

Gendered Peace

Women's Struggles for Post-War
Justice and Reconciliation

Edited by
Donna Pankhurst



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Foreword

This volume makes a contribution to the small but growing literature on women, conflict, and peace building. Its particular focus is on the moments after a peace accord, or some other official ending of a conflict, often denoted as “post-conflict” or “post-war”. Such moments generally herald great hope for holding to account those who committed grave wrongs during the conflict, and for a better life in the future. For many women, both of these hopes are often very quickly shattered in starkly different ways from the shattering of the hopes of men.

Such periods are often characterised by violence and insecurities and the official ending of a war often fails to bring freedom from sexual violence for many women. Not only do many women normally face a continuation of at least some of the aggression that they faced during the war, but they also often face new forms of violence. Furthermore, in post-war policies women’s needs tend to be systematically ignored, or even deliberately marginalized, in ways that echo earlier periods, but which also often take on a new element of aggression against women’s rights and behaviour.

Within such a context, efforts on the part of women, and those made on their behalf, to hold to account those who commit crimes against them, as well as to access their own rights as women, are difficult to make, are often dangerous, and are also often deployed with little effect. Nonetheless it is important to recognize that women are not merely victims of war and that they have agency and are also participants. The chapters highlight the importance of giving voice to women and not silencing them when they are brave enough to step into the public arena. The scope includes various international contexts, and a variety of local ones, in which such struggles take place, and evaluates their progress. By considering contexts as diverse as Sierra Leone, Rwanda, South Africa, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, East Timor, Peru, Central America, and the Balkans, the book reviews the extent to which it is possible to make generalisations across the world. Some of the explanations for “blockages”, including the behaviour of men, and the roles of changing masculinities, are also considered.

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Many of the chapters that appear in this volume were commissioned as background papers for the 2005 UNRISD report, *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*. UNRISD would like to thank the European Union, the Department for Research Co-operation of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA/SAREC), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC; Ottawa, Canada), and the government of the Netherlands for their financial support for making this work possible.

Thandika Mkandawire
Director, UNRISD

1 Introduction

Gendered War and Peace

This book is concerned with what happens to women when wars officially end. Along with several other volumes¹ it recognises that women face particular difficulties at such “aftermath” moments, which often have very strong continuities with what happened during wars, and with the nature of gender relations in society prior to armed conflict. At the international level remarkable progress has been made: in establishing women’s legal rights; in the identification of sexual violence as a potential war crime; and even progress in some women’s abilities to access such legal frameworks. Nonetheless, when faced with a post-war backlash from men and the state, women in highly varied cultural contexts tend to face distinct difficulties as they seek justice for crimes committed against them during and after wars; when they attempt to participate in “truth and reconciliation” endeavours, and when they attempt to re-build their lives. This book² explores how far we have come both through international frameworks and in particular countries, and examines the ways in which the endings of war still often bring highly gendered challenges for women which are themselves often violent.

GENDERED WAR DEATHS AND SURVIVAL RATES

An assessment of what happens to women when wars officially end logically begins with an assessment of the extent of mortality and injury as post-war legacies. Much has been written about women’s experiences during wars and, after well over a decade of feminists’ lobbying, there has been some success in a generalised recognition at the international level that during wars women play key roles, carry heavy socio-economic burdens, and themselves suffer casualties. Such a shift away from women being virtually invisible in conflict analyses has been facilitated by a common understanding that after the Cold War, war itself took on a different and distinct character, which intensified women’s involvement. A key feature of so-called “new wars” is the lack of separation between the “war front” and the “home front”, and, whilst it is possible to argue that some wars in previous decades and centuries could also be characterised in this way, the

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point is that the increased vulnerability of civilians has become commonplace. There are many publications which assert that civilian casualties in war are greater than military casualties, and that women and children have become major casualties in war where once they were much less so (Giles and Hyndman 2004b: 3, 4–5). Typical of these is Cockburn (2001: 21), who cites the oft-quoted figure that 90 per cent of the casualties of today's wars are civilians.

This overarching realignment of the identity of war casualties as now being predominantly civilian, has sometimes led to the elision that women are victimised by war to a greater extent than men, because the majority of civilians are women, and when the populations of civilian women and children are added together, they outnumber male combatants. In the post-war context women survivors generally outnumber men and so it is also often said that women as a group bear the greater burdens for post-war recovery. An example of this is Turshen (2001b: 58). Nonetheless it is the case that more men than women die directly from violence across the world in general, as well as directly from war (Pearce 2006; WHO 2002) and none of those who cite the 90 per cent civilian deaths figure, or who highlight the burdens of women, actually refute this directly, although there is certainly ambiguity in some accounts if they are not read with care.

Some confusion derives from the fact that we do not usually have anything like accurate data for war-related deaths, as recently demonstrated in the international disputes about deaths in Iraq (Davies 2006). Nonetheless, some analysts have undertaken careful statistical analysis of gender differentials,³ and the calculations of Plümper and Neumayer, 2005 show that more women than men die or suffer serious disease as a result of war:

over the entire conflict period interstate wars, civil wars and internationalised civil wars on average affect women more adversely than men...we also find that ethnic wars and wars in 'failed' states are much more damaging to women than other civil wars. (Plümper and Neumayer 2005:3)⁴

Nonetheless the weak statistical base and previous assertions about women "bearing the brunt" of war, has already led to one major publication, by the Human Security Commission (HSC 2005) asserting that publications which allege that women "bear the brunt" of war⁵ are misleading, citing Amnesty International (2004) in particular. The HSC alleges that in gender-aware approaches to conflict, "the huge costs that political violence imposes on males have been mostly ignored" (2005:111) and that the disproportionate suffering of women has been exaggerated. Men certainly do constitute the majority of battle-related deaths, a point which has never been questioned and is in fact emphasised in HSC's cited source of Plümper and Neumayer (2005). Nonetheless, the evidence given by these latter authors and Stewart, Huang, and Wang (2001: 93) for the longer

term strongly contradicts the HSC assertions. The HSC report presents no evidence to show that this previous work is incorrect, and confuses data about the relative number of people who have to leave their homes. Some of this debate may be rooted in misunderstandings about the meaning of “casualty”, “victim”, and “bearing the burden”, but the report’s dramatic claim seems to go beyond the need for us to tie our analyses more closely to empirical data. In effect it stakes out an ideological position that itself does not accurately reflect the empirical evidence it cites.⁶

On balance then, the extent of women’s war-related mortality remains controversial. Not surprisingly, more detailed data on the gender balance of survivors and heads of household, for instance, are also very difficult to generate and are often contested. Against this globally confusing backdrop, there are nonetheless common differences faced by women as a backlash against them occurs.

POST-WAR BACKLASH AGAINST WOMEN

The post-conflict environment cannot be characterized as one in which life for women invariably returns to “normal”—even if a return to previous patterns of gender and social relationships, as if no war had occurred, were desirable or even possible. The upheaval of war, in which societies have been transformed and livelihood systems disrupted, in which women have assumed certain roles for the first time or come into contact with new ideas, has its own impact on intra-personal relationships and social expectations. Furthermore, evidence from gendered analyses of post-war situations in the former Yugoslavia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia, and elsewhere (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002) shows that women not only face a continuation of some of the aggression they endured during the war, but may also face new forms of violence. In the design of policies for post-war reconstruction, women’s needs are often systematically ignored, and even deliberately marginalized. This may carry forward echoes of past situations and power relations, but there can also be a new edge of aggression against women.⁷ Together, the continued and new forms of violence, and the attacks on women’s newly-assumed rights and behaviours, constitute what frequently amounts to a post-war backlash against women.⁸ Such a backlash seems to be very common across quite contrasting social, economic, and geographical contexts, as has been reflected in a number of publications (e.g., Meintjes et al. 2001a) although the specifics seem to vary. Two key elements seem to be common: an “anti-women” discourse with associated restrictions on the life-choices of women regarding social, economic, and political activity (El Bushra 2004; Meintjes et al. 2001b: 12–14); and violence against women which continues above the level of pre-conflict violence, and sometimes at a higher level than during war itself.

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The backlash discourse may be expressed through state institutions, the media, or in everyday public and private language. It is often about “restoring” or “returning” to something associated with peace in the past, even where the change actually undermines women’s rights to a more unequal situation than before the war—in effect to a balance of gender politics which is unambiguously in favour of men as a gender. It is also often accompanied by imagery of the culturally specific equivalent of Pierson’s (1989) concept of a “beautiful soul”, and strongly associates women with cultural notions of “tradition”, motherhood, and peace, using new and old cultural norms (Turshen 2001a: 80).⁹

Women can be targeted for having gained economic independence from men, for having been employed in “male” roles, or for having adopted urban and educated lifestyles in predominantly rural societies. There are calls for them to be forced “back” into kitchens and fields, even if they were not so occupied before the war (Cockburn 2004:40). It is sometimes unclear whether these outcries are spontaneous reactions from individual men, or whether they are orchestrated by the state or government.¹⁰ In either case, at both social and individual levels there are forceful attempts to define women’s roles and rights as secondary to those of men,¹¹ and to restrict women’s behaviour.

Protests by women against such behaviour are often castigated as being “Western-influenced” (Kandiyoti this volume; El Bushra 2004). In such an intense and sometimes violent moment, the state can bring to bear many of the policies used in “normal times” to intervene in gender politics, or weight the “sex war” in favour of men. The state becomes instrumental in enforcing controls over women’s sexuality; fails to increase, or prevent a decline in, women’s personal security; imposes legal, or supports social, restrictions on women’s movement, access to housing, jobs, and property (especially land), and marginalizes women’s health needs. In many cases such official policy outcomes are reinforced by the practices of international organizations which do not actively seek the opinions of women or fail to promote their interests where this might be deemed “culturally insensitive”. Women also commonly find their contributions to the war and peace efforts marginalized in both official and popular accounts of war, as happened in Europe immediately after the Second World War. There seems to be an attempt to deny that shifts in gender relations were required for women to take on their war-time roles, or that they will ever, by implication, actually be possible (Kelly 2000: 62; Sideris 2001a: 54).

Such backlash experiences were experienced with bitterness by women active in liberation struggles; for example in Algeria, Eritrea, Mozambique, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe, where some of the women concerned had even risen to senior military ranks (Luciak this volume; Sørensen 1998:37). Ilja Luciak’s chapter summarises some of the fates of women in the post-war contexts of Central America. In El Salvador considerable social animosity and pressure was brought to bear on women who had challenged gender

Women excluded from post-war planning

“It is really amazing”, said one Kosovar woman...“that the international community cared only about Kosovar women when they were being raped—and then only as some sort of exciting story. We see now that they really don’t give a damn about us. What we see here are men, men, men from Europe and America, and even Asia, listening to men, men, men from Kosovo. Sometimes they have to be politically correct so they include a woman on a committee or they add a paragraph to a report. But when it comes to real involvement in the planning for the future of this country, our men tell the foreign men to ignore our ideas. And they are happy to do so—under the notion of “cultural sensitivity.” Why is it politically incorrect to ignore the concerns of Serbs or other minorities, but “culturally sensitive” to ignore the concerns of women?”

Source: Rehn and Sirleaf (2002: 125).

roles during the conflict and those who wanted to continue to do so afterwards. This led to many of them choosing to be much less politically active and take a less public role. Political scandals resulting from the exposure of sexual abuse committed by Ortega and other senior members of FSLN in Nicaragua, and Noriega in Guatemala, revealed the extensive social support that remained for condoning the sexual abuse of girl children and the social abuse of women. Furthermore the dramatic and horrific rise in murders of women in Guatemala is seen to continue with impunity. The chapter concludes with the view that much of the resistance to change faced by women is itself reinforced, if not caused, by a backlash against the struggles for greater equality between women and men.

The chapter by Dubravka Žarkov, Rada Drezgić, and Tanja Djurić-Kuzmanović also illustrates some aspects of this backlash phenomenon. The authors look at the reproductive rights of women and how these changed in the dramatically shifting political context of the breakup of Yugoslavia and its consequent wars and post-war aftermaths. They highlight a particular feature of the post-war backlash in the region as being the reduction of women’s rights to abortion, as compared with the pre-war situation. As these were wars in which mass rape was a key weapon of war, this constitutes a form of violence against women having to bear the consequences of giving birth to children conceived under such horrific circumstances. They also highlight other difficult features for women in the aftermath relating to employment and possibilities for political action.

A second major feature of post-war backlash is that of violence targeted at women, and sexual assault in particular, which often continue above the level of pre-conflict violence, and sometimes at a higher level than during

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war itself. Women may also be arrested (Jacobs and Howard 1987) and murdered (Luciak, this volume) in this inflamed context of anti-women discourse. After wars officially end, women continue to be raped by soldiers, policemen, former combatants (both strangers and partners) and even peacekeepers¹²—those whose responsibility it is to safeguard and protect them in the “at peace” environment. They may be attacked at home, on the way to collect water, to work in the fields, in the urban workplace and when they go to the police station for help. In camps for refugees and the displaced, and in areas where livelihood systems have collapsed, they continue to be forced to sell sex as a means of economic survival. In addition, it is normal for domestic abuse to increase in the post-war setting, both from partners returning home from the war, and from partners who remained at home.¹³ Even though men also suffer from high crime rates, as a group they are also the main perpetrators (Pearce 2006). Men also kill each other in such tense post-war moments, and sometimes do so in very great numbers, but it is also striking that sometimes their violence against women reaches extraordinary peaks which exceed those against men, such as in Guatemala (see Luciak, this volume).

In this difficult post-war situation, the differences between women often reassert themselves, especially in countries where women are divided by a strong ethnic or regional identity (Žarkov et al., this volume). New divisions can occur as a result of the different experiences women have endured or their different allegiances during the war; for example, whether they were on the side of “victors”, “perpetrators”, or “collaborators”, and whether they have given birth to children of “the enemy” after rape. Such issues can determine who qualifies for aid and other support (Turshen 1998: 9), as can women’s marital status, and whether or not they still live with their husbands, or are widowed, abandoned, or divorced. Marital status is highly significant in situations where women do not have strong legal rights (such as in land and property titles or access to credit), and tensions also exist between women over whether or how their children survived the war. These types of difference and tension between women make it very difficult for them to articulate common needs and this difficulty adds to the silencing effect of the backlash against them. They are subject to violence and censure if they do not want to return to old ways of living. The consequent increase in divorce adds to the overall post-war context of heightened gender tensions (El Bushra 2004). In the face of such difficulties, many women prioritize the restoration of peaceful relationships with men, rather than continue to fight for greater rights themselves.¹⁴

Meghna Guhathakurta’s chapter, which draws on her own research and experience, looks at the case of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, where a conflict between indigenous people and the state resulted in a Peace Accord. She uses a framework which draws out the continuities between what happened during the conflict and the nature of the accord and its aftermath. The chapter gives an insight into the ways in which violence against

Domestic violence increases after war

Recent research indicates that many combatants have difficulty making the transition to peacetime non-violent behaviour after returning home. In the United States in 2002, four Special Forces soldiers at Fort Bragg in North Carolina killed their wives within a period of six weeks. Three of the four had recently returned from overseas duty in Afghanistan, although some commentators believe it is not the experience of conflict but the culture of violence and masculinity that permeates military forces that causes soldiers to be violent in civilian life. Studies in Cambodia in the mid-1990s indicated that many women—as many as 75 per cent in one study—were victims of domestic violence, often at the hands of men who have kept the small arms and light weapons they used during the war.

Source: Rehn and Sirleaf, Women, War and Peace (UNIFEM, 2002)

women that was very much part of the conflict continued after the Peace Accord, and the difficulties women face in seeking justice for such violence.

The explanations offered for this post-war backlash violence are varied and often rather conjectural, and are reviewed in the final chapter of this volume. The rest of this chapter reviews first the political, then the socio-economic policy contexts in which women attempt to improve their post-war situations.

POST-WAR POLITICAL CONTEXT FOR WOMEN

Some wars end in an atmosphere pervasive with the desire to build a new type of society, particularly where some kind of liberation struggle was fought and won (Sørensen 1998: 41–42; Turshen 2002: 891–892). Where gender issues were raised as part of the political agenda of the conflict (e.g., in South Africa); or where the situation of women received a lot of attention during the conflict (e.g., Afghanistan), there may be a greater potential for improving women's legal rights beyond the pre-war situation. Where many women gained sufficient confidence to articulate their needs during the conflict, they may be more effective campaigners and activists. Where the post-war period heralds a greater openness to learning from similar circumstances in other countries, governments may see more clearly the efficacy of supporting women. If unprecedented amounts of international funding become available, as is often the case in poor countries following a conflict, there may be external pressure for policies that support women, and funds may be directly available to women's organizations.

If women are to benefit from such opportunities, it is important to identify the strategies to promote and the issues to be given priority. These are bound to vary. Post-war contexts pose confusing dilemmas about the extent to which they require special approaches, or merely represent normal challenges for social and economic development. Where considerable devastation has been wrought to production and communication, and where large numbers of people have fled their homes, for instance, the need for “exceptional” approaches to macro-policies for “recovery”, “rehabilitation”, and “reintegration” is commonly perceived. In the political arena, there may likewise be “exceptional” requirements: for example, for voter registration and the establishment of machinery to hold elections, and increasingly for some kind of exceptional judicial or “truth and reconciliation” process.

Such exceptional and urgent activities may receive new streams of international funding and be given high priority by all parties, to be conceived and implemented outside any normal planning process. And in the immediate post-war stage, these exercises are even more difficult to implement effectively than usual since the state, so recently contested, is politically weak and its apparatus damaged or barely intact. Weakened state capacity tends to lead to outcomes that are detrimental to women’s interests, thus adding to the cards stacked against them. In the absence of an effective state, the exercises in question are largely controlled and determined from outside the country, as part of what has become known as the “peace industry” (Pankhurst and Pearce 1997).

Post-war administrations face the challenge of trying to (re)-build respect for human rights and for rights-based behaviour in the population at large, among former fighters, members of the security forces, and in the justice system. Despite significant improvements, women are still able to access fewer political rights than men in the post-war context, as in most others. Nurturing a human rights culture in the post-war context is complicated because all too often many of the perpetrators of human rights abuses during the war are still at large; they may even be members of the government, the police, or the armed forces. Even where perpetrators are prosecuted, these tend to be a relatively small number despite the necessary legal framework and evidence against suspects being available (Walsh this volume; Brownmiller 1975: 31–32). Furthermore, attempts to (re)-establish the rule of law in post-war contexts have proved to be extremely difficult in most places, even where extraordinarily large sums of money are invested, as was the case in Latin America (Seider 2003). The most common focus in immediate post-war situations is on the behaviour of the state, whether in a new or a changed form, to ensure that military and police personnel no longer act outside the law through arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture. This attracts plaudits from the international community, even though achieving real change can remain elusive for many years. All too often, however, the (re)-establishment of some degree of law and order merely means that men are not suffering such serious abuse at the hands of those holding power.

Until relatively recently, women's rights in the post-war context seem to have been breached with almost complete impunity. In contexts where transitional systems of justice are used as part of a process to re-build the rule of law, women's human rights are not given priority. For instance, the police tend to operate with a strong gender bias, even where post-war reform and political change means that men are no longer subject to arbitrary arrest and torture (Kandiyoti, this volume). It is not uncommon for there to be immense post-war social pressure on women not to report abuse by men, particularly if the men are members of key political movements, the government, or where there is a shortage of men available for marriage. Where rape was widespread during war, and is not effectively prosecuted afterwards, it is extremely difficult to bring prosecutions for rape in the post-war setting, an issue that remains as much of a problem as when it was highlighted over a decade ago in the UN. Children's rights have been taken more seriously over the last decade, with the plight of former child soldiers receiving a great deal more attention and increasing international support, but the focus still remains on boys' war experience rather than girls. Many experiences of girls, such as sexual abuse by peacekeeping forces in Mozambique (Nordstrum 1997: 15–19), remain hidden.

Martha Walsh's chapter is an extensive review of the ways in which the definition and prosecution of gender-based violence in conflict have developed over the last decade. In spite of this serious situation, legal advances at the international level have been much greater than anticipated and we now have a consistent body of international jurisprudence that has established and re-affirmed rape as a war crime, a crime against humanity, and an element of genocide. Much has also been learned about the actual processes required for women to access such justice frameworks in the post-war context, and Walsh particularly highlights the lessons learned from the International Criminal Court for Yugoslavia. The International Criminal Court now has a sophisticated framework which recognises lessons from the difficulties experienced by women in the past and she suggests that it is important to acknowledge this great, and largely unexpected success, but also to keep in mind that for many women the ability to access such justice requires support from their nation state and the "legal literacy" and knowledge of processes available to them.

This chapter is followed by a detailed review by Binaifer Nowrojee of a decade of work by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. She describes the attempts and failures to prosecute gender-based violence in this setting and suggests that some lessons were learned from this experience in the post-conflict setting of Sierra Leone. Nonetheless the main thrust of her review is the very poor way in which women survivors were treated in the justice processes, and the low priority given by the court to the prosecution of such crimes. She highlights the importance of acknowledgement to and justice for the women survivors and the way in which in

some cases their attempts to give evidence actually resulted in personal and material suffering on their return home.

POST-WAR TRUTH PROCESSES, RECONCILIATION, AND WOMEN'S STORIES

The linking of “truth” and “reconciliation” has become common in post-war contexts over the last decade. The most common understanding of “reconciliation” is that it is about restoring good relationships and involves some level of forgiveness; but different people mean different things, some focusing on what happens to individuals, some on groups, and some on society as a whole (Pankhurst 1997). There is considerable international and national discussion about whether and how reconciliation might be possible (Bloomfield et al. 2003), but there has been virtually no discussion about “gender reconciliation”. Women are often expected to identify themselves with reconciliation and peace-building interventions, in the same way as the idea of women’s inherent peacefulness may be co-opted or deployed to reduce hostilities during war-time (Pankhurst 2003). Some of these interventions could be interpreted as being about reconciliation between women and men.

The issue of amnesty and truth-telling remains controversial; where amnesty is offered in return for truth-telling, the sense of being deprived of justice has the potential to provoke further violence. For this reason, when the El Salvadorian Truth Commission released its report, the government passed an amnesty law within a few days, fearing that the findings could fuel further conflict. In general, Truth Commissions do not have the power to prosecute, although some of them do grant amnesty; the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for example, was empowered to grant amnesty to individual perpetrators in exchange for testimony if they could prove that their crimes were politically motivated. However, this can also create problems for anyone who would prefer a prosecution.

There have been 25 Truth Commissions in different parts of the world since 1974. Official Truth Commissions (TCs) take many different forms, seeking sometimes to find out information about “the disappeared”, as in Argentina, Uganda, and Sri Lanka; at other times to work towards “truth and justice” as in Haiti and Ecuador, or “truth and reconciliation” as in Chile, South Africa, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, East Timor, and Peru. The box summarizes the most common characteristics and purposes of TCs, but these are very difficult to achieve and most do not achieve them.

Truth Commissions can also be created by NGOs. When the government of Brazil refused to institute a formal enquiry into human rights abuses under Brazil’s military regime, the Archbishop of Sao Paulo was assisted by the World Council of Churches in his own investigation. The Catholic Church in Guatemala also established a truth process (REHMI 1999).

Characteristics and purposes of truth commissions

Four main characteristics of truth commissions

- They focus on the past, and often on the recent past, but are not ongoing bodies such as human rights commissions.
- They investigate a pattern of abuse over a set period of time rather than a specific event. The mandate of truth commissions is time-bound, and specifies the types of abuse the commission can look at.
- Truth commissions are usually temporary bodies, operating over an average period of six months to two years, at the end of which they submit a report. Sometimes their time period can be extended if necessary.
- They are officially sanctioned, authorized, and empowered by the state; also sometimes by armed opposition groups as part of a peace negotiation; in theory, this allows them access to information, and should also ensure that their recommendations and findings are taken seriously.

Source: Hayner (2001: 14)

Six main purposes of truth commissions

- To clarify and acknowledge truth.
- To respond to the needs and interests of victims/survivors.
- To contribute to justice and accountability.
- To outline institutional responsibility and recommend reforms.
- To promote reconciliation and reduce tensions resulting from past violence.
- To meet the rights of victims/survivors and society to the truth.

Source: Hayner (2001: 28–31)

Abuses to women are both the most under-reported to truth commissions and the least prosecuted. Rashida Manjoo's chapter shows that in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), although women constituted the majority of witnesses for acts of violence committed against others, only a few initially spoke about acts of sexual violence committed against themselves. After prompting from women activists, the TRC tried to create an enabling environment where women could feel safe to speak out; but even then few could find the words or courage to speak publicly of sexual violation. Some women-only hearings were then held, which

many women regarded as successful in addressing the problem (Goldblat and Meintjes 1998: 29).

In her chapter, Alessandra Dal Secco analyses three cases of post-conflict truth and reconciliation commissions which have tried to take women's concerns seriously: Peru, Sierra Leone, and East Timor. In the first case, as also described by Boesten, the determination to identify crimes against women was rather narrowly defined and has left many women's experiences unacknowledged. In the other two cases the commitment to take such issues seriously was there from the beginning and greater advances were made. Nonetheless Dal Secco identifies the risks in such approaches leading to definitions of women's war experiences being limited to sexual crimes and specifically rape.

Jelke Boesten's chapter focuses on the post-war processes in Peru and how they affect women who experienced sexual violence during the conflict between Shining Path guerrillas and government forces. A national Truth and Reconciliation Commission in this case did not have the power to prosecute or give immunity but was able, due to the diligence of particular individuals, to investigate the experiences of women who had survived such violence. The analysis shows once again that it is very difficult to get testimonies from women survivors, and that the precise definition of the crime dramatically affected the process of collecting evidence. Sexual violence against women did not even feature amongst the testimonies of some communities asked to talk about human rights abuses, even though it was very widespread. One particular aspect of the post-war context here is the social practice of women and their parents petitioning rapists to promise to marry their victims. Until 1997 rapists who married their victims were exempt from prosecution, as they still are in a number of other Latin American countries, and there is still a strong social understanding that this act cancels out previous acts of sexual violence, depriving such women even of having the violence fully recorded, let alone having the right to prosecute.

The ideal of a gender-aware truth process is not only to avoid omitting the particular sufferings of women, but also to integrate into the conflict narrative their experiences as fighters, survivors of attack and torture, household managers, and community leaders. To release such stories may require a different kind of truth process than a national commission. For example, in 2000 women's groups in Japan and neighbouring countries came together to hold a War Crimes Tribunal to look at the issue of sexual slavery by the Japanese army during the war (Walsh, this volume). Set up by women's groups, this Tribunal had no official status; but even though more than half a century had passed since they experienced being sexually abused, the women who came forward to testify felt keenly the need for public acknowledgement of what they had lived through. While reluctant to accept culpability, the Japanese government did eventually acknowledge the issue of sexual slavery, which had earlier been denied; however, the women's demand for compensation from the State was denied. A few women

accepted compensation from a special private fund, but many refused; it was important to them that the Japanese State itself make reparations.

“TRADITIONAL” CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESSES

In Africa, people are increasingly turning to local processes as a means of coming to terms with what happened during conflict. This coincides with a growing fashion among donors for promoting so-called “traditional” methods of conflict resolution (ending of organized violence) and post-conflict mediation and reconciliation. Significant funds are being applied to these processes, with multiple objectives and considerable confusion about whether justice, truth processes, or reconciliation are being sought. These mechanisms include rituals and transfers of property and labour (individual and collective), intended to achieve a range of outcomes including retribution, compensation, forgiveness, and building of trust. Some of these systems are in regular use; others are being resurrected from the memories of elderly people and re-invented; yet others are actually being invented from scratch. These activities may co-exist in the same country—even in the same communities; but they are increasingly being packaged under the rubric of peace-building, not least in order to access funding from international donors (Pankhurst 2002, 2003).

These processes tend to reflect highly gendered local political and power relations, and by no means belong to some value-free traditional culture. They are occurring at the same time as “retraditionalisation” in some African countries which is usually geared towards limiting women’s rights (Turshen 2001a: 80). Women are normally marginalized in practice and their needs not given any priority. Some even have cultural roots in such practices as exchanging women as wives between different groups by way of compensation and repairing community relations, as in Afghanistan (Kandiyoti, this volume). In post-war contexts, the revival of “traditional” practice can form part of the backlash process of putting women back “in their place”. On the other hand, where gender awareness is incorporated, it can be used to help build a new society. A notable example of this is the use of *Gacaca* in Rwanda. The Rwandan government revived an old system of dispute-resolution that had largely fallen into disuse, to assist with hearing genocide cases. *Gacaca*, in its new form, has incorporated important roles for women. Amongst many other fundamental changes is the participation of women as judges; although it is too early to evaluate what difference this might make to the outcomes.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Where there is a perception that women “earned” new rights because of the roles they played during wartime, there may be a new awareness in the

post-war environment of what women can contribute politically, and of the moral imperative to let this happen. The chances of such perceptions influencing political structures are greater where there is a conscious attempt to build a “new” society after a “liberation”.¹⁵ It is less likely when the post-war context is dominated by a political ideology that does not recognize women’s contribution or potential for public life.¹⁶ In Kashmir, northern India, for example, it is unlikely that women will anticipate a moment of liberation. There, years of syncretism and a healthy mix of Islamic, Hindu, and Sufi traditions had ensured a liberal space for women in society. With the deepening of the conflict and the growing hold of fundamentalism among insurgents, the imposition of restrictions on women has forced them to submit to rigid patriarchal mores (Butalia 2001). Even in deeply conservative environments such as Kashmir or Somalia, however, there can also be recognition during war-time of the ways women exercise old forms of influence-as-power. In private, they may guide men’s decisions; they may perform in public as singers or poets; they may give direction as elders or leaders in cultural activities; or act as informal negotiators whilst visiting kin or engaging in trade. From such gradual accretions of responsibility, the opportunity may emerge for basic legal and political rights to be developed in a post-war setting.

In the post-war situation, new constitutions and laws with radical provisions can come speedily into being; even though they initially exist only on paper, they may well be more progressive than if there had been no war or upheaval. For example, after the war of liberation in Zimbabwe, women’s legal status was much improved. In Namibia women were given clear rights in the constitution, as they were in Eritrea. The establishment of formal legal rights for women is, however, only one step towards their being able to exercise them. In post-conflict settings, particularly where war has been prolonged, illiteracy is widespread and access to the law may be confined to a handful of the elite. So even if the population is aware of women’s new rights they cannot easily be realized.¹⁷ Moreover, the existence of such political rights does not protect women from the “backlash” described earlier.

Even where the political and legal apparatus is in place to allow women to take part in political life, their level of political participation tends to remain lower than men’s. They may be discouraged by the educational requirements for voter registration, or the long distance needed to travel in order to vote, as shown in a number of elections. Practical or cultural constraints, or family and community pressure, can bar women from exercising their right to vote, or to stand for elections. Similarly, attempts to encourage civil society organizations to participate in public debate, or consult with government, may marginalize the views of women if they are dominated by men. Special activities to involve women may still be required, and may not be put in place even though they have long been proposed at international level (EC 1995).

Ilija Luciak's chapter looks at three countries in their Central American setting: El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, and focuses on the efforts that women have made, both within their own countries and across this region, to take forward the political issues of the post-war context. In these countries a good number of women joined guerrilla struggles because they believed that this would help to bring social justice, and their presence also gave prominence to women's rights within that framework. Many other women were forced, or chose, to take on what he calls "counter-traditional roles" during wars. The expectation of social change at the point of a peace settlement was therefore very high.

The chapter evaluates the political strategies used by women's groups in the three countries. In El Salvador, the difficulties of building alliances and making tactical priorities around elections led to a reduction in the number of women elected after some initial success. In Nicaragua there was a greater success of getting women elected under the FSLN but this did not automatically lead to women's issues being taken more seriously, which only happened after the Sandinistas lost power and the women's movement developed more autonomously. The chapter then illustrates some of the common frustrations with having quotas for women candidates through what happened in Nicaragua. By the time of Guatemala's peace accord, coming last in 1996, women's groups had been successful in getting gender issues actually written into the accord, which had not been possible in the other two cases. That, however, was only the first step and many of them have still not been implemented.

The issue of how to increase women's representation in politics remains challenging. The Beijing Platform for Action called for a 30 per cent minimum representation of women in decision-making bodies; UN Security Council Resolution 1325 urges the appointment of women in peace processes and subsequent political structures. There have been some striking successes in using these international frameworks to increase the representation of women. In post-war settings in particular there are sometimes opportunities for pushing forward reforms and innovative approaches, where the desires of international donors and local women's groups coincide.

Where women have gained stronger political voice through the experience of conflict, they may be able to leapfrog stages that elsewhere remain protracted. For instance in South Africa, the majority of ANC leaders at the transition to democracy were men, even though gender equality was much discussed. Women fought for representation and succeeded, with the result that the first parliament of the Government of National Unity was made up of 15 per cent women in the Senate and 24 per cent in the National Assembly (Sørensen 1998). Similarly in Eritrea, the government ensured that the post-war administrative system involved women; it was agreed that women would have a 30 per cent quota in regional and sub-regional councils and could contest any of the remaining 70 per cent of posts (Sørensen 1998). Even in Afghanistan, the Constitutional Loya Jirga ensured that at

least 19 per cent of the 500 seats went to women, who actually gained 20 per cent, as described by Deniz Kandiyoti in this volume.

Sometimes measures to assist women's representation have been introduced post-war that would not be implemented in donor countries promoting this agenda (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 81). For instance, the UK government supported the reservation of seats for women in local and national government structures in Uganda at the same time that the use of women's quotas for political parties was deemed illegal in the UK (Tamale 1999). Many such issues are felt across the world as women try to increase their engagement in formal politics, but in post-war societies where the conditions are ripe, change can happen at an unprecedented rate. Rwanda offers a very striking example. Here, elections to the national assembly in 2003 delivered 49 per cent of the seats to women, a higher proportion than in any OECD country. This does not indicate a Rwandese revolution in gender relations, but rather reflects the high proportion of women among genocide survivors. Nonetheless this massive change was by no means demographically inevitable, and will have consequences for political life in Rwanda that are as yet too early to judge.

MACRO-ECONOMIC AND MACRO-SOCIAL POLICIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

Macro-level policies for the post-war context tend to ignore what women are trying to do, unless they are intended to stop them doing it. For instance, many women continue with war-time economic strategies involving small-scale trade in the informal economy; such strategies tend to be ignored as being unsustainable or unimportant, rather than being evaluated as providing an important service, let alone the potential for successful business growth. In Mozambique, to take a case in point, the post-war government set up restrictions on the informal "grassroots economy", on which women had come to depend (Chingono 2001: 116). Similarly women also often attempt to re-build primary education and primary health care services themselves as state services collapse; but these are not generally built on after war, but pushed aside in favour of bringing in qualified professionals, who tend to be men (Sørensen 1998).

Policy initiatives at the macro level need to build gender analysis into peace-building policy processes, alongside "special" policies specifically geared towards women; this has been accepted as appropriate by key international organizations for some time (EC 1996; UN 1995: para 141). At its simplest, a gender-aware approach requires applying the question: "Does this policy affect women and men differently?" If the answer is in the affirmative, then policy-makers need to explore what can be done to prevent or correct women's disadvantage (Elson 1998). Posing this question should lead in some cases to a complete re-think in the way a policy is devel-

oped and implemented; in others, relatively minor adjustments would be required. In post-war emergency situations in poor countries, it may be difficult to apply a gender-aware approach. Not only are resources scarce, and infrastructure weak, but new governments are often constrained in their spending by the conditions of World Bank structural adjustment and bilateral loans, which place strict limitations on budgetary expenditure. A growing lobby supported by some eminent economists argues that such conditions ought to be loosened in post-war economies, since they severely undermine the chances of economic recovery. The needs of women and other vulnerable groups should be given a higher priority than macro-economic probity (Stewart and Fitzgerald 2001b: 240).

If there is political willingness to take the gender implications of policy seriously, the analytical tools already exist to undertake the necessary data collection, analysis, monitoring, and evaluation. In some post-war environments, as was the case in Uganda after 1986, the political will to do this may be strong. Where such opportunities occur, it might be possible to develop some elements of a top-down gender-aware approach to a range of policies. It has now become usual in post-war circumstances to attempt a bottom-up approach of at least some support for women's organizations as the most obvious way to support women. International links between women's organizations have been expanded in recent years and are greatly facilitated by the IT revolution.

Such a positive political environment cannot by any means be guaranteed; indeed, in the atmosphere of backlash already described, the political will for changing gender relations may be completely absent, or at best ambivalent. For various reasons, women themselves may not be in a position to press for positive change. Deniz Kandiyoti's chapter shows how external donors have misunderstood the local cultures in Afghanistan, assuming that so-called traditions which oppress women are timeless when in fact they have a history of being contested and varying in intensity. In spite of a strong international commitment to improve the situation of women in the post-war context, women have a very difficult time in trying to fight poverty and protect their livelihoods while also being subject to violence from men, including those in official positions.

Nonetheless, the contrasting political post-war contexts mean that opportunities can arise. Some general economic and social policies have more acute implications for women than others and significant change could be supported by focusing on a few key areas. Specific contexts determine both what is possible and what ought to be prioritized. For example, where the majority of the surviving population relies on agriculture as the main source of livelihood, land reform is often of key importance. Where levels of urbanization and education are higher, employment issues are of far greater significance. In all contexts, however, it is normal at the end of war to find women dominating the most marginalized sections of society. They are the returnees with access to the fewest resources, the ex-combatants

who tend to be overlooked, the heads of household with least support. Women tend to predominate in the most stigmatized and disadvantaged groups: rape survivors, orphans, disabled people, and widows (who may constitute up to 30 per cent of a post-war population [Sørensen 1998: 38]). They generally tend to be the least well-trained and educated, whether in urban or rural areas, and have specific health needs that are overlooked.

AGRICULTURE AND LAND REFORM

Agricultural economies, where the majority of the population still mainly depends on cultivation and raising of livestock for their food supply, are normally characterized by a strong gender bias in favour of men. Women typically receive less of the income generated from their labour, and have less access to other people's labour and less control over their own, than men. Meanwhile, men are often accused of "wasting" farm incomes in times of social change, and particularly during conflict. As a result, many women seek opportunities to sell their labour to others for very poor returns, sometimes in secret, to guarantee some minimum resources for household needs (UNIFEM 2001; Sørensen 1998: 20). In places where women are unable to get access to sufficient land to farm, as in Rwanda, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, and Sri Lanka, they hire themselves out as casual workers (Sørensen 1998: 19).

During periods of violent conflict, agriculture becomes important as a source of food, even for people whose livelihoods were previously non-agrarian. Where men are away fighting, or are injured or dead, women often take up the burden of agricultural production even where they did not do this previously. War also disrupts established systems of land tenure. Men take land by force as social regulation breaks down and people move away from their homes into new areas. Landmines restrict the use of fields and grazing land, putting great pressure on the remaining accessible areas. Soldiers use land for camps, often killing wildlife, and stripping vegetation and soil. Traders and soldiers negotiate tenure deals with local leaders for mining or natural resource extraction, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and even buy and sell land.

All this may take place without reference to local custom or law relating to ownership and use of land, which leaves a confused post-war land rights legacy. This happened in Mozambique, even though existing communal land tenure arrangements made the sale of land illegal (UNIFEM 2001: 45–53). It is rare to find that there is agreement, let alone a written record, of land transactions during the war; nor a clear understanding as to who the rights should pass to in the event of the landholder's death. Previously accepted land tenure systems break down or become superseded because of new land shortages, the absence or removal of local leaders, and the collapse of local government institutions.

The more severe the land shortage, the greater is the pressure on women's rights. In many places women may be the majority of post-war adult survivors in the countryside, and there may also be many women-only households, as in Mozambique, desperate for land to grow food (Chingono 2001: 95). Nonetheless, discriminatory legal practices, or entrenched social attitudes can still prevent them from taking possession of family lands.¹⁸ In Rwanda, many men were killed during the genocide; but women were barred from claiming lands through inheritance under customary law, even though under the constitution they have the legal right to inherit. Some revisions were made to inheritance laws to try to address this problem, but these still do not provide women with secure tenure (UNIFEM 2001: 38–44).

Many other examples can be cited to reinforce a picture of women's rights or access to land gained during conflict receding in the post-conflict period. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia found that many disputes arose over ownership of land at the village level, while the simultaneous breakdown of traditional systems of conflict resolution meant that women and children found themselves at the receiving end of heightened levels of violence (Curtis 1998). In post-war Eritrea, men protested against women having access to land even though the majority of households were probably headed by women. While in exile, Guatemalan refugees had given women a voice in political structures; on returning home, when women tried to claim equal rights to land, they were attacked by local people for having "overstepped the acceptable limits...prescribed for women" (UNIFEM 2001: 58–62).

At the end of a conflict, there is often pressure to "sort out" land tenure and land use from several directions. Land and agrarian reform may be seen as a means of speeding up the process of recovery and "normalization"—part of a modernization agenda that takes on a keener urgency in the post-war context. Many countries emerging from conflict in the last decade have predominantly agrarian economies; systems of land tenure are seen as central to recovery. The World Bank identifies certain types of land reform with a "market friendly environment", particularly in Africa, and promotes this model in post-conflict contexts. Land reform also figures as part of peace deals because land is often an issue in the conflict itself, even in wars that appear to be primarily about other issues (as in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Zimbabwe and Namibia). The nature of the land reform contained in the agreement reflects the view of what the post-conflict society should consist of and the future role of agriculture within it. It may involve negotiations with international donors expected to underwrite its costs, who are often themselves highly influential in determining the outcomes.

The land reform promoted by international lending organizations is almost universally in favour of privatized, individual land tenure arrangements. The outcome of land reforms with this principle at their core has universally been that women emerge with rights no stronger than previously, and frequently find them drastically reduced (Davison 1998). There are a

few exceptions where an effort has been made to correct this imbalance—as in El Salvador—by building on existing, more flexible approaches which had more capacity to protect women's land rights; but in the post-war context none of these lessons are typically brought on board. Planners tend to ignore the fact that many men who have been fighting have not been farming for a long time, and those who joined military forces as boys have barely any farming skills at all. By contrast, women have been planning and managing scarce resources under difficult conditions, and are often better informed about the particular local ecological conditions and trading opportunities.

Where there is an attempt to codify and modernize previous systems of land use, there is a tendency to overlook the ways in which women accessed rights as daughters, aunts, wives, widows, and mothers, and even as independent women where they are able to negotiate with local leaders, even if their access was typically more limited than that of men. New land titles tend to be granted almost exclusively to men (UNIFEM 2001; Davison 1998), and even where there is no legal impediment to women purchasing such rights, and women have the resources to do so, men in their families and communities may actively discourage them from taking them up, as in Guatemala (UNIFEM 2001: 63).

Even where women have some access in their own right, this is usually less secure than that of men and often dependent on their marital status. There may also be a conscious prejudice on the part of planners involved in land allocations and titles, who may characterize rural women as poorly educated, more “backward” than men, and therefore not as able to take advantage of land reform opportunities. Inequalities are compounded by the fact that post-war rehabilitation of agriculture (usually involving the distribution of seeds, tools, and livestock) is usually organized on a per household basis in which the man is always the head, even where it is clear that women's agricultural production is important for food security and small-scale business (Sørensen 1998: 20; Chingono 1996).

Undermining women's land rights and marginalizing them in agrarian reform is not likely to improve food security where women retain the main responsibility for meeting household food needs, especially where conflict has left them heads of households. Thus, in post-war settings the standard approach to land reform reinforces the likelihood of food insecurity. Land and agrarian reform can, on the other hand, be used to support women's post-war roles. The political significance of land reform and the strong donor influence in post-war situations ought to present positive opportunities; international donors have at their disposal many reports that highlight the potential dangers of undermining women's land rights and the advantages of supporting them. If the political context is one where it is widely acknowledged that women played key roles during the conflict as farmers and as managers of household resources, donors could reasonably be expected to highlight the advantages of their continuing to do so, although they rarely do.

Women losing land: Post-war land reform in Africa and Latin America

Mozambique from 1997: Women's relatively secure access to land under customary law was eroded by the social disruption of war. In the increasingly market-based economy women are more disadvantaged than men. The government encouraged people to "go back to the land", but with competition over the best land, the new political and business elites made claims on huge tracts of land, putting extra stress on small-holders. Women went back to farming food out of necessity, but have great difficulty inheriting land, even in matrilineal parts of the country, where control is still vested in men. The 1997 law stipulates that women have equal rights to men, but implementation is weak and long-standing local practices often work against women.

Source: UNIFEM (2001: 45–53)

El Salvador 1980–1992: Need for land in El Salvador was ignored in post-war agreements, despite the efforts of women activists in the FMLN (Argueta, 1996, cited in Luciak, this volume). Subsequent reintegration programmes introduced a gender perspective and improved the situation for women, particularly ex-combatants. However, policy guidelines were subverted by local officials, denying women access to land, which was allocated on a household basis with the title vested in the male household head; where women were assigned some land in their own right, it tended to be of poor quality. Extra requirements for receiving land included the ability to read and write as well as the possession of documentation such as birth certificates and voter registration cards. Women were among those unable to fulfil such requirements.

Sources: Luciak this volume; Cockburn (2004: 40)

Guatemala 1990s: Women had a say in the peace agreements which facilitated legislation promoting land rights for women returnees and ex-combatants, at least on paper. Nevertheless, the objectives set up in the Guatemalan Peace Accords were not backed up by clear guidelines for implementation (Luciak this volume; Cockburn 2004:40). Consequently, many women were not able to exercise their rights because of "traditional male structures".

Source: UNIFEM (2001: 66).

Nicaragua 1990s: Deals were struck between Sandinistas and Contras over land that specifically excluded women's land ownership.

Source: Pankhurst and Pearce (1998: 161)

URBAN EMPLOYMENT

The post-war context provides an opportunity for states to consider employment strategies afresh, rather than merely seeking to recover the pre-war situation and “reintegrate” returnees into a shattered economy. This is particularly important where towns and cities did not offer sufficient job opportunities before the war. Where wars are fought in the countryside, people tend to flee to urban areas, even while formal employment is severely constrained because of the disruptions of war. The public sector often collapses, creating problems similar to those in countries suffering retrenchment under public sector reforms. The private commercial sector also experiences difficulties due to the destruction of infrastructure, including transport, communications, currency controls, security, and other services (Stewart and Fitzgerald 2001b).

As recovery takes place, a prolonged shortage of male workers (due to death or absence) may lead to women taking up key positions and becoming a significant part of the workforce. However, this is unusual; the norm is for returning men to take up the best employment opportunities—for which on average they have better education and training (Sørensen 1998). Cultural arguments about women’s roles are often used to prevent them from trying to enter the formal sector. In some cases women’s legal rights of access to employment may actually be curtailed by the state in the post-war context (Kelly 2000: 62). An ILO document confirmed that in Namibia, some 60 per cent of women remained unemployed even two years after they had returned to the country (Sørensen 1998).

Women ex-combatants, even where they have held very responsible positions during war, as in Eritrea, frequently find it harder than men to make a life in their rural homes and seek a living in town (Sørensen 1998: 26). In the context of a backlash, they are particular targets for censure and may find getting work very difficult indeed. Cultural constraints or newly coined political versions of them also keep women away from employment. The lack of adequate childcare can also be an obstacle to taking up jobs, as female ex-combatants in Eritrea found (Sørensen 1998).

THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

For women and men, earning in the aftermath of war often means relying on the informal economy. Women’s peace-time employment is predominantly in the informal economy anyway, based on trade in vegetables from the countryside, cooked food, beer, scarce goods from long-distance trade, and handicrafts. These goods offer relatively quick returns for small investment and do not require access to land. In war-ravaged societies where formal trade has not yet recovered—if it had ever developed—these activities

may be keeping society provisioned. Women entrepreneurs are often able to meet local urban demands for cheap food which governments cannot provide.

In Somalia, for example, women have taken over men's traditional roles and sold livestock; in Mozambique, they took to marketing fruit, fish and vegetables, and beer. In many countries women take on long-distance and cross-border trade, as in Chad, Eritrea, and Sierra Leone (Sørensen 1998: 20, 22). A survey of Somali refugees carried out by UNHCR in 1994 notes that in the absence of men, women have become increasingly involved in economic activity, and have acquired a virtual monopoly of the barter trade in food, clothing, and a number of other items (UNHCR 1994). Yet none of these trading and retailing activities tends to be supported by post-war governments.

As part of the post-war backlash against women, their retailing can actually be curtailed. Successful women may be socially castigated, their entrepreneurial activities treated as undesirable and even declared illegal. In Zimbabwe, women have created informal trade networks that span several countries in an attempt to supplement family incomes. However, this transgressing of social boundaries has resulted in their being branded as prostitutes and harassed at international borders (Cheater and Gaidzanwa 1996: 191). As they have become more successful economically, male-dominated state institutions have brought in regulations to undermine them. An alternative approach would be to investigate such activities and identify ways to support their development: many women's businesses fail due to insufficient capital and skills in business management. Relief and development organizations increasingly seek to work with women in the post-war context and are also able to offer sources of income—either as direct employment or to support women's organizations. In the post-war countries of former Yugoslavia, women were very effective at coming together to establish new organizations so as to take advantage of this opportunity.

The last resort for women without other gainful employment is often prostitution. In post-war contexts formal and informal selling of sex flourishes, particularly where there is an international market, such as from international peacekeepers (Bedont 2005) and international tourism (Sørensen 1998: 24). Post-war countries may see very fast growth in the numbers of women involved, due to their lack of other opportunities, the presence of foreign, therefore moneyed, clients, and the degree of dislocation in social relationships. The dilemmas faced by post-war authorities in managing prostitution are therefore even more complex than usual. The most effective strategy for limiting the numbers of women involved would be to support their alternative endeavours in small-scale production and trade, through the provision of training and small loans, and to ensure that they are included in general opportunities for training and education appropriate for formal sector employment. This plea has featured in major reports for many years, but there are still many women finding that they

have little choice but to risk their lives in this way. Even those who are lucky enough to undergo training or education have to find ways to eat in the meantime (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002).

HEALTH, WELFARE, AND EDUCATION

At the end of most wars, health services are very run-down and may even have collapsed entirely. Even where there have been valiant attempts to keep some kind of health provision going for children, health care for adult civilians has usually been completely undermined. High morbidity and mortality levels from avoidable disease constitute a serious development cost in a population (Stewart and Fitzgerald 2001: 236); however, expenditure on health has not yet been recognized by lending agencies as a high priority in considering the mechanisms for post-conflict reconstruction. Leading economists have called for public entitlements to health and education to be sustained during and after wars, particularly as primary health and education only take a fraction of social expenditure (Stewart and Fitzgerald 2001: 237).

Virtually every report on women and conflict highlights the need for health programmes to be specifically geared towards women, including ex-combatants, as a pre-condition for social recovery. Nonetheless neglect of women's health needs during pregnancy, childbirth, and for rape injuries tends to be common, and this neglect has a multiplier effect on their difficulties in meeting the needs of dependants and other community members, as well as undermining their ability to participate in public life. Instead, women are subject to gender bias against their interests in the ways that many health and welfare policies work during "normal" times (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 31–46). Injured women may not be able to access even the most basic elements of community support where they are stigmatized as a result of surviving their assaults, or being pregnant, or having HIV. It is still common for women (and child, especially girl) ex-combatants to be relatively marginalized, if not completely neglected in such programmes (Farr 2003), in spite of this having been highlighted for nearly a decade.

One of the most challenging areas in post-war healthcare is the need to address psycho-social trauma. Alcoholism, anxiety, violent and aggressive behaviour, even suicide, are common as a result of war-time experiences and difficulty in coming to terms with the post-war situation. Trauma counselling receives insufficient attention, and where resources are available, may be poorly designed. Research suggests that the employment of Western medical approaches to treat such problems, by focussing on the individual, are not appropriate for all cultural contexts. In many predominantly rural societies the ways in which people experience trauma not as isolated individuals, but within a socially constructed context; mean that support has to take this into account, if not actually be provided through

social relationships. Awareness is growing that culturally specific healing processes can be more effective in such societies (Sørensen, 1998:34). Where women have roles in the rituals and practices associated with such healing, they could be given support.

Perhaps surprisingly, education is often seen by survivors of wars as a key part of recovery. This is partly because of a need to “return to normal”, but also because people recognize that for children, and even adults, education can play an important role in conflict prevention. Women often attempt to re-establish primary education themselves during and after wars, rather than wait for the state to do it. In spite of having this high priority in people’s minds, government spending on education is restricted by the same budgetary constraints as health and so rarely meets people’s expectations.

In many countries, girls participate in education to a lesser degree than boys. Although this can be reversed during wars when boys may be away from home, the process of rehabilitating educational provision usually finds the proportion swing back again once boys return (Stewart et al. 2001: 103). There are many ways in which unequal access to education reinforces gender inequalities and this is therefore a useful point of intervention to foster future positive change. The education of girls and women is vital if women are ever going to be able to participate effectively in peace negotiations, post-war planning, and public life. Even where women are included in peace negotiations, they are at a strong disadvantage where they do not even have primary education while most other key players have been at least to secondary school.

Where peace education is taken seriously as part of the new curriculum, this frees women from what might be seen as a private responsibility (that of educating their children for peace) and makes of it a public activity in which men can also play a part. Where peace education also contains explorations of gender issues, this can have a long-term impact on the overall transformation of gender relations in ways connected and unconnected to war.

CONCLUSION

For more than a decade, the UN has proclaimed that women’s needs deserve greater attention in the post-war context. Yet the problems, rights abuses, and programme shortcomings documented in many old reports remain commonplace.¹⁹ The plight of women during war, particularly the scale of their sexual violation, has attracted international attention, and is often used to characterize the barbarism of mankind or brutality of particular “enemy” groups. Women’s roles in working to end conflicts are increasingly celebrated—even if other roles are downplayed. As a consequence, women participants in post-war peace-building have been thrust into