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War and Women Wielding Power: Lessons from Burundi, Liberia, and Chad

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WAR AND WOMEN WIELDING POWER
LESSONS FROM BURUNDI, LIBERIA, AND CHAD

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1989, the world has seen civil war replace traditional war as the prevailing paradigm of conflict. Simultaneously, the world's leading thinkers, international bodies, and aid organizations have encouraged the idea that women's rights are human rights, and urged that policy issues be considered through a gendered lens. My thesis aims to connect these two concurrent shifts in geopolitics by examining the relationship between civil war and women. How do women experience civil war differently from men? How does the legacy of civil war change women's lives? Specifically, my thesis examines the effects civil war has on women's political power.

In the existing literature on this topic, two conflicting themes emerge: the idea that civil war increases women's political participation, and the notion that following civil war, women are confined to roles more traditional and constraining than in the status-quo ante. Additionally, an examination of civil wars occurring after 1989 suggests that countries which have undergone civil conflict often live under an authoritarian government in the post-conflict period, complicating the issue of how women fit into politics post-civil war. In my thesis, I will attempt to answer two questions to reconcile these contradictions. First, under what conditions does civil war assist women's entrance into formal political bodies? Second, in cases where women do enter these political bodies post-conflict, how does the type of regime influence the ability of those women to make significant legislative and policy contributions?

Understanding how civil conflict affects women's political voice and how women in politics interact with their respective regimes is important from both a human rights and strategic perspective. Accepting the prevailing notion that women's rights are human

rights, we must strive to understand women's experiences and include their perspectives in all facets of research and politics. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 sets the precedent for this idea in relation to war, urging that women be involved in all aspects of peace and reconciliation processes. By understanding just how civil war impacts women's political representation, we can be better equipped to help women dealing with the horrors of civil war have their voices heard. Clarity surrounding the relationship between civil war, women's political power, and regime type is also important from a strategic standpoint. Women represent over 50% of the population, and thus their policy contributions are vital to overcoming some of the vast challenges facing countries today. Understanding abets action, and if we seek to understand the conditions under which civil war advances women politically, and the ways in which women can be effective under varying regimes, we may be better placed to take action that aids those women, and subsequently, society as a whole.

To answer my research questions, I first created a table of every civil war beginning in or after 1989 with a conclusive end date, the numbers of women in parliament and cabinet before/during and after those civil wars, and the Freedom House scores for civil and political rights in the year following the end of those conflicts. This table helped to confirm that the discrepancies in the literature did in fact, exist. The outcome for women's political participation after each civil war was varied, and in many cases, the peace brought by the termination of the war existed alongside authoritarianism. This trend was highly concentrated in Central Asia and in Sub-Saharan Africa, and generally civil war was most common in Sub-Saharan Africa. These observations led me to pick three case studies that best allowed me to examine my research questions:

Burundi, Liberia, and Chad. These countries experienced civil war for a reasonably comparable duration, and the wars occurred in the same general time period. However, Burundi, Liberia, and Chad had different outcomes for women in politics, and varying degrees of authoritarianism in the post-conflict period.

My first chapter centers on the Burundian case. Burundi was engulfed in genocidal warfare from 1993 until 2003. During the war, ethnicity became a matter of life and death, as both Hutu and Tutsi militant groups attempted to eliminate the other and seize control of Burundi's political system. The majority Hutu channeled many years of political and economic grievances into warfare against the ruling Tutsi, while the Tutsi government, keen to hold on to power, brutally responded to Hutu uprising through mass slaughter of Hutu citizens. During the war, women, while often victims of systematic rape and sexual torture, also organized across ethnic lines leading up to the Arusha Peace Talks, and ultimately gained a seat at the negotiating table. Using their new found political power, women in the transitional government of Burundi and women in local civil society groups, in partnership with international feminist organizations like UNIFEM, successfully demanded the incorporation of gender quotas into Burundi's post-conflict constitution. As a result, female political representation significantly increased post-conflict. During the transition from war to peace in Burundi, the overwhelming sentiment in the country was optimism. In the new constitution, power was shared across ethnicities, economic class, and gender. Burundi was democratizing. However, as the new government took shape and the first elections were held, ethnic fragmentation resurfaced. President Nkurunziza, an ethnic Hutu, struggled to control the Tutsi dominated judiciary, and coup threats began to circulate. In response, Nkurunziza

severely limited the political rights of Burundian citizens, becoming increasingly despotic. As Burundi has become less democratic, female parliamentarians and cabinet members have been constricted by the decisions of their parties and the authoritarianism of the regime. Thus, the case of Burundi helps to determine both the aspects of civil war that propel women into formal political bodies, and how those women operate in an authoritarian context.

The civil wars in my second case study, Liberia, shared several common characteristics with Burundi's war: the war in Liberia occurred nearly during the exact same time frame as the Burundian genocide, spanning from 1989-2003, and was rooted in similar economic, social, and political grievances between ethnic and religious groups. Furthermore, women in Liberia were also victimized, but mobilized together, regardless of caste. Muslim and Christian Liberian women created several large-scale women's peace initiatives, which worked in tangent with one another to bring the major militant opposition groups and President Charles Taylor to the negotiating table, ultimately ending the war in their country. Women in Liberia sustained their civil society growth in the post-conflict period and were able to permeate the political sphere, making significant policy contributions as the country entered a period of democratization post-conflict. However, save from the no doubt critical election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to the presidency, the number of women in formal political bodies stayed more or less the same post-conflict. Yet, women in Liberia have continued to contribute to the political dialogue in their country, and are currently pushing for the implementation of gender quotas. Furthermore, gender equality has been a cornerstone issue for the Sirleaf administration, which is supported by women in Liberia's robust civil society participation. Thus the

Liberian case helped reveal how women can influence politics in a democratic context, and served to demonstrate that the parliament and ministry are not the only areas of the political sphere where women can make change.

My third chapter focuses on the Chadian case. Chad achieved independence from France in 1960, and has since existed in a state of perpetual warfare. Although Chad has technically had six separate civil wars since 1965, the periods of peace have been negligible and difficult to define. Chad's civil wars have been rooted in conflict between its many ethnic groups and between the Arab North and Christian South, endemic poverty, and abusive power in the government. The post-conflict period in Chad has not been transformative. Unlike in Liberia or Burundi, the peace process in Chad was not majorly supported by foreign organizations, nor did it bring about major change to the country's politics. Chad is still under the same regime with the same leader, Idriss Deby, as it was in 1990. Deby's regime is backed by oil revenues, and prospects for change seem grim. Political stagnation in Chad is mirrored by social stagnation; little has changed in terms of economic prospects, strife between ethnic groups, or gender. Since the end of the latest Chadian civil war in 2006, women have not made significant gains in the informal or formal political sectors, and the strict patriarchal norms of Chad remain pervasive and widely accepted. The Chadian case, when compared to the Burundian and Liberian cases, served as a helpful source for determining the conditions necessary for women's advancement post-conflict, because positive results were so absent.

Using the case studies of Burundi, Liberia, and Chad, I argue that civil war does not implicitly advance the political participation of women. Rather, civil war only facilitates women's entrance into politics if it causes a major disruption in the society

where it occurs, and spurs an attempt at institutional and governmental restructuring post-conflict. While these are common aspects of civil war, they are not universal. Burundi and Liberia's civil wars completely upset every day life and in turn subverted pre-war societal norms, whereas in Chad, war was perpetual, and represented a state of being for its citizens, rather than a change to every day life. Furthermore, the cessation of Burundi's conflict brought a transitional government and a new constitution; Liberia's peace process resulted in a transitional government and democratization, while Chad did not see any type of regime change post-conflict. These structural aspects of Chad's civil wars, alongside oil, culture, and lack of foreign investment in the peace process, prevented women from increasing their political voice in its aftermath. Although I initially measured political participation through representation in formal political bodies, I ultimately argue that the impact of having women in these bodies is subjective to the type of regime holding power in the country they are helping to govern. The cases of Liberia and Burundi demonstrate that women's policy preferences may be better represented through civil society in a democratic and stable political context than through inclusion in formal political bodies in an unstable and authoritarian context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

War is a gendered phenomenon. The literature surrounding conflict has shown that while devastating for both genders, men and women experience the hardships of conflict differently. Therefore, it is imperative that gender is taken into account when engaging in discussion about the effects of war and best strategies for building sustainable peace. Traditional paradigms surrounding war and peace have excluded women, or at least placed the emphasis on men's perspectives (Bouta et. all 2004, Cahn, Haynes, Aolain 2010, Pankhurst 2008, Shoemaker 2001). However, since the end of the Cold War, intrastate war has emerged as the prominent form of conflict, increasingly blurring the lines between the official battle ground and the home, where women traditionally dominate (Giles and Hyndman 2004). The prevalence of civil war has thus brought gendered aspects of conflict to the forefront of the international conflict dialogue (Shoemaker 2001). Perhaps the landmark document for integration of gender and conflict issues is UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which codifies the necessity of including women's voices and presence in peace dialogues and considering their unique experiences in war. As women's experiences become incorporated into the discussion of internal war, the question becomes, how does conflict affect men and women differently?

A review of the literature suggests that women's experiences in conflict are not uniform, but they are uniquely distinct from those of men. Women are affected differently by conflict in part because women's bodies are often viewed as the vessels of culture and tradition (Giles and Hyndman 2004, Shoemaker 2001). The burden of tradition placed on women shapes their experiences and actions before, during, and after conflict.

Civil conflict is often preceded by turbulent political and economic times coupled with the militarization of society. These changes frequently cause cuts in welfare spending, job loss, and violence towards women. In times of political uncertainty, there tends to be a clamping down on dissent and a fierce nationalistic movement. Many scholars have argued that the state and nationalism are inherently patriarchal (Kaufman and Williams, 2010), thus the strengthening of state and nationalistic institutions fosters restrictions on women. Difficult economic conditions similarly affect women by depressing wages and causing strife in the family. As male breadwinners lose their jobs or see a decrease in their salaries, they are more likely to become violent towards their wives and children (Giles and Hyndman 2004). Economic downturn especially affects female heads of household, as most live in rural areas and do not have access to credit or the ability to increase production of goods to mitigate the hard economic times (Giles and Hyndman 2004). The process of militarization only serves to compound the hardship caused by economic distress because arms spending becomes inflated at the cost of welfare and health programs overwhelmingly utilized by women (Giles and Hyndman 2004, Shoemaker 2001). Thus, the conditions that facilitate civil war have negative consequences for women even prior to the outbreak of war itself.

Additionally, the outbreak of civil conflict causes an increased emphasis on existing divides in the society, be they ethnic, religious, political, or social. These social divisions are projected on women due to their role as the upholders of societal norms and culture (Shoemaker 2001). As divides in society become more pronounced, so does the division between genders. While gender division and patriarchy are often present in societies prior to conflict, they become more prevalent in times of strife. The role of the

woman as support for the brave and honorable male soldier is established as the acceptable norm (Shoemaker 2001).

However, women are not simply passive recipients of these societal shifts. Women utilize their traditional roles in order to encourage emerging strict social divisions by engraining them into the next generation (Shoemaker 2001). Some women fully accept their roles as support for male combatants and encourage their daughters to do the same, while simultaneously teaching their sons to be noble and fearless soldiers (Giles and Hyndman 2004, Shoemaker 2001). Therefore, women interact with the responsibility to uphold traditional culture both as victims of strict societal schisms and as perpetrators of those same schisms.

In addition to eliciting new social divisions and exacerbating old ones, civil war militarizes society. As previously discussed, militarization inflates arms spending and cuts into important state programs for women. But, its effects permeate far beyond the economic realm and into the heart of societal norms. Mobilizing for war encourages a fierce 'us vs. them' mentality and a broad acceptance of violence as a legitimate tool to achieve one's goals (Kaufman and Williams 2010, Shoemaker 2001). This violence is not confined to the boundaries of combat zones. The nature of warfare today is fundamentally different from that of the early and mid 20th century; traditional conceptions of combat zones have ceased to exist, and conflict has seeped into all sectors of society, including the private sphere. Thus, as the process of militarization occurs, violence is prevalent in the home as well as in public spaces (Giles and Hyndman 2004). This shift disproportionately affects women, as they become victims of violence

committed not only by militants, but also by their families and intimate partners (Giles and Hyndman 2004, Shoemaker 2001, Usta, Farver, Zein 2008).

In fact, gender-based violence is perhaps the most utilized means through which women are victimized during conflict. While men are more likely to die during war than women, and are often more vulnerable to non-sexual torture and imprisonment, women are more likely to face violence specifically because they are women (Bouta et. all 2004). This harkens back to the idea that women bear the standards of tradition, and violence against them is used to tear at the seams of society and create further divisions (Bouta et. all 2004, Giles and Hyndman 2004, Pankhurst 2008). Violence against women during conflict is primarily, though not exclusively, sexual. In conflict, gender based violence is perpetuated by militants and often condoned by the state or other leadership as a mechanism to advance its cause (Bouta et. all 2004). It is not accidental, but rather widespread and systematic. This is clear in the case of Sierra Leone and Rwanda, as “we know that 94% of displaced households in Sierra Leone have experienced sexual assaults including rape, torture, and sexual slavery, and that at least 250,000— perhaps as many as 500,000— women were raped during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda” (Bouta et. all 2004, 35). In conflict ridden Democratic Republic of the Congo, sexual violence is the most widespread form of criminality (International Crisis Group 2006). The experience of increased violence against women, especially sexual violence, during civil conflict is universal and undeniable.

Women suffer a variety of types of sexual violence, including sexual torture and slavery, but perhaps the most harmful and the most studied is rape. A review of the literature suggests that rape is employed as a tool of war to foster camaraderie among

male militants and to prove enemy forces incapable of defending their women. Because rape results in the defiling of the female body, women's bodies are subsequently used as rightly won treasure of war, 'ethnic markers', and sometimes as slaves (Shoemaker 2001, 8). Rape as a tool of war is especially pronounced in ethnic and nationalist conflicts, which includes most civil wars (Shoemaker 2001). This is because the defiling of the enemy helps to cement the societal divides engrained in the war and promulgate one group's superiority over the other (Kaufman and Williams 2010, Shoemaker 2001). When 'honor' is considered a vital component of society, rape is especially effective as a tool of war. Because women are entrusted to uphold and continue the purity of societal and ethnic lineages, their 'dirtying' through rape is humiliating and destructive to the overall community (Giles and Hyndman 2004). Rape is therefore not an act of violence perpetrated against one individual woman, but rather against the community as a whole.

Sometimes, forced pregnancy is an intended consequence of rape, in order to further cement the humiliation of the community and literally disrupt the purity of that community's lineage. In Rwanda, an estimated 10,000 women suffered pregnancy as a result of rape, and about half of those women gave birth to children following the war (CRLP 1996, 2). The degradation of female honor through rape has consequences within the home as well, because it can isolate women from their communities, or elicit violence from members of their communities under the guise of 'protection' from the enemy (Shoemaker 2001). Tied to the experience of rape and sexual violence is forced prostitution, or prostitution out of perceived necessity (Bouta et. all 2004, Kaufman and Williams 2010). Women can be forced into prostitution by their families or by the army (Bouta et. all 2004, 36-37). Alternatively, some women resort to prostitution of their own

volition as a survival mechanism, tying themselves to someone who can provide food, shelter, and protection to them and their families (Bouta, et. all 2004 36-37). This phenomenon is exacerbated by the general breakdown of law and order (Bouta et. all 2004). This is clearly demonstrated in the Congo where sexual violence is the most prevalent crime, but rapists essentially have full impunity due to a broken state system (International Crisis Group 2006). Rape also exacerbates women's reproductive and sexual health concerns as it exposes them to unprotected sex and the threat of contracting serious diseases like HIV/AIDS (Bouta, et. all 2004). This is especially concerning because access to healthcare is incredibly limited during times of conflict.

Rape and sexual violence are tied to another major threat to women in conflict: displacement. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports that women comprise about half of any given displaced or refugee population, but the proportion is often much higher during and after intrastate conflicts (Shoemaker 2001). Displaced and refugee women face their own unique set of challenges, and are incredibly vulnerable to the same health concerns, sexual violence, and domestic violence that women who remain in conflict zones are. In 2008 in Northern Uganda, approximately 900,000 people, many of them women, remained internally displaced with little access to healthcare, proper nutrition, or any sort of safety net (Liebling-Kalifani et. all 2008). This resulted in major health issues for women including HIV/AIDS and limited or nonexistent access to safe motherhood services (Liebling-Kalifani et. all 2008).

Furthermore, female internally displaced and refugee populations face incredible danger when leaving their homes and camps. In Northern Uganda, the commute from IDP camps to schools greatly increases vulnerability of girls to abduction, sexual

violence, early marriage, and a myriad of other dangers (Liebling-Kalifani et. all 2008). Increased exposure to domestic violence is also a common experience for internally displaced and refugee women, as men in IDP and refugee camps become more hostile due to limited economic opportunity and a growing sense of isolation (Kaufman and Williams 2010, Shoemaker 2001). The threats posed to women by conflict are inescapable; both women who make the choice to flee and women who remain in conflict zones are met with violence and other challenges.

Despite the overwhelming hardships facing women in conflict, women are not just victims of warfare; they are also active participants in it. In recent scholarship surrounding women and war there is a strong emphasis on rejecting the victimization of women. That is to say, the simplistic view that men wage war and women are the passive recipients of the consequences is untrue and does not serve to create a comprehensive view of war today. Women actively engage in conflict both as direct combatants and as support for male soldiers in various ways. On average, women represent 10-30% of informal and formal militaries (Bouta et. all 2004, 9).

In the civil conflicts of Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire women were involved in the leadership of rebel groups and worked to secure small arms and external political support. Women became combatants for three primary reasons: coercion, to protect other women from sexual violence or slavery, and personal ideology (Badmus 2009). Congolese women were motivated to join formal and informal military forces by similar factors and made up 15-20% of the Congolese army (Puechguirbal 2003). During the fight for Tamil independence in Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) included an elite division of suicide bombers comprised solely of women (Giles and

Hyndman 2004). Reasons behind engaging in combat are as nuanced for women as they are for men. Women join revolutionary and fighting forces to protect themselves and their families, out of economic necessity or coercion, but also to fight for equal rights and power, or their view of the correct political and social system (Bouta et. all 2004).

Women also use their traditional position in the home to engage with war by broadcasting hate speech and teaching hate to new generations (Bouta et. all, 2004).

Not all women choose to make war. Women serve as active participants in warfare not only as combatants or supporters of the war, but also as peacebuilders and political activists protesting the conflict. One study of women in conflict determined that though conflict does impose strict conditions on women, one choice they do have is whether or not to participate in political activism and peacebuilding (Kaufman and Williams, 2010). Of the women who do choose to participate, some use their role as mothers as a tool of empowerment, spreading the rhetoric that the warring groups need to build peace and ‘bring back our sons’ (Kaufman and Williams 2010, 61). Still other women take a consciously feminist position in protesting the war. In Bosnia, a feminist group formed the Medica Women’s Therapy Center to provide services for female victims on violence on both sides of the ethnic divide (Kaufman and Williams 2010, 67). Regardless of whether women join pacifist movements for primarily feminist reasons or as mothers and wives, they become active in civil society and push for peace by working across the social boundaries exacerbated by conflict (Kaufman and Williams 2010, Pankhurst, 2008 Shoemaker, 2001). In Sudan, despite immense threats to their own personal security, women are in force in civil society and are becoming all the time more conscious of their political importance. They do important work caring for the southern

IDP women, providing basic health services, and building a framework for peace (International Crisis Group 2006).

Whether women engage in conflict as combatants, as support for male soldiers, as political protestors, or as members of civil society, one experience that is universal is the expansion of roles and responsibilities. During civil war, women are far more visible in the public sphere than they were during times of peace (Kaufman and Williams 2010, Shoemaker 2001). The literature suggests several reasons for this, including disrupted social norms, demographic shifts, and political or military necessity. Because men are overwhelmingly absent from the home in order to fight the conflict, civil war disrupts the common tradition of women giving their income to their husbands (Fuest 2008). This gives women increased economic autonomy and the ability to take on duties that hadn't previously been available to them (Fuest 2008). While the disruption of daily life caused by civil war can obviously create danger for women, it can also create opportunity. Furthermore, as women choose to become politically active or happen upon activism, they build networks, and their voices and opinions are heard in ways they may not have been before the onset of the conflict (Kaufman and Williams 2010).

Women's changing roles are encouraged by the demographic shifts that take place during civil conflict. Generally, a larger number of women than men survive conflict (Pankhurst 2008, 2). In the Congo, between 60-80% of women are single heads of household as a result of the ongoing conflicts (Puechguirbal 2003). This leaves women as the economic providers and decision makers for their families (Puechguirbal 2003). It should not be ignored that this increased responsibility is also an immense burden for women; not only are they dealing with the death or absence of a partner, they are also left

to be both the caretakers and sole providers for their dependents. Despite that difficulty, the widespread absence of men from the home allows women to take on growing responsibilities. Women become increasingly integrated into the public sphere both out of necessity and their own political drive. This trend is evidenced by the mobilization of women as combatants and support to the army, the incorporation of women into the formal economy, and the prevalence of women in civil society.

Despite the universality of women's increased presence in the public sphere, these newfound roles and responsibilities are rarely sustained in the post conflict period (Kaufman and Williams 2010). In fact, women in post-conflict societies often experience a 'backlash' whereby they are confined to even stricter and more traditional roles than before the onset of the conflict (Giles and Hyndman 2004, Kaufman and Williams 2010, Shoemaker 2001). This is in part due to the engrained misogyny of military structures. Institutions of force, like the army or the police, conjure up images of men, and remain male dominated. In fact, scholars argue that as men are mobilized to fight they learn certain behaviors of aggression and dominance which are utilized not only to ensure their power over the enemy, but also over women (Segal 2008, 30). That is to say, the military is an innately macho entity that asserts the dominance of masculinity over femininity. The male soldier's psyche contributes to the conscious "forceful attempts to define women's roles and rights as secondary to men" (Pankhurst 2008, 4) that occur at the cessation of armed conflict. Also contributing to the deliberate marginalization of women in post-conflict society is the dominant, Western, neoliberal model for societal reconstruction. The discourse and funding surrounding post-conflict reconstruction is driven by institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that

emphasize “principles of political institution-building, investment in physical infrastructure, [and] the fostering of legal environments amenable to competitive pluralism and market economy (Ismael and Langille 2011, 28). This in turn contributes to the breakdown of social safety nets, as the resources of the state are directed towards political and economic institutions, rather than citizen’s personal security or specific social programs like food aid and public healthcare (Ismael and Langille 2011). Because women have an overwhelming need for these programs and are not often incorporated into the emphasized formal establishments, societal reconstruction efforts can reinforce patriarchy, leaving women largely out of the picture, and largely vulnerable to violence (Ismael and Langille 2011).

The literature suggests that this ‘backlash’ manifests itself through increased or sustained levels of violence against women, economic discrimination, disregard for the experiences of female combatants, and the undermining of female peacebuilding efforts. In essence, the conclusion of armed warfare does not necessarily imply a state of peace for women. The realities of displacement, limited access to healthcare, and the burden of providing for families do not cease to exist for women when conflict ends (Pankhurst 2008, Shoemaker 2001). Furthermore, women often face “a continuation of aggression and new forms of violence post-conflict” (Pankhurst 2008, 2). This is especially true of domestic violence; the gender based violence women experienced during conflict tends not to disappear in conflict’s aftermath, but rather to move into the home (Bouta et. all 2004, Segal 2008, 31-32). In Sierra Leone,

Domestic violence against women... has also been aggravated by the decade of conflict, and is now so ingrained in local attitudes that 85 percent of Sierra Leonean women feel that a beating is justified for actions such as going out

without telling the husband, arguing with a husband, refusing sex, or accidental burning of food (McFerson 2012, 50).

The correlation between domestic violence and civil conflict can partly be explained by the disdain for femininity taught to male soldiers in combination with the economic stress associated with post conflict societies. These factors can cause immense strain in marriages and relationships, which results in violence (Pankhurst 2008, 6). This issue can be exacerbated by displacement; Syrian and Palestinian refugees cite intimate partner violence as one of their main concerns (Charles and Denman 2013), and there is a general trend of intimate partner violence increasing among refugee populations (Charles and Denman 2013). In addition to domestic violence, international peacekeeping forces, largely present in refugee and IDP camps, sometimes perpetrate sexual violence against women (Bouta et. all 2004, Cahn, Haynes, Aolain 2010, Pankhurst 2008). For women who remain in the former conflict zones, and for women who are displaced, the violence experienced in war transcends the conflict and continues in peacetime.

Patriarchal notions and the deliberate containment of women in traditional roles also reveal themselves in the economic sector. During conflict, women venture into new economic territory and become more integrated into labor markets (Justino et. all 2012). After conflict, women's economic mobility becomes a necessity for their survival as women head a significant proportion of households due to the overwhelming loss of male life (Justino et. all 2012, Pankhurst 2008, Shoemaker 2001). However, women's involvement in the labor market is almost always met with resistance after conflict ends (Justino et. all 2012, Shoemaker 2001). Additionally, female heads of household do not experience a decrease in household duties, but rather are expected to serve a dual role of

care provider and economic provider (Justino et. all 2012, Shoemaker 2001). Therefore, impoverishment among women post-conflict is rampant (Ruwanpura and Humphries 2004, 192). The threat of poverty is made more severe by discriminatory laws and lack of access to credit lines and other forms of monetary assistance (Shoemaker 2001, 20). In Sierra Leone, women who needed to provide for their families after conflict faced immense obstacles because of discriminatory financial and land rights. Though women make up the majority of the agricultural workers in Sierra Leone, they are legally prohibited from owning land in their own names without their husband's permission (McFerson 2012, 48-49). This incredible economic stress can lead women to engage in prostitution, in turn exposing them to STIs and other health risks (Pankhurst 2008, Shoemaker 2001, 20).

Violence and economic discrimination against women after conflict is often coupled with disregard for women's experiences during conflict. As a society transitions to peace, women's issues and concerns are subverted in relation to men's (Cahn, Haynes, Aolain 2010). At the end of armed warfare, the emphasis is often placed on separating the warring parties, rather than providing social services and reconciliation (Bouta et. all, 2004). However, separation of the warring parties is not sufficient to provide for women's needs after conflict. Rather than dealing with the underlying social injustices that contributed to the conflict, traditional paradigms of peacebuilding focus exclusively on security issues (Bouta et. all 2004, Cahn, Haynes, Aolain 2010). This is problematic for women, because their role in conflict is not always seen as a securitized issue. This is clear in the case of Sierra Leone, where the experience of female combatants and women who worked within the army was 'desecuritized'. Women were systematically excluded

from the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program that was almost universally available to male soldiers, because male participants in the war were unambiguously viewed as soldiers, while female participants were "stripped of their titles" (MacKenzie 2009, 257). The 'desecuritization' of women in Sierra Leone hindered their reintegration into society because their transition from the war was treated as a social process, and expected to occur naturally (MacKenzie 2009). Here again, the deliberate subjugation of women is apparent. While conflict may act as a force for women to increase their responsibilities, after conflict, they are met with an equal, if not stronger, force pushing them back into the private sphere.

The invisibility of women's issues after conflict is compounded by the fact that formal peace talks do not usually include a gendered lens, and due to the pushback against women after conflict, women are not present to illuminate gendered issues. Exclusion of women from formal peace talks is common in post-conflict societies (Bouta, et. all 2004). Women were invited only nominally, as an after thought, or not at all to peace talks in Uganda, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (International Crisis Group, 2006). In Darfur women were systematically excluded from the first six rounds of the Abuja negotiations held by the UN (International Crisis Group 2006). A UN Women study from 2012 found that the average level of female participation in negotiating delegations was 9% across 17 cases, only 4% of signatories from the sample were women, and women were "absent from chief mediating roles in UN brokered talks" (Diaz and Tordjman 2012, 1-2).

However, women are not always excluded from formal peace processes. Due in part to their own mass organization, women in El Salvador, Guatemala, Northern Ireland

and several other countries were members of peace delegations and signatories of formal peace agreements (Diaz and Tordjman 2012, 4-5). However, the percentage of female representatives and signatories still lingers between 10-14% for the most part, though in the Philippines and Honduras women comprised closer to 30% of the signatories and negotiating teams (Diaz and Tordjman 2012, 4-5). Female presence does not necessarily foster beneficial language for women in peace agreements, however. Out of 585 peace agreements from 1990-2009, only 25 included "general reference to political and legal equality on the basis of gender or non-discrimination", only 16 mentioned the "need to woman's human rights or ensure the application of humanitarian law to women", and only four qualified gender based violence as a violation of the ceasefire agreement, (Diaz and Tordjman 2012, 17-18).

Furthermore, due to the small percentage of women included in formal peace talks, the full scope of women's issues and needs is rarely represented. The peace negotiations in Sri Lanka included a Sub Committee for Gender Issues (SGI) comprised of five women from the Government of Sri Lanka and five women from the LTTE. While this represented an admirable attempt at gender mainstreaming, the women from the government had not lived through war, and many women who were affected by the civil war felt the experience of female combatants in the LTTE did not mirror their own experiences (Harris 2004). The women involved in the LTTE were products of a highly homogenous and patriarchal structure and their ideas reflected this (Harris 2004). So, due to the lack of direct warfare experience of the government women, and the ideologies of LTTE women, the bulk of Sri Lankan women's interests were excluded from the SGI.

Another way women's concerns and experiences can be incorporated into the formal peace process is through truth commissions. Since the end of the Bosnian and Rwandan conflicts, truth commissions have become more prominent for dealing with crimes perpetrated against women during conflict, like rape and other forms of sexual violence (Pankhurst 2008). While the truth-telling process can certainly help women receive justice for the crimes committed against them, many truth commissions do not sufficiently include women's voices (Pankhurst 2008). Those that succeed in including gender sometimes limit women's narratives to those of victims, obscuring their roles as combatants, administrative support for soldiers, and agents for peace. A gendered analysis of truth commissions in Peru, Sierra Leone, and East Timor revealed that the final reports often solely concentrate on sexual violence, ignoring other important experiences of women (Pankhurst 2008). Even more limiting, the accounts of sexual violence in Peru centered almost exclusively around rape, and gave reparations only to victims of rape, rather than including women who were subjected to other forms of sexual torture and violence (Pankhurst 2008). Including women's voices in truth commissions is incredibly important, but limiting women's narratives to rape and sexual violence places emphasis only on their bodies and their experience as victims, thus contributing to a story that limits women's agency (Pankhurst 2008).

Despite the barriers to women's participation in formal peace processes and the lack of nuanced incorporation of women's stories into truth commissions, women build their own peace movements post-conflict. In general, women tend to approach conflict resolution with a different perspective than men; they assess the underlying causes of conflict and how to resolve those rather than focusing solely on disarmament and security

(Kaufman and Williams 2010). Furthermore, women are highly likely to have been involved in peace construction through community activism during conflict, and thus already have networks across ethnic and social divides at the end of the war (Kaufman and Williams 2010). In Northern Nigeria, women activists have succeeded in bridging the gap between Islamic and non-Islamic peace discourses through their participation in community activism (Mikell 2005). Their efforts have helped contribute to processes of democratization, human rights promotion, and conflict resolution because they have worked outside of the semi-broken political environment and across divides at the grassroots level (Mikell 2005). The success of female peacebuilding in the informal realm serves to prove how important their inclusion in formal peace talks is. Female inclusion in formal peace processes doesn't guarantee gender equality issues will be raised, but the exclusion of women almost certainly ensures they won't be (Bouta et. all 2004, Kaufman and Williams 2010, Pankhurst, 2008). Thus, the exclusion of women from formal peace processes works with the patriarchal forces pushing women back into traditional roles after conflict to inhibit them from sustaining roles in the public sphere.

This 'backlash effect' makes realizing significant political agency for women after conflict difficult. Thus, as society rebuilds, women can be absent from state institutions and governments, despite their increased role during conflict and the mass political and social contributions they make through civil society after conflict. This can be seen clearly in the cases of Palestine, Lebanon, and the Sudan. Throughout the Arab-Israeli conflict, women played key roles. They made significant and practical contributions to legal reform and realization, and provided concrete support for women's political education and participation in public political discourse (Schnabel and Anara

2015). However, as the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) have begun the process of state building, women have been systematically excluded (Schnabel and Anara 2015). Palestinian women have struggled to successfully frame their actions as vital contributions to state building and “enshrine them in public institution-building in a more systematic way”, despite possessing the necessary skills and experiences to do so (Schnabel and Anara 2015, 267). Existing gender norms and push back against women in public life make it immensely difficult for Palestinian women to assert themselves in the formulation of the state in the oPt.

A similar picture emerges upon examination of the civil war in Lebanon. While the war led to essential changes in women’s lives and places in society by allowing them to take on combat positions, engage in civil society, and provide supportive functions to various militias, post-war women struggled to translate those efforts into roles in the state apparatus and formal political sphere. In 1992 Lebanon held its first election after the peace treaty, called the Taif agreement, was signed, and women gained three seats in parliament. Yet, these women were all from elite families. The pattern of a few elite women being elected to Parliament followed in 2005 and in 2009. The Taif agreement represented political barriers for both men and women, by ensuring that an elite class, whose goals were aligned with the existing social and gender norms, would run the government (Schnabel and Anara, 2015). Women running for election faced the additional barrier of the historical patriarchal political culture further enshrined by the Taif agreement. Implicit in the peace agreement following the civil war in Lebanon were significant obstacles for women becoming involved in the government, echoing the experience of Palestinian women.

Sudan is another case that proves the challenges for women in government and state institutions. Women in South Sudan are often internally displaced, and all other issues from gender equality to wider political participation are subordinated to the desire to survive and not be assaulted (International Crisis Group 2006). But nonetheless, Sudanese women are active in civil society and becoming increasingly aware of their political importance. This instability in itself acts as a barrier to women expanding their political representation, as it makes mobilization around the issue difficult. In the North, where the state is less fragile, the government is reinforcing existing patriarchal norms by creating laws that may undermine women's role in peacebuilding, one of the main feeding lines into roles in the government and state institutions. One of the main issues in Sudan is lack of specificity: while laws made by the Government of National Unity may mention gender rights, they do not give specific timelines for women's inclusion or other measures. Furthermore, many qualified women have emigrated, and the government has made little effort to implement training programs for women who remain in the country. Due to insecurity and lack of government support, the inclusion of women in government post-conflict is immensely difficult to realize in Sudan.

Despite the significant obstacles to women's formal political involvement post-conflict, women's political representation is not absent in post-conflict societies, and scholarship maintains that civil war in itself acts as a catalyst for broader female political participation. The proposed relationship between civil war and positive formal political momentum for women is based on the societal restructuring that occurs after conflicts, women's roles during conflict as activists and peacebuilders, and the influx of global connections and aid that occurs during the reconstruction process. Often at the end of a

conflict, fundamental institutional change is proposed. The new order does not want to keep pre-existing establishments, but rather create new ones. Under pressure from women's groups, this institutional overhaul can include the adoption of gender quotas or proportional representation, both of which have been shown to increase women's political representation. Furthermore, groups struggling for power or to overthrow the current regime will propose a new vision for society, and expanded women's rights can become a part of that vision (Hughes 2009).

In addition to top-down reform occurring after civil war, women's actions and experiences during conflict can provide a springboard for their increased political representation. Because women act as soldiers, builders of social and political movements, and in a myriad of other roles, perceptions about women's capabilities can change after conflict and make them more viable candidates (Hughes 2009). Even if the perception is false, women are thought to be less at fault for causing conflict, and viewed as less corrupt because they were not decision makers at the conflict's outset, and this can create political legitimacy for them (Hughes and Tripp 2015). Lastly, civil war provides connections to global society through international organizations, and these organizations influence a variety of policy outcomes, including women's political rights. This can happen through education and integration surrounding gender, or through aid incentives whereby funding is tied to women's political citizenship (Hughes 2009). For these three reasons, civil war is thought to expedite women's representation in governments and state institutions, despite the clear challenges it presents to women.

One common avenue to ensuring women's inclusion in the formal political sphere after conflict is the implementation of gender quotas for political representation. It is

undeniable that gender quotas provide a fast track to women in government, and they are prevalent at the conclusion of civil wars. For example in Rwanda, shortly after the civil war and brutal genocide, the highest number of women in parliament was elected. The Rwandan Patriotic Front mandated that women must occupy at least 30% of the positions in all decision-making bodies (Burnet 2011, 320). These quotas apply to national, regional, and local levels, thus providing a thorough representation of women that is visible for and accessible to all Rwandan women (Burnet 2011, 326). Sudan also implemented gender quotas at the conclusion of its civil war, mandating that 25% of parliamentary seats be occupied by women (QuotaProject). In Uganda, the post-conflict constitution required that the parliament should consist of one female representative per district (QuotaProject). South Africa saw a robust push for women's representation in formal political institutions during the formation of the post-apartheid government. The result was that in elections for local councils, parties must ensure that 50% of their candidates are women (QuotaProject). While the conclusion of civil war is not the only time gender quotas are implemented, it is certainly a time when the possibility is ripe. When post-conflict governments tasked with the drafting of a new constitution intersect with organized women who have found their public voices, gender quotas are not an unlikely result (Hughes 2009).

However, gender quotas are also not inevitable, and capitalizing on the opportunity civil war provides for women in state institutions and governments can be difficult. In Lebanon, the National Commission on Parliamentary Electoral Law met in 2006 in part to attempt to rectify the gender gap in the national government. A quota of 30% for female representation was proposed, but ultimately deemed too politically

difficult to implement, as it faced huge backlash (Schnabel and Anara 2015). South Africa is often lauded as the ideal case for conflict creating opportunity for women in government, but the difficulty of achieving those results is also often overlooked. South Africa is in some senses an isolated case, and demonstrates a rare time when women organizing with an explicit feminist purpose made significant gains during democratic transition (Waylen 2007). The success of South African women was not caused solely by successful mobilization of women post conflict. Firstly there was a strong and pre-existing women's activism network in South Africa, and secondly, state-building negotiations were "sufficiently open to allow interventions by organized women", something that is abnormal (Waylen 2007, 531). While gender quotas are certainly possible after conflict, they are not certain, and can often be difficult to realize. Furthermore, there is scholarship that argues the presence of women in the government after conflict does not always imply productive policies for women (Bastian and Luckham 2003).

Women's experiences in conflict, though distinct from men's in many ways, are not standardized. Gender and war interact in complex ways; during conflict women are victims of sexual violence, persecution, and displacement, but also act as combatants, perpetrators of hate and social divides, and peace activists. Furthermore, the binary of war and peace is not sufficient to explain how women experience the aftermath of conflict; economic hardship, increased levels of violence, and systematic exclusion from reconstruction are present alongside shifting power dynamics and a significant participation in civil society. It is clear that women often see an increased opportunity to penetrate the public sector and strict gender divides during conflict, but these newfound

roles are met with immense resistance when warfare ceases. Yet, the literature suggests that civil war abets women's entrance into politics. Existing scholarship has not explained the causes of two vastly different outcomes of civil war: situations whereby women see increased inclusion in governments and state institutions with the situations where women are forced back into strict traditional roles.

In order to reconcile the discrepancy posed in the literature over whether or not intrastate conflict consistently acts as a catalyst for the entrance of women into politics, I compiled a table of every intrastate conflict beginning during or after 1989 with a definitive end date.¹² The table is organized regionally by end date and includes numbers of female parliamentarians (or senators) in each country before or during the war and after the war. Dates of measurement were chosen based on data availability. The table also includes the numbers of women in cabinet positions before/during the war and after the war, dates were also chosen for this category based on data availability. Finally, the table includes the Freedom House civil and political rights scores one year out from the conflict's end, in order to reflect the nature of the regime once the country had truly moved into a period of peace.

¹ Correlates of War defines intrastate war by four markers: (1) military action internal to the metropole of the state system member; (2) the active participation of the national government; (3) effective resistance by both sides; and (4) a total of at least 1,000 battle-deaths during each year of the war.

² Romania had a civil war meeting the Correlates of War definition in 1989, but no data was available for any measures of women in government, and thus the case is not included.

Table 1: Conclusive Civil Wars Since 1989 and Their Results for Women and Political Rights

Country	Region	Start Date	End Date	Women in Parliament Before/During Conflict	Women in Parliament After Conflict	Women in Cabinet Before/During Conflict	Women in Cabinet After Conflict	Freedom House Score for Civil Rights/Political Rights
Azerbaijan	Central Asia	1991	1993	2% (1990)	12% (1995)	N/A	0% (1994)	6,6
Tajikistan	Central Asia	1992	1997	2.8% (1995)	15% (2000)	3% (1994)	6.5% (1998)	6,6
Afghanistan	Central Asia	1989	2001	4% (1990)	27.3% (2004)	0% (1994)	10% (2005)	7,7
India	South Asia	1990	2005	5% (1990)	10.8% (2009)	4% (1995)	3.4% (205)	3,2
Nepal	South Asia	2001	2006	5.9% (2001)	33.2% (2008)	3.1% (1998)	7.7% (2010)	4,5
Pakistan	South Asia	2004	2006	21.6% (2002)	22.2% (2008)	5.6% (2005)	3.6% (2008)	5,6
Sri Lanka	South Asia	2006	2009	4.9% (2004)	5.3% (2010)	10.3% (2005)	5.9% (2010)	4,4
Cambodia	South East Asia	1989	1991	Data Unavailable	5.8% (1993)	Data Unavailable	0% (1995)	6,6
Indonesia	South East Asia	1989	2003	12.2% (1992)	11.3% (2004)	4.9% (1987)	10.8% (2005)	4,3
Philippines	South East Asia	2000	2006	12.4% (2000)	21% (2007)	9.5% (1998)	13.6% (2010)	3,4
Moldova	Eastern Europe	1991	1992	Data Unavailable	4.8% (1994)	Data Unavailable	0% (1994)	5,5
Georgia	Eastern Europe	1991	1994	6.3% (1992)	6.8% (1995)	Data Unavailable	0% (1994)	5,5
Croatia	Eastern Europe	1991	1995	Data Unavailable	7.9% (1995)	Data Unavailable	12% (1998)	5,4
Bosnia	Eastern Europe	1992	1995	4.5% lower (1990)	7% (2001)	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	5,5
Turkey	Eastern Europe/Central Asia	1991	1999	1.8% (1991)	4.4% (2002)	5% (1994)	4.3% (2005)	5,4
Lebanon	Arab	1989	1990	0% (1990)	2.2% (1992)	Data Unavailable	0% (1994)	6,5
Iraq	Arab	1991	1995	10.8% (1989)	6.4% (1996)	9% (1994)	18.8% (2005)	7,7
Algeria	Arab	1992	1999	2% (1990)	6.2% (2002)	4% (1994)	10.5% (2005)	5,6
Sudan	Arab	2003	2006	9.7% (2000)	25.6% (2010)	0% (1998)	6.3% (2010)	7,7
Yemen	Arab	1994	2007	0.7% (1993)	0.3% (2010)	0% (1994)	5.9% (2010)	5,5
Republic of the Congo	Sub-Saharan Africa	1997	1997	1.6% 1993	12% (1998)	6% (1994)	6.1% (1998)	5,7

Sierra Leone	Sub-Saharan Africa	1991	1999	Data Unavailable	14.5% (2002)	0% (1994)	13% (2005)	5,3
Guinea-Bissau	Sub-Saharan Africa	1998	1999	10% (1994)	7.8% (1999)	17.6% (1998)	37.5% (2000)	5,4
Rwanda	Sub-Saharan Africa	1990	2001	4.3% (1994)	48.8% (2003)	9% (1994)	35.6% (2005)	5,7
Guinea	Sub-Saharan Africa	2000	2001	8.8% (1995)	19.3% (2002)	8.3% (1998)	15.4% (2005)	5,6
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Sub-Saharan Africa	1997	2002	5% (1994)	12% (2004)	7% (1994)	12.5% (2005)	6,6
Liberia	Sub-Saharan Africa	1989	2003	5.7% (1994)	5.4% (2003)	Data Unavailable		6,6
Burundi	Sub-Saharan Africa	1993	2003	12.3% (1993)	30.5% (2005)	7% (1994)	10.7% (2005)	5,5
Ethiopia	Sub-Saharan Africa	1999	2003	2% (1999)	21.4% (2005)	5% (1998)	5.9% (2005)	5,5
Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa	1999	2004	7.3% (1999)	7% (2007)	6.5% (1998)	10% (2005)	4,4
Cote D'Ivoire	Sub-Saharan Africa	2002	2004	8.5% (2000)	10.4% (2011)	3.1% (1998)	17.1% (2005)	6,6
Chad	Sub-Saharan Africa	1989	2006	16.4% (1993)	14.9% (2011)	5% (1994)	6.9% (2010)	6,7
Somalia	Sub-Saharan Africa	1991	2008	4% (1990)	13.8% (2012)	0% (1994)	Data Unavailable	7,7
Papua New Guinea	Western Pacific	1989	1992	0% (1992)	1.8% (1997)	Data Unavailable	0% (1994)	2,3

Sources: The civil war cases and start and end dates were discerned from the Correlates of War Project (Sarkees and Wayman 2010). The percentages of women in Parliament were gathered from the International Parliamentary Union's "Women in Parliament Archive" 1997-2015 and from the IPU's "Women in Politics" 2005, 2015. The percentages of women in Cabinet were gathered from the IPU's "Women in Politics" 2005, 2015, and from "Statistics - Human Development Reports (UNDP)." *Human Development Reports*. 1987, 1990, 1995, 2005, 2008. Full bibliographic information is included in "Works Cited".

Looking at the 35 cases in Table 1, interesting trends emerge along temporal and regional lines. Firstly, quotas for women in parliament are highly likely after 1995, perhaps due to the Beijing Conference, and as a result, the majority of countries which had civil war(s) ending during or after 1995 have seen progress for women's representation in parliament. Similarly, women's appointments to cabinet positions see an improvement in most countries, especially after 2001. So, it seems civil conflict is more

likely to increase the number of women in both executive and legislative branches of government as time progresses.

Perhaps even more interesting than the timing trends are the regional data. I grouped the 35 countries into seven regions: Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, Eastern Europe, Arab, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Western Pacific. This brought me to several observations. Firstly, every country that shows negative growth of 1% or more for female political participation post-conflict in either parliament or cabinet is home to a significant percentage of Muslims, however not every Muslim country shows decline in female political participation. Second, while other regions do not show such a clear picture of women's progression, Central Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate near universal advancement of female political participation post-conflict. However, these same regions also perform overwhelmingly negatively in terms of political and civil rights after conflict when it comes to Freedom House scores. This trend seems to suggest that women's political representation post-conflict coincides with decreased political and civil rights, but not universally; the trend is highly concentrated in Central Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Since the majority of civil war cases occurred in Sub-Saharan African cases, I found this trend to be more worthy of examination in the Sub-Saharan African region.

Aside from these observations, the other main takeaway from the dataset was that an increase in female political participation is not a universal result of civil conflict. After establishing that there are in fact a wide variety of results for women's representation in the formal political sphere following civil conflict and recognizing the trends regarding end date of conflict, region, and political and civil rights, two subsequent questions arose:

1. Under what conditions does civil war facilitate women's entrance into government and state institutions?
2. Does female representation in parliaments and cabinets have equal importance if those governing bodies are operating in an authoritarian regime as it does in a comparatively democratic regime?

In order to answer these questions, I chose three case studies, all in Sub-Saharan Africa: Burundi, Liberia, and Chad. I chose these countries to examine because the conflicts ended within a few years of one another, yet had different outcomes for female political participation. Burundi presents a case where women's political representation did increase after civil war, while it remained stagnant in Liberia, and decreased in Chad. However, each of these countries had bad absolute Freedom House scores on political and civil rights immediately following conflict. The following three chapters of my thesis will be case studies of these countries that draw conclusions about whether or not civil war helps women advance politically, under what conditions it helps, and how women's participation interacts with the broader political landscape of their respective countries.

CHAPTER 1: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT, THE STATE, STABILITY, AND GENDER IN BURUNDI

Introduction

Burundi's genocide rocked the country with violence and instability from 1993-2003. While women in Burundi were brutally victimized by sexual assault, left to care for their families alone, and disproportionately displaced by the conflict, they also engaged with the war as combatants, supporters of the war, and peacemakers. Burundian women capitalized on the end of the conflict and the society's reconstruction period to lobby for a place in the peace negotiations and in the post-transition government. They also made critical contributions to the country's post-conflict constitution. However, as the country moved out of the transition period, women in government were systematically shut out of leadership positions and unable to make independent contributions to legislation. The position of women in Burundi is inextricably tied to the stability of the state. In the period of reconstruction, when optimism about democratization was the primary driving factor for the country's leaders, and stability was an expected result, the government was responsive to and inclusive of women. When that government's hold on power became tenuous and fraught with ethnic tensions, women were once again relegated to a position of weakness and expected to conform to the ideas of their parties.

The Conflict in Burundi

Since its independence in 1962, Burundi has suffered from outbursts of violence across ethnic and regional lines. Burundi's ethnic makeup is approximately 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, and 1% Twa (Agbalajobi 2009, Uvin 1999). While these ethnic divides existed in the pre-colonial period, they were not as influential in characterizing the political, economic, and social landscape of Burundi as they became under the German,

and later Belgian, colonial administrations (Uvin 1999). The arrival of colonialism brought stricter divides between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa ethnic groups and ethnicity became a crucial indicator of social worth and status in the colony. Belgian colonial rule created a society where political, social, and economic relations became more inflexible, imbalanced, and prejudiced against the majority Hutu (Agbalajobi 2009, Ndikumana 1998, Uvin 1999). The colonial administration wielded its power through Tutsi leaders, who sometimes acted “like warlords” and increased the demand on the Hutu to produce cash crops and other goods for the economic strength of the regime (Uvin 1999, 255).

Ethnicity remained paramount to status in the post-colonial period, despite the initial success of the biethnic Uprona party, led by Prince Louis Rwagsore. The vestiges of ethnic divides after independence were evidenced by the almost immediate assassination of Rwagsore and the subsequent conflict within the Uprona party (Uvin 1999). In the wake of independence and in the absence of a colonial power, control of Burundi’s governance became the only means through which the Tutsi could maintain the privileges and dominance they enjoyed in the colonial period, while also representing the only opportunity for the Hutu to advance their position in the country (Uvin 1999). The Tutsi minority won this battle for state control, monopolizing almost all positions of power in the government and the military. The Tutsi ruling elite became incredibly repressive of the majority Hutu in an effort to maintain their fragile grip on rule (Ndikumana 1998, Uvin 1999). This political repression and discrimination, coupled with sparse economic resources and insufficient development, resulted in sectarian violence. Burundi’s post-independence history is marred by a pattern of Hutu uprising and killing of Tutsis that invoked massacres of Hutu citizens carried out by the Tutsi-controlled

military, as in 1965, and from 1988-1992 (Rwantabagu 2001, Ndikumana 1998, Uvin 1999, 258-259). Burundi experienced major clashes between the Hutu and Tutsi groups in 1965, 1966, 1972, 1987, 1988, 1993, and 1996.

The most pertinent of these events to Burundi's intrastate war was the 1993 assassination of the country's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye. Ndadaye won the 1993 election with 65% of the vote, and his party, Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) won 65 out of 81 parliamentary seats (Uvin 1999, 262). Ndadaye was killed by low-ranking officers in the Tutsi-controlled Burundi army, with "at least passive support" from the highest-ranking levels of the military bureaucracy (Uvin 1999, 262). This assassination was the catalyst for the decade of civil war and genocidal violence in Burundi spanning from 1993-2003. Following Ndadaye's assassination, a large number of Hutu killed thousands of Tutsi across Burundi, facilitating a vicious response from the military, which moved in to quell the unrest and killed thousands of Hutu in the process. A political stalemate arose between the Hutu-controlled FRODEBU party, and the now Tutsi-controlled Uprona party. The FRODEBU party split between those who wished to find a peaceful solution, and the militant branches: the *Council National de Défense et de Démocratie* (CNDD), the *Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (FDD), and the *Forces Nationales de Libération* (FNL). The fragmentation of the country across political and ethnic lines incited a state of fear whereby Hutu citizens were subjected to the random violence by the military and Tutsi militia, and Tutsi citizens in turn were terrified of the increasingly radical and violent Hutu militant groups (Agbalajobi 2009, Ndikumana 1998, Uvin 1999).

Although the Arusha Peace Agreement was signed in Arusha, Tanzania in 2000, two influential Hutu militant groups, the CNDD-FDD and the FNL, refused to sign. The lack of cooperation from the Hutu rebel groups dragged the conflict past the time of the peace agreement, with at least 1,000 people dying in battle-related deaths until 2003 (Sarkees and Wayman), when the CNDD-FDD agreed to sign a peace deal and join the transitional government (Agbalajobi 2009). The FNL continued to commit sporadic acts of violence until they finally signed a formal ceasefire with the government in September 2006 (Agbalajobi 2009).

Women's Experiences During and After the War in Burundi

Burundian women's experiences during and after the genocide were not uniform. Gender identity alone is not sufficient to determine experience; ethnicity, region, class, and political alliance all shaped how each woman in Burundi interacted with and were acted upon during the war. However, women did experience the genocide in distinctive ways solely because of their gender.

As tensions rose between the Hutu militants and the Tutsi-controlled army, so too did male dominance and militarization (Daley 2008). Both the Hutu and Tutsi militants worked diligently to inculcate young men with the dogma of genocide and aggressive masculinity in order to mobilize them for the war effort and shape their mental state to be ready to brutally kill the other ethnic group (Daley 2008). The ideology of dominant and violent masculinity was not difficult to instill in Burundian society, as "twenty eight years of successive military rule in Burundi enabled military values that reinforced patriarchal tendencies and oppressive forms of masculinity to become entrenched in all areas of society" (Daley 2008, 123). The reinforced and emphasized patriarchal attitudes further

exposed women to violence. While men certainly underwent a host of brutalities including being the targets of mass killings, torture, and forced abduction and soldiering, women were targeted specifically because of their vulnerabilities as women and their role as the symbol of their caste (Daley 2008).

Gendered violence during Burundi's genocide manifested itself mostly through rape and sexual assault. During and after the genocide, members of the military, armed rebel groups, and individual citizens committed rape without repercussions (Amnesty International 2004, Daley 2008). As discussed in the literature review, rape is utilized as a tool of war to humiliate and intimidate not only individual women, but also the enemy collectively, because women are seen as the bearers of tradition and honor in society. This is especially true in the context of Burundi; though the conflict was certainly economic and political in nature, the violence occurred across ethnic lines. As a result, armed forces perpetrated sexual violence against women in order to suppress their enemy ethnic group and humiliate and intimidate the population as a whole (Amnesty International 2004, Daley 2008). One woman, Adèle N, told Amnesty International,

When they arrived, I was eating with the children. They [members of the armed group] asked for money. I said I didn't have any. They began to beat me on my face and back with a gun. They said I was lying, that they knew I'd sold things at the market. They asked me if I paid my dues. I was saying yes and no. I didn't know what I was saying. Nine of them had come into the house and they started to rape me. The children fled to a neighbour's to get help but by the time they returned, they'd finished. All nine of them raped me. I know other women were raped but they won't admit it (Amnesty International 2004, 12-13).

Her account is unfortunately not unique. Many Burundian women were raped in front of others, especially children, in order to add to the embarrassment and shame of the violation (Amnesty International 2004). Adèle's comment that she is certain other women

were raped but were unwilling to speak of it suggests that militants in Burundi succeeded in bringing shame upon communities through rape.

A culture of impunity surrounds sexual violence in Burundi; women are reluctant to come forward with accounts of rape or sexual assault because of the stigma associated with it (Amnesty International 2004, Daley 2008, Tripp 2005). Women who bring forward their cases are met with an indifferent and incompetent legal system that either refuses to pursue the case or lacks the resources to do so (Amnesty International 2004). Furthermore, reporting rape can cause major problems in the domestic sphere. 42-year-old Odette, who was raped by a soldier at gunpoint, stated,

I don't know where my husband is. He left me and our children when he heard I'd been raped. I'm still in the camp - I have nowhere to go now. My house was destroyed by soldiers and anyway I think my husband wouldn't allow me to live there. I have no money. The children can't go to school (Amnesty International 2004, 13).

The shame and impunity surrounding rape has made it all the more prominent during war. As of 2003, there were no court cases in Burundi dealing with the sexual abuse of women (Tripp 2005).

In post-conflict Burundi, women, especially those displaced by the conflict, continued to suffer from their traumas and from the militant attitudes that still pervaded their country. Levels of domestic abuse and rape did not lower with the end of the conflict; in fact, domestic abuse rates were higher and the number of reported rapes rose significantly following the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000 (Daley 2008).³ Women in refugee camps in Tanzania were especially vulnerable to continued violence and

repression after the cessation of the conflict. Inside Tanzanian refugee camps, some Burundian men left their families without food either by selling their family's aid packages or giving them away to mistresses. The packages were almost exclusively given to male heads of households, and while women could request their own packages, this sometimes resulted in domestic abuse. Women who challenged their husbands were often beaten and had no recourse for escape, as they were dependent on their husbands for the aid packages (Tripp 2005).

Despite these immense challenges, Burundian women mobilized and took action both during and after the genocide. 3.5% of the 14,533 combatants belonging to rebel groups who were demobilized in the post-conflict period were women (Daley 2008, 124). The percentage of female combatants was higher in certain rebel groups, with women comprising 8% of the demobilized combatants for CNDD-FDD (Daley 2008, 124). Women also supported the war by inciting violence or supplying weapons and other supplies to militants. One woman, Aziza Kulsum Gulamali, acted as a crucial weapons supplier for CNDD-FDD, while also trafficking gold, ivory, and coltan (Daley 2008, 124). Like their male counterparts, female rebels suffered consequences for their stance and involvement in the war. Between 2003 and 2006, there were several reports of women being killed by the FNL rebel group upon suspicion of their collaboration with the CNDD-FDD (Daley 2008, 124).

However, not all Burundian women chose to engage in violence. In the midst of the genocide, women organized across party and ethnic lines to work for a transition to

³ It is important to note that rape is significantly underreported in Burundi, and this change in numbers could come from increased access to the proper authorities that came with the de-escalation of the genocide.

peace (Casimiro et. all 2008). The women's movement that arose in Burundi culminated with the consistent lobbying and eventual acceptance of women activists into the Arusha peace negotiations, and the accomplishments they made there. In the years of the conflict prior to Arusha, the Burundi Women Refugee Network had been providing crucial services to internally displaced women and refugees as well as training them in peace promoting activities (Casimiro et. all, 2008). Additionally, since its conception in 1997, the Burundi Women's Journalist Association had been promoting women's voices and freedom of the press (Casimiro et. all 2008). These groups, along with many others, comprised the emerging network of female activists who came together to voice their recommendations for restructuring and healing Burundi during the Arusha peace talks.

The first round of talks of the Arusha peace process took place in July 1998, and initially consisted of seventeen different political parties (Agbalajobi 2009). Despite civil society not being authorized to participate, Hutu and Tutsi women involved in civic organizations joined together to protest their exclusion and demand a place at the peace table. Women's activism for peace brought about the creation of several women's NGOs which would go on to organize a vast number of actions, including the formation of a forum bridging ethnic divides for women to discuss national reconstruction strategies and learn nonviolent conflict resolution (Agbalajobi 2009). These women activists were eventually granted permanent observer status into the Arusha peace process in February 2000, and in July 2000 they convinced the nineteen negotiating parties to recognize that women's involvement was essential to all aspects of the process (Casimiro et. all 2008, 212). Following this recognition, the women convened an All Party Burundi Women's Conference where two delegates from each party drafted the Women's Proposals to

Engender the Draft Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (Casimiro et. all 2008, 211-212).

This document communicated the women's conceptions of how their perspectives should be taken into account in the final peace agreement. Their list of demands to the nineteen negotiating parties included specific measures for female security, rights to land and inheritance for women, gender equal access to education, an end to impunity for gender-based violence and gender-based war crimes, the inclusion of a women's charter in the constitution, and a 30% quota for female representation in all decision making bodies (Agbalajobi 2009). The demands of the All Party Burundi Women's Conference were all incorporated into the final peace accord, with the exception of the 30% quota, which was later implemented as a part of the 2005 Constitution (Agbalajobi 2009).

The successes of Burundian women in mobilizing for peace and pushing for women's inclusion in the peace process required incredible strategic organizing. Women in Burundi accomplished these two goals by coordinating on the local, regional, and international levels. Firstly, local Burundian women within women's NGOs emphasized their gender identity over their ethnic identities, allowing for a stronger unification within the groups, and therefore increasing these groups' effectiveness. From this cohesive starting point, the women's NGOs in Burundi were able to deemphasize the more contentious political aspects of the conflict, and focus on peace for all (Anderson 2016). Secondly, at the regional level, multiple women's groups leveraged their cause by lobbying prominent Burundian political figures to allow women a place in the peace negotiations (Anderson 2016). Lastly, at the international level, Burundian women's groups gained the support of UNIFEM New York. UNIFEM provided crucial support to

Burundian women on several levels; it aided them in lobbying the chair of the peace process, Nelson Mandela, to ensure women's issues would be a priority, and addressed the negotiating parties, linking the support of third party donors to the inclusion of women's rights (Anderson 2016). Burundian women were successful in their efforts to gain access to and influence the peace negotiations because of their willingness to represent both Hutu and Tutsi women, and because of the assistance of prominent Burundian political figures and of international women's groups who had vast resources and funding networks.

However, these successes did not negate the fragmentations within Burundian women's networks. Though ethnic and political divides did not impede the success of the women's conference, divides nonetheless existed. Friction within the conference between Hutu and Tutsi women and among various political parties made reaching a consensus on certain issues difficult. A study on the conference found,

[The conference] constituted a real challenge due to the ethnic, political and social heterogeneity of the groups of women present, even though it finally could be held. There were sometimes deep divergences among the women due to differing political opinions. The women representing political parties tended to align themselves on the positions of their respective political groups (Sow 2012).

The economic embargo imposed on Burundi by its neighboring countries was especially hindering and highlighted these divisions. The economic embargo had become a divisive issue in Burundi and had increased partisan rhetoric and riffs among the political parties. Women were not an exception; the women's conference was split on the issue along ethnic and political lines (Sow 2012).

In addition to the All Party Burundi Women's Conference, three women representing the government and three representing FRODEBU were present at the

formal negotiations. Women within the formal negotiations were even more limited by their political alliances. Reports of the negotiations suggested that these women's views did not diverge from the other delegates in their party. In fact, some women were wives of colonels (Daley 2007). However, "the inclusion of women, even as tokens was beneficial, in that, as a group, women are probably the most victimized in war time and patriarchal practices might be difficult to defend in their presence" (Daley 2007, 343). Burundian women made important strides towards political involvement, women's rights, and peacemaking both during and in the aftermath of the conflict. However, it is important to note that gender does not determine willingness to cross party lines. In fact, gender may not have been the most important factor to these women, and their allegiance to their party could have overruled their gender identity during the negotiations.

Burundi's Political Rights and Women's Formal Political Participation Post-Conflict

Burundi is a case where civil war did provide an opportunity for women to enter into the formal political space. Women's political representation in Burundi's national and local legislative bodies before the civil war was essentially non-existent, except when Sylvie Kinigi notably served as the prime minister from 1993 to 1994 (Falch 2010). In 1993, women comprised 12.3% of Burundi's National Assembly (IPU). Following the first elections after the civil conflict in 2005, 30.5% of the representatives elected to the National Assembly were women and women made up 34.7% of the senators appointed by local elected officials to the Senate (IPU). Burundi also saw a small increase of 3.7% in female ministers between 1994 and 2005; that number has continued to grow, with women serving in 34.8% of Burundi's ministerial positions in 2015 (Human

Development Reports 1995, 2005, 2015). Yet, the factions within the women's conference leading up to Arusha, and the partisanship of the female delegates to the peace process demonstrate that women's political participation does not occur in a vacuum. Women's gains in political representation need to be analyzed in the broader context of the Burundian political landscape.

The strides made by women in Burundi's political sphere are inextricably linked to the end of its decade long civil war; the proposal to incorporate gender quotas into the initial peace accord came out of a dialogue among women that was made possible by the cessation of conflict. Had the Arusha peace process not begun in 1998, no forum where women could formally voice their opinions and direct their political will towards ensured representation would have occurred. However, women were not initially included in the peace dialogue, nor was their proposal for a 30% quota accepted into the peace accord that came out of Arusha in 2000. The negotiators at the Arusha dialogue maintained that there were not enough adequately qualified, educated women to hold that number of political positions (Falch 2010). In the interim years between the installation of a transitional government in November 2001 and the completion of Burundi's new constitution in 2005, the rejection of gender quotas for representative bodies was apparent. Women made up only 17 out of 184 seats in the National Assembly, and only 4 out of 26 ministerial positions. Women enjoyed greater representation in the Senate, where they were appointed to 10 out of 54 seats (Falch 2010, 12). While the civil conflict in Burundi certainly helped open the door for more women to enter the formal political sphere, the door had to be forced open, to extend the metaphor.

The women who did have positions in the political institutions of Burundi's transitional government worked tirelessly with UNIFEM and national and local women's organizations to incorporate a 30% gender quota for all local and national decision making bodies into the post-transitional constitution (Falch 2010). There is not a consensus over why the anti-quota lobby eventually relented, though some possibilities are the funding UNIFEM could provide to the Burundian post-conflict reconciliation effort should Burundi's political bodies come closer to gender equity, the immense advocacy and education efforts of Burundian women's groups surrounding female political representation, and the existing female political representatives' lobbying of their male colleagues (Falch 2010). The inclusion of women in representative bodies was not implicit in the emerging post-conflict political landscape, nor was the notion that they should be involved in the peace process. What then is the relationship to female political representatives and the state and institutions that did not initially want them to be included in the formation of the new Burundi?

The women in the government and state institutions of Burundi have made some significant strides for the advancement of Burundian women. In fact, largely due to the efforts of these female representatives, the new Burundian constitution included several improvements regarding the status of women and gender equality. In addition to establishing the 30% quota, the 2005 Constitution explicitly states that men and women are equal, and have equal rights in citizenship, education, employment, and marriage. Perhaps it was these women who proved to the transitional government that Burundian women were qualified to hold office in the five years between the Arusha Agreement and the formation of the new constitution.

However, the progress female political representatives were able to make in terms of advancing women's rights stagnated as the period of transition came to a close and the post-war Burundian political system solidified. The gender quotas were easily met, and in some cases exceeded, in both the 2005 and 2010 elections⁴, and the general public has responded positively to seeing women in positions of power following the instillation of the quotas (Falch 2010, 15). Yet, the actual opportunities women in formal political institutions have had to affect change have been negligible post-2005.

Women are constrained by their political parties, their colleagues' perceptions of women in politics, and the types of positions they occupy. In a stringent party system, the leadership of Burundian political parties is almost exclusively male (Falch 2010). A female MP described how her party systematically diminishes the autonomy of the female representatives. She stated that the decisions of the parties are usually made by a group of men behind closed doors, and before voting, the women in the party have to wait for the decision of the male leadership to make its way down the chain of command (Falch 2010, 14). A human rights activist in Burundi similarly asserted,

Women have no voice inside the political parties. The political parties threaten women members that they will be removed from their positions if they say something that is not in line with the party. Therefore, they cannot speak out and fight for their issues of interest (Falch 2010, 15).

The activist's claim is not without evidence. In 2007, the president of the National Assembly and the Vice President of the Senate were both removed from their positions and replaced by men (Sow 2012). It is difficult for women to progress to a position where

⁴ In 2010, women comprised 46.34% of the Senate, and 31.13% of the National Assembly (Nanourou and Wilson 2014, 5).

they can change this because their male colleagues often view them as illegitimate politicians who are there as “tokens, rather than agents of change” (Falch 2010, 14).

It is not just within political parties that men dominate leadership positions; the same is largely true of ministry positions and provincial governance. Men occupy the positions of Minister of Interior, Assistant to the Minister, Chief Executive Officer and Director of Department, and only three of the seventeen provincial governors are women (Nanourou and Wilson 2014, 2). Perhaps the three most important decision making bodies in Burundi are the *Conseil National de Sécurité* (National Security Council), the *Conseil Économique et Social* (Economic and Social Council), and the *Conseil National de la Communication* (National Communication Council). While a woman does head the Economic and Social Council, overall women are underrepresented in these paramount political institutions (Nanourou and Wilson 2014, 7). Across the board, Burundi is far from achieving gender parity in decision-making bodies. The largest concentration of women in these bodies is in the Social and Economic Development Sector, where women comprise 20.15% of the employees. Women make up 17.6% of the Governance and Democracy Sector, and a bleak 1.37% of the Security Sector (Nanourou and Wilson 2014, 7).

Women in Burundian politics have basically been unable to affect the circumstances of other women in society through concrete policy changes. Since the initial strides made in 2005, the institutions female politicians are party to have systematically failed to protect women’s basic bodily integrity, their access to justice, and their right to equality as citizens of Burundi. Following the war, domestic violence and rape remained rampant, all without recourse for victims (SD HR Report a 2003-2014).

Some of these violent acts were perpetrated by the very institutions designed to protect Burundian civilians; as recently as 2007, there have been credible reports of members of the Burundian National Army raping and extorting civilians (SD HR Report a 2007). Women are not comfortable bringing their attackers to justice, and in the rare case that they do, they are usually met with indifference. The judicial system in Burundi is understaffed, underfunded, and often prejudiced against women. Women who brought their cases to judges were hindered by the limitations of the judicial system, “including judges who did not regard rape as a serious crime” (SD HR Report a 2007). Though the gender quotas have been respected since the post-transition constitution was codified, the Burundian government has shown lack of resolve to address women’s issues more broadly.

So, why include women at all? Why was the decision made to implement a gender quota and include the input of women in the Arusha Agreement, and subsequently, the 2005 Constitution, if that input was to be increasingly ignored as the new governmental structure solidified? It would be remiss to not give credit to the women themselves, who lobbied fiercely through civil society and invoked UNSCR 1325 to ensure their voices would be heard. The dedication of Burundian women and their allies to capitalizing on the ongoing peace dialogue in order to widen the opportunities available to women in their societies is admirable and certainly had an effect. The women who held positions in the transitional government also influenced the decision to include quotas in the post-transition constitution. However, once Burundian society moved away from the period of transition and into a new period of peace, the rights of women set out by that constitution were consistently undermined and the women elected and appointed

to governing bodies were largely ignored. Political parties limited the autonomy of women parliamentarians, as “women parliamentarians are bound to their party’s decisions to the detriment of their support for issues concerning women” (Sow 2012, 24). The most pessimistic explanation of this shift is that all strides made by women were symbolic and the leadership of Burundi never intended to grant women a larger role in the public sphere. However, upon examination of the changing dynamics of the state, this is not the most likely explanation.

The period of time where women were able to make the most influential change and gain access to formal political institutions coincided with a period of transition, democratization, and optimism surrounding Burundian politics. Conversely, the strengthening of political parties’ grips on their female members occurred simultaneously with increasing political instability, threats to President Pierre Nkurunziza and the CNDD-FDD party’s power, and rising ethnic tensions. Though the civil war did not end by the Correlates of War definition until 2003⁵, the negotiations over what the transition to peace would look like in terms of state leadership were cemented in 2001. The political agreement stated that Pierre Buyoya, who had seized power in a coup in 1987 and again in 1996, would remain president until April 2003 when Domitien Ndayizeye would take over the office for 18 months until the elections were held in November 2004. In a political system where coups and civilian uprisings are commonplace, Buyoya and Ndayizeye were guaranteed power by a coalition that crossed ethnic and political lines.

⁵ Correlates of War defines intrastate war by four markers: (1) military action internal to the metropole of the state system member; (2) the active participation of the national government; (3) effective resistance by both sides; and (4) a total of at least 1,000 battle-deaths during each year of the war.

Their presidencies were insured, and their mandate was to create a new constitution alongside the other members of the transitional government.

While there was certainly still unrest and brutality raging in the country, there was also a sense of hope that the new Burundi would be less burdened by ethnic and political tension. The collective sentiment was that the power sharing agreement between the Hutu and Tutsi leaders would work and Burundi would be stable. This optimism was shared by the international community; in 2005, following the elections, Freedom House deemed Burundi a constitutional democracy, and upped its political rights ranking from 5 to 3.⁶ It was in this context that women's agency increased. In a time where real hope about Burundi's democratic future circled both inside and outside its borders, women were able to organize and effectively express their policy strategies for reconciliation and their ideas for improving women's rights without the barrier of party lines or exclusion from decision making positions.

While the 2005 elections in Burundi were deemed free and fair (FHa 2006, SD HR Report a 2005), Nkurunziza's presidency was characterized by an immense crackdown on political rights, and the Senate and the National Assembly became almost immediately divided across party lines. Directly following the civil war, in 2004, Burundi received a Freedom House score of 5 on political rights. In 2015, that score worsened to a 6, and in 2016, declined to a 7 (FHa 2004, 2015, 2016). In recent years, Burundi has been deemed the most corrupt country in East Africa (FHa 2011), with politically motivated arrests and security forces' abuse of citizens rampant (SD HR Report a 2005, 2007, 2009). Although judicial reform was a major part of the Arusha agreement, the judicial

⁶ On a scale of 1-7, with 1 being the most free and 7 being the least free.

branch remained largely in the control of the Tutsi minority, was subject to bribes for decisions, and felt by the majority of Burundi's citizens to be unequipped to provide basic protection (SD HR Report a 2005). Nkurunziza, an ethnic Hutu, did not have a functioning relationship with the judiciary branch of government, nor did he have a strong hold on power. Several higher-ranking officials, including opposition leaders, were arrested upon suspicion of a coup plot in August 2007 (FHa 2007). Faced with threats to his power, Nkurunziza has responded with stringent restrictions on political rights; no direct criticism is allowed of the president, and several journalists have been arrested and several media outlets have been shut down for expressing alternative views (FHa 2006, 2006, 2008). The political freedom that was so exciting in 2005 has all but disappeared. During the 2010 elections, Freedom House stated,

Irregularities in local elections and efforts by President Pierre Nkurunziza's National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) to close political space led opposition candidates to boycott the subsequent presidential and parliamentary elections. Sporadic political violence occurred throughout the electoral period, with the CNDD and opposition parties accusing one another of complicity in the attacks (FHA 2011).

Opposition parties have responded similarly to political tension and instability; most political parties employ groups of young people to intimidate and perpetrate violence against their opposition. Both the dominant CNDD party and the other parties have used aggressive methods against both external and internal dissent. The current political system in Burundi encourages ethnic and political isolationism, with little to no cooperation between parties (Sow 2012). The crackdown on political rights and the emphasis on party allegiance occurred simultaneously with the decline in women's ability to make effective progress on the status of women in Burundi and as autonomous

legislators. The government as a whole has essentially ceased to function, effectively prohibiting the women involved in the government from using their position of power in a meaningful way.

The Burundian genocide, while devastating for men and women alike, did provide an opportunity for women to enter formal political institutions. These women were not simply symbolic; they were able to influence the government to include several mentions of gender equality in the new constitution. However, after the transition period, their presence in the government became less meaningful and the constitutional rights of women did not reflect the reality of their status within Burundi. This change can be seen as an expression of the decline of Burundian governance more broadly. The period of time where women were able to enter the government and influence its policies was a period of hope, positivity, and expected democratization, but as the post-conflict Burundian political landscape really took shape, it became increasingly clear to those in power that the power sharing agreements and new constitution did not change the instability of their political system. Political parties and ethnicity did not cease to be the most important identifiers, and the women in these parties were thus expected to defer to the party line. For some women, deference to the party line is made willingly, others feel limited by the sectarian nature of the parties (Falch 2010, 14). Regardless of female politicians' feelings toward this shift, the shift itself is clear: as the state declined, so too did the power of the women within that state to affect change.

CHAPTER 2: WOMEN'S ACTIVISM, CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT, AND ELECTION TO THE EXECUTIVE IN A DEMOCRATIZING POST-CONFLICT LIBERIA

Introduction

Liberia suffered fourteen years of intermittent civil war, during which women were left economically insecure, tortured, abducted, and raped. Because of the guerilla nature of warfare in the Liberian civil wars, men and boys were brutally and systematically conscripted by militant groups, and as a result, often forced into hiding. The absence of men left women to take on traditionally male roles and responsibilities, including providing for their families economically. Additionally, women in the Liberian conflict fought, became traders, and smuggled food across battle lines and checkpoints into their community markets.

The largest expansion of the female role in Liberian society came when women in Liberia mobilized into an organized peace movement to end the civil war. Fed up with the constant barrage of death and destruction, Christian and Muslim Liberian women worked in concert to protest the war, met with both President Charles Taylor and the main opposition groups, and ultimately convinced both sides to come to the Accra peace talks. When the women felt the peace talks were moving too slowly, they protested in order to force a comprehensive agreement. Women's visibility and influence in Liberian society has not diminished post-conflict. Although clear progress was not made in terms of female representation in parliament and the cabinet in the years following the peace agreement, Liberian women achieved immense power and formal representation when Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first female elected head of state in an African nation in 2005. Her election was secured in part by Liberian women political activists'

commitment to her campaign and a female voter turnout that equaled, if not surpassed, male voter turnout. Since her inauguration, Sirleaf, working with women's NGOs, has made significant policy changes for Liberian women. Furthermore, the advancements for women in politics have occurred alongside a period of democratization, allowing for women in civil society to have a greater impact on state policy. Thus, stagnation for women's inclusion in parliament and the cabinet seems less important to the overall picture of Liberian women's political voices when considered alongside the level of influence achieved by women in civil society and the election of a female head executive.

The Conflicts in Liberia

Like the genocide in Burundi, the Liberian civil wars, spanning from 1989 to 2003, were rooted in economic, social, and political grievances that coincided with ethnicity. Liberia's history, and subsequently the roots of its intrastate conflicts, is deeply intertwined with the history of the United States. In the 1820s, the American Colonization Society (ACS) began to encourage the repatriation of free Blacks and slaves to Liberia. Those who returned formed an Americo-Liberian ruling elite and worked with the de-facto colonial power, the ACS, to forcibly govern the native Liberians (Brenner 2004). The Americo-Liberian group made up between 2.5 and 5% of Liberia's population, yet its establishment was able to consolidate power and suppress Liberia's 16 other main ethnic groups (Call 2010, Tripp 2015).

The Republic of Liberia, under the rule of the Americo-Liberians, declared its independence on July 26, 1847, although the United States did not recognize it as a sovereign nation until 1862. The economic and military relationship between the U.S. and post-independence Liberia further established the elite status of the Americo-Liberian

rulers and encouraged the discrimination inflicted on indigenous Liberians. The U.S. business, Firestone Rubber Company, bought vast swaths of Liberian land, and emphatically promised to develop it. Though the company did not follow through on this promise, it did provide extensive employment for the Americo-Liberians, and little opportunity for indigenous Liberians. At the onset of World War II, the Americo-Liberian government tightened its grip on the country's politics and national resources by adopting an open door policy to foreign investment and focusing the economy on export crops like cocoa, rubber, and coffee. These policies increased the personal wealth of many of the elites, but caused economic and food insecurity for the majority of the population (Brenner 2004).

The Americo-Liberian's political party, the True Whig Party, maintained its dominance over the country until 1980, when Samuel Doe, of African Krahn descent, took power from William R. Tolbert in a military coup d'état (Call 2010, Brenner 2004, Tripp 2015). Almost immediately following his takeover, Doe began exhibiting authoritarian tendencies. His nine-year rule was laden with immense corruption, economic decline, and discrimination against the Gio, Grebo, and Mano ethnic groups (Tripp 2015). The first post-coup elections, held in 1985, were widely considered to be rigged (Brenner 2004). To appear on the ballot, candidates were required to pay a \$150,000 deposit. Doe banned major opposition parties, and after worries that Doe's party, the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) was falling behind, all ballots were moved to Monrovia and counted by a special commission, hand picked by Doe (Brenner 2004). About a month after the 1985 election, Army Commanding General Thomas Quiwonkpa attempted a coup, and was subsequently executed. Following his

failed attempt, Doe attacked Quiwonkpa's Gio and Manno supporters in Nimba County and tightened the restrictions upon their rights, fueling further unrest in the country (Brenner 2004, Tripp 2015).

Doe's ethnic group, the Krahn, comprised at most 5% of the Liberian population, but like the Americo-Liberians from 1847-1980, they dominated every major Liberian decision-making and economic institution during Doe's reign. To prevent revolt, the Krahn soldiers, encouraged by Doe, waged a violent campaign across non-Krahn dominated regions of Liberia. This onslaught of persecution, terrorization, and violence, coupled with the monetary failing of the Doe regime incited the event which would plunge Liberia into the First Liberian Civil War for the next seven years: Charles Taylor's 1989 coup.

Taylor invaded the country with support from neighboring C'ôte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso and successfully took power from Doe. He and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) party emphasized the grievances of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups against the Krahn and Mandigo, which festered during the discriminatory Americo-Liberian and Doe regimes (Tripp 2015). The country split into several warring factions: the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), created by Alhaji Kromah to revenge Doe's killing⁷, the Nimba Defense Council, the Movement for the Redemption of Liberian Moslems, the Krahn-dominated Liberian Peace Council, and the Lofa Defense Force. These militia groups fought a brutal civil war until 1996, when one of the 12 peace agreements signed since 1989 finally brought the country to a transitional period, and elections were held (Tripp 2015, 82). Taylor and his party won the elections

⁷ ULIMO later divided into two sects: Mandigo-led ULIMO-K and Krahn-led ULIMO-J.

with 75.3% of the vote, although many believed that Liberian citizens only voted for him out of fear that he would plunge the country back into war upon any other outcome (Call 2010, Tripp 2015).

Peace was short lived even with Taylor's victory. In 1999, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) attacked the Liberian government from Guinea, and not much later, Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) moved into the country from C'ôte d'Ivoire. These attacks prompted the Second Liberian Civil War, which lasted until 2003. In the intervening years between Taylor's coup in 1989 and the signing of the peace agreement in Accra, Ghana in August 2003, over 200,000 people were killed and over 850,000 were displaced, either internally or in bordering countries (Brenner 2004).

Liberian Women's Experiences During and After the Civil Wars

Both the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars were vicious affairs. The countryside was totally controlled by various warlords, and as the war progressed, violence moved toward the capital, Monrovia, where thousands of Liberians from across the hinterland were seeking refuge in camps. The government of Liberia, with Charles Taylor at its helm, was equally violent against its citizens, and often threatened to remove them from IDP camps by force, out of fear the camps were an embarrassment to the administration (Disney 2008). As the country fell to complete chaos and disarray, women's livelihoods, bodily integrity, and ability to protect their families were fundamentally threatened.

Women-headed households were particularly vulnerable to the economic devastation caused by Liberia's civil wars. The majority of Liberian women worked in

the informal sector before the outbreak of the civil war, either in the small towns or markets. As waves of violence spread through the country and the countryside became dominated by warlords, the informal sector collapsed, and women were left without their livelihoods (Liebling Kalifani et. all 2011). A vast number of women became the sole economic providers for their families during wartime as a result of systematic conscription of males to militant groups and overwhelming male death (Liebling Kalifani et. all 2011, Tripp 2015). The loss of their livelihood was ruinous for women across Liberia, as they could depend neither on the collapsing and violent state, nor on their families for support.

The engulfing chaos of the civil wars not only made women vulnerable to economic insecurity, but also to torture, abduction, and sexual violence. As warlords recruited young boys and men into their militant groups, they gave these recruits guns and power. These guerilla fighters, enticed by their newfound strength, continually ravaged the countryside. One woman, Janet Bryant Johnson, a reporter for the Catholic radio station *Radio Veritas*, described how the warlords and their fighters became drunk with power during raids, “these boys would go into your home, they could rape you in front of your children, they could rape you in front of your husband” (Disney 2008).

The World Health Organization’s office in Monrovia interviewed about 450 women from fifteen displaced persons shelters across the city. Of the respondents, thirty-three percent reported having been raped, eight-four percent of the group were raped during periods of active warfare, eighty six percent of the rape cases involved weapons, and multiple attackers were involved in over fifty percent of the cases (Cain 1999, 275). One woman told the World Health Organization,

I was nine months pregnant. When the fighters came, they grabbed me and my husband and tied us up. The head of my husband was cut off in front of me. I was then raped by about fifteen young men. I delivered my baby a day after. Now my womb cannot stay in place (Cain 1999, 280).⁸

Rape was systematic, widespread, and used by all militant forces. Rape and other sexual violations were employed against women as a form of torture. A report of the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) found,

There are numerous reports of fighters moving among the displaced of various areas looking for pregnant women. When they find one they gamble on the sex of the unborn baby. They then cut the mother's womb open and pull out the baby to see who won the bet. The mother and baby are then thrown to the side of the road, as the fighters go looking for their next victim (Cain 1999, 281).⁹

NPFL fighters regularly tortured women by “placing hot metal rods between their legs and forcing men to rape women” (SD HR Report c 1995). Additionally, while men were the primary victims of abduction into the armed forces, women were also targeted, and sometimes forced to marry rebels. A woman from Pleebo, a city in southeastern Liberia, recounted her experience of being captured by rebels,

I was captured in 1992 and raped. I was with the rebels all through the bush until 1994, when I started falling sick and I went to the hospital. I later went to Guinea and returned in 1997 and got very ill again. When I went to hospital I was tested positive, it is only my sister who knows my status (Liebling-Kalifani et. all 2011, 8).

Liberian women had few resources to protect themselves from the widespread violence engulfing their country. Rebels invaded their homes and ravaged their bodies and lives. Many women were raped, tortured, exposed to disease, or killed. Because the recruitment

⁸ From Rape-A Silent Scourge of the Liberian Conflict, World Health Organization, WHO Office, Monrovia, Liberia, April-June 1995 in an anonymous report to the author.

of able-bodied men into rebel groups was so prominent, it fell to Liberian women to leave safety in order to make a living, further exposing them to the horrors of the civil conflict (Cain 1999, Liebling-Kalifani et. all 2011).

The immense effort to conscript Liberian men to rebel groups had another gendered consequence: women, more than ever, became the primary providers and the primary authorities within their families and communities. Women took on an enlarged role during the conflict by distributing food when shortages ensued, and hiding their husbands, sons, relatives and friends from rebels who came to abduct them. Additionally, women acted as negotiators and advocates for their communities and the greater Liberian population by bringing food from the hinterland into the city and other neglected parts of the country. This often required the women to negotiate their safe passage with the NPFL forces and across the ULIMO checkpoints (Tripp 2015). One person interviewed by Tripp attributed many Liberians' survival to these market women,

During the war, Monrovia was divided into sections controlled by various warlords. The market women were especially brave and took a lot of risks, they traveled across divisions in the city. We would have starved to death without the market women (Tripp 2015, 85).

Women played instrumental roles in protecting the civilian population of Liberia, despite the vast personal risk involved. However, women also engaged in violence. About 20-30% of the combatants were women (Tripp 2015, 86), and at the end of the conflict around 21,000 women and girls were demobilized as part of the official DDR programs (Nduka-Agwu 2009, 190). Liberian women undeniably and in different ways contributed, interacted with, and were victimized by the two civil wars in their country.

⁹ From Confidential Report of the UNOMIL Chief of Security to UNOMIL Headquarters, Monrovia, Liberia 12 (24 May 1995)

While women's contributions to the war effort were certainly laudable in the First Liberian Civil War and in the beginning of the Second Liberian Civil War, the real marvel came during the end of the second conflict, when Liberian women came together to bring the Taylor Regime and the various warring factions to the peace talks in Accra, Ghana. The women of Liberia, for the most part, felt disengaged from the driving forces of their country's civil wars. Leyma Gbowee, the leader of Women in Liberia Mass Action For Peace, spoke of how the war was often attributed to the unfair gap between the rich and the poor, the hatred between the ethnic groups, or a desperate bid for control over the country's natural resources. However, she felt, as did many Liberian women, "there's nothing in my mind that should make people do what they did to the children of Liberia" (Disney 2008). The brutality, longevity, and seeming futility of the civil wars in Liberia drove numerous Liberian women to allocate all of their resources and efforts toward ending the conflict.

At its outset, the Liberian women's movement for peace was religious in character; Gbowee appealed to her fellow Christian women to come together and drive the warring parties to peace talks. Asatu Bah Kenneth, the Assistant Director of the Liberian National Police, and a Muslim woman, felt connected to the message of the Christian Women's Peace Initiative and she and Gbowee resolved to bring Liberian women of all faiths to unite under one goal: end the civil war in Liberia (Disney 2008, Johnson 2012, Tripp 2015). From that point forward, the women of Liberia took on a mantra of interfaith unity, asking, "Can the bullet pick and choose? Does the bullet know Christian from Muslim?" (Disney 2008). Once the women had unified and formed core support for their peace movement, they utilized their connections to various factions of

society to pressure the Taylor regime and the warlords to engage in peace talks. Gbowee described how both Taylor and the warlords appealed to their religions to justify their power and control. She explained that Taylor often thanked God for bringing him the office of the presidency, and emphasized his religion to legitimize his authority (Disney 2008). The warlords would use their Islamic faith in the same guise, promising that Islam would thrive with the overthrow of the Taylor regime and using it to propel their popularity (Disney 2008). The women strategically pressured their religious leaders, both Christian and Muslim, to spread a message of peace throughout their congregations and delegitimize both Taylor and the warlords' religious rhetoric (Disney 2008).

Following their appeals to religious leaders, Women in Liberia Mass Action for Peace, the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), and other women's organizations staged a mass protest at the fish market in central Monrovia in a bid to command Taylor's attention, secure a meeting with him, and plead their case for peace. Dressed in all white with their hair tied, over 2,500 Liberian women demonstrated for days on end. They sat and chanted "the women of Liberia want peace now" (Disney 2008). Together, the women wrote the "Women of Liberia- Position Statement on the Liberian Crisis" to present to Taylor. When, after several days, Taylor continued to pass by their protests without pause, the women marched to the Executive Mansion, and sat from 5am to 6pm in a demonstration to end the war. On April 11, 2003, about 1,000 women demonstrated at Monrovia's City Hall in protest against the war (Tripp 2015, 99). Finally, Taylor conceded and met with the women of the movement. Around 2,500 women entered the Executive Mansion and handed over their Position Statement. By the

time they left, Taylor had agreed to attend the peace talks in Ghana (Disney 2008, Taylor 2015).

The women of Liberia understood that Taylor's presence at the peace talks would mean little without the cooperation of the main rebel groups, especially LURD (Disney 2008, Taylor 2015). Subsequently, the Women's Peace Movement sent two of its leaders to Sierra Leone to negotiate with the rebels and convince them to participate in the peace process. In order to have the most impact at the talks, Liberian women raised money to send a few women to Ghana to establish a relationship with the female refugees living there and encourage them to join the women's movement for peace once the process in Accra was underway (Disney 2008).

The women of Liberia did not consider their mission complete at the commencement of the peace talks. Though they had no formal role in the Accra peace process, they nonetheless worked to ensure its success. Gbowee expressed her initial frustration at the progress of the peace talks; Taylor was not willing to make concessions and the rebels, rather than taking the talks seriously, were enjoying the fully funded amenities that came with their attendance without dedicating themselves to the process (Disney 2008). The failure of the talks to facilitate any substantial peace agreement was complicated by the indictment of Charles Taylor for war crimes by the UN-mandated Special Court for Sierra Leone. Following Taylor's indictment, he fled back to Liberia and popular unrest immediately ensued. There were cries that without Taylor, the stability of Liberia would be fundamentally threatened. Conversely, the rebels and their supporters scrambled to gain control of the country's affairs in anticipation of Taylor's absence (Disney 2008). As the peace talks continued in Ghana, full-scale war raged on in

Monrovia. The women protesting at the peace talks were speaking to their families at home and hearing how thousands of people were cramming into sports stadiums to seek refuge from the fighting, and were left without clean water or access to food. After the rebels sent a missile into the American Embassy, where many refugees were camped out, the violence and grief overwhelming Monrovia pushed the women at the peace talks to take more extreme steps.

The peace talks had been ongoing for six weeks, and the negotiating parties had made no tangible progress. The women formed a physical barricade outside of the talks and prevented the negotiating parties from leaving the building until they reached an agreement. General Abdulsalami Abubakar, former Nigerian President and chief mediator at Accra, met with the women to hear their concerns after the barricade protest. Under pressure from the women, Abubakar and the international community announced that funding would be discontinued for the peace talks if an agreement were not reached in two weeks (Disney 2008). The threat succeeded; two weeks later, the terms of the agreement were announced. Taylor would be exiled to Nigeria, a UN Peacekeeping Force in Liberia was established, and a transitional government, with many former warlords holding positions, was announced (Disney 2008). The Liberian women's peace movement, which was supported by the UN Mission in Liberia's Gender Program (Nduka-Agwu 2009), was successful.

The women involved in the peace movement, and those who saw their successes, were fully conscious of the impact they had. General Abdulsalami Abubakar said of the women's peace movement, "We took the women of Liberia in all seriousness. We found

an ally in them” (Disney 2008). Esther Page, a community leader integral to the Women’s Peace Movement, said,

The women decided to get the rebels to put down their guns. We had fasted and prayed throughout the war. Women played a major role in bringing the war to an end. We were the cause for peace to enter into this country. We talked to men to be calm for elections... We carried food to the rebels and convinced them to stop fighting (Tripp 2015, 97).¹⁰

The woman of Liberia, through their incredible organization and unification, were undeniably the impetus for the end of their country’s second civil war.

The Liberian Political Landscape and Women’s Involvement In Civil Society and Government Post-Conflict

Despite Liberian women’s incredible achievement of bringing their country to peace, their representation in parliament and the ministry remained stagnant post-conflict. In 1994, in the midst of the First Liberian Civil War, and before the onset of the Second Liberian Civil War, women comprised 5.7% of the Liberian House of Representatives (IPU 1997). In 2004, the year following the peace agreement, women comprised only 5.4% of the Liberian House of Representatives (IPU 2004). The Cabinet also remained a primarily male institution; in 2005, women held only 3 out of 22 Ministry positions (IPU Women in Politics 2005). Today, the proportion of women in Liberia’s House of Representatives hovers around 11% (IPU 2015), so women have seen an increase in the intervening years since the Accra Peace Agreement, and 11% is perhaps a strong percentage given the lack of a gender quota in Liberia. Women have made greater strides in the Cabinet, with women holding 20% of the positions in 2015 (IPU Women in Politics, 2015).

¹⁰ In an interview to the author, Monrovia, September 13, 2007

However, women have made clear gains in the formal political sphere outside of the parliament and cabinet: a woman rules the executive branch. Leading up to the 2005 elections, Liberian women rallied around Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and ensured her success in the 2005 presidential election. The women of the peace movement believed that peace would come through continual work, not through a single event, like the signing of the agreement (Disney 2008). Gbowee said, “until we had elective democracy, Liberia would not know peace” (Disney 2008). The women chose to support Sirleaf because they had watched the men of Liberia tear apart their society, murder their children, and drag the country into disarray, all to secure their personal power and wealth. They felt the leadership of the country should fall to a woman (Disney 2008). In the lead up to the 2005 election, female activists, including the leadership and members of WIPNET and other women’s peace organizations, undertook a vigorous campaign to register female voters across the country (Tripp 2015). Their efforts were successful; women voters equaled male voters in the election, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first elected female African head of state on November 23, 2005 (Tripp 2015).

It is not shocking that Liberia was the first African country to elect a female head of state. Before the First Liberian Civil War, Liberia had a comparatively large number of educated women, perhaps because the Americo-Liberian regime placed a higher value on Americo-Liberian women than on indigenous men (Tripp 2015). Additionally, Liberia has had a long history of women, albeit a small number, in leadership. The first female minister served Liberia in 1948 (Tripp 2015, 94). Liberia also had a non-elected female head of state; Ruth Sando Perry was selected to head the Third Liberian National Transitional Government in 1996. While Liberia does not have a robust history of gender

or class equality, it does have a legacy of including women in leadership. Thus, Sirleaf's election and the acceptance of her leadership by Liberian society are not altogether unsurprising.

Since her inauguration to the presidency in 2005, and in the years following her reelection in 2011, Sirleaf has demonstrated commitment to issues of gender equality, and attempted to affect significant positive changes in the lives of Liberian women. Under Sirleaf's leadership, Liberia was the first country to launch its National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 (Tripp 2015). Created in 2009, the National Action Plan calls for women's full and equal participation in matters of peace and security, further protection of women and girls in war zones, and full prosecution for gender-based crimes (Tripp 2015). While the National Plan's implementation has suffered from fragmentation and disorganization, the Joint Programme to Prevent and Respond to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence observed in 2008 that Liberia has made improvements to its capacity to respond to gender issues in the realm of peace and security (Liebling Kalifani et. all 2011). Furthermore, Sirleaf's government instituted a National Gender Policy and a National Gender Forum in 2009, in addition to Rural Women Structures, which serve to allow rural women to express their concerns and opinions surrounding state policy (Tripp 2015). Sirleaf's new policy for free primary school education increased the enrollment of Liberian girls in school by 40% (Tripp 2015, 112). Sirleaf, together with the Ministry of Gender and Development, launched a campaign against rape in order to engrain in society that sex should not be a requirement to receive services or employment (Tripp 2015, 112). Clearly, Sirleaf's election and leadership has allowed Liberian women greater freedom and protection, and suggests that

regardless of stagnation in the National Assembly and cabinet, Liberian politics have considerably opened to women in the post-conflict period.

Sirleaf's changes to gender policy have been complimented, and in part driven, by civil society activism. The Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) has consistently lobbied to change discriminatory Liberian gender laws. In 2003, AFELL succeeded in passing a gender equitable inheritance bill, and in 2005 it worked on rape legislation that strengthens the punishment for rape by making it a nonbailable offence with a minimum sentence of ten years for raping an adult, and a life sentence for raping a minor (Tripp 2015, 111). Additionally, NGOs in Liberia, including NGOs focused on gender issues, have in recent years enjoyed a close and positive relationship with the government and have consistently been able to contribute to policy making (Fuest 2008, Tripp 2015).

The opening of civil society and the near full participation of female voters in elections are indicative of the wave of democratization that has infiltrated Liberia since Sirleaf's election. The reality for democracy in Liberia at the conclusion of the second civil war was grim; the infrastructure was decimated, sporadic fighting continued in the countryside, and much of Liberia's population had been killed or forced to flee (FHc 2004). The judiciary branch was under the corruptive influence of the security forces and the transitional government, which both had little accountability to the government or citizens (FHc 2004). Furthermore, Liberia's history did not give any strong indicators that a true democracy would emerge. Since its independence in 1847, Liberia has been governed by discriminatory and authoritarian regimes which came to power either through foreign imposition or military coup. However, with Sirleaf's election came

concrete improvements and democratization efforts. While the judiciary and security forces have continued to be plagued by corruption, Sirleaf has created government watchdog institutions in an effort to combat this (FHc 2007). She has also allowed the media and civil society to operate freely, in stark contrast to Liberia's previous regimes (FHc 2006). From 2004 to 2007, Liberia's Political Rights score from Freedom House improved from a 6 to a 3.

Liberia's fourteen years of intermittent civil war were absolutely brutal for men and women alike, yet those years also drove women to make incredible achievements. Women were on the front lines of battle, ensured their communities received food, and became the most vital part of bringing the warring parties together to sign a peace agreement. Women also maintained a political voice after the peace agreement by working to elect Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and remaining remarkably active in civil society. Women in Liberia have come to understand their worth. The leader of a prominent Liberian women's organization stated,

During the war we got to know our value... Women can speak anywhere [in public] now. In the past, women were in the back and were silent... Women stayed at the back too long, and now we have decided to speak for ourselves. The voice of women should be heard (Tripp 2015, 107).¹¹

While women did not make significant progress in terms of their representation to parliament and the cabinet, they clearly are in a better position to make policy recommendations and wield political power than they were prior to the outbreak of conflict. Furthermore, better gender equity in parliament and cabinet may be on the horizon for Liberia; a gender bill recommending a 30% quota for women in Liberian

¹¹ In an interview to the author, Bomi, June 12, 2012

representative bodies, introduced several times since 2005, has been gaining support in recent years (Nduka-Agwu 2009, 191, Tripp 2015). Yet, even without that bill, the amount of power allotted to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the significant contributions of women in civil society under an increasingly democratic government have positively reshaped the political reality for Liberian women.

CHAPTER 3: MILITARIZATION, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND THE PERPETUATION OF PATRIARCHY IN POST-CONFLICT CHAD

Introduction

Chad has been engulfed in near perpetual civil war for the majority of its post-independence history. It has had five major outbreaks of civil conflict since 1966, and three in the post-Cold War period. These conflicts were rooted in religion, ethnicity, political discrimination, authoritarianism, and poverty. The myriad of conflicts has caused Chad to become an incredibly militarized society, and this militarization has worsened the existing patriarchal attitudes within the country. Women during Chad's multiple civil wars were victims of systematic rape, other forms of sexual violence, forced militarization, and child marriage, and continue to be persecuted in the post-conflict period. Yet, like women in Liberia and Burundi, Chadian women during and after conflict ventured further into the public sphere, undertook new economic endeavors, and involved themselves in civil society. Unlike women in Liberia and Burundi, a mass, organized women's movement did not emerge in post-conflict Chad, women's involvement in civil society was far from widespread, and women experienced a decrease in their formal political representation. The absence of the emergence of more gender equitable formal and informal political spheres in Chad coincided with a worsening of the country's already horrendous civil and political rights, making Chad the bleakest case for women's increased political voice after civil war.

The Roots of the Civil Wars in Chad

Chad's history is so intertwined with war, regime change, and instability, that it is difficult to discern times of peace from times of conflict within the country. Since its

independence from France in 1960, Chad has been fighting a losing battle against three mutually reinforcing and destructive factors: difficult living conditions and landscape, limited state capacity, and ethnic fragmentation. The interaction of these three detrimental characteristics drove Chad to experience five major periods of civil war as defined by the Correlates of War project: 1966-1971, 1980-1984, 1989-1990, 1998-2000, and 2005-2006 (Sarkees and Wayman 2010).

These five outbreaks of fighting are far from representative of the full scale of Chad's intrastate conflicts. Fighting between warring parties and the government has continued throughout Chad's entire post-independence history (Debos 2011). Once French security forces left Chad in 1965, the inability of any government to wield power over Chad's vast desert territory became increasingly clear. The state is weak, the country is divided both into the Arab North and Christian South, and among hundreds of small ethnic groups, and the population is endemically poor, with a GNI per capita of \$980 US Dollars in 2014 (The World Bank 2016).¹² These dynamics, present in Chad since 1960, have been the underlying reasons for each of Chad's civil wars. I will briefly discuss the specific impetus behind each major outbreak of fighting. However, given Chad's complicated and near continuous state of violence, I believe it is more useful to think of Chad's civil conflicts not as separate entities, but rather as one long civil war with small interjections of peace.

The first period of major fighting, spanning from 1966-1971, was caused by the rebellion of the National Liberation Front of Chad (FROLINAT) against Chadian president François Tombolbaye's regime. Tombolbaye had served as the head of the

colonial government for France and the leader of the Chadian Progressive Party (PPT), and following Chad's independence, was appointed president. His rule was incredibly authoritarian, corrupt, and patrimonial. He banned all other political parties, dissolved the National Assembly following riots in 1963, and subjected politicians, civil servants, and senior administrators to *Yondo*, a Sara¹³ initiation rite likened to torture by those forced to undergo it (Nolutshungu 1996). Tombolbaye also intensely favored the Christian southern region of Chad, discriminating against and ignoring the needs of Arabs in the north (Azevedo 1998, Nolutshungu 1996). These instances represent only a few of many horrifically authoritarian and personalistic actions taken by Tombolbaye during his presidency.

Thus, the formation of FROLINAT in 1966 and the subsequent insurgency against Tombolbaye comes as no surprise. The FROLINAT rebellion, a Muslim dominated movement, quickly engulfed the entirety of northern Chad. The years of the FROLINAT rebellion were bloody, and involved fighting between FROLINAT and the southern-dominated government, violence between factions within FROLINAT, and interventions by the French (Azevedo 1998, Nolutshungu 1996). In 1975, junior officers in the Chadian military, fed up with Tombolbaye's arbitrary firings and unstable leadership, successfully ousted Tombolbaye in a coup (Azevedo 1998). Felix Malloum, a colonel in the Chadian army who had been imprisoned by Tombolbaye until the coup, replaced him. Malloum was also a member of the PPT and the Southern Chad establishment.

¹² GNI per capita represents the average income of a country's citizens. It is calculated by dividing the dollar value of a country's final annual by its population.

¹³ Sara is the ethnic group Tombolbaye belonged to.

Malloum's rule did not last long. In an effort to unite northern and southern fighting forces, Malloum entered negotiations with Hissène Habré, a commander in the Second Liberation Army of FROLINAT, and later the leader of Armed Forces of the North (FAN), a faction of FROLINAT. Eventually Malloum, who was serving both as president and prime minister, conceded the position of prime minister to Habré in 1978 (Debos 2011). However, a series of peace talks held in Nigeria in 1979 brought Goukouni Oueddei, the leader of the opposing fraction of FROLINAT, called the People's Armed Forces (FAP), not Habré, to power. The three-way power struggle between Malloum, Habré, and Oueddei was the catalyst for the Second Chadian Civil War (Atlas and Licklider 1999). Following Oueddei's installment as president, Habré mobilized FAN to retake power, and deposed Oueddei in a coup in 1982. Habré's revolt plunged the country into violence once again.

Habré's oppressive rule from 1982-1990 ultimately caused Chad's third major period of civil war. For those eight years, Habré acted as an absolute despot in Chad, and was responsible for "tens of thousands of political killings as well as systematic torture" (HRW 2015). Habré held onto power by promising his opposition, especially opposing warlords, positions in his government. He created the Chadian National Armed Forces (FANT) out of his rebel group, FAN, and attempted to create a Chadian national identity based on the hatred of Libya as a foreign occupier (Atlas and Licklider 1999). However, Habré's power sharing tactics did not hold up against his brutal discrimination against political opponents and citizens outside of his Gorane ethnic party (Atlas and Licklider 1999). Furthermore, once Libya was driven out of the north and ceased to be a foreign

occupier, the fragility of the Habré regime became apparent. He did not have a strategy for holding together the tenuous coalition of factions he had created, and his cruelty and bias made him unpopular with much of Chad's population (Atlas and Licklider 1999). The vulnerability of Habré's rule presented an opportunity for his former commander in chief, Idriss Deby, and Deby's rebel group, the Patriotic Movement for Salvation (MPS), to initiate multiple attacks against the FANT forces (Atlas and Licklider 1999). Deby's military resistance to Habré's rule launched the third period of civil conflict in Chad, and ultimately led to Habré fleeing the country on December 1, 1990 (Atlas and Licklider 1999).

Like Habré, Deby attempted to reconcile the country by calling for democratization and installing his former enemies in government positions (Karlsruud and Solhjell 2012). However, Deby's calls for democratization were not in line with his actual leadership and policy. Deby is a member of the Zaghawa ethnic group, which represents about 2% of the Chadian population. Under Deby's rule, the Zaghawa receive a disproportionate amount of the country's resources and jobs, dominating the ranks of the armed forces and government (Massey and May 2006, 443). This ethnic discrimination drove Youssouf Togoïmi, Deby's former defense chief and a member of the Toubou ethnic group, to form the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (MDJT), a rebel group aiming to overthrow Deby. MDJT, initially supported by Libya, attacked government forces from the time of its formation until 2002, when a tenuous agreement with the Deby regime was reached. Togoïmi's revolt marks the fourth period of civil war in Chad.

The fifth and most recent Chadian civil war, beginning in 2005, was driven by many of the same factors as the previous outbursts of violence, but is also inextricably linked to the Darfur Conflict in Southern Sudan. Deby had been providing his fellow Zaghawas, many of whom were rebels in Darfur, with support for their resistance to the Sudanese government since his installation as the Chadian head of state (Massey and May 2006). Thus, the Sudanese government willingly armed a number of Chadian rebel groups in Darfur and essentially fought a proxy war against the Chadian government through these groups (Massey and May 2006). In December 2005, several factions of anti-Deby militant groups laid siege to the capital, N'Djamena, in an effort to depose Deby. These rebel groups were made up of Habré supporters, members of other ethnic groups, but also of other Zaghawa factions who wanted to see Deby out of power (Massey and May 2006, Marchal 2008). While the conflict in Chad beginning in 2005 technically ended in 2006, there were 20 major rebel attacks in the country between 2005 and 2009 (Debos 2011, 414).

Clearly, Chad's history is marred with multiple sustained periods of civil war, and these periods are interconnected. While a different aspect of authoritarian leadership, a different military coup, or ethnic strife may have instigated each separate instance of fighting, there are several common explanations among them. First, Chad is divided into a Muslim northern region and a Christian southern region, and this division affects all aspects of the country. However, it is also not the only important social schism. Chad is also incredibly ethnically diverse. The CIA World Factbook found from the 1993 census that Chad was comprised of 9 major ethnic groups: 27.7% Sara, 12.3% Arab, 11.5% Mayo-Kebbi, 11.5% Kanem-Bornou, 8.7% Ouaddai, 6.7% Jadjarai, 6.5% Tandjile, 6.3%

Gorane, and 4.7% Firtri Batha. Additionally, the census found that 6.4% of Chadians identified as “other” and 0.3% were unknown (CIA Factbook 2016). The sheer diversity and lack of unified identity in Chad contributed to each of Chad’s wars. The sectarian nature of the Chadian social structure was compounded by Chad’s endemic poverty, authoritarianism, and the historical conflation of political and military forces. Chad has yet to experience a non-military regime change; armed takeover is the most viable strategy for gaining power in Chad (Debos 2011). Thus there is a clear “cycle of rebellion and repression” that runs through Chadian political history and conflict (Debos 2011, 414).

The established rules of politics in Chad are brutal, uncompromising, and militant. This is clear upon examination of the Tombolbaye, Oueddei, Habré, and Deby regimes. Furthermore, any attempts at reconciliation by these leaders was always exercised through promising opposition warlords positions of power, further contributing to the corruption of the country, and also “to a situation where political control is mainly rooted in co-opting warlords, with civilian opposition and non-violent campaigns taking the back seat” (Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012, 230). All of these factors are intensified by Chad’s difficult living conditions, landscape, and scarce resources. Chad is incredibly impoverished, making unfair distribution of jobs and resources by authoritarian leaders all the more provocative (Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012). These patterns consistently destabilize Chad and shaped women’s experiences and ability to exercise power and autonomy both during and after the Chadian civil wars.

Chadian Women's Experiences During and After Conflict

As a result of constant warfare and a long history of military rule, Chad is a highly militarized society that places a premium on the strength of armed forces. This deeply entrenched military tradition has emphasized masculinity and worsened preexisting patriarchal norms (Debos 2011). Violence is a commonly utilized and highly successful strategy for gaining power and prestige in Chad. After nearly two decades of full scale sectarian violence and political enmity, during times of war young boys in Chad were expected and encouraged to join the ranks of the national armed forces, or fight in a rebel militant group (Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012). This pattern is evident upon examination of the demographics of both the army and rebel groups. Most of these forces were made up of armed male civilians who have been recruited or forced into fighting (Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012). The fact that the majority of fighters were ordinary civilians blurred the boundaries between military and civilian life (Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012). This entrenched connection between power, masculinity, and armed force and the conflation of civilian and military life has been deeply harmful to Chadian women. Masculinity is stressed, and women are seen as less important, far less powerful, and as objects to be either protected or harmed by military forces (Debos 2011, Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012).

One of the ways that the militarization of society and subsequent discrimination against women arose during Chad's various civil wars was through sexual violence. The national armed forces and each of the rebel forces used rape and sexual violence as a means to suppress the population, to humiliate women, and simply as a way to receive a reward for their conquests. The State Department reported that in June of 2000, the

national army invaded the Southern villages of Bessokovan, Bekolo, Bembaitada, and Bamadja, which it believed to support Kette Nodji Moise, the leader of the rebel militant force the National Salvation Council for Peace and Democracy (CSNPD). During the invasion of these villages, soldiers systematically raped the women and tortured the men (SD HR Report b 2000). Chadian women were regularly raped and abused by all sectors of security forces and opposition groups. Women in custody of the police and the army were also routinely raped and sexually harassed (Farr 2009). In 2004, on a three-day visit to IDP and refugee camps in Chad, Amnesty International recorded 250 rape cases, and many of them involved multiple rapists (Farr 2009). While many of these cases were rapes of refugees from Darfur, Chadian women were not immune to these abuses. Chad's security forces did not discriminate when it came to rape and sexual violence, but rather targeted all women living in Chad (AI 2011). The issue of rape and sexual violence was met with total impunity in Chad. The same institutions that were meant to protect civilians were in fact among the perpetrators of these crimes, and as a result, there was little recourse for women to seek help or protection.

Girl children in Chad were also incredibly targeted by both militant opposition groups and the government. Early and forced marriages are pervasive in Chad, and IDPs from the multiple Chadian civil wars are particularly targeted; during years of war, the problem became even more apparent. Young and old men alike took girls from the ages of twelve and thirteen as wives, and sometimes even as third or fourth wives (AI 2011). Like in cases of rape and sexual violence, men who forced young girls into marriages often did not face repercussions. For men who took multiple wives, the lack of punishment was in keeping with Chad's legalization of polygamy. However, for men

who took young wives, the negligible ramifications represent a failure of Chad's legal system to uphold the legal marriage age of sixteen (Casimiro et. all, 2008). Amnesty International found that these types of marriages have become so commonplace in Chad that they are not viewed as problematic by the majority of Chadian citizens (AI 2011). Young girls in Chad also suffered from forced abduction during the civil wars. While most of the child soldiers conscripted into the military and rebel groups were men, they were not exclusively so. The exact number of female child soldiers who fought for Chadian armed groups remains unknown, but the existence of young girls in militant groups is definite. Ten girls between the ages of 10 and 17 were among the children released from the armed group MDJT in May 2010 (AI 2011, 14).

Due in part to the precarious nature of peace in Chad, the issues facing women and girls during conflict still persist in the post conflict period. Child marriage is not exclusive to the conflict period or to IDPs. As recently as June 2011, Amnesty International identified a case where a fourteen year old girl was forced to marry a relative of her father, and though her mother alerted the authorities, she remained in the capital living with her much older "husband" (AI 2011, 10). Inaction by authorities is a common occurrence in Chad, especially surrounding gender issues. Like child marriage, rape and sexual assault have remained pervasive and unpunished following the cessation of the civil wars. Between June 2010 and April 2011, at least 25 girls aged eight to thirteen were reportedly raped in Tandjilé-East, a region in Southern Chad. Following the rapes, girls from around the region participated in two peaceful demonstrations, which elicited the governor to promise there would be recourse for the victims. However, the efforts of local and national authorities to punish the perpetrators was negligible, even

though several of the suspects were still residing in the area and their identities were known to their victims (AI 2011, 9).

The issue of sexual violence in Chad is complicated by the fact that Eastern Chad remains engulfed in spillover from the Darfur conflict, and hosts many Sudanese refugees. This environment is similar to the environment of war, especially when it comes to rape and sexual violence. While rape is prominent within the refugee camps, it is the local women and girls of Eastern Chad who suffer the most from the insecurity of the region, as they are not protected by the relative safety of the camps (AI 2011, 9).

Amnesty International recounts the rape of one such local girl,

In the night of 4 to 5 March 2011, three men wearing military fatigues attacked the house of a local worker of an international NGO based in the town of Goz Beida. After the attack, the men took with them a 15-year-old girl. The girl confirmed that all the three men raped her several times and that she was beaten. She was abandoned by the roadside in the outskirts of the town (AI 2011, 9).

Clearly, rape and sexual violence have not subsided with the coming of relative peace in Chad.

Despite the challenges Chadian women and girls have faced as a result of near constant warfare, women in Chad also displayed courage and resilience during and after the Chadian civil wars. In Eastern Chad, arguably the most unstable area of the country, women within and outside of IDP and refugee camps play a vital role in their societies as the primary providers of food, water, and childcare (Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012). Women in Eastern Chad have also started small-scale businesses in areas such as alcohol production (Karlsrud and Solhjell 2012). The foray into the public sphere by women post-conflict is not unique to Eastern Chad; it has been observed in all areas of the country. Women across Chad have ventured into new businesses and trades post-conflict,

including dressmaking, embroidery, knitting, and production and marketing of goods like Shea nuts, groundnut oil, and doughnuts (Sy 1993, 11-12).

Furthermore, women refugees of war who returned to Chad revitalized the tradition of female kin organizing traditional parties by turning it into a lucrative commercial business. They organized parties in public bars and restaurants and opened attendance to the general public. Women were able to use the money earned from drink sales at these events to undertake small development projects. Through this business endeavor, women became close to other women outside of their family network (Nzomo 2002). These accomplishments by women across Chad seem all the more impressive when considered in light of the immense patriarchy of Chadian culture. Before the outbreak of the sustained period of civil wars,

The woman's role was that of biological and social reproduction. Giving birth was the only role which conferred status on women and this status was reinforced by large numbers of children. Every action and every movement done by a woman was done under the authority and control of a man (Sy 1993, 11).

Clearly, the social disruption caused by civil war did have some effect on gender relations. Women became more visible in the economic and public spheres, and gained some autonomy, either through the death of their husband or through their economic value to their families (Nzomo 2002, Sy 2011).

In addition to economic strides, women also gained a greater role in Chadian civil society. In the post-conflict period, some women became involved in peace movements. For example, Delphine Kenneloum Djiraibe became the national coordinator of the Monitoring Committee to Call for Peace and National Reconciliation in Chad (IRIN 2009). However, an organized, integrated, and unified women's movement on the scale

of Liberia or Burundi was totally absent in Chad. Tripp writes, “In postconflict countries like Angola, Chad, and Eritrea... few women were involved in peace movements or other forms of mobilization” (Tripp 2015, 37). Unlike in Burundi or Liberia, women were not involved, formally or informally, in the decisions made at Chad’s peace talks. Neither the agreement between the government of Chad and the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (MDJT), signed in January 2002, nor the Tripoli Peace Agreement between opposition political parties and the ruling party included any explicit mention of gender (Djiraibe 2010). While women in Chad made strides economically, and as a result challenged some patriarchal notions, they were unable to channel those post-conflict gains into a concrete women’s movement, or fight for peace on the same scale that Burundian and Liberian women did.

Chad’s Political Rights and Women’s Political Participation Post-Conflict

In 1993, following the Deby Coup, but before the period of civil conflict between Togoïmi and the MDJT, other rebel groups, and the government, Chad’s National Assembly was comprised of 16.4% women (IPU 1997). In 2002, right after the January peace agreement was signed, the National Assembly was only 5.2% women (IPU 2003). In 2011, years after the Tripoli Peace Negotiations resulted in a peace agreement, Chad’s National Assembly was made up of 14.9% women. This is the latest data available for women in Chadian parliament (IPU 2015). Women in Chad’s cabinet did see a slight increase following the fifth civil war. In 1995, only 5% of cabinet members in Chad were women (UNDP 1995). In 2010, the percentage of women in cabinet in Chad increased to 6.9% (IPU Women in Politics 2010). These numbers are a far cry from Burundi, which saw staggering increases, from Liberia, which elected a female president following civil

war, and from the literature that purports civil conflict results in an opening of the political system for women. Though the percentage of women in Chad's parliament may seem relatively high, Chad nonetheless experienced a decrease in female parliamentarians in the years following its civil wars, and only a 1.9% increase in cabinet members.

Furthermore, in a country like Chad, which has such weak state infrastructure and control, the question must be asked, does the National Assembly or the ministry matter? Chad's state is relatively incapable and there is a disconnect between government policy and reality. This is clear in the case of gender laws; despite the Chad penal code's prohibition of rape and child marriage, both issues are pervasive and widely tolerated by local authorities (AI 2011). In addition to not being able to dictate policy throughout the country, the Chadian state lacks basic control of its territory. Despite the peace agreement with the MDJT in 2002, rebels still remained the main power in parts of northwestern Chad throughout 2002 and 2003 (SD HR Report b 2003). Chad's government both perpetuates and ignores incredible human rights abuses against its people including "politically motivated killings; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; killings; rape by security forces; security force impunity; kidnappings of nongovernmental organization (NGO) personnel by armed groups and bandits; societal discrimination and violence against women" (SD HR Report b 2010).

Furthermore, Chad has some of the worst political and civil rights in the world. A year after the Tripoli Peace Agreement, in 2008, Chad had a Freedom House score of 6 for civil liberties and 7 for political rights (FHb 2008). Its numbers remain the same today. In Chad, power is totally consolidated in the hands of the executive and the elite of

President Deby's Zaghawa ethnic group (FHb 2007-2015). This issue was exacerbated by the passage of a constitutional amendment proposed by President Deby in 2005 that abolished presidential term limits in Chad (FHb 2007). The rule of law and the judicial system remains incredibly weak. Additionally, the ruling party controls the legislature and marginalizes the country's other 70 legal political parties. In fact, a number of the country's political parties were created by the ruling party, MPS, in order to separate and weaken the opposition (FHb 2007). The country's oil revenues contribute to Deby's authoritarian rule, as he often uses the money for personal gain and as a funding source for the military to fight opposition (FHb 2015). In 2014, Chad ranked 163 out of 175 countries and territories included in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (FHb 2015). It seems doubtful that women in Chad would really be able to contribute to the country's political process from within a state system this corrupt and ineffective.

Despite near complete exclusion from Chad's formal political organs, Chadian women aren't totally lacking a political voice. There exists some evidence that women in Chad have been able to influence political change post-conflict through involvement in civil society. After reports that the 2001 elections in Chad were rigged, large crowds of women gathered to protest outside of the French Embassy, accusing the French of being complicit in the fraudulent reelection of Idriss Deby (Casimiro et. all 2008). This occurred at the end of the third Chadian civil war, but before the outbreaks of the fourth and fifth. There were also reports of women in Chad organizing politically after Chadian warring parties signed their final peace agreement in 2007. In December 2008, women took to the streets of Guelendeng in a march protesting and condemning the continual

violation of their rights, and calling on the government to resolve the issue of impunity (IRIN 2009). However, Martine Klah, a Chadian activist, explained how the women were received by men and by people in positions of power, “Men told us that they were going to kill us one by one for having held that march” (IRIN 2009). Ultimately, while individuals or small groups of women may have joined civil society movements and increased their political voice, a large-scale inclusion of women in civil society did not emerge. This is in stark contrast to the Liberian case, where both civilian men and male political leaders responded with respect to the women’s peace movement, and to Burundi, where women were able to become a part of the formal peace process and formed multiple women’s rights civil society groups.

Women in Chad experienced neither the broad formal political inclusion that Burundian women enjoyed post-conflict, nor the mass civil society participation and female executive leadership that Liberian women gained. They remain marginalized in cabinet, in the National Assembly, and in NGOs and other civil movements. Perhaps the view towards women in Chad today, even following years of conflict, can be best summed up by Delphine Kemneloum Djiraibe, national coordinator of the Monitoring Committee to Call for Peace and National Reconciliation in Chad: “Women are at the bottom of the [social] ladder and are seen as property. People can do whatever they want to a woman” (IRIN 2009).

CONCLUSION

My thesis aimed to answer two primary questions. First, under what conditions does civil war facilitate women's political participation as determined through entrance into governing bodies like parliament and the ministry? Second, is the increase in women parliamentarians and ministers as effective for representing women's policy preferences and legislative ideas in an authoritarian context as it is in a comparatively democratic context, or are women's political voices better represented through other means?

While I initially set out to examine the impact of conflict on women's inclusion in parliaments and cabinets, upon comparison of Burundi and Liberia, it became clear that those are not the only facets of society where women's political voices hold weight. Both Burundi and Liberia can be considered success cases in terms of women's political advancement. Burundi jumped from 12.3% female parliamentarians in 1993, to 30.5% in 2005, and increased female cabinet representation from 7% in 1994 to 10.7% in 2005. Liberia elected a woman to the presidency, encouraged women's voting registration and civil society participation, and made substantive, positive legislative changes for women post-conflict. The most important aspect of the variation between the three case studies to understanding the first question is that Burundi and Liberia can both, albeit differently, be considered successes for women's advancement post-conflict, while Chad cannot. So what made the post-conflict atmosphere in Liberia and Burundi more capable of fostering women's political voice than Chad?

The most decisive factors for explaining why Chad's civil wars did not provide an opportunity for an increase in women's political power are related to the structure of the wars. The civil wars in Chad were constant and did not fundamentally change society

politically, socially, or even really alter the way Chad's citizens experienced their every day lives. War is normal in Chad and after the wars, political and civil society continued normally. The lack of disruption caused by Chad's civil wars is important for explaining political stagnation for women when one considers the arguments behind the proposed positive relationship between civil war and women's advancement. The literature contends that war changes women's position in society because the disruption of every day life allows them to take on new roles and responsibilities, and because post-civil war, societal restructuring and fundamental institutional change is proposed. However, upon examination of the Chadian case, it is clear that this is not the only paradigm for civil war. Sometimes, it is not a catalyst for change, and if it is not, can it have the same effect for women?

Since 1965, Chad has experienced sectarian fighting, ethnic discrimination, competition for governance, and violence in every day life. Although there are five periods of civil war in Chad's history as defined by the Correlates of War project, the reality is that war and peace in Chad have few differences. Chad has never experienced a change in political leaders through any other means but violence. Malloum seized power after junior members of the Chadian military ousted Tombolbaye in a coup, and this transition followed years of violence between FROLINAT and Tombolbaye's regime, Malloum ceded the position of Prime Minister to Oueddei after continued fighting between the Northern and Southern militant groups, Habré gained control of the country after mobilizing FAN to depose Oueddei, and finally Deby and the MPS came to power after launching attacks on the military and forcing Habré to flee the country. Political and sectarian violence are normalized in Chad, and thus do not present much of a disruption

to society. For citizens in Chad, war is not an event that will someday have a concrete and definite ending; it's simply a state of being.

In both Burundi and Liberia, the civil wars were a divergence from the status quo for citizens, rather than a continuation of their every day lives. While in Burundi, outbursts of violence between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups had been common since independence, the assassination of the President Melchior Ndadaye incited a clear period of war on a scale the country had not seen before. The country also experienced relatively decisive peace with the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000, the ceasefire between the government and the CNDD-FDD in 2003, and between the government and FNL in 2006. Liberia had similarly clear periods of war and peace. Although Liberian citizens experienced repression at the hands of the Americo-Liberian and Doe regimes, both regimes were relatively stable and the citizens of Liberia did not live with the uncertainty and violence that comes with war. Thus, the seven years of civil war following Charles Taylor's 1989 coup were discernibly different for Liberian citizens. Violence and volatility continued through the interwar period and obviously into the Second Liberian Civil War, but following the Accra Peace Agreement in 2003, Liberia stabilized and returned to a state of normalcy.

Why has post-independence Chad existed in a state of constant warfare, while Liberia and Burundi have been able to maintain a relatively peaceful existence marred only by one or two periods of violence? The answer to that question is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, its implications are incredibly important to understanding the impact the countries' respective civil wars had on women in politics. If war is the norm, rather than the exception, it does not disrupt society in the way the literature purports it

will. In Liberia and Burundi, women were able to capitalize on the new ways society was functioning during wartime to expand their roles economically and socially. Because society was so vulnerable and disordered, women in Burundi and Liberia emerged as organizers, traders, and peacemakers. The women's movements of Burundi and Liberia, vast in scope and impact, laid the foundations for the gains made by women in the formal political sphere and in civil society post-conflict.

In Chad, women did expand their roles to some extent during and after conflict. Like Burundian and Liberian women, they brought supplies across battle lines and created new business ventures, but this happened on a smaller scale in Chad, and was met with more disdain from society. Female returning refugees in Chad had some of the most impressive expansion in economic endeavors, but were continually met with hostility in their home environments (Nzomo 2002). The progress made by women in Chad was made by individual women, rather than by women collectively. As a result, the advancements individual women made never translated into a women's movement that could abet women's entrance into politics. This critical difference between Chad and Burundi and Liberia is clearly related to the state of perpetual war in Chad. If war is simply part of every day life, it isn't going to fundamentally change society. Women in Chad may become more integrated into the economy or help transport supplies out of necessity, but they have been doing that since war first broke out in the 1960s. War in Chad didn't have the impact that it did for Burundian or Liberian women because it was not exceptional.

Perhaps even more important to the lack of change for women in post-conflict is the aftermath of the last civil war in Chad. Unlike in Burundi and Liberia, the political

landscape in Chad did not transform in any way. Not only did the institutions of the pre-conflict regime remain unchanged, the personnel remained the same. Deby is still the president of Chad. If disruption of societal norms is the first aspect of civil conflict that supposedly helps women, change in the country's constitution, leadership, and political status quo is the second. This was totally absent in Chad. The peace agreements in Chad, rather than attempting to transform the political system, continued a trend visible throughout Chad's post-independence history: conceding positions in the government to MDJT fighters and other opposition group militants. This phenomenon was not totally absent in Burundi and Liberia; the peace agreements in both countries included a power-sharing clause whereby warring parties were guaranteed a place in the post-conflict political environment. However, in Burundi and Liberia, this was far from the only measure included in the peace negotiations. Burundi created a new constitution in 2005, and this constitution was where much of the new gains for women were made, including the 30% gender quota for representative political bodies. Liberia included the exile of Charles Taylor as a term of the Accra Peace Agreement, and established a transitional government. Furthermore, Liberia held its fairest and most democratic elections yet two years after its second civil war, which led to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election, helped along by Liberian women who became further involved in politics after the formation of the women's peace movement. In post-conflict Chad, none of these transformative efforts are apparent; the status quo ante persists. How are women supposed to infiltrate a system they have been systematically excluded from if the system is not subverted?

The perpetual state of warfare and the lack of transformation post-conflict in Chad represent the two key differences between Chad and the other two cases for thinking

about women's political advancement post-conflict, but they are not the only factors that influenced the outcome for women. A secondary set of factors, including oil, culture, and level of foreign involvement in the peace process also help to explain the negative outcomes for women in politics in post-conflict Chad. Oil has been suggested to be innately bad for gender equality, because it decreases the opportunities for women to join the work force, which subsequently reduces women's political participation and voice (Ross 2008). Of the three case studies, Chad is the only country with an oil reserve, and thus it seems possible that this hurt the progress of women post-conflict.

Oil in Chad also may have had another, more profound, effect on women's political fate. Oil reserves provide political leaders with a source of power that other natural resources, like Liberia's supply of diamonds, cannot. Diamonds and oil work differently politically simply because of how each is extracted. Diamonds are a lootable natural resource, meaning that no one individual or group can truly achieve a monopoly over the supply. In Liberia, both the rebels and the government could access diamonds and use them to fund their fighting. Conversely, in Chad, Deby had total control over the oil supply, because his government was the only entity with the means to extract it from the ground and convert it into a profitable commodity. Oil allows governments both a source of income independent from its citizens and the freedom to spend that income to ensure its power (Bellin 2004). The Deby regime was more likely to remain in power than the Taylor regime in Liberia or the Tutsi regime in Burundi because Deby used oil revenue for his own personal gain, and to ensure the strength of his military and security forces. Therefore, oil contributed to the lack of change in Chad's political landscape post-

conflict, and subsequently, to the negative outcomes for women's political empowerment.

While women in Burundi, Liberia, and Chad all face cultural ideas that are traditionally discriminatory against women, Chad's cultural norms are arguably more patriarchal than Burundi's or Liberia's. In Chad, polygamy is legal, female genital mutilation (FGM) is widely practiced across the country, and there is no law expressly prohibiting it (State Department 2001). While Chad has no discernable history of women in leadership prior to the civil war, in Liberia under the Africo-Liberian regime, Africo-Liberian women were often given higher roles than indigenous men, and in Burundi, a woman served as the prime minister from 1993-1994. Neither Burundi nor Liberia has high instances of FGM, and polygamy is not legal in either country. In 2014, Chad's women were estimated to receive only 5.9 years of schooling on average, while women in Burundi could expect to receive 9.6 years, and Liberian women received an average of 8.9 years (UNDP 2015). The reasons behind Chad's pervasive patriarchal norms are beyond the capacity and purpose of this thesis, however, a few possible explanations come to mind.

Chad is both more tribal and more Islamic than Burundi or Liberia. Chad is 53.9% Muslim, while Liberia's population is 12.1% Muslim, and Burundi is comprised of only 3.2% Muslims (Pew 2015). While Islam does not intrinsically cause the subordination of women, and there is vast variation across the Muslim World in terms of gender equality, Muslim majority countries do tend to have discriminatory gender norms, especially when those countries also suffer from poverty and war. Tribalism has been demonstrated to be inherently bad for gender equality, because the importance of kin-based relationships in

forming social and political structures is implicit in tribalism (Charrad 2000). This negatively affects individual women because the kin group is placed over individual rights, and the male kin are given power over women (Charrad 2000). Whatever the reasons behind Chad's more persistent patriarchy, it is significant for explaining why Chadian women did not see any advancement in their political rights post-conflict. Perhaps civil war can only serve to break patriarchal norms to a certain level, and Chad's were simply too deep.

Another possible reason for Chadian women's considerably worse outcome for women post-conflict is the level of foreign involvement in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconciliation. One reason the literature suggests civil war offers an opportunity for women to enter the political sphere is because of the influx of international organizational support and aid that occurs during the post-conflict rebuilding period. There was more investment in the Burundian and Liberian peace processes than there was in the Chadian reconciliation process. In 2001¹⁴, the year after Burundi underwent the Arusha Peace Talks, it received \$32,104,520 in foreign aid from the United States. In 2003, when ceasefire negotiations between the government and FNL were occurring, Burundi received \$48,037,399 in aid. In the same year, when Liberia was also undergoing peace negotiations, Liberia received \$45,227,003 (US Aid 2001, 2003). In 2002, when Chad was negotiating peace between the government and the warring factions, it received only \$4,479,907 in foreign assistance from the United States (US Aid 2002). Obviously, the US Aid's collective budget varies from year to year, but it's

¹⁴ Data is unavailable for the year 2000.

interesting to note that both Liberia and Burundi received around \$40,000,000 more than Chad in years when peace talks were underway.

Furthermore, women's organizations in Liberia and Burundi enjoyed the institutional and financial support of international groups like UNIFEM. In Burundi, UNIFEM was imperative in securing the political support necessary for incorporating gender quotas in the 2005 Constitution. In Liberia, the UN Mission in Liberia established a gender program and prioritized female contributions to policymaking as a key aim. During my extensive research on Chad's conflict and peace process, and women's role in both, I did not come across any evidence that international gender organizations played a large role in supporting Chadian women. This does not mean it did not happen, but it does suggest that international humanitarian organizations had a lesser involvement in Chad than in Burundi or Liberia.

So, what mattered most for women's fate in Chad? While oil, culture, and foreign aid all certainly could have negatively affected women's position in post-conflict Chad, the main reasons Chad's civil wars failed to facilitate women's entrance into politics lie in the structural aspects of Chad's conflicts. The literature proposes a positive relationship between civil war and female political advancement for two main reasons: the subversion of societal norms during conflict and the political and social transformational period post-conflict. In Chad, war is endemic. Civil conflict, and the social constructions that come along with it, are the norm. Therefore, societal standards were not disrupted during Chad's civil wars. The pre-existing patriarchal norms in Chad may have been worse than in Burundi and Liberia, but even if they were equal, it would not have mattered, because they never had the chance to be subverted. Furthermore, a

political restructuring failed to emerge in post-conflict Chad, which may have been in part due to Chad's oil reserves and to the fact that international aid and organizational support did not play a large role in Chad's peace process. Whatever the reasons behind the continuation of Chad's political status quo, the result of stagnation was that women did not have the chance to enter the political system in the way that Burundian and Liberian women did.

While Chad is distinct from Burundi and Liberia because Chadian women were not afforded the opportunity to enter the political system post-conflict, Burundi and Liberia are distinct from one another in the type of political system women entered. Burundi and Liberia had opposite experiences in terms of democratization and the ways women became involved in politics. In Burundi, women post-conflict saw incredible advancement in their representation in formal political bodies like parliament and the ministry; however, these women became almost immediately constrained in their abilities to affect substantive change for Burundian women due to the increasing authoritarianism of President Pierre Nkurunziza. The constraints on political rights in Burundi also affected women involved in civil society, and as a result, the independent women's movement was not strong in the country. In Liberia, apart from the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to the presidency, women have not seen a significant improvement in their formal political representation. However, since Sirleaf's election, the government has become increasingly democratic, Sirleaf has made gender equitable policies a priority, and Liberia's civil society includes numerous autonomous and influential women's groups.

While Burundi's vast inclusion of women in formal political bodies helped advance women's rights during the period immediately following conflict, when optimism about Burundi's democratization was rampant, it seems the autonomous contributions and legislative changes those women have been able to make have been negligible since. In Liberia, though women are less integrated into parliament and the ministry, a female president was elected largely due to robust civil society and women's rights groups, and the country has seen many positive changes to patriarchal norms and gender rights. The women involved in Liberian civil society have also had the ability to influence state policy. Thus, it seems that the importance of having women in formal political bodies is contingent on the government's stability and the country's political rights. It is also possible that in addition to a politically free and democratic government, women in parliament and cabinets need the support of a robust and gender equal civil society in order to operate effectively. A democratically elected official, by definition, should respond to the needs and desires of the citizens. Thus, unless civil society is interested in gender rights and the legislative opinions of its female representatives, it might be difficult for those female representatives to fully represent their own policy preferences to the broader government. It seems highly possible that until a country has a civil society more apt to support women than not, is more democratic than authoritarian, and more stable than insecure, women's involvement in civil society may be more impactful than women's representation in parliament and cabinet.

This is not to say that representation of women in formal political bodies is totally unimportant in an authoritarian context. In Burundi, the general public has responded positively to seeing women in positions of power, which has helped alter the view that

women are inferior to men. However, a similar objective was achieved by the women in the peace movement in Liberia. Members of WIPNET and other women's peace groups were regarded with respect by the Liberian population, the leaders of the peace negotiations, and the transitional government. High regard for women in Liberia is clearly evidenced by Sirleaf's election, which women involved in civil society had a large role in securing. While Liberia is far from perfect in terms of gender equality, gender rights have been more of a priority in Liberia than in Burundi since both countries' respective conflicts. Furthermore, there is now more of a foundation for women in Liberia to enter into politics without the help of quotas. Liberia has a female president, and its National Assembly includes 11% female members, which is an arguably impressive number for a country without a quota. Additionally, since Sirleaf's election, there has been discussion of implementing a quota to help that number grow. So, perhaps informal female political representation in a democratic society is more influential for women's equality than formal political representation in an authoritarian government, as it provides a better opportunity for women to express their opinions and needs, and plants the seed for women's political representation to grow organically.

After examining the situation of women before and after the civil war(s) in Burundi, Liberia, and Chad, two interesting conclusions emerge for thinking about women and warfare. Firstly, the way we think about women's political advancement may be dependent on the type of regime those women are living under. The case of Burundi demonstrates how women in formal political bodies enjoy autonomy under a stable political system, but tend to lose the ability to make independent and beneficial contributions to gender equality when their government is threatened and resorts to

authoritarianism. Conversely, Liberia presents a case where democratization efforts became increasingly present post-conflict. In this democratic context, women in civil society were so influential during the war and the peace process, that they brought about the election of a female head of state and helped pass numerous gender equitable bills, while at the same time, were not themselves included in the parliament and ministry. Despite the arguably low percentage of women in parliament and the ministry for Liberian women, Liberia elected a female head executive, and other women have been able to influence state policy through civil society, breaking many patriarchal norms that predated the conflict.

Secondly, we should reconsider the idea that civil war intrinsically presents an opportunity for women to increase their political voice in any way. The literature rests that connection on two main ideas: civil war disrupts social norms and causes a political transformation at its end. In Chad, war is the norm, not the exception, and major political change did not follow the end of the conflicts. These characteristics of Chad's wars, coupled with oil reserves, culture, and lack of foreign support for the peace process, made it so women did not have the opportunity to advance politically post conflict, in either the formal or informal sectors. Thus, the characteristics of civil war defined in the literature should not be thought of as universal, and subsequently, civil war does not present a universal opportunity for female political advancement. War and women wielding power have a causal relationship only if war represents an exceptional period and causes a major restructuring of society, and the ways women wield power should be examined in the broader context of the political system in which those women are operating.

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