known about which women make it into decision-making positions in the processes discussed, how they get there, what enables them to participate, what limits their participation and what enables them to stay there and to do so without masculinizing or being co-opted into existing power structures. In order to begin to answer some of these questions and to address current assumptions in the literature, I propose exploring the methods and perspectives of a growing body of public health literature that examines gender, interpersonal violence and health outcomes.

### **Public Health, Gender and Interpersonal Violence**

Study of the intersections between health, gender and violence evolved largely in response to the HIV epidemic and the need to better understand and change behaviors that increase infection risk (Dworkin, Hatcher, Colvin, & Peacock, 2013). Thus, the literature investigates how gender and interpersonal violence (IPV) affect reproductive health and HIV outcomes and tests gender transformative health interventions (WHO, 2010). Somewhat unique to gender transformative literature, most studies use large population-based samples, quantitative methods and statistical analysis (Walker, 2005), and a clear gap is the absence of qualitative

documentation of the “process of change within health programs” (Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 3). Throughout the literature, gender is defined as fundamentally relational and centered around power dynamics. Consequently, men and the role of masculinity in shaping behavior is often a fundamental component of study design (Dworkin et al, 2013). These studies examine partner decision-making, power distributions and communication, with a particular focus on women’s abilities to negotiate condom use and sexual practices and the effects of men’s use of violence on women and men’s health (Jewkes et al. 2009; Amaro and Raj, 2000; Varga, 1997; Antal, 2011; Shannon et al., 2012; Swan and O’Connell, 2012; Barker and Ricardo, 2009).

The field has provided significant findings on the relationship between household gendered power dynamics and decision-making, equality and health outcomes. Both IPV and disparate decision-making powers have been associated with higher HIV rates. For example, HIV-positive women were 50% more likely to report experiencing IPV than were HIV-negative women in studies in South Africa and Rwanda (van der Straten, King, Grinstead, Serufilira, & Allen, 1995; van der Straten et al., 1998), and, in South Africa, low sexual decision-making power was associated with 50% higher HIV seropositivity, regardless of violence concurrence (Dunkle et al., 2007; Dunkle et al., 2006).

Studies also confirm a relationship between IPV and decision-making. In Nigeria, women with autonomous decision-making power were found to have a lower likelihood of experiencing IPV than their counterparts with low decision-making autonomy (Antal, 2011), and Thai wives with significantly higher or lower decision-making power than their husbands were found to have a higher risk for domestic violence victimization (Xu et al., 2010). Amaro and Raj (2000) found that their sample of women did not to participate in decision-making for a variety of reasons, including passive feminine gender roles, experiences or fear of partner



violence and fear of relationship loss when uncertain of alternative partner availability. Other studies from the United States, Botswana and Swaziland confirmed the connection between gender role socialization and men's authority in decision-making and perpetration of IPV (Shannon et al., 2012; Tsai et al., 2011; Teitelman, Ratcliffe, Morales-Alerman, & Sullivan, 2008; Antal, 2011; Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson, & Gottman, 1993).

Additionally, several studies document an association between poverty and IPV, affirming the importance of intersectional approaches to addressing gender inequality. Tsai et al. (2011) find that women experiencing food insecurity also reported higher sexual victimization and less sexual decision-making power than those without food shortages. Xu et al. (2010) and Antal (2011) note that wives with significantly greater or smaller access to economic resources also experienced greater risk for IPV. Additionally, Wood and Jewkes (2001) and Silberschmidt (2001) note a connection between men's loss of economic security and provider roles and use of sexual relations to gain socially-validated male status.

Studies in this field also document how involving men and boys in efforts to change gender power structures is key to improving health and violence outcomes. They have shown how gender socialization and structures often attribute men with control over decision-making processes and allocation of resources and encourage men's engagement in sexual and other risk-taking behaviors (Barker and Ricardo, 2005, p. 37). Programming that seeks to address the gender norms and power disparities underlying harmful behavior can produce positive changes. They have revealed how such gender transformative programming can enable men to reconfigure harmful definitions of manhood and change decision-making in support of gender equality (Dworkin et al., 2013), particularly by reimagining masculinity that relies on images of strong, authoritative protectors and providers (Paine, Khanyile, Herstad, & Nkurunziza, 2012; Esplen,

2006). By exploring women and men's experiences with violence and oppression and their capacities for positive change, this literature upholds feminist ideals of security as emancipation, aspiring to truly transform the gendered power relations and ideologies that maintain systems of inequality.

The literature within global health that seeks to explore and change inequitable gender norms and create more equitable relationships, particularly as it intersects with that on masculinities, is developing an evidence base on "the possibility of democratizing gender relations" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, 853) that could contribute to efforts to support women's conflict resolution decision-making. This field offers insight into factors affecting women's participation in decision-making at the micro, household level, where literature on Resolution 1325 has yet to investigate. Thus far, little research utilizing gender and global health perspectives or methodologies explicitly examines the effects of household gendered power dynamics on women's decision-making and participation in peace processes or reconstruction. Thus, this study aims to begin exploring the possibilities in meeting research on Resolution 1325 with that on gender and health to address gaps in understandings of norm localization in post-conflict Burundi.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Research Questions

The research questions that guided study design differ slightly from the goal of this paper. My original interest was to explore how gendered (or other) power structures appear in public and private decision-making domains and the effect(s) of changes to these power structures in one domain on the other. Ultimately, the findings were inconclusive in relation to my original hypothesis. However, they offer greater insight into the process of gender equality norm localization<sup>13</sup> at the household and community levels. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, I have slightly shifted the focus of the study in response to the insights that emerged. In this section, I present the methodology utilized to explore the original research question and note amendments as research questions evolved after analysis.

Several broad goals informed study design and implementation. First, I hoped to explore gender dynamics between husbands and wives and in local-level leadership during post-conflict reconstruction. Second, I was interested in conflict resolution practices and power dynamics within intimate partnerships. Third, I intended to begin to explore the relationship between cross-gender power dynamics within intimate partner relationships and conventional domains of political engagement. Fourth, I wanted the research to be relevant to the partner organization's work and to the needs and interests of participants. Fifth, the research needed to fit within the mandate of the funding institution, *Georgetown University Institute for Women, Peace and Security*.

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<sup>13</sup> Norm localization refers to the process undertaken by local actors to build resemblance between pre-existing norms and transnational norms. See Acharya (2004) and Chapter 5.

In response to these considerations, a review of the relevant literature and consultation with the directors of Fontaine-ISOKO, three general questions guided the research: 1) How do participants conceive of power, claim it in their own lives and recognize suffering because of abuse of power? 2) How do participants resolve conflicts with their intimate partner(s)<sup>14</sup>? Specifically, what enables non-violent and participatory resolution of conflicts between husbands and wives or cohabitating partners? 3) What are women and men's peacebuilding roles today, and how have men and women's participation in decision-making and peacebuilding changed since 2010?<sup>15</sup>

### **Data Collection Methods**

Research was conducted in partnership with *Fontaine-ISOKO*, a Burundian integrated development and good governance organization, from June through August 2013. Burundi is administratively organized into 17 provinces, 117 communes and 2,638 *collines*, or *hills* (CIA, 2013). Primary research took place in two provinces: *Bubanza* province, located in the plains just North-West of the capital, Bujumbura, and along the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and *Ngozi* province, located in the mountains in the North of Burundi along the border with Rwanda.

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<sup>14</sup> Though polygamy is no longer legal, it is still widely practiced. Additionally, Burundians increasingly practice cohabitation without legal formalization because of economic hardship. Therefore, 'household,' inter-marital' or 'intimate partner' decision-making processes pertain to interactions between full- or part-time cohabiting partners, regardless of their legal status. See Niyongabo, et al. (2013) or Peeters et al. (2012).

<sup>15</sup> 2010 is the first election cycle in which a gender quota existed at the commune level. Burundi is divided administratively into 17 provinces and 116 communes. See: <http://www.burundiembassy-usa.org/burundiindepth.html> or <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html>

This study utilizes a mixed-methods design. The original design called for focus groups, participant observation and survey methods. However, due to time and resource constraints, the survey portion of the research was eliminated. Removing the survey and preserving the focus groups upholds the integrity of the study paradigm that prioritizes shared learning and participant voices over data extraction.

Participant observation during GBV and positive masculinities workshops conducted in *Bubanza* and *Gihanga* communes in Bubanza province and in *Busiga* commune in Ngozi province provides men's perspectives on gender inequality, GBV and cultural ideologies and practices that are conducive of gender inequality. Partners of Fontaine-ISOKO living in each community where workshops occurred identified participants either because 1) they hold positions of influence in the community, such as teachers, government administrators, business-people or elders or 2) they are known to practice GBV in their daily lives, as identified by women community-members. These workshops provided a safe space for men to discuss their experiences, ambitions and fears concerning gender equality and nonviolence and to increase their skills and knowledge.

Though the original study design called for focus groups, in practice, group interviews were conducted in *Busiga* and *Mwumba* communes in Ngozi province. While focus groups involve a high degree of participation among participants, group interviews involve bilateral exchanges between the facilitator and the participants (Stewart, 2007). Several factors facilitated the shift from focus groups to group interviews, including time constraints, my failure to sufficiently discuss facilitation style and goals with the facilitators, my inability to participate in

the discussions as they took place in Kirundi<sup>16</sup> and participant comfort levels. Importantly, it is possible that having groups of participants with relatively mixed social statuses and of various ages inhibited vigorous discussion, as unequal power distributions and social conventions permit different degrees of freedom and authority.

Ultimately, four group discussions on the three guiding research questions<sup>17</sup> were conducted in *Busiga* and *Mwumba* communes in Ngozi province. One ninety-minute focus group with five women and one ninety-minute focus group with six men<sup>18</sup> was held in each commune. As there were twenty-two participants total, conclusions are anecdotal, and all data analysis is qualitative. While a qualitative focus helps ascertain the significance of various phenomena for the participants, the lack of quantitative analysis presents a major contrast with most global health methodologies that investigate similar phenomena, largely using household surveys. Participants included adult men and women who had previously attended *Fontaine-ISOKO*'s gender equality and advocacy and/or masculinities workshops and were active in community-level development and conflict resolution projects. Perspectives and experiences of participants from Ngozi may not be generalizable to the rest of the country, as the president since 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza, is from Ngozi province, which has received an influx of economic development as well as disproportionate saturation of non-governmental organization (NGO) activities. However, this participant selection provides insight into the perspectives of middle-level community-based peacebuilders with relatively high access to international organization resources and programming.

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<sup>16</sup> Focus group guides were prepared in French and translated into Kirundi. Focus groups were audio-recorded and subsequently translated from Kirundi into French.

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix for Group Interview Guiding Questions

<sup>18</sup> 12 women and 12 men were invited and confirmed; two women did not attend.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis followed grounded theory methods as closely as possible. While I was unable to perform concurrent analysis and collection of group interviews because they were conducted in Kirundi and later translated into French, I did so for participant observation, conducted either in French or with simultaneous Kirundi-French interpretation, and used grounded theory coding procedures. While participating in masculinities and GBV workshops, I wrote theoretical memos and engaged in constant comparison of concepts emerging during different workshops. Coding of workshop notes and interview transcripts began with open coding, whereby every piece of data was compared with others, put into concepts and re-organized. Once concepts emerged from the data, I then grouped them into categories. Due to time limitations, I was unable to develop subcategories or compare with further data. Throughout coding, concepts and their inter-relationships developed, and categories became more specific, but I did not have enough rounds of data to verify consistency for all concepts or firmly establish a “core category” or “central phenomenon of the study” (Corbin and Strauss 1990, 424). Since completing data analysis, I have compared findings from research for this study with several other studies with similar foci and methods that were conducted with larger samples.<sup>19</sup> In order to check the validity and worth of this study, interpretations and results are put into dialogue with the findings from these studies.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Uvin, 2009; Sommers and Uvin, 2011; Peeters et al., 2012. See Chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter 5.

## **Myself as Researcher-Participant**

Feminist researchers have long challenged the argument that researcher dislocation from their own history, experiences and position in society and distance from participants leads to ‘objective,’ ‘unbiased’ work. Rather, *intersubjectivity* is proposed to help end the objectification of women and marginalized groups as ‘objects’ of research (McDowell, 1992, p. 406). It is my belief and experience that participants generally do – and desire to – learn equally from researchers and that, as a white, American researcher it is my ethical responsibility to recognize that I am in a position of privilege and situated in a legacy of extractive and appropriative interactions with presumed ‘others,’ including contemporary African populations.

This perspective indicates several implications for the research process. First, I tried to pay great attention to whether my research process empowers the discipline, my professional and personal goals or the context and the people who engage in and are implicated in the study (see Gergen, 2010). Consequently, I strove to design questions that would be of use to participants and methods that would honor their experiences and not violate their integrity. One way of doing this was to emulate Cooperrider, Barrett and Srivastva’s (1995) description of “an invested participant whose work might well become a powerful source of generative conversation, affecting the way people see and enact their worlds” (p. 170). This understanding of the role of researcher as “invested participant” attempts to release the presumed authority of observer/interviewer and recognizes that no questions are neutral. Instead, I aimed to engage from a shared recognition of dignity and respect for potentially very different experiences and the meanings attributed to them. As I was in Burundi to conduct research and undertake an internship both with the same local organization, which does work on empowerment in good



governance and gender equality, I believe that this conceptualization of my role was authentic to my ethics, reflective of applicable literature and appropriate to the values and reality of the organization.

Regardless of my approach and intentions, numerous factors mediated my ability to truly ‘participate’ in the research process beyond inquiry and observation. Because the research period was my first time in Burundi, and I speak French but no Kirundi, I was in many ways strongly an outsider and unable to build more than fleeting relationships with participants. However, I have spent a notable amount of time in East Africa, am married to a Kenyan and spend much time with African immigrant communities in the United States. This enabled me to recognize some of my own biases and assumptions, to be relatively culturally and contextually adept and to share a number of norms and habits with participants that I might otherwise not have. Nonetheless, the array of socio-economic differences and my position as a privileged white American locate me squarely as an outsider. In recognition of my position of privilege and authority, I relied on partnership with Fontaine-ISOKO staff and careful balancing of my research goals with the intent to honor participants through the process.

### **Methodological Strengths and Weaknesses**

Research design and analysis followed a feminist approach<sup>21</sup> and a grounded theory methodology,<sup>22</sup> with some modifications due to practical constraints. There are several benefits

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<sup>21</sup> Originating in critical theory, feminist research assumes a principal role of power in social life, rejects separation of researcher and participants, perceives of reality as socially constructed, and believes knowledge is subjective and that all research is value-laden. Though originating in efforts to challenge oppression and violence against women, it

to grounded theory methodology. First, it is a well-established methodology in gender research, particularly as it seeks to discover alternatives to andro- and hetero-normative predispositions (Gergen, 2010, p. 13). Second, it offers an appropriate approach to exploring both a country and a topic that are under-researched, as it seeks to discover what is and “to generate new concepts and theories” (McCallin, 2003, p. 204). These factors align with the intentions of this study in that I was interested in exploring the realities and attributed meanings of particular groups of people and the potential for consequent theory development, rather than testing a pre-conceived hypothesis.

A feminist grounded theory methodology also offers ethical strengths and minimizes unintended consequences of the research process. Throughout, Fontaine-ISOKO directors helped to guide research style, format and content. Partnership with a local organization situated the research within the context and is also in keeping with post-colonial and feminist perspectives on research that privilege local forms of knowledge and people-centered agency and experience (Gergen, 2010). This approach honors participant priorities and guards against imposing Western-driven agendas and interpretations. By incorporating structural analysis and individual experience, I also aimed to respect the critical balance of humanist and structural studies preferences in feminist work (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 6). Additionally, I attempted to be transparent and participatory throughout the research process. Not only does this adhere to qualitative and post-modern assertions that all interactions are relational and that objective

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aspires toward emancipation of all peoples from structures of oppression and marginalization. For a review of feminist scholarship, see: Hesse-Biber (2007).

<sup>22</sup> Grounded theory is a systematic inductive approach to gathering and interpreting qualitative data that aims to build theory from empirical research and emerging categories (as opposed to pre-identified categories). See: Charmaz (2003).

researcher positions are neither desirable nor possible, it demonstrates mutual respect for participants as interlocutors and as co-inhabitants of human experiences.

As a final consideration, it was important to me and to the partner organization that the research questions and process itself be of benefit to participants. Therefore, I determined to use an appreciative inquiry (AI)<sup>23</sup> approach to question design. Using an AI approach aimed to address three ethical concerns. First, focusing on participant strengths and sources of non-violence aspired to minimize the potential re-traumatization or discomfort that might arise from discussing painful experiences of intimate partner violence or conflict. Second, following the AI wisdom that “inquiry is intervention” (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2001, p. 15), researching participants’ positive practices aimed to reinforce those practices. Lastly, I wanted to avoid as much as possible the tendency of Western researchers and conflict resolution practitioners to prioritize African ‘pathologies’ and expropriate ‘others’ experiences of suffering for our own personal and professional progress. It is my hope that utilizing grounded theory and appreciative inquiry methodologies within a feminist research paradigm helped to change the extractive and paternalistic neo-colonial pattern of interactions between Westerners and Africans and respected the capacity and dignity of all parties involved.

In addition to the research paradigm, the design and practicalities of data collection posed various strengths and challenges. Conducting gender-disaggregated group interviews reflects attention to the sensitivity of the questions asked as well as the grounded theory principle that the goal of research is to “discover patterns of behavior in a particular group of people in a certain context” (McCallin, 2003, p. 205). Consulting each group separately solicited gender-specific

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<sup>23</sup> Appreciative inquiry is a research methodology that prioritizes narrative and language and asserts that the process of inquiry itself enacts change with the individuals and societies of study. See Cooperrider and Whitney (2001).

experiences and ideas and facilitated gender-disaggregated data. However, some of the questions themselves would have likely facilitated higher detail and greater participation from each individual respondent had they been conducted using individual interviews, rather than group interviews.

Additionally, grounded theory uses theoretical sampling in which specific groups of women and specific groups of men are targeted in order to elicit not only gender-specific responses, but also intersectional and context- and position-specific responses (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). As I was only in the field for a short period of time and had access to participants through Fontaine-ISOKO, my sampling necessarily more closely resembled convenience than theoretical sampling. However, the participants were identified and selected based on former or current participation in the same gender and governance organization. Thus, the participants represent a particular sub-group of people with related experiences with gender equality and leadership work. Lastly, grounded theory involves multiple rounds of interviews so as to identify and elaborate emerging concepts. Due to time constraints, I designed and implemented only one round of interviews. Thus, any theory development presented in this paper is limited to potential trends and proposed directions for further research.

Relevant results from the fieldwork described in this chapter are presented in Chapter 5, and Chapter 6 extends further implications for research and practice. While group interviews and participant observation contribute to analyses of micro-processes of norms change, the next chapter utilizes a desk review of relevant literature to discuss macro-level processes and indicators of gender equality localization in Burundi since the 2000 peace process.

## **Chapter 4: Conflict and Peacebuilding in Burundi**

### **Conflict in Burundi**

Burundi is a multiparty constitutional republic in Central Africa that is currently recovering from over forty-five years of conflict (USDS, 2013, p. 1). Since gaining independence from Belgium in 1962, Burundi has experienced cyclical ethnicized political violence, with large losses of life in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1988 and 1993 (Niyongabo, 2013, p. 3; Bundervoet, Verwimp, & Akresh, 2008). Between the first coup d'état in 1965 and political liberalization in 1991, more than half a million people died during political violence, and more than 300,000 people have died since the 1993 assassination of Burundi's first democratically-elected president, Melchoir Ndadaye (Ogunsanya, 2007, p. 9). Peace talks began in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1997, and Burundi entered the post-conflict period in 2006 when a ceasefire agreement was signed with the last rebel group (Niyongabo, 2013, p. 14). The transition to post-conflict, however, began in 2002 when the primary rebel movement, the National Council for Democracy-Front for Democracy (CNDD-FDD) of Pierre Nkurunziza signed a ceasefire with the government (Vandeginste, 2009, p. 78). In 2005, Nkurunziza was elected president, and he was re-elected in 2010 in elections that were "largely peaceful, generally free and fair, and generally well managed" but that were boycotted by the opposition parties and marred by restricted freedom of assembly and expression and alleged misuse of financial resources by Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD (USDS, 2013, p. 9). Burundi is currently preparing for the 2015 presidential elections, and tensions have been steadily rising as the government restricts Burundi's famously

liberal civil society and freedoms of expression, oppresses opposition parties and attempts to strengthen the power of the executive branch (Nikiza and Meeson-Frizelle, 2014).

The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (28 August, 2000)<sup>24</sup> begins by describing the historical causes of conflict as well as sources of nonviolent conflict mediation. In Article Four (p. 17), the parties define the nature of the conflict:

- (a) The conflict is fundamentally political, with extremely important ethnic dimensions;
- (b) It stems from a struggle by the political class to accede to and/or remain in power.

Defining the conflict as a fundamentally political struggle reflects sensitivity to the myth of fixed ethnic fault lines and caricatured social groups originating during colonialism and manipulated during post-independence elite power struggles. Burundian and international scholars have supported the assertion that ethnicity was a mobilizing factor more than a root cause of Burundi's conflict. David Newbury, in his 2001 study on pre-colonial state formation in Rwanda and Burundi, asserts that Burundi's political history can be much more accurately told through the histories of the differentiated regions and their relationships to the central dynasty than through ethnic histories (p. 266). Within Burundi's two major social (mislabelled 'ethnic') groups, Hutus and Tutsis, numerous internal differentiations often hold stronger political significance than do differences between the two. Newbury describes how, in addition to various regional variations, four primary social groups existed within the label 'Tutsi' in Burundi's dynastic system: 1) descendants of the kings, the *Baganwa*; 2) eastern cattle herders, the *Hima*; 3) a distinct political-economic class, the *Banyaruguru*; 4) common Tutsi. Among Hutu, he describes two key groups with differentiated political positions: 1) those responsible for royal religious services and 2) mediators, adjudicators and intermediaries between the royalty and the

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<sup>24</sup> Heretofore referred to as the Arusha Agreement

population, the *abashingantahe* (2001, p. 274-275). Many of Burundi's post-independence political conflicts featured these distinct groups of Tutsi (and others) competing for political power, rather than simple Tutsi-Hutu oppositions. However, elite manipulation of ethnicity following colonial state centralization and mobilization of ethnicity to determine access to state resources resulted in large-scale massacres often along ethnic lines (Daley, 2007; International Crisis Group [ICG], 2012, p. 5; Arusha Agreement, 2000, p. 16; Newbury, 2001, p. 288). Thus, Burundian scholars Ntahombaye and Nduwayo (2007, p. 244-245) conclude: The conflict was “multi-dimensional: ideological, socio-cultural (degradation of values), psychological (suspicion, fear), political (fight for power) and economic (unequal access to economic and social opportunities with regard to education, employment and health).”

As systematic exclusion of different identity groups from state resources and services to the benefit of specific sub-groups was a key pattern in the build-up and enactment of conflict in Burundi, the process to shape a new society relied fundamentally on power-sharing arrangements. The majority of Burundi's territory and population has recognized allegiance to the same centralized state since the nineteenth century, but pre-colonial society formalized varying degrees of local autonomy and numerous checks on state power accumulation (Newbury, 2001). Burundi's contemporary history of consociationalism began in the late 1980s after nearly fifteen years of military rule when President Buyoya began to liberalize the government and provide greater civil liberties. The power-sharing arrangements of the early 1990s were much more limited in scope than those instituted in the Arusha Agreement of 2000 and in Constitutional reforms of 2005-2006 and 2009. While the 1992 reforms aimed to placate international donors, the 2000 reforms intended to redress horizontal inequality as a root cause of conflict, and the 2005-2006 agreements addressed political balance and neopatrimonial concerns

of political elites (Vandenginste, 2009). Though it has had limited effects on long-term state-building, power-sharing has been a vital component of conflict termination and the de-ethnicization of political competition (ibid). Uvin (2009, p. 19) writes that the ethnic integration of the armed forces formed “the cornerstone of the new Burundi: both sides control half the army and the police, and feel that they cannot be victimized by the other side.” Over time, power-sharing provisions have become more complex, with provisions for ethnicity, region and gender. Consequently, gender concerns and women’s networks have often been disempowered as ethnic and regional alliances take preference (Sow, 2012, p. 7). Nevertheless, the power-sharing provisions and equality proclamations of Burundi’s transition process suggest the inauguration, at least at the national rhetorical level, of an inclusive society.

### **Gender Analysis of Burundi’s Peace and Reconstruction Processes**

The conflicts in Burundi both increased women and girls’ vulnerability and opened space for flexibility and diversity of their gender roles. Sexual violence and exploitation were commonplace, as many women and girls took up domestic and sexual servitude roles for combatants and were exposed to sexual exploitation as internal and external refugees<sup>25</sup> (Bitsure, Nyanzobe, & Nisabwe, 2011, p. 66). Poverty and displacement, exacerbated by cyclical conflict, lead to substantial trafficking and prostitution, phenomena that were undocumented before the 1993 civil war (Dolgopol, 2006, p. 262). At the same time, women and girls participated in all

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<sup>25</sup> The Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi, 2005, para 46, states that, as a result of the conflict, over one million people were estimated to be internally and externally displaced in 2000 (as cited in Dolgopol, 2006, p. 64), and 80,000 people were internally displaced as of the end of 2012 (UN Security Council Report 36 (2013, p. 11-12).



stages of the conflict as combatants, peace advocates and reformers (Ndikumana and Sebudandi, 2012). Bitsure et al. (2011) write:

*The conflict shattered certain stereotypes regarding men and women. Roles once regarded as predominantly male, such as mediation of conflicts in the mountains, participation on the battlefield, court testimonies were often played by women. Many women became heads of households and carried out that role successfully. In politics, women became conscious of their capacity and interested in the life of the country, and began to demand to be involved in decision-making.*

Burundian women organized cross-party and inter-regional peacebuilding associations (Niyongabo, 2013; Gahama, 2002) and ultimately applied the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 in order to gain access to Arusha Peace Negotiations. Though they were permitted only as ‘Observers,’ they are considered “pioneers in the application of the Beijing Platform for Action 1995 to participate in peace processes in Africa” (Ogunsanya, 2007, p. 29; Barltrop, 2008, p. 22). Several days before the Arusha Agreement, they met with Nelson Mandela at the first All Party Burundi Women’s Peace Conference in order to present a unified vision for peace and advocate their demands and recommendations. Ultimately, nineteen of their thirty recommendations were included in the final Arusha Agreement (Ogunsanya, 2007, p. 30). Recognizing exclusion as one of the principle causes of conflict, the Arusha Agreement enshrines in the reconstruction process “the principle of the equality of rights and duties for all citizens, men and women, and all ethnic, political, regional and social components of Burundian society” and devotion to “combatting conflict-generating injustices of all kinds” (Arusha Agreement, 2000, p. 19). Gender sensitivity is evident throughout the Agreement, for example in the use and alternation of gender inclusive pronouns (“his/her,” “her/his” and “she/he,” “he/she”). The Agreement makes reference to gender inclusion in regard to civil administration, education, the judiciary, the defense and

security forces, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), equal citizenship, rights and freedoms, residence, freedom of marriage, property ownership and children's rights. Ultimately, the Arusha Agreement proclaims significant advances in the creation of a new society based on a balance of powers, protection under the law and equal citizenship, value, dignity and inclusion (p. 25).

Women's successful advocacy for inclusion of their rights and needs in the Arusha agreement is a source of pride for many Burundians, and the headway made during the peace negotiations has continued at the national level throughout the post-conflict reconstruction period. Burundi has ratified nearly all international resolutions protecting and promoting human rights (Bitsure et al., 2011, p. 56), and women's organizations have continued to apply international mandates to advocacy work. They used Resolution 1325 during the 2005 and 2010 elections to push for gender mainstreaming of the electoral processes, and various pieces of legislation have been passed supporting women's rights and inclusion, namely the 2004 National Gender Policy (Niyongabo, 2013, p. 4), the 2011 National Action Plan on Resolution 1325, the Great Lakes Region International Conference Protocol and the Goma Declaration (UN Security Council Report 36, 2013, p. 12). The 2005 Constitution reserves 30 percent of all seats in the National Assembly, the Senate and the communal councils for women (USDS, 2013, p. 12); two of the first four Second Vice Presidents were women, and the first Ministers of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and Health were women (Ogunsanya, 2007, p. 37; Barltrop, 2008, p. 22). In the 2012 Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of Resolution 1325, the authors note at least 12 civil society organizations (CSOs) working directly on resolution 1325

and 1820<sup>26</sup> (Niyongabo, 2013, p. 12). Burundian women's mobilization at community, national and regional levels is exemplary of the potential of grassroots advocacy in partnership with human rights mandates to engender peacebuilding and reconstruction legislation.

However, the legal and rhetorical advances gained during the reconstruction period are somewhat exceptional in the terrain of women's representation and gender equality in Burundi today. Falch (2010, p. 18) notes that "women's organizations' efforts in the past five years have been more fragmented and less visible than during the peace process." Niyongabo (2013, p. 22) highlights the disconnect between rhetoric and resources as the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender<sup>27</sup> received 7.95% of the national budget, of which 0.7% is allocated to gender-specific projects. Additionally, women's exclusion from the highest level negotiations has still not significantly improved in the ten years since the Arusha Agreement, as no women representatives were included in the political party delegations that met in Caux, Switzerland for negotiations and reconciliation after the 2010 election cycle unrest (Niyongabo, 2013, p. 8). Thus, even at the national policy level where great levels of national and international attention have stressed gender goals, implementation of Resolution 1325 remains tenuous.

### **Women's Rights and Participation Today**

Examination of women's rights and participation today reveals mixed conclusions pertaining to 1325 localization. The statistics are relatively encouraging when only considering

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<sup>26</sup> Resolution 1820 connects sexual violence as a tactic of war to the women, peace and security agenda. While enhancing the 1325 mandate, it positions women as victims and prioritizes protection.

See: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/wps.shtml>

<sup>27</sup> The Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender is responsible for women's issues and gender mainstreaming.

women's representation within the government. In 2012, women composed 40.62 percent of political positions and 47.27 percent of technical positions within the National Assembly, 22.22 percent of the Office of the presidency, 40 percent of the National Independent Commission on Human Rights and 42.85 percent of the National Independent Electoral Commission (Niyongabo, 2013). These statistics indicate that women's representation has, in some venues, surpassed the 30% representation mandated by gender quotas. However, where no quota exists, such as at the *colline*, or *hill* level, which is the most local administrative unit through which the majority of Burundians – particularly women – interact with the government, women's representation is significantly lower. Though women represented 16.93 percent of the Territorial Administration in 2012 (up from 14 percent before the 2010 elections and electoral reform), this is still troublingly low in a country in which women compose over 50 percent of the population (Sow, 2012, p. 20). Strikingly, women compose only 4.9% of Colline Chiefs, the highest local leadership position. Additionally, women are 0.46 percent of the National Defense Force, 3.33 percent of the National Police, 5.26 percent of Peacekeeping Missions and 2 out of 5 members of the TRC commission (Niyongabo, 2013). Thus, women's participation in leadership and decision-making institutions remains highly dependent on legal assurances and otherwise follows traditional gender roles, with women excluded from 'masculine' and high-powered political structures.

The relationship between women's human rights and their effective participation in decision-making is particularly pronounced concerning sexual and domestic violence. Willett poignantly writes: "The threat of sexual violence is acknowledged to preclude women's participation in public life, and it is a powerful weapon to enforce subordination, to humiliate and degrade women and to enforce their victimization" (Willett, 2010, p. 154). Numerous

factors prevent the state, particularly at higher levels, from assuring women's rights, especially relating to SGBV. The pact of impunity among many elected elites, who were participants in militias and party to political and gender-based violence during the various cycles of crisis, exacerbates the ineffectiveness of Burundi's extremely weak state infrastructure to provide protection and services to the population (Bundervoet et al., 2008; Vandeginste, 2009). Because of the limited state and poor development, women's needs often fall to local leaders and non-governmental actors, such as NGOs, churches and the family. Thus, women's underrepresentation within local administration is of particular concern for women's rights and ability to participate in decision-making structures. Women colline administrators play a central role in reducing and responding to SGBV and domestic violence (Sow, 2012), which are not only important barriers to women's participation in public life but also strong 'risk factors' for future conflict (Report of the Secretary-General, Woman and Peace and Security, 2004, 4-5). Though rape is criminalized under the 2005 Constitution and 2009 legislative reform, sexual, physical, psychological, economic and estate-related violence is widespread, and there is no law against SGBV broadly (Niyongabo, 2013, p. 12). As enforcement is inconsistent, the burden of "proof" remains high in rape cases, and the socio-cultural barriers to women's use of the judicial system are profound (ibid, p. 13), local efforts to address SGBV are essential in Burundi.

In addition to SGBV, other forms of GBV continue to substantially hinder women's participation in decision-making. Burundi has one of the highest population densities in the world (Cochet, 2004), a very weak economy, high inflation rates and shortages of key services such as water and electricity (ICG, 2012). The majority of the population relies on manual subsistence agriculture, undertaken primarily by women (Dolgopol, 2006), and displacement, population growth and environmental instability have led to food shortages, rendering women's

work of feeding their families more difficult (ICG, 2012; Peeters, Rees Smith, & Correia, 2012). Various studies have noted the impact of women's disproportionate agricultural and domestic burdens on prohibiting their participation in public life (Sow, 2012; Ndikumana & Sebudandi, 2012). Increasing land fragmentation and strains as former refugees and IDPs return has been used to justify women's exclusion from inheritance despite legal provisions (Sow, 2006, p. 9), and only 10.5 percent of all survey and interview respondents thought that women's presence in political life had produced a positive effect on women's access to land ownership (Ndikumana and Sebudandi, 2012, p. 34). Additionally, nearly 17 percent of Burundian women are illiterate, impeding their capacity to advocate for their rights and inclusion (2010 Demographic Health Survey, UN Security Council Report 36, 2013, p. 12). Significantly, the 2000 report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Initial Reports of State Parties – Burundi, 2000) notes:

*The traditional society is a patriarchal and patrilineal one, in which a woman is constantly under the protection of a father, brother, uncle, husband or family council. Women have more duties than rights and must subordinate themselves to the customs and practices governing the relations between men. (p. 7)*

This statement reveals the underlying assumptions about gendered rights and duties that enable unequal presence and influence in decision-making. Altering the underlying power relationships becomes even more important in contexts such as Burundi where the state and economy, possible checks on cultural or informal inequalities, are weak or collude with informal discrimination.

The effect of the multi-faceted influences on women's daily lives and citizenship indicates that Resolution 1325 fulfillment lies beyond women's numerical representation within

decision-making. Rather, their qualitative capacity to affect policy-making is an important indicator of the acceptance of Resolution 1325 as a norm with impact on local power and ideology structures. Various signs suggest that the root causes of gender discriminatory systems continue to hinder women's ability to affect decision-making despite their mandated presence. Falch (2010), for example, notes that men almost exclusively lead Burundi's political parties and that, despite party list quotas, decision-making within parties occurs primarily among small groups of elite men behind closed doors (p. 14). Despite the presence of higher numbers of women in Burundi's National Assembly, the presence of women parliamentarians has not led to systematic attention to women's or gender issues (Sow, 2012, p. 22). Niyongabo (2013) found that former women civil society leaders who are elected to political posts often loosen ties to women's civil society organizations (CSOs) and strengthen allegiance to their party and its platform. Additionally, many women lack the legitimacy or resources to participate equally with men, even when the incentives to vote along party lines do not outweigh those to support women's issues (ibid; Ndikumana and Sebundani, 2012). Women's presence within governing bodies is thus not sufficient to transform the unequal power relationships between men and women and often does not lead to the transformation of the institutional structures that would enable equal citizenship. Gender quotas have significantly increased women's representation, sense of capacity and confidence and support for women's freedom of speech (Sow, 2012). However, macro-level changes to gender role and power structures have yet to outweigh the range of institutionally- and societally-embedded norms and incentives that support inequitable gender differentiation.

## **From ‘Women’ to ‘Gender’ : A Note on Gender Analyses in Burundi**

Ideally, a case study of the gender dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding would investigate the relationships between conflict and women/femininities *and* men/masculinities. As data collection and gender analysis in Burundi has prioritized making women’s experiences and activism visible, it is currently unfeasible to present a comparable analysis on relevant macro indicators of men’s rights and well-being. Therefore, this section discusses the gender analyses that do consider men as gendered subjects and offers implications for Resolution 1325 norms change.

Literature on the gender dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding in Burundi is relatively limited, due in part to Burundi’s similarities and proximity to Rwanda,<sup>28</sup> whose 800,000 deaths during the mid-1990s overshadowed Burundi’s 300,000 (Sommers and Uvin, 2011). The majority of research on gender and conflict globally and in Burundi specifically centers on women’s experiences of victimization and activism and examines men and masculinities only peripherally and as spoilers of post-conflict transformation. Consequently, gender analysis of men and boys’ experiences during the civil war and preceding political conflicts is a fundamental gap in the literature. This atomized focus on either men or women to the sacrifice of gender overlooks fundamental aspects of the structures that (re)produce differential citizenship. Literature on masculinities, conflict and health has illustrated how masculinities and femininities are mutually-reinforcing, interactive, institutionally embedded, multi-dimensional, plural and

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<sup>28</sup> Despite profound social, political and economic differences, both Burundi and Rwanda are historical nation-states with approximately 14% Tutsi, 85% Hutu and 1-2% Twa ethnic populations, and both countries experienced civil war and genocide in the mid-1990s. For a detailed comparison of precolonial Rwanda and Burundi and implications for current scholarship, see Newbury (2001).



changing (Connell, 2003, p. 3-4).<sup>29</sup> Because masculinities and femininities are relationally-constituted, creating space for women's rights, empowerment and liberation is necessarily dependent on also shifting women and men's expectations about men and masculinities. Thus, any gender analysis that examines only women is incomplete, for it makes women and assumptions about femininity visible while leaving men invisible and unproblematized, thus maintaining half of the gendered power structure.

In the literature on Burundi, two primary accounts of gender and masculinities exist. The first, offered by Patricia Daley in *Gender and Genocide in Burundi* (Daley, 2007), offers a structuralist and post-colonial account of the effects of militarization in the Great Lakes Region on gender dynamics in Burundi. She describes how colonialism and decades of militaristic state-building and contestation normalized militaristic values that violently support traditional patriarchal divisions of rights and power. Arguing that militarism has facilitated the extension of state violence into private realms and shaped it according to gendered and ethnicized ideologies, she asserts that deconstructing hierarchies of violent masculinities is a central question of post-conflict reconstruction (p. 134). While Daley takes a macro-structuralist view, the other key account of gender and masculinities in Burundi looks at the micro-politics and lived experiences of Burundian youth to offer "a people's story" of violence and recovery (Uvin, 2009). Based on interviews with Burundian youth conducted by Peter Uvin in 2006 and Peter Uvin and Kimberly Howe in 2007, this account illustrates how young men and women make sense of and cope with violence, poverty and political instability. In contrast with Daley's portrayal of militarized masculinities, Uvin (2009), Sommers and Uvin (2011) and Peeters et al. (2012) describe the centrality of the values of respect, collaboration and perseverance and support for gender role

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<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 2

flexibility among young Burundian men confronting the constraints on attaining normative masculinity during the post-conflict period. Despite their contrasting approaches, both Daley and Uvin et al. stress the importance of gender relations in transforming conflict and creating an inclusive post-conflict society.

Uvin, Sommers and Peeters et al. offer insight into the multi-sited and changing construction of gender relations during reconstruction and support investigation of micro- and household-level dynamics. Their studies confirm the centrality of marriage as both a site for gender construction for men and for women and as a gatekeeping institution in sub-Saharan Africa. Silberschmidt (2001) asserts that marriage is one of the primary mechanisms that shapes and communicates gender ideologies. In Burundi, where lives are lived locally and where homesteads, rather than villages, are the key social institution (Newbury, 2001), marriage and the family take on increasing importance. Urban and rural respondents of both genders reliably indicated that the pressure to marry and start a family is one of the greatest stressors and barriers to personal stability (Peeters et al., 2012, p. VIII). Marriage and childbearing are recognized as prerequisites for African women's social legitimacy and key factors in their well-being (Mechanic, 2004, p. 14; Sommers and Uvin, 2011, p. 4), and female youth, particularly, noted marriage as an important determinant of their "economic status and social security" (Peeters et al., 2012, p. 13). Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, expectations that men build a home, marry and provide for their spouses, children and extended families mediate male youth's ability to enter socially-validated manhood (Barker and Ricardo, 2005; Silberschmidt, 2001). In post-conflict contexts of displacement, insecurity, years of lost education and collapsed economies and states, men's inability to save enough money to marry serves to keep poor and marginalized men from attaining adult manhood. Gerontocracies, including most traditional African societies,

exclude children from leadership positions. Consequently, marriage in such societies operates to both shape gender roles and to filter access to decision-making based on intersectional gender hierarchies. Thus, gender interacts with power dynamics across spheres to disproportionately prevent women and certain men from participating in shaping post-conflict society. As the household plays an essential role in molding gender dynamics and in gatekeeping men and women's access to important institutions, it is a significant and missing component in Resolution 1325 localization literature in Burundi and elsewhere.

## **Chapter 5: Fieldwork Analysis**

This section analyzes key factors in Resolution 1325 norm adoption at the household and local level that emerged during participant observation and group interviews. It first describes core concepts of normative masculinity and femininity in Burundi and then examines gender norms and power structures that are specific to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Precisely, this section maps marital conflict resolution practices and discusses participants' perceptions of women's participation in peacebuilding. Throughout, it places micro-level conflict resolution and peacebuilding practices into dialogue with macro-level structures that began changing during the peace process and have continued through subsequent government reforms.

### **Gender Norms and 1325 Localization**

In his study on the impact of two transnational norms on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Acharya (2004) asserts that the successful adoption of international norms within any new context is dependent on the norm's congruence with pre-existing local beliefs, practices and normative orders. It is this process, "localization, not wholesale acceptance or rejection, [that] settles most cases of normative contestation" (p. 239). He draws the distinction between norm adaptation that is often tactical and imposed from above and localization, which is voluntary and tends to produce more enduring change (p. 251). Because "norm displacement fails when it competes with a strong identity norm" (p. 247), as in the case of female

circumcision in Kenya (Keck and Sikkink, 1998),<sup>30</sup> efforts that not only create official or rhetorical space for the new norm but also reinterpret existing identity politics so as to reinterpret, rather than displace, existing identities may significantly aid in localization. In order to understand the preexisting norms around Resolution 1325 – gender and women’s participation in peace and conflict decision-making, this section reviews the core gender identity norms that emerged during group interviews, beginning with conceptions of masculinities and concluding with a discussion of femininities and a note on data availability.

Several principle components of masculinity surfaced throughout field and desk research. Uvin (2009) writes that, in Burundi, “the main requirement to become ‘a man’ is to marry and provide for a family” (p. 123). During masculinities workshops, facilitators asked the participants what it means when a father tells his son to ‘be a man,’ and many of the responses related to their roles as husbands, fathers and heads of households. Becoming ‘a man’ was associated with protecting the home and the nation. While Uvin asserts that “masculinity leads first and foremost to responsibility – not to violence” with “expectations of young men to be ‘obedient,’ ‘polite,’ ‘have morality,’ and ‘stay close to home,’” (p. 135), men in my study (who belonged to a wider age-group than Uvin’s cohort) discussed the expectation that they use various degrees of violence to assert and prove their masculinity. They listed proverbs instructing them to ‘ensure their progeny’ and to ‘have many children, even outside of the marital bed if necessary’ in addition to dictates of *how* to be a husband. For example, participants at every workshop mentioned *Gishinga’ mashiga*, which means that a man must beat his wife quickly after the wedding in order to establish his dominance and gain respect from his

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<sup>30</sup> For example, efforts to prohibit female circumcision in Kenya failed because it was embedded in nationalist agendas that conceived it as important to local identity and culture. See Keck and Sikkink (1998, as cited in Acharya, 2004, p. 247).

wife and the wider community. Sexual violence and sex as a performance were also understood as acceptable aspects of manhood, with the directives to ‘make love like a man,’ to ‘tire your wife’ and the advice that ‘you know that you have made love like a man if your wife runs away from sexual relations.’ While many men do not practice violence and may not accept normative masculinity that associates manhood with domination, participants overwhelmingly recognized that predominant messages that they receive about masculinity frame violence and control as desirable or acceptable and connect domination to respect. Thus, men in the workshops suggested that getting married and providing for a family are the keys to *attaining* manhood but that the *practice* of manhood often involves demonstrating dominance over one’s wife.

The idea of masculine dominance extended beyond physical or sexual violence to decision-making practices, suggesting that hegemonic masculinity in Burundi may pose a barrier to Resolution 1325 norm acceptance. One of the characteristics of a ‘real man’ is to *Uraba samurarwa*, meaning to ‘be the one to take the leadership.’ They also discussed how a man should ‘hit your wife if she speaks standing up while you are seated,’ ‘never take your wife’s opinions seriously’ and ‘be dominant in the domain of decision-making.’ While these dictates – all of which contrast ‘real men’ with their wives – associate masculinity with exclusive decision-making, the imperative to ‘be responsible for decision-making’ was often connected to the instruction to ‘be a wise man, a model and give advice.’ The latter iteration of masculinity as leadership and decision-making derives from the *bashingantahe*, a council of mediators and arbitrators empowered to protect Burundian values and administer justice. Justice, integrity and non-violence are essential values of the *bashingantahe* and serve as a positive interpretation of masculinity. However, these different expressions of masculinity as leadership demonstrate how similar norms may manifest quite differently in public and private space. Images of male

leadership in public (*bashingantahe*) serve to uphold justice and non-violent conflict resolution. Simultaneously, the same norm in private space serves to validate men's domination in the household and women's exclusion from decision-making. Whether violently or non-violently, the association of masculinity with leadership serves as an obstacle to social norms change that poses women as legitimate decision-makers in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Literature on gender in Burundi follows the general trend, with relatively large amounts written about women's roles and experiences of gender discrimination and emerging literature existing on masculinity, while comparatively little exists about men's gendered roles and on femininity. Due to the scope of the fieldwork and the approach of the partner NGO, research for this study also gathered relatively little on femininity in Burundi. However, Uvin writes that ideas about womanhood in his research centered "on 'obedience' and on 'morality'" at rates "three times higher for women than men; 'politeness and respectfulness' score six times higher" (Uvin, 2009, p. 135). Participant observation for this study also indicated that virtue and politeness are important factors that validate women's social value and legitimacy. Several informants discussed the message, often communicated to brides by their aunties the night before their wedding, that it is better for a woman to die in the home than to leave their husbands, and men, primarily, discussed motherhood as a principal symbol of womanhood. In contrast to discussions about masculinity, data collected for this study on femininity is incidental. Therefore, further systematic research on the components of womanhood and the various ways that women perform, fulfill or challenge femininity requirements would lend clarity to Resolution 1325 norm negotiation.

Preliminary findings on hegemonic masculinities and femininities in Burundi indicate that understandings of what it means to be a man and to be a woman are discordant with

Resolution 1325 norm localization. Association of manhood with leadership and dominance and of womanhood with obedience and respectfulness suggest that Resolution 1325 norms may meet significant resistance as they confront how women and men conceive of themselves and their place within the social order.

### **Marital Conflict Resolution Practices**

In order to explore the potential for localization of Resolution 1325 beyond formal structures, this section investigates how femininity, masculinity and gendered power dynamics manifest in inter-marital conflict resolution. It thus explores beyond how women and men define themselves to how they (re)negotiate their positions within social relationships and their roles in determining their realities. Uvin (2009) articulately states the importance of household conflict during post-conflict reconstruction, writing:

*I am sure that household conflicts are one of the most serious problems faced by many Burundians, especially women and children. The stunning outside pressures Burundians have been subjected to – the ravages of war, the insecurities of banditry and theft, the grinding pressure of misery, the land scarcity and the fear for tomorrow – often get mediated into deep and long-lasting intra-household conflicts, pitting husbands against wives, brothers against sisters, children of one marriage against children of another. (p. 27)*

Investigating conflict resolution practices between husbands and wives therefore provides insight into norms in the sphere where the largest number of men and (particularly) women engage in conflict resolution and negotiate for voice and influence in shaping their future.

Throughout group interviews, men and women shared a base understanding of marital conflict that reflects the importance of marriage in women and men's social status and socio-



economic security. Participants across sites proclaimed that preserving the socio-economic gains associated with marriage is the primary motivation for using non-violent conflict resolution practices. For example, a man from Busiga stated:

*If we engage in the destruction of our household, it's our affair, and we won't have development for our household. That's why we decide without resistance from anyone to resort to dialogue to see how we can meet our goals.*

Similarly, a woman from Mwumba explained: *You tell yourself that when you use violence, you lose. You weigh the risks and you realize that it's very dangerous [to use violence or intimidation to resolve marital conflicts].*

They also described an acceptance of conflict as a part of life, referencing the proverb *Ntazibana zidakanya amahembe*, meaning 'Two cows can't share the same stable without butting horns.' Participants thus expressed a common preference for reconciliation and a rational approach to protecting long-term socio-economic stability.

The central role of marriage as a gateway to important privileges and basic stability profoundly shaped how men and women approached marital conflict and resolution. Throughout discussions, participants repeatedly noted the figure of the 'model' or the 'herder' when discussing those with social power and influence. The idea of literally 'being in front' of others, leading physically and by 'announc[ing] the projects to come' reverberated as a paradigm of respected power-holders within governance and family- or community-level peacebuilding. Historically, un-married men were not permitted into the *bashingantahe*. Because "it was considered that single people did not have enough wisdom, did not know enough about life, and could not keep a secret," unmarried men were regarded as unfit for participation in this fundamental decision-making institution (Nindorera, 2002, p. 23). As the ability to maintain

confidentiality is one of the key requirements of both married persons and members of the *bashingantahe*, participants discussed the imperative of preserving the husband and wife's reputations by solving their problems in private:

*Another fundamental element to keep in spirit for spouses is to never violate conjugal secrets without having themselves exhausted all the other solutions. (man from Mwumba)*

*If there is something that isn't okay, their mutual love constrains them to find a solution together without having to unveil themselves to the public. (man from Busiga)*

Because it serves as a social signal, marriage in Burundi indicates acceptability for participation in decision-making, and it provides both men and women with social protections and status. Overwhelmingly, men and women thus preferred to protect their relationships through private communication and mutual forgiveness.

Nevertheless, women and men used different strategies for resolving conflicts with their husbands or wives, strategies that are reflective of gender norms and power distributions. While men discussed exclusively interpersonal dialogue and forgiveness, women elaborated a variety of approaches to resolving household disputes. After dialogue and forgiveness, the second most commonly-mentioned conflict resolution practice for women was to withdraw:

*People can't live together without bickering from time to time. In cases of incomprehension susceptible to degenerate into violent conflict, I don't leave the conjugal roof. I withdraw for a while. The next day, he reflects and he can realize that he was wrong. When I realize that I was wrong, I try to appease the situation without requiring us to bring ridicule. (woman from Mwumba)*

However, not all women agreed that their husbands would use their withdrawal as an opportunity to reflect. For some, withdrawal was a self-protective first step for dealing with dominating husbands while maintaining the marriage. During masculinities workshops, men described the imperative *Urahora ugavye*, translated to me as ‘Impose your power over your wife; stay vigilant against your wife; never accept that you are wrong.’ Many women thus recounted strategies that placate their husbands and creatively resolve problems without using violence or extra-familial resources. For example, a woman from Mwumba recalled:

*In my home, sometimes we argue. Even too seriously sometimes. When I realize that I made a mistake, I be quiet, even for three hours. But him, he never thinks he is wrong...He always uses force. When I realize that I have the chance, I withdraw a little to my family's or his. When I have been at his brother's for two days, he asks him to tell me that he would like us to go work together. I say no and demand that he tells me why he came at me. Sometimes, he has his reasons, and others I realize that he acted under the influence of beer or his friends.*

A woman from Busiga asserted that women use sexual relations to smooth over conflicts between their husbands:

*When the woman accepts, despite everything, to sleep with her husband, the hour to talk together arrives, and they can speak truthfully...When you talk well at night, you forget everything. It is no longer necessary to resort to a mediator because you will have already resolved it by yourself.*

Another woman from Busiga described doing extra housework or special services for her husband in order to placate the situation and facilitate dialogue, saying that he would then come to her and say ‘I didn’t know that you would do that even though I’ve hurt you.’ Thus, many women recounted strategies to normalize their relationships with their husbands, whether through withdrawing physically or socially until the situation had deescalated or through

reaffirming their gender roles in the marriage. While achieving non-violent conflict resolution, the majority of these practices ultimately affirm the husband's position of greater power in exchange for reconciliation.

Not all women accepted their subordination to their husbands' position within the household, however, and several women recounted negotiating with their husbands to change the power distribution in their conflict resolution practices. A woman from Busiga described confronting her husband's 'injustice:'

*It happens that we argue, for example, about a goat that is a familial property. He could sell it and manage the proceeds without keeping me up to date...But you know the husband is in the position of force in his home; he can say to himself that he has all the rights in his household...I explain to him the injustice behind it, and we understand each other. All of this, we didn't do before the arrival of good governance. The man could dilapidate all the family's wealth, and you didn't have anything to turn to.*

This woman's story reflects the emerging use of "a rights-based approach" (Strickland and Duvvury, 2003, p. 20)<sup>31</sup> to transform household decision-making structures. While men almost exclusively discussed interpersonal dialogue and forgiveness, and women clearly preferred interpersonal or familial solutions to dealing with marital conflict, women also regularly mentioned mediators and other authorities as elements in their conflict resolution repertoires. Like the woman with the disagreement over how to use the proceeds from selling the familial goat, many women described advocating for themselves, for example going to mediators or state authorities – or threatening their husbands to do so – if interpersonal dialogue didn't produce a satisfactory solution. As men are already the greater power holders in their homes, it is likely

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<sup>31</sup> Strickland and Duvvury write that "a rights-based approach to development can provide the means to contest notions of unequal worth, demand that citizenship be extended to women on the basis of equality, and enhance women's agency." (2003, p. 20)

that they rarely need a higher authority to deal with disagreements and can maintain the status quo from which they benefit through practices of dialogue and forgiveness alone. Women, on the other hand, appear to benefit from additional, extra-marital protections. For example, the shame associated with revealing private disharmony, combined with associations of manhood with domination, results in a general acceptance of violence against women, particularly one's wife, if it occurs in private (Niyongabo, 2013, p. 17). While resolving disputes within the household benefits both couples in terms of their social status and economic security and encourages non-violent dialogue as a conflict-resolution method, it often also serves to enable gendered rights and duties that disproportionately harm women. Consequently, changes to the macro-level structure that facilitate Resolution 1325 norms and recognize women's rights appear to provide women with a new element of negotiating power that at least some women are utilizing to contest subordination in their private lives.

Nonetheless, altering the gender normative framework at the interpersonal level may still be an important element in supporting women's participation in conflict resolution and decision-making. Ndikumana and Sebudandi (2012) found that many women avoided political engagement or voted according to their husbands' preferences in order to avoid conflict in the home (p. 28). Even women in this study who mentioned going to mediators or other authorities in order to increase their influence still often confronted discrimination because of gender norms and corruption. During interviews in Bubanza province, Niyongabo (2013, p. 17) noted "a culture of leaders profiting from their status as leaders to "do as they please,"" a sentiment echoed in Uvin's research as well as in my own. Uvin found that *bashingantahe* routinely ask for beer, traditionally a symbol of gratitude and reconciliation shared after a dispute had been settled, *before* they would agree to mediate a case and that they "will make decisions in favor of

the one who managed to pay them in beer” (Uvin, 2009, p. 63). During a group interview, a woman from Mwumba described how her husband paid the elder who agreed to mediate after her husband had broken her arm. Rather than sharing the beer among all parties as a symbol of reconciliation, the husband and the notable drank the beer together, and she was left to compensate for the lost household resources. After that experience, she professed that she learned to withdraw and later return and hear what her husband had to say and ceased involving mediators in disputes or cases of violence. Thus, while women noted expanded power and opportunity structures because of governance changes, they still confronted prominent informal barriers that encourage keeping dispute resolution within the private sphere and privilege men’s decision-making authority. These findings reaffirm the importance of changing lived social norms in tandem with amending official normative structures if Resolution 1325 is to become an integrated aspect of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Burundi and elsewhere.

### **Peacebuilding Roles**

This section moves beyond household 1325 norm negotiation to community-level practices and further interconnections between the two spheres. When asked about men and women’s roles in consolidating peace in Burundi, participants overall confirmed traditional gender roles based on the family paradigm and the *bashingantahe* institution but also noted women’s emerging advocacy roles.

Men, particularly, asserted that it is important to create peace in the household so as to serve as models for peace in the community:

*First, you must have peace in the household. Thus, you can advise others because you already represent the model. (man from Busiga)*

*When you are a man of trust and you have peace in your household, neighbors can also confide in you to reconcile them or help them to resolve their conflicts. (man from Mwumba)*

The prevalence of these responses and the lack of responses pertaining to community or government institutions reflect the extent to which Burundians' lives are lived locally and marital status serves to signal respectability and eligibility for leadership. Though similar responses were used to describe men and women's roles, some expressed the assumption, likely deriving from the *bashingantahe* institution, that men have historically been the central figures in leading the country to peace, as a man from Mwumba explained:

*Since long ago, we always said that if the country is doing well, we give credit to the men because it is they who have a dominant voice, and an honest country is made of men...if you are a man without integrity, your discourse is completely ignored. The technique to consolidate peace is to be a man of truth.*

Despite women's former exclusion from holding formal membership in the *bashingantahe*,<sup>32</sup> women have historically been recognized for their roles as mothers and wives, and therefore advisors to their *bashingantahe* spouses (Nindorera, 2002, p. 16). The image of women mother-peacebuilders recurred throughout group discussions, particularly among men. For example, one man from Mwumba referred to women's status as *abonarugo*, 'she who is permanently in the home,' saying:

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<sup>32</sup> As part of the governance transition, the *bashingantahe* are now required to include women as members. See: Ntahombaye (2005). Several informants for this study noted how women's investiture has resulted in decreased prestige and respectability of the institution.

*A good woman first makes peace in the interior. She must have love and not seek trouble at the neighbors'...As they are always near to the house, they have a large role in promoting the consolidation of peace in the neighborhood.*

*Another man added: When she sees something detrimental, she attacks the problem at the root, arranges everything to prevent the situation from degenerating and claiming the whole country. She succeeds because she is a mother. All that she says is favorably welcomed.*

Thus, participants stressed that motherhood and marital tranquility enable women to serve as examples and advisors in their communities and afford them the legitimacy to participate in conflict prevention and resolution. These responses reflect women's peace activism at the state-level as well, such as Burundian women's activation of their "strategic essentialism"<sup>33</sup> as mothers in order to gain space in the Arusha Peace process and mainstream women's rights throughout the agreement (Anderson, 2010, p. 9). Significantly, the idea that peacebuilding, for women and for men, begins in the home and then radiates out into the neighborhood, community and the country mirrors marital conflict resolution practices that follow a path from the most private to increasingly formal and public avenues.

In addition to drawing from familial archetypes that legitimate men and women's differential peacebuilding roles, men thought of themselves as having particular peacebuilding roles because of their gender and sex. During masculinities workshops, men discussed a host of masculinity imperatives relating to their protector roles. For example, *Inguvu* and *Ikinyaganwanka*, meaning 'Have strength;' 'Fight for your home and your country' and 'Be a protector, ready to use physical means to protect your wealth.' Men in Bubanza noted that real

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<sup>33</sup> Sharer (2004) defines 'strategic essentialism' as "the temporary suspension of difference for purposes of amassing power against oppression" (p. 40, as cited in Anderson, 2010, p. 9).



men are ‘Never afraid,’ and men in Busiga stated *Ntuzorotse icumu*, meaning that real men never remove the feathers from their lance (because this signifies that you accept that you are in the weaker position and thus enables you to avoid a confrontation). Lastly, men in Gihanga recalled *Umugabo airinda akaje*, meaning ‘A man must confront everything that happens in order to protect the home.’ In a discussion in Busiga, one man explained gender differentiated peacebuilding roles: *The techniques differ and are so because, as men, we are capable of confronting the night and making a contribution.* In his account, women assure the safety of the home, while men’s strength and courage enables them to contribute to peace outside of the home. These accounts imply that Resolution 1325 norm localization will involve contestation of a gendered division of leadership spaces and roles that disproportionately encourages men’s active and physical engagement in public life.

Though many responses conformed to traditional gender roles that construct a masculine/feminine protector/protected dichotomy, some women stressed roles unrelated to women’s status as mothers. For example, several women described a gender consciousness and women’s role in assuring equality and justice for all women and other people in need:

*What I think, so that we can contribute to consolidation of peace, we must not be indifferent. We don’t have the right to pass in front of a woman in a problematic situation and to say that it’s her business. We must know that we are the same and show that we are solidary. We learn in associations how to advocate for women and all other people in distress. That’s the way that we will contribute to peace consolidation.* (woman from Busiga)

*Our specialty as women is that we are alert. We can speak in front of crowds and verify if our conversation will reinforce those who are listening...we must be equitable without looking at the status of people or their sex.* (woman from Mwumba)

Numerous men and women observed that, since women have been participating in governance and the *bashingantahe* institution, women have largely ceased going to male leaders for help, particularly with gender-specific concerns. Ndikumana and Sebudandi (2012) similarly noted that women community leaders had become a primary protection against sexual violence in the home by serving as resources for women victims capable of acting in an official capacity (p. 32). Many women also asserted that they consolidate peace through community associations, where they discuss conflict resolution and learn about the benefits of women's empowerment and participation in leadership. These responses reflect the growing flexibility of gender roles that Uvin (2009), Sommers and Uvin (2011) and Peeters et al. (2012) document among youth as well as a sense of women's specific and important contributions to decision-making, suggesting local support for Resolution 1325 based on participants' valued experiences with women leaders. The next section discusses changes to women's participation in peacebuilding since the 2009 Constitutional and legislative reform initiated greater protections for women and gender quotas at the commune level and highlights the impact of associations on women's peacebuilding participation.

### **Growing Space for Women in Conflict Resolution**

In 2009, Burundi initiated reforms to the Constitution and legal code that increase protections against SGBV and expanded the gender quotas initiated during the peace transition to the commune level.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, rural women have gained a new level of government support for their participation in civil administration. As the majority of the participants in this

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<sup>34</sup> See Niyongabo et al. (2013) and Chapter 3

study engage in conflict resolution and leadership at the community-level (no participants discussed activism or institutions beyond the commune – for example at the sub-regional, national or African regional levels) when asked about conflict resolution and peacebuilding practices, the 2010 elections offered to significantly affect gender and governance dynamics for the men and women involved in the study. In order to explore the effect of these changes on community-level men and women, facilitators asked participants how women’s participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding has changed since the 2010 elections.

While, historically, Burundi has had a weak “associational tradition” due to its vertical organization and the centrality of the family as the principle social institution (Verivsch and Titeca, 2010, p. 492),<sup>35</sup> since the assassination of the president and the beginning of the civil war in 1993, conflict resolution, governance and development associations have multiplied in Burundi. For example, because of the influx of international conflict resolution organizations and programs, Uvin (2009) writes that Burundi “was in many ways the world’s top laboratory for this sort of work” (p. 173). Throughout discussions, participants noted the influence of associations and government reforms on redefining norms around rights and citizenship, suggesting areas of congruence between Resolution 1325 and local norms. One woman from Mwumba described how attending workshops helped her husband and her to respect each other’s political rights and to understand political choice as a right that applies to women as well as to men:

*Through meetings, we learn that in each family every member has rights. He learns that political choices are part of our rights. In the past, in the time of*

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<sup>35</sup> Though women mobilized *as women* to support the independence movement, women’s associations first formed as a coherent effort during the late 1980s. For an analysis of women during Burundi’s political transition, see Verivsch and Titeca (2010, p. 19)

*FRODEBU,<sup>36</sup> there were many women who found themselves being beaten [by their husbands] because their husbands wanted to force them to adhere to this party. Now the choice is free.*

A man from Mwumba similarly observed the positive effects of governance and associational developments:

*Since 2010, there has been a large change. Before, women under-estimated themselves and didn't frequent associations or leadership meetings for the country, but since the occurrence of a power that is re-elected by the people,<sup>37</sup> associations have pulled women from anonymity. Women, just like men, have an important role to play in the administration of the country.*

Several participants expressed positive analyses of the current ruling party in discussions of women's rights and participation. Additional research would be beneficial to determine whether such statements are reflective of tangible changes in women's inclusion in government or whether these statements reflect support for the CNDD-FDD for reasons other than the gender quotas and legislative changes that have occurred primarily during their tenure.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, numerous respondents indicated a redefinition of citizenship that includes women as actors with the right to participate in civic decision-making free from violence or coercion, and effect that Ndikumana and Sebudandi (2012, p. 28) did not find in their research from 2010.

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<sup>36</sup> Front Pour la Démocratie au Burundi (FRODEBU) is the political party of the first democratically-elected president who came to power in 1993. When the current ruling party, the Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) was elected in 2005, FRODEBU became the main opposition party (Vandeginste, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> President Pierre Nkurunziza and the Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) were elected in 2005 and re-elected in 2010.

<sup>38</sup> This may also be a regional phenomenon, as group discussions for this study were conducted in the president's home commune. Uvin (2009) conducted research in a greater number of regions and found that the majority of his respondents who discussed governance did so in veiled criticism of the CNDD-FDD.

Women, and some men, overwhelmingly noted that women's higher visibility in public spaces is a sign of these expanding rights and citizenship. Participants of both genders asserted that women are increasingly overcoming barriers in the home that prevent them from engaging in public life:

*We are engaged in pulling women from anonymity, and we know that sustainable development always begins in the home...we question the tradition that says: 'Nta jambo ry'umugore; nta nkokokazi ibika isake ari ho iri' [The woman doesn't have sharp senses in reasoning; a hen cannot sing in the presence of a cock]. (woman from Busiga)*

One man from Mwumba asserted that "Women can no longer be discriminated against. Before, we called them "*abanyakigo*," she who stays in the backyard; she who lives in anonymity."

The image of women emerging from anonymity resonated throughout the study. When asked what 'political power' means to them, women routinely referenced equality and inclusion, with one woman from Busiga saying: "[Political power means that] each person, no matter where he or she is, can come out of anonymity." Another woman added: "Political power is that there is no longer exclusion. If we want political power, as much as we have the trust [votes] of the people, we can have it. Now even children have power."<sup>39</sup> Women both defined political power as visibility and voice in public space and noted that women's presence in public space is one of the most significant and positive changes in women's positions since 2010. These findings indicate that Resolution 1325 norms implementation at the state-level is meeting supportive local-level conceptions of citizenship and participation in governance.

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<sup>39</sup> She is referencing the Forum Nationale des Enfants, the National Children's Forum. See: Nkurunziza (2013) <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/le-forum-des-enfants-mal-parti/>

At the same time, women and men interpreted open access to leadership positions in notably different ways. Both men and women discussed power in terms of leadership and validation from the people through election. However, while men conceived of legitimate power as a competition between individuals wherein the person with the best idea is elected, women stressed inclusiveness. By referencing official space for women and youth in governance, female participants emphasized appreciation for the decoupling of leadership with exclusively adult manhood. It is possible that men expressed approval of increased inclusiveness while underscoring competition because they assume that the gender norms and structures that position men as the appropriate leaders and give them preferential access to the necessary resources to participate in politics will ensure that they will win most competitions with women or youth. Peeters et al. (2012, p. VI) find that “Burundians consider survival and progress in profoundly individualistic and capitalist terms...Indeed, personal character is perceived to be a significant determinant of the socio-economic status and upward social mobility of youth alongside education, parental assets and marriage.” While participants in the research for this study also expressed the primacy of people, their explanations of political power and assessments of its recent transformations indicate that men and women may prioritize different aspects of an individualistic approach to progress. This suggests different starting points for Resolution 1325 norm localization depending on the gender of the interacting population.

Regardless of men and women’s distinctive interpretations of open and inclusive leadership, women noted profound changes in their husbands’ perspectives on women’s participation in public spaces. Several women even described explicit encouragement from their husbands for their political leadership:

*In 2005, we were afraid of running for election. We presented ourselves timidly. We would ask ourselves if our husbands would authorize us to take our seats...Now, when we present ourselves at elections, it is the men who fight in our campaign, the friends of our husbands who campaign for us. (woman from Busiga)*

While the support that this woman describes from husbands and their friends is likely the exception rather than the rule, research with youth under the age of thirty shows that urban men are increasingly supporting women's engagement in non-traditional roles, particularly by their wives, and that collaboration and respect are core marital values among youth (Uvin, 2009; Peeters et al., 2012). Growing support from husbands for women's electoral ambitions is a vital indicator of potential change, as women noted that women's lack of access to resource, controlled by their husbands, to "buy voices" (woman from Mwumba) and the perseverance of husbands' abusive behavior are major barriers to their participation. Peeters et al. (2012, p. 15) write "As an adaptation to economic crisis, traditional gender roles are being challenged and new values related to women's 'dynamism' and education are emerging." Participants in this study, who are of a wider age-range,<sup>40</sup> also expressed their husbands' growing support of their participation in traditionally male leadership roles and attributed these changes to the work of associations and the opening of formal space for women within governance:

*[Before 2010] It wasn't rare that one's husband threatened you, saying that if you go to a meeting for an association, you won't return home. They have, little by little, realized that a woman who isn't a member of an association isn't good for anything and that her development is unforeseeable. (woman from Mwumba)*

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<sup>40</sup> Participants were between the ages of 18 and 65. Due to the small sample size and the focus on gender in study design, participants are not disaggregated by age.

Her description is reflective of the Burundian tradition of valuing social flexibility, adaptation and innovation. Throughout interviews, workshops and participant observation, the term “dynamism,” used to describe this phenomenon, recurred frequently when making positive assessments of men and women. Within the specific group of informants in this study, all of whom participate in NGO programming and in various levels of community leadership, access to the social capital and material resources provided through associations and government institutions has become an important component of women’s ‘dynamism’ and contributions to household development. Through participation in associations, women discussed building their capacity and legitimacy as members of leadership institutions, challenging assumptions that women are in government because of gender quotas alone and are ill-equipped for the demands of leadership. Despite the persistence of barriers to women’s participation in peacebuilding leadership, particularly GBV,<sup>41</sup> illiteracy, corruption and women’s lack of access to material resources, fear of running for election, lack of solidarity among women (or competition between women) and practices of polygamy or cohabitation without legal marriage,<sup>42</sup> participants declared significant and positive changes in the opportunities for women and in men’s interpretations of these developments. As Sommers and Uvin (2011) assert, the norms around what it means to be a man or a woman have not necessarily changed, and perhaps nor has women’s ‘dynamism’ (Peeters et al., 2012), but Burundians have proved willing to adapt in order

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<sup>41</sup> For example, Ndikumana and Sebudandi (2012) note that, 72.7 percent of their respondents thought that gender quotas has produced a positive effect on male-female relations, while at the same time only 26.3 percent believed they had led to reduced violence against women (p. 31).

<sup>42</sup> Numerous women stated that few protections against abuse or disenfranchisement exist for women who are in marriages that are not legally recognized, such as cohabitation and polygamy. They noted that anti-polygamy projects have been one of the main initiatives of elected men and women in Busiga commune.



to imperfectly fulfill unattainable expectations, resulting in increasing appreciation for women's diverse roles.

## **Conclusion**

Though traditional gender norms persist as a barrier to women's freedom from violence and participation in conflict resolution decision-making, evidence from this study indicates that macro-level changes are in dialogue with micro-level adaptations in ways that support gender flexibility and Resolution 1325 localization. This study illustrates how various aspects of gender norms (identities, roles, power relationships, ideologies) respond and change differently. While gender identities seem to continue to reflect dichotomous archetypes that reaffirm women's exclusion from public space and decision-making and men's authority and access to violence, women's gender roles are responding to structural and normative shifts more progressively. Changes to incentives structures in support of Resolution 1325 initiated by the government and by NGOs are interacting with adapting gender expectations at the micro-level. The result is increased support for women's engagement in conflict resolution and decision-making in the home and community based on both normative, rights-based criteria and interest-based decision-making. Ultimately, this study suggests the emergence of a class of middle-level peacebuilders characterized by gender role flexibility and an expanding sense of citizenship, particularly for women.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study illustrates the vital complementarity of work done in various spheres and targeting different actors in transforming gender normative structures. It has shown how Resolution 1325 gender norms work at the state-level and by associations is facilitating normative change at the household level, leading to greater support from husbands for their wives' participation in leadership and decision-making. Despite the persistence of gender norms that are oppressive of women and that essentialize both women and men, women's gender role flexibility (and the rigidity with which men expect they fulfill their roles)<sup>43</sup> that often begins during conflict is enduring – or even increasing – for at least certain groups during reconstruction. While men are able to maintain unequal power distributions by calling on cultural norms around the division between the public and private spheres, women are utilizing state and community structures to enhance their conflict resolution outcomes in the home. Women with access to community organizations are interpreting participation in governance and conflict resolution as components of their social capital and productive roles and are integrating these activities into their strategies for building peace and social mobility. Because husbands estimate these changes to enhance household development and are beginning to accept rights-based arguments, they express approval of their wives' participation in traditionally male spaces and access to traditionally male rights.<sup>44</sup> Findings from this study indicate the emergence of a class of community-level leaders for whom collaboration and gender flexibility are important characteristics of social mobility and an emerging sense of citizenship and compliment recent

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<sup>43</sup> Sommers and Uvin (2011)

<sup>44</sup> Such as formal and informal decision-making structures, voice and visibility in public life, the right to choose whom to vote for and participation in community associations

studies in post-conflict contexts that demonstrate men's support for gender flexibility and cross-gender collaboration.<sup>45</sup> Limitations of this study, including the small sample size and convenience sampling method, mean that findings are provisional, and further research is necessary to confirm validity and to explore representativeness of the wider population of community leaders and of other cross-sections of Burundian society.

### **Governance, Political Violence and Sustainability**

This section discusses implications of the evolving political context on Resolution 1325 localization and the reverse: possible effects of the current level of gender flexibility and support for women's participation in conflict resolution decision-making on the political context.

#### **Changes to incentives structures.**

Several factors could influence the potential sustainability of Resolution 1325 implementation progress occurring among community-level peacebuilders. Gender flexibility in Burundi seems to be an adaptation to the socio-cultural and economic contexts that occurs through rational decision-making first and acceptance of gender equality norms of their own right second. Therefore, changing social and economic incentives structures may also inspire different adaptation techniques. As gender equality is associated with access to government positions and NGO resources, these two factors leave gender equality norms vulnerable in the short- to medium-term whilst they are equally instrumental as internalized. Consequently, a shift in government structure or rhetoric or a decrease in international aid or in the visibility of gender

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<sup>45</sup> For studies on Burundi, see: Uvin (2009); Sommers and Uvin (2011); Peeters et al. (2012). For a study on Northern Uganda, see: Stefanik (2010).

equality within development programs could profoundly change the opportunity structure currently influence gender norms changes.

### **The 2015 elections and challenges to power-sharing.**

Possible implications of change in state-level values and stability for gender processes at the local- and household-level is worth investigating further, as recent political developments indicate significant challenges to the power-sharing and political and civil rights arrangements initiated during the Arusha peace process. As the 2015 elections approach, current president, Pierre Nkurunziza, has steadily increased centralization of power and oppression of dissenting voices. After restricting freedom of the press and association during the summer of 2013 (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2014), Nkurunziza unsuccessfully attempted to extend the Presidential two-term limit so that he could run for a third term (AFP, 2014).<sup>46</sup> After this incident, Tutsi UPRONA ministers withdrew from the Hutu-majority government. Marginalization of opposition within the government and mounting authoritarianism of the presidency indicate increasing ambivalence toward the Arusha Agreement on the part of the ruling party, which sees its influence weakened by the agreement's complex power-sharing provisions (Vandeginste, 2009). These developments threaten the state-level social contract that has facilitated the emergence of inclusive citizenship norms and structures.

### **Gender and political changes.**

As women's space and rights within the government largely rests on the Arusha Agreement principles of power-sharing and inclusion, growing disregard for the principle of power-sharing in favor of political expediency and centralization poses substantial barriers to Resolution 1325 implementation and normalization of inclusive citizenship. Findings from this

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<sup>46</sup> Nkurunziza has said he will still seek re-election. See: <http://news.yahoo.com/rejecting-term-limits-burundi-president-seeks-election-211155389.html>

study thus indicate several considerations for governance and respect for human rights in the immediate context of mounting authoritarianism. First, this study demonstrates that macro- and micro-level changes to power structures and gender norms are mutually-influencing. Scholars and practitioners might thus contemplate how increasing authoritarianism at the national level influences other levels, such as by modeling a particular mode of governance and decision-making or by changing incentive structures by increasing instability and diminishing space for collaboration. In the other direction, exploration of the potential of growing citizenship and gender flexibility within households and communities to affect the modes and outcomes of regional- or state-level political struggles would facilitate better understanding of norms change and directionality of influence.

#### **Women's political influence.**

Second, this study illustrates women's increasing visibility and leadership in public space. Questions remain as to how much space for women's participation will remain and as to how women will choose to use their space and voice in a context of contracting, rather than expanding, political rights. Findings from this study indicate that women and men similarly define politics as a diversity of ideas, chosen by the people and legitimate leaders and put into action to benefit the country. However, within that definition, men highlight competition, whereas women prioritize inclusion. It remains to be seen whether the difference in values will reliably translate into difference in political or peacebuilding behavior, particularly if political space is to become more volatile and coercive, as current events suggest. In the longer term, women's commitment to inclusivity may also wane as their presence in formerly male spaces is normalized and they may consequently participate in power competitions and access resource streams formerly outside their reach. Nevertheless, women's rhetorical appreciation of human

rights discourses and emphasis on inclusive and non-violent decision-making offer potential leverage points for violence prevention and collaborative political processes. Thus, the 2015 election cycle offers to test the level of Resolution 1325 localization concerning both women's physical inclusion in conflict resolution and decision-making and the integration of gender equality norms throughout those processes.

### **Masculinities and militarization.**

Additionally, recent developments suggest a re-militarization of several political processes and institutions. Human Rights Watch continues to report the militarization of the youth wing of the CNDD-FDD, the *Imbonerakure*, and the intimidation, harassment and extra-judicial killing of the opposition (HRW, 2014; Muhame, 2014). For example, on March 8<sup>th</sup>, members of the opposition party, the Movement for Solidarity and Democracy, clashed with police during a political rally. Subsequently, twenty-two MSD members have been sentenced to life in prison, and twenty-seven others were sentenced to between five and ten years imprisonment (Louw-Vaudran, 2014). These developments indicate deteriorating independence of key institutions, such as the police and the judiciary as well as a willingness to use violence as a mode of political process on the part of the ruling party. Further interrogation into the accessibility of violence to the general population would provide important indicators of possible developments should elites again attempt to mobilize civil war. During group interviews, facilitators asked participants how they know when someone is suffering because of abuse of power and what they do in response. While women primarily described non-violent advocacy approaches, several men discussed resistance or revolt as ways to overcome injustice:

*We know that someone is suffering because of power by his anger or jealousy and that he begins to develop strategies to replace the person who has the power.*  
(man from Busiga)

*When we start to bring justice, there are many wrongdoings that begin to develop, revolts that become frequent and un-civic acts become numerous, and this is a way of showing the anger against this power that doesn't respond to his needs as it should.* (man from Busiga)

Attention to men's assumptions about political contestation is especially important as women remain extremely marginal within Burundian security institutions.<sup>47</sup> Research with larger samples into men's conflict resolution practices and decision-making would enable a better understanding of these responses and possible ways to facilitate men's use of non-violent pathways to enact change. Peeters et al. (2012) found no evidence of men experiencing masculinity crises that could facilitate violent coping strategies, but rather adaptability and flexibility in how men anticipated fulfilling their gender requirements. However, men throughout this study referenced their roles as protectors, the expectation to fight to defend their homes and country and accepted use of violence to maintain authority in their homes. Additionally, various informants discussed the widespread mobilization of the population (male and female) into self-protective militias during the civil war, suggesting general familiarity with military methods of conflict resolution. This suggests that, while the concern with conflict and rapid socio-economic change producing masculinity crises may not be a central consideration for reconstruction and stability, violence and force are acceptable components of men's conflict resolution practices and familiar to the broader population. Consequently, further investigation into how gender expectations are interacting with socio-economic changes to shape men and

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<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 4

women's conflict resolution methods could lend insight into supporting peaceful political processes from the bottom-up.

## **Research Recommendations for Building on the Current Study**

### **Investigate other aspects of gender.**

Recent thought on gender change indicates the significance of *gender relational* approaches that presume that men, women and gender minorities are all located within the same gender systems and are thus *equally and differently* affected by those systems according to their contextual and intersectional positions (Myrntinen et al., 2014). While this study sought to equally problematize gender issues for men and women and to place identities and roles into the context of gendered power structures, by design and because of data availability, it offers greatest insight into masculine identity/ies, women's roles and the underlying power structure. Therefore, space remains for continued research on other aspects of gender. As women's growing gender flexibility in response to external circumstances that limit the attainability of traditional gender roles is documented here and elsewhere,<sup>48</sup> continued investigation of men's roles would be beneficial. This could examine whether men's roles have remained fundamentally unchanged, save for permitting creativity in their fulfillment, or whether changes are occurring that are not yet documented. For example, have the changes to women's rights and roles within the home and the community affected men's conceptions of their own roles in decision-making and peacebuilding? Have women's conceptions of men's roles changed (and how)? What are the consequences, expected and unexpected, for gender relations and conflict

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<sup>48</sup> Uvin, 2009; Sommers and Uvin, 2011; Peeters et al., 2012



resolution? Lastly, what role do women play in co-creating non-violent and violent male conflict resolution roles and oppressive or emancipatory masculinities?

**Target specific cross-sections of society.**

In addition to expanding the operational aspects of gender investigated, future gender relational research could replicate this or similar studies, disaggregating across multiple identity markers, such as age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and citizenship status. Intersectional research would help to explain *which* women and men engage in the types of changes discussed in this paper, and *under which conditions* these changes become possible. As conflict in Burundi has had regional dimensions, and this study was conducted with a geographically- and sociologically-limited sample, continuing studies should include multiple regions and different cross-sections of society. Complexifying the type and number of characteristics investigated would facilitate understanding of how the patterns documented here persist or change in relation to other dynamics as well as identify errors or gaps in this study.

**Expand to other contexts.**

Similarly, comparable research conducted in other post-conflict countries could determine whether macro-level changes, such as gender quotas and anti-GBV legislation, interact in the same ways at the micro-level in other contexts. This study discussed a number of characteristics that appear to combine to facilitate gender adaptability, such as Burundi's extreme poverty, 'dynamism' as a legitimate and desirable personal attribute, less hierarchical social stratification than many societies, the role of the *bashingantahe* in defining social values and the large amount of international resources provided for conflict resolution initiatives. Examining gender dynamics of conflict resolution and peacebuilding practices in countries with significant

differences in these areas would contribute to better understanding of study reliability and of important factors in Resolution 1325 and other gender norms localization.

## **Implications for Policy and Programming**

### **Don't discount the state, but build legitimacy locally.**

This study demonstrates evidence of the positive effects of macro-level changes to normative structures usually inaugurated during peace processes, such as gender quotas and legislative gender mainstreaming. However, all quotas and gender equality-supportive legislation should be implemented sub-regionally and locally. Educational and sociological programs should draw from local repertoires to build legitimacy for the desired changes, particularly where they involve changes to gender systems.

### **Programs should be multi-dimensional.**

The success of norms change documented in this study is attributed in large part to the interaction between policies and programming in multiple domains and targeting multiple dimensions of gender. Resolution 1325 implementation should follow the socio-ecological framework and incorporate state-, community- and household-level initiatives and target multiple sectors and actors.

### **Work with women and with men.**

Change to gender systems involves men and women and interacts with other identity and power dynamics. Therefore interventions should target the specific needs and perspectives of various groups of participants, but they should do so in synchronization. Involving husbands and

other gatekeeping men (and gatekeeping women) is particularly vital to building buy-in for women's participation in public life and freedom from violence.

**Make gender equality make sense in context.**

Gender norms interact with the political, social and economic contexts in which they are situated. Change to gender roles and structures occurs as much out of rational, interest-based decision-making as out of appreciation for rights-based arguments. Work with the structures that affect what matters to participants to address resistance and frame intended outcomes in language that makes sense to participants. Draw on the strengths of local normative inventories and institutions while challenging their oppressive aspects through opportunities for self-reflection.

**Additional Research Directions**

**The *bashingantahe* institution.**

Two additional research directions are worth noting: the potential within the *bashingantahe* institution to normalize gender equitable participation in decision-making and conflict resolution and the intersection of women's emerging leadership and land conflicts. As noted in chapter four, the *bashingantahe* historically served as an important intermediary between the state and the people and fulfilled the role of mediator and adjudicator. Because of its historical and current significance in shaping non-violent conflict resolution practices and elevating the values of integrity, justice and human rights, the *bashingantahe* offers rich ground for creating a normative framework of leadership and justice that is inclusive of women and that is politically emancipatory. Though research exists that analyzes the *bashingantahe* as a

transitional justice mechanism as well as its limitations since post-conflict governance reforms,<sup>49</sup> space exists for further research targeting its potential to enhance gender relations and power-sharing.

### **Land conflict.**

Lastly, due to Burundi's high population density, primarily rural population and large returning refugee population, land conflict is one the greatest threats to reconciliation and long-term stability (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2014).<sup>50</sup> Consequently, research on women's particular position within land disputes, the ways in which gender, ethnicity, socio-economic standing and citizenship status intersect to create variable strengths and vulnerabilities and men and women's current and potential roles in land dispute resolution is vital to supporting long-term peace and human security.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> See Naniwe-Kaburahe (2008) and Ntahombaye (2005) for discussions of the *bashingantahe* during conflict and peacebuilding.

<sup>50</sup> For analysis of issues surrounding land conflict in Burundi, see: ICG (2014). <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/central-africa/burundi/214-les-terres-de-la-discorde-ii-restitution-et-reconciliation-au-burundi.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Human security takes a broad approach to security that is centered around people, rather than states and includes "macro and micro levels, the public and the private, the material and the psycho-emotional" See Moser and Clark (2001, p. 30)

## **Appendix**

### **Group Interview Guiding Questions**

#### **Power and Politics**

How do you understand power? What does it look like? How do we know when someone has power? How do we know when someone is suffering because of differences in power?

What does the term ‘political’ mean to you? When you think about political power, what do you see?

If we think of political power as the ability to impact decisions and make the changes that we desire in our relationships and communities, how do you claim political power in your daily life?

#### **Gender and Participation**

What happens when you and your partner have a conflict? How do you two solve your problems when you have disagreements or conflicts?

How do you solve problems in non-violent, cooperative and mutually supportive ways? What does this look like?

When you need to make an important decision, how do you involve you partner, or how does your partner involve you? What prevents you from participating in making decisions with your partner?

What does it look like when you supportively make decisions together?

What enables you to do this, rather than to make decisions on your own or using violence or intimidation?

#### **Community Level**

What do people in your community know or practice in order to have nonviolent and mutually supportive relationships?

What are the different roles and capacities for women and for men to build peace in Burundian society? What are the different methods and spaces that women and men use?

How has women’s and how has men’s participation changed since 2010? What do you think about these changes? What do you appreciate? What more needs to be done to increase women’s participation? Men’s?

What role do you think your family life has on creating a peaceful and equitable society?

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