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The Leading Lives of Others:
The Transforming Power of Women's Leadership
in the Transition to Peace in Northern Ireland

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For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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DECLARATION

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SUMMARY

The Leading Lives of Others: The Transforming Power of Women's Leadership in the Transition to Peace in Northern Ireland

There is a robust study of leadership theory and practice, with particular focus on transformational models. A parallel discourse within conflict resolution and peace studies examines conflict transformation and the building of sustainable peace. Within these areas of study there is growing acknowledgement of gender dimensions and the importance of women's participation. Theories of transforming leadership and conflict transformation indicate the nature and location of women's leadership represents a highly valuable resource for social change (Boulding 1995; Brock-Utne 1989; Bass and Riggio 2006; Lederach and Lederach 2010). There is substantial, meta-analytic evidence demonstrating that women are particularly effective transformative leaders, but that gender stereotypes continue to limit their roles and advancement opportunities. In the study of conflict resolution and peace there is growing recognition of the varied roles women play during conflict, the distinct impacts of war on women's lives, and a greater understanding of their roles as agents of change. Yet there is little work examining their engagement as leaders and the unique ways they contribute to post-war social and political transformation. In this thesis, I bring together the separate discourses on transformational leadership and conflict resolution to explore the significance of women's peace leadership through a case study of Northern Ireland.

Despite international policies acknowledging the benefits of women's participation in peace and security issues, there is little work examining the value of their leadership. The Northern Ireland peace talks process ranks among the elite for women's participation in global peace processes (Castillo-Diaz and Tordjman 2012). Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society. Ethno-national divisions and patriarchal social structures reinforce gender stereotypes and segregate women leaders. There is an incomplete record of the peace process that fails to account for the significant contributions made by women leaders.

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Their innovative and courageous activism has been largely ignored, overlooked and dismissed in mainstream historical documentation of Northern Ireland's peace process. This dangerous 'other divide' limits access to the considerable skills, experiences and contributions of women leaders and undermines the prospects for peace.

This qualitative social research project explores the landscape of leadership through the lives of 'others'. It documents and examines women's leadership to assess the transforming impact of their work. The focus is on a pivotal time 1994-2000, beginning with the ceasefires, during the peace talks process, and into early post-agreement Northern Ireland. Through a combination of original research and an examination of academic literature, this thesis seeks to document the contributions of women leaders and critically analyze the impact and perceptions of their work. This research fills a gap in the existing literature by documenting and assessing the leading lives of women to rebalance the male-normative narratives that dominate literary debates, academic study, and the practice of peacebuilding. It also adds to our understanding of women's leadership by casting it in the light of transformative leadership and the centrality of this form of leadership to peacebuilding. This dissertation argues that women's leadership was a transforming factor that significantly contributed to the end of violent conflict and the advancement of peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

...even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to the sea[1].

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[1]The Garden of Proserpine, A. C. Swinburne, 1866

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Introduction

> Too much of the peacebuilding technical literature takes an
> essentialist perspective that scarcely accounts for, or simply fails to
> give credit to women who have, by *intentional design*, imagined a way
> to work for the healing of their communities (Lederach and Lederach
> 2010).

Research Questions and Argument

There is a robust study of leadership theory and practice, with particular focus on
transformational models. A parallel discourse within conflict resolution and
peace studies examines conflict transformation and the building of sustainable
peace. Within these areas of study there is growing acknowledgement of gender
dimensions and the importance of women's participation. Theories of
transforming leadership and conflict transformation indicate the nature and
location of women's leadership represents a highly valuable resource for social
change (Boulding 1995; Brock-Utne 1989; Bass and Riggio 2006; Lederach and
Lederach 2010). In this thesis, I bring together these separate discourses to
explore the significance of women's peace leadership through a case study of
Northern Ireland. I examine women's leadership in Northern Ireland after the
ceasefires in 1994, during the peace talks process, and in the early post-
agreement transition.

It is argued that conflict, peace and leadership are highly relational, socially
constructed activities influenced by gender norms and perceptions. How and
where leaders operate within society to build sustainable peace is important to
academics, policy makers and peace builders. Through a combination of original
research and an examination of academic literature, this social research project
seeks to document the contributions of women leaders and critically analyze the
impact and perceptions of their work. It aims to address a gap in knowledge
about the extent, complexity and impact of women's peace leadership in
Northern Ireland. This dissertation investigates how women leaders contributed
to social and political transition, their roles as agents of change, and the extent to

which their leadership reflected transformative models and sustainable peacebuilding practices.

Key Points

1. Women are involved, skilled and experienced peace leaders, but their contributions are often underappreciated by male-centric, constrained understandings of leadership and peace.
2. Studies in Transformative Leadership and Conflict Resolution demonstrate that women are especially effective as transforming leaders, and that their skills and approaches are particularly important to promote social justice and peace.
3. A case study of Northern Ireland demonstrates women's transformative leadership was a significant factor in facilitating the transition to peace.

Research Approach

In Northern Ireland, there is an incomplete record of the peace process that fails to account for the significant contributions made by women leaders. Despite international policies acknowledging the benefits of women's participation in peace and security issues, there is little work examining the value of their leadership. Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society. Ethno-national divisions and patriarchal social structures reinforce gender stereotypes and segregate women leaders. This dangerous 'other divide' limits access to the considerable skills, experiences and contributions of women leaders and undermines the prospects for peace ("A Citizens' Inquiry: The Opsahl Report on Northern Ireland" 1993). The severe underrepresentation of women in political leadership and decision-making roles was determined to be Northern Ireland's other 'democratic deficit' by the European Union in 1997 (Mulholland 2001, 175). This dissertation presents a composite portrait of the leading lives of women, the 'others' working on the 'other side' of structural and psychological gender barriers to shape a lasting peace.

To presume women were important actors in the NI peace process, and consider their roles and contributions as worthy of analysis is a challenging way to start the conversation. It is meant to be. One reason for conducting this research and writing this dissertation is to challenge the mythology that surrounds the peace process. In particular that peace was achieved or delivered by an elite group of men - leaders of paramilitary groups, political parties and governments. And conversely that women were minor, insignificant, or irrelevant actors with few lasting contributions.

The title 'The Leading Lives of Others: The Transforming Power of Women's Leadership in the Transition to Peace in Northern Ireland' is meant to signal my intention to refute the common narrative. It refers to viewing the history of peace through the perspectives and experiences of women, the primary 'others' in society. Women and women's leadership are the invisible other, cast as outside the normal, masculine, male-dominated political system. This research fills a gap in the existing literature by documenting and assessing the leading lives of women to rebalance the male-normative narratives that dominate literary debates, academic study, and the practice of peacebuilding. It also adds to our understanding of women's leadership by casting it in the light of transformative leadership and the centrality of this form of leadership to peacebuilding.

Theoretical Framework: Leadership, peacebuilding and gender

> Leadership is essential to draw in extended constituencies
> toward a dialogue of coexistence and democracy (Anderlini
> 2007).

Emerging from within the theoretical debates of the peace processes are questions about the roles of effective leaders. Within the study of leadership there is a growing emphasis on transformational models. A parallel discourse in conflict resolution and peace studies examines the practices used by leaders in transforming conflict and building sustainable peace. Within these areas of study there is growing acknowledgement of gender and the distinct characteristics of women's leadership. Theories of transforming leadership and conflict transformation indicate the nature and location of women's leadership

represents a highly valuable resource for social change (Boulding 1995; Brock-Utne 1989; Bass and Riggio 2006; Lederach and Lederach 2010). To be effective in today's world, leaders need to be more transformational. And there is growing evidence that women, as a group, are more disposed to transformational leadership behaviors (Bass and Riggio 2006). The international discourse on women, peace and security promotes the value of women's leadership and the unique ways women contribute to post-agreement social and political transformation.

Background: Women as transformational leaders in Northern Ireland

A case study on Northern Ireland offers an expansive view of women's leadership drawn from the experiences of activists working to sustain the community through violent conflict and foster the transition to peace. Political scientist Cathy Gormley-Heenan argues that political leadership is an important dimension of the Northern Ireland peace process, and the role and capacity of leaders is critical to understanding how it came about. She says, '[I]t is critically important to be able to identify those aspects of political leadership that might have made the difference between success and failure in the peace process (2007, 63).

The analysis of leadership in the existing literature on Northern Ireland is preoccupied by the influence of male protagonists and politicians like Adams, Hume, Trimble, Paisley, McGuiness and Mitchell. Very rarely does this lineage include the names of female leaders such as May Blood, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, Inez McCormack, Monica McWilliams, Dawn Purvis, or Pearl Sager. Like countless others, these women were actively leading during the conflict, in places and ways that made significant contributions to end violence and facilitate the transition to peace.

> Women were actively building bridges between Catholics and Protestants long before the official peace negotiations began. Instead of focusing on old injustices they discussed solutions and strategies for healthcare and education etc. The women developed a common cause that in time influenced public opinion. By cooperating they became a peaceful alternative, which showed that coexistence is possible despite a bloody history (Jacobson 2004, 12).

As leaders women did the preparatory work (Curle 1981) for peace throughout the decades of violent conflict. They mobilized strong networks of community activists to promote female leaders into electoral politics and gain influential positions in the peace negotiations. As delegates to the peace talks they invested their considerable skill in dialogue and diplomacy to cultivate constructive relationships, expand the agenda of priority issues, promote inclusive practices, build community support for political agreement and enhance the prospects for peace. As Cockburn argues, the participation of women leaders was a transforming factor in the negotiations and agreement.

> Thanks to the input of civil society, and particularly of the women's voluntary, trade union and community sectors, the Agreement was not limited to a settlement between the belligerent parties. It envisioned a transformed society, rid of the inequities of a colonial past and reshaped according to principles of inclusion and human rights (Cockburn 2013, 151).

It was through their determined advocacy that key issues related to victims and survivors, education and prisoners were part of the Talks agenda and the final Agreement. Their achievements and experiences advanced the global cause for women's participation as peace partners and helped inspire the adoption of international policy adopted by the United Nations (UNSC 1325) calling for the full engagement of women in matters of peace and security. Professor Monica McWilliams speaks of the lineage of women's peace activism in Ireland and the connection it has to the development of international laws.

> When we look at the rest of the world now, there is a UNSC resolution 1325 that talks about the inclusion of women in peace process. We were two years in advance of that resolution. In fact, it was the Coalition's formation, I was told, led to that resolution ("Northern Ireland Peace and Women Today" 2013).

The story of women's peacebuilding leadership in Northern Ireland is a story of abundance, expertise, perseverance, and achievement. The lessons of women's leadership are available to those who look beyond the obstructing glare of male-centered history, masculine notions of power, and gender-blind models of leadership. The counter narrative is that women are agents of change and key peacebuilding partners. Many female leaders made significant contributions to sustain life in their communities, cultivate peace and achieve political settlement.

Their individual and collective leadership provides a rich legacy from which to learn. Among the global stories of women's peace activism, feminist researcher Cynthia Cockburn finds the experiences of Belfast women to be particularly impressive.

> I have to say that when I travel and visit and research and write about such groups, I always tell them that it was in Belfast, in 1996, that I found the most impressive work being done to help a country move from centuries of war to a prospect of peace. More than anywhere else, it was here, in the Women's Support Network in Belfast, that brought together women of the Shankill, Falls, Windsor and other women's community centres, that I learned from women about the dedication and courage you need if your aim is to further the transition to peace. And what's more the skills you need - - among them feminist skills -- to convert suspicion and fear between women of different identities, different names, different positioning in relation to the causes of an armed conflict -- into caring and careful engagement towards understanding each other and working together (Cockburn 2008, 1).

Part of the work of this thesis is to build a composite picture of women leaders in Northern Ireland, intended to help correct the one-sided narrative presented in the literature that is disproportionately written by and about men. As Chapter Three and the fieldwork will demonstrate women were involved in peace building at the grassroots, civil and political society levels. A broad network of diverse women-led initiatives focused on equality, education, health, employment and voting rights, and were among the first to address the trauma and injuries of violent conflict. Researcher Kate Fearon estimates that there were 'more than 1000 groups working for or by women' across the broad voluntary and community sector in 1996 (Democratic Dialogue 1996, 57). These individuals and groups represented a stabilizing infrastructure, and provided collective leadership that was significant in addressing the needs of families and the depravation of communities.

Marjorie 'Mo' Mowlam who was UK Secretary of State for NI believed it was 'remarkable' that by the time formal negotiations began in 1996 fifteen women were 'sitting alongside their male colleagues and arguing their points'. She credits the presence and participation of leading women with positively changing the

nature of the political conversations in Northern Ireland. The female delegates not only represented change, Mowlam argues, their active involvement generated 'a new quality of debate' in the proceedings that led to the 1998 agreement. (Mowlam, 1999: xi). In a BBC Radio 4 program broadcast on the eve of the Agreement referendum, Secretary Mowlam addressed the scope and significance of women's participation in the peacebuilding process that reached well beyond the fifteen female delegates. She reflected,

> Here in NI there is a network of 400 women's groups that are there, their voices heard, they have an influence. Now I'd like that to be a clearer political influence. I don't think we should underestimate how important they have been in getting the peace to where we are. Those women have learnt to accommodate, compromise, as we do, with other women from the other side of the community. I think that is an immeasurable indicator of why we've got to where we've got in the talks process. Because there are a lot of women out there who want this to work ("Northern Ireland Peace and Women Today" 2013).

Women leaders have not been properly recognized for their important roles in the ongoing peace process. Their innovative and courageous activism has been largely ignored, overlooked and dismissed in mainstream historical documentation of Northern Ireland's peace process. The primary literature sources give major attention to male leaders and the male dominated systems of politics and culture. Similarly, the gendered nature of the conflict and the peace remains only minimally discussed, and then primarily by women authors. For some authors it is a sin of omission. They overlook and exclude women in their work. For others, it is a matter of dismissal. A brief acknowledgement of women generally, or a few key individuals, is eclipsed by an overwhelming focus on men, and silence on gender as a relevant analytical dimension. This skewed presentation is most often presented without reflection or interrogation. A scan of the indexes in the standard peace and conflict literature demonstrates the pervasive lack of recognition of women as political actors, peacemakers and leaders of democratic change in Northern Ireland. In Chapter Three I present a review of the literature on Northern Ireland demonstrating these critical gaps and omissions.

The gender dimension

There is growing recognition of the gendered nature of conflict and peace, and the dimension of gender in divided societies transitioning from war and violent conflict. The analysis of gender has a growing profile as a dimension of peace studies and the practice of peacebuilding. Put simply, 'war cannot be explained, as it normally is, without reference to gender'(Cockburn 2007). Feminist writers argue gender relations, the way women and men relate in society, need to be transformed in order to progress sustainable peace. Feminist scholars have challenged the concepts of democracy, violence, justice and peace 'as providing a gendered vision for the reconstructed state that assumes male subjects and excludes women from its ambit' (Chinkin 2004:14). Within peacebuilding is a growing focus on post-conflict and transitional justice. The expanding body of literature has brought matters of women's agency, capacity and effectiveness into the mainstream debates of conflict resolution and sustainable peace processes. This expanding focus on the process of transformation from violent conflict and war to peace includes greater attention to women's participation, roles and contributions to peacebuilding. Cynthia Cockburn considers gender 'a relation of power' and gender issues to be significant elements of militarism and war (Cockburn 2008). What is gender? The World Health Organization defines gender as

> The socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes
> that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women.
> The distinct roles and behaviour may give rise to gender inequalities,
> i.e. differences between men and women that systematically favour
> one group ("Health Topics: Gender" 2010).

The relative absence of women leaders in the literature and public discourses is a research opportunity. Author Carol Gilligan explains that once we accept that women are systematically left out of the study of social change, the subsequent work to consider their inclusion is both a challenge and opportunity. She says,

> To recognize women's voices as human voices means to recognize
> that women's experience might inform, even transform, our
> understanding of the human condition. To discover that over half
> the population essentially has not been studied is, in one sense, an
> enormous opportunity. It opens possibility that there may be in
> that group, in our group, ways of thinking and knowing that have
> not been explored (Gilligan 1987, 236–7).

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As Gilligan argues, the inclusion of women and their experiences is in itself transformational. The consideration of their 'ways of thinking and knowing' has the potential to significantly enhance our capacity for social justice and peaceful change. Women are the majority of society, and represent half the potential leadership talent. This research purposely takes gender into account as a key dimension of the peace process and presumes gender biases are a primary reason women are filtered out of historical narratives. As such, this work reflects a clear feminist approach. As Eck and Jain explain, feminism is,

> Listening to the voices of women, advocating the participation of women, caring about the rights and concerns of women, working for the welfare of women and transforming the world of women and men through the struggle for equality and for a just and peaceful society (1987, 2).

Gender - the other divide

Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society, and not just along ethno-national lines. Beyond sectarianism, there is another chasm that negatively impacts politics and peacebuilding work: gender. The deep gender division cuts across other boundaries of religion, race, class, and culture. Gender segregation remains a prominent political feature, sidelining women leaders and limiting their opportunities to shape the new Northern Ireland. This cleavage along gender lines has deep cultural roots and presents particular challenges for peacebuilding and reconciliation. The stark separation of women has been defined as 'the other divide' in Northern Ireland, and the presence of this crosscutting division was found to be 'as deep as that between the Protestant and Catholic communities' ("A Citizens' Inquiry: The Opsahl Report on Northern Ireland" 1993). The Opsahl Commission found the contributions of women to be impressive and distinct, and the systematic inequality and exclusion of women to be among the areas of highest concern for economic, social and political reform. They highlighted women's activism and leadership across the region as effectively promoting peaceful change and connecting civil society to politics. Unfortunately, the political system did not heed their recommendations and has not been reformed. Further, mainstream literature and political analysis fails to recognize the presence of the dangerous 'other divide', acknowledge the value of the civic

infrastructure built by women, or account for the positive nature of women's leadership.

There are important lessons to be found in the abundance of women leaders and power of their collective experiences. How do women lead, influence and engage others to make positive social change? What is distinctive about the ways they use their skills and approaches, relate to others, and define their leading roles? How did they sustain their communities, promote political settlement, and advance the transition to peace in Northern Ireland? A critical examination of the distinct ways women leaders have intentionally influenced social and political change can deepen the understanding of transformational leadership and sustainable peace.

A Feminist Approach

I acknowledge this research approach is not without risks. It follows the established pattern of treating women and women's leadership as separate from the 'normal', male-dominated practice. As Professor Eilish Rooney so well cautions:

> In mainstream debate, women are *assumed* to be included. Yet when a separate space for 'women and…' is created, the pressure to integrate gender, to include women, into ostensibly gender-free understandings is lessened. The idea that women can, and perhaps should, be dealt with separately, even additionally, is subtly reinforced: 'women' are made visible in the separate space but the penalties are insidious (Rooney 1996, 33).

'The penalties' include essentializing women and assuming women have a natural inclination to peace. While this research focuses on women's peace leadership, it is important to avoid such essentialism and acknowledge that the broad spectrum of women's involvement encompassed fighting roles within state and non-state forces. There is evidence that women were active in combat roles throughout the conflict. For example, women held visible leading roles within the IRA, although not in equal numbers to men. The list of prominent female republicans includes Maire Drumm, head of the Cumann na mBan in Belfast, and political prisoners Máiread Farrell, Mary Doyle and Máiread Nugent who took part in the 1980 hunger strike from inside Armagh Gaol. In a study of women in the Provisional IRA Dr. Mia Bloom found that '[F] rom the outset of the conflict,

women consistently took part in violent operations' (Bloom, Gill, and Horgan 2012). While republican and loyalist women held operational roles during the conflict, these experiences did not translate to leadership posts within the organizations in the same way as their male counterparts. In some cases, women prefer to be less visible, or are unwilling to publicly discuss their involvement in violent campaigns. As one woman interviewed by Bloom explained, women deferred to men and opted for less visible roles.

> 'I blame the women who prefer to remain in the background. There were many of us who suffered in the jails, on hunger strikes and on the no-wash protest...but few were willing to talk about their experiences. They let the men take the lead'(Bloom, Gill, and Horgan 2012).

For many reasons, women may contribute to the silence about their leadership roles, making the study of their contributions more challenging. They may be unwilling or unable to discuss their involvement in the violent conflict because doing so threatens their personal safety or challenges the historical narrative promoted by their parties and organizations.

Acknowledging women's complex relationship to peace and violence and with the concern not to essentialize in mind, this dissertation focuses on those women who in the Lederachs' words at the top of this chapter, have by *intentional design*, imagined a way to work for the healing of their communities and explores the work of women leaders to better understand their experiences as change agents working within a divided, transitioning society. I will show that making women's peacebuilding leadership more visible, assessing their leading ways, and evaluating the positive impact of their contributions can help to address analytical and historical gaps. A greater analysis of women's roles and contributions is critical to a full analysis of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Theoretical Framework

Through a combination of original research and an examination of academic literature, this social research project documents the contributions of women leaders and critically analyzes the impact and perceptions of their work. It aims to fill the gap in knowledge about the extent, complexity and impact of women's peace leadership in Northern Ireland. Drawing on models of transformative

leadership and sustainable peacebuilding, this thesis assesses women's activism after the ceasefires in 1994, during the peace talks process, and in early post-agreement Northern Ireland. The project was designed to document and explore distinctions in the approaches, skills and strategies used by women in their leadership practices. And further, to examine their leadership attitudes and practices for characteristics consistent with transformative leadership and sustainable peacebuilding models.

For many reasons, the lived experiences of women, including their contributions as leaders of change, are hidden, overlooked or ignored. Our knowledge of all periods in human history is necessarily partial, based on written records that are made at the time or soon afterwards, drawn from the memories of participants, and the stories that are told. Most historical knowledge from written sources lacks the texture and depth that the untold stories can add (Smyth and Faye 2000, 131). Divided societies produce divided memories and history (Naylor 2004, 29). A minimal focus on gender inequalities in the study of Northern Ireland serves to 'exacerbate' the silence of women's voices in the 'analysis of the conflict and in the processes of conflict resolution and peace building' (A. M. Gray and Neill 2011, 484).

Research Methods

This qualitative social research project explores the landscape of leadership through the lives of 'others'. It documents and examines women's leadership to assess the transforming impact of their work. The focus is on a pivotal time 1994-2000, beginning with the ceasefires, during the peace talks process, and into early post-agreement Northern Ireland. I conducted in-depth face to face interviews with 26 women leaders to discuss their leadership experiences in the broad peace process. These women held positions of influence and responsibility in a wide spectrum of social and political groups during the study period. This research is designed to reconstruct the forgotten and hidden stories of women's peacebuilding leadership and explore how women practiced and perceived leadership within a transitioning society. This thesis presents a group portrait, a composite picture of women leaders who participated in a significant period of the region's transition to peace. I hope that this compilation of their experiences

will enhance the historical narrative and expand narrowly defined concepts of leadership and peace.

I approach this research from a professional and personal context. My interest in these subjects is based on my personal experiences as a feminist working for social justice and peaceful change within the deeply divided United States of America. My research is informed by extensive professional experiences in mediation, group facilitation, public engagement and collaborative change. In a variety of roles I have sought to promote constructive dialogue, engage diverse perspectives, and enlist the talents of non-traditional leaders. I find inspiration in the stories of ordinary people living through extraordinary times, especially those of women who respond to adversity with hope and hard work.

Thesis Structure and Chapter Outline

This thesis is organized into an introduction, seven chapters, a bibliography and an appendix. In Chapter One I survey the literature on leadership theories with a focus on transformational leadership models including feminist critiques of transformational theories, gender biases and gender differences, and women as transforming leaders. This is followed by review of the literature on conflict resolution, peace and conflict transformation theories with particular emphasis on the role of leaders and leadership in sustainable peace, women's peacebuilding leadership and gender in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three I consider the scholarship on Northern Ireland and provide an analysis of the treatment of women, leadership and gender in the literature on the region's peace process. A discussion of methodological approach, strategy and design follows in Chapter Four, including a detailed list of the women leaders who were interviewed in this study. A presentation of the fieldwork results collected through in-depth interviews with women leaders is provided in Chapter Five with minimal commentary. In Chapter Six I engage the theories of transformational leadership and peacebuilding to critically examine the interview data to assess the value and impact of women's peace leadership in Northern Ireland. Chapter Seven provides a summary and conclusion of the thesis. A detailed bibliography follows with all works cited and referenced in these chapters and a separate list of the interview

participants. The Appendix features the tables and lists discussed in various chapters.

Chapter 1: Leadership, Transformational Models and Gender

> A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be. (Rosalynn Carter)

The concept of leadership is examined in all areas of study and is generally thought to involve influencing others and exercising power. How leaders operate to exert influence, manage change, communicate, inspire and make decisions is the subject of significant attention in academic and professional literature. Contemporary leadership discourse promotes leadership as a vital element in all organizations. Key debates focus on how leadership is performed, measured, taught, and promoted within groups and across society. A growing theme within the literature considers whether and how gender affects leadership, if women and men perceive and practice leadership differently, and whether these differences are relevant to social and political change. Leaders and leadership are considered important factors in the study of politics and peace.

Conceptual changes in the study of leadership have moved from authoritarian, hierarchical management styles to more collaborative, democratic approaches. This chapter surveys existing literature on leadership to understand transformational models, the impact of gender on practice and perception, women as transforming leaders, and the relevance of transformational approaches in contexts of conflict and change. I will argue that socially constructed gender roles constrain the way we think about leadership and limit the capacity of women and men to effectively use transformative styles.

Overview of leadership theory

Nineteenth century theories of leadership focused on the personal traits and stories of great men. These 'trait theories' were most concerned with the combination of strong attributes and physical qualities characteristic of leadership talent. These outstanding people were thought to be male, as women were thought not to possess the basic requirements of leadership, or to have the

capacity to greatly influence society (Carlyle 1900). According to theorist Sydney Hook 'some men are eventful, while others are event-making' (Hook 1955).

To challenge this view, *situationalists* argued that the context of time, culture and events shape leaders more than they impact history. Individuals emerge from significant periods of social and political change, and are thus born or called into leadership positions. These opposing views were brought together in the 1950s as researchers began to see the complex interaction of factors – traits and situations – that make up notions of leadership. Later, the focus of study looked beyond the constituent factors to consider the interactions between leaders and followers. This focus on relational behavior offered new insight into the comprehensive set of group dynamics and motivations. The debates moved from how and why some people are prominent and influential, to how leaders gain and sustain power. *Constituency theory* considers a range of effective leadership styles, and the need to adapt approaches to suit situational needs. This approach views the purpose of leadership as obtaining and holding power, in order to achieve organizational goals.

Transformational Leadership

In his Pulitzer Prize honored book *Leadership* (1978), historian and political scientist James MacGregor Burns examined the sources of motivation and behavior of leaders and their followers. He states 'leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth' (1978, 2). Central to this work is a focus on the process of change and the dynamic relationship between leaders and followers. He established the concept of transformational leadership as an interactive process that collectively engages leaders and followers in social change, rooted in 'the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations, and values of the followers' (1978, 4). Burn's view of leadership was a major shift from long-standing transactional theories based on task-oriented models of exchange between controlling leaders and their homogenous followers. Transformational leadership has been applied and examined in a wide variety of arenas. Early works examined the use and effectiveness of transformational leadership within military arenas (Burns 1978, Bass 1985). In the mid 1990's, the research focus expanded to consider the wider

application of transformational approaches in business settings, government agencies, education and non-profit organizations.

Leaders, according to Burns can be identified by the nature of their behavior, and are found at all levels and locations within society. He further explains that leaders and followers work together in the 'process of leadership' and that this relationship 'must be seen as part of the dynamics of conflict and power' (Ibid). His work casts leaders and followers within a dynamic relationship central to all political and social change movements. Burns acknowledges the global search for new and better leadership and argues this reveals a desire for 'moral leadership' and principled leaders. It is a reflection of society's 'need for moral, uplifting, transcending leadership, a leadership of large ideas, broad direction, strong commitment' (1978, 452). He argues that of central importance is the relationship between leaders and followers and the 'reciprocal' nature of their interactions in the joint pursuit of moral goals. His methodological approach examined individual leaders rather than 'power-holding' positions to reveal 'patterns' of behavior and distinctive leadership 'roles and qualities'. From these assessments of leader behavior, Burns identified positive leadership behaviors characteristic of transformational leadership. He explains:

> such leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality….Power bases are linked not as counter-weights but as mutual support for a common purpose' (1978, 20).

Burns' extensive work has significantly advanced the study of leadership, and generated 'an international tidal wave' of research making it the 'approach of choice' in the contemporary study and practice of leadership theory (Bass and Riggio 2006, xi). It has been a significant factor in the shift away from traditional 'transactional' models and a catalyst for extensive academic and professional work exploring relationship-based, interactive approaches that place leaders at the center of adaptive organizations. As a result, the study of leadership has become less about the character and charisma of elites, and more about of skill, approach, and experience necessary to exert influence through 'everyday relationships' in a dynamic world.

Traditional conceptions of leadership tend to be so dominated by images of presidents and prime ministers speaking to the masses from on high that we may forget that the vast preponderance of personal influence is exerted quietly and subtly in everyday relationships (1978, 442).

In his subsequent work *Transforming Leadership* (2003), Burns explores the moral dimensions of leadership and argues that it is best understood as the passionate actions to 'accomplish some change in the world that responds to' the basic human desires for 'liberty and equality, justice and opportunity, the pursuit of happiness'.

Because the theory of leadership is bound so closely to its practice, because it is a prescriptive as much as an analytical endeavor, the stakes for understanding leadership's crucial role in change—in transforming change, change that is intended, comprehensive, durable, and grounded in values—could scarcely be higher' (2003, p214).

The potential for creative individuals to inspire change that liberates and elevates society is a central theme. Burns explores the dynamic elements of insight, ideas and vision, and explains how they fuel creative leadership. He observes:

At its simplest, creative leadership begins when a person imagines a state of affairs not presently existing. This initial creative insight or spark is elaborated into a broader vision of change, possible ways of accomplishing it are conceived, and—in a fateful act of leadership—the vision is communicated to others. Because most ideas of significant change make some persons followers and others opponents, conflict arises. It is such conflicts that supply powerful motivation for transforming leadership and followership, fusing into a dynamic force in pursuit of change (2003, 153).

In transforming leadership leaders and followers work collectively to make comprehensive, lasting change and are themselves changed in the process. 'Transforming change transforms people *and* their situations' and 'flows from the collective achievement of a "great people"'. This collective activity enriches all participants by raising aspirations, empowering capacity, and sustaining the momentum necessary for purposeful social change. Leadership is a dynamic process directing social and political power toward positive, transforming change.

Core components of transformation leadership

Building on the theoretical foundation established by Burns, leadership scholar Bernard Bass developed a typology of transformational leadership that he used to conduct research on the behaviors of corporate executives and military commanders (1985, 1990, 1997). He found that although transformational leadership is influenced by the cultures and organizations within which leaders operate, common patterns are evident across a variety of business, education and military settings. On the basis of this research, Bass identified four Core Components of transformational leadership activities:

- *Idealized influence* – a leaders' ability to display conviction, emphasize trust, present their most important values, and highlight the importance of purpose, commitment, and ethical consequences of decisions. In this context, leaders are admired as role models.

- *Inspirational motivation* – a leaders' ability to articulate an appealing vision of the future, challenge followers with high standards, express enthusiasm, and provide encouragement.

- *Intellectual motivation* – relates to the following leadership capabilities: to question existing assumptions, traditions, and beliefs; to stimulate others to adopt new perspectives and behavior patterns; and to encourage expression of new ideas and reasoning.

- *Individualized consideration* – a leaders' ability to deal with others as individuals (1997, 133).

Bass examines how the process of leadership is influenced by and in turn influences organizational culture. Transforming leaders seek to motivate, inspire and empower their followers, within small work teams, in large organizations, and more broadly within society. The differences between transactional and transformational approaches are observable in the behavior of individuals and in the collective work of groups. Bass explains:

> People jockey for positions in a transactional group, whereas they share common goals in a transformational group. Rules and regulations dominate the transactional organization; adaptability is a characteristic of the transformational organization. (Ibid)

His early work demonstrated that using the core components enabled leaders to motivate others to achieve 'higher than expected performances', and to enhance the leadership capacity of the group. He finds that leaders are transformational if

their work 'inspires followers with challenge and persuasion', providing 'meaning and understanding' and the support needed for their enhanced participation in the collective achievement.

Leadership in a changing and challenging world

As organizations and wider society change, so must leadership. Bass joined with his colleague Ronald Riggio to examine the changing nature of leadership and the expanding use of transformational approaches. In their book *Transformational Leadership* (1998 and 2006)[2], they consider the influence of dynamic economic and political challenges on the contemporary study and practice of leadership. Transformational leadership is focused on the process of positive change and the way individuals and groups interact through changing conditions. They argue that transformational leadership is, 'at its core, about issues around the processes of transformation and change'. Effectively managing crisis, adapting to change, and resolving conflicts are key tasks for leaders at all levels. Bass and Riggio identify three significant changes emerging in this changed global environment:

1) the 'flattening of hierarchies';

2) an emphasis on the work of collaborative teams; and

3) a focus on the capacity of organizations to learn, adapt and innovate.

In crisis situations leaders will be better equipped and effective by relying on transforming models. Bass and Riggio describe crisis conditions to be marked by the dual pressures of time constraints and uncertain action. The ability to reframe crises into opportunities, solve problems, and creatively adapt strategies will enhance the capacity of the organization and the quality of achievement. Transformational leaders and their organizations are better able to 'handle crises, uncertainty, and threats of required change' and are more successful at adapting their strategies to be effective during prolonged chaotic conditions (2006, 63). In the crisis of conflict, leaders who use transforming approaches will be 'able to rise above what their followers see as their immediate needs and appropriate reactions' (2006, 75). Critical to the work of transforming leaders is sustaining their

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[2] The broad application of this work in academic and policy arenas has made it a primary text in the study of transformational leadership. The high interest led to the publication of a 2nd edition in 2006.

followers' belief that better outcomes are possible and attainable. To effectively manage the process of change, especially in the extreme situations created by violence and war, transforming leaders sustain hope and inspire determined investments in a better future. According to Bass and Riggio, 'Envisioning, enabling and empowering followers provides greater tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty, and working with new and unfamiliar conditions' (2006, 78).

Leadership in divided societies moving toward reconciliation

Political leaders make a significant contribution to the peace building process, but little work has discussed their role in transitioning societies. Researchers David Bargal and Emmanuel Sivan examine the influence and roles of leaders in societies divided by violent conflict, and moving toward peace and reconciliation. In a book chapter 'Leadership and Reconciliation' (2004) they consider how elite leaders using transformational approaches influence constructive shifts in attitudes and behaviors during post-conflict transitions. Their research extends that of Burns and Bass to examine how leaders using transformative approaches can promote the shifts in attitudes and behaviors needed to establish new relationships, especially between former adversaries. As the focus shifts from negotiating to implementing the peace, the roles and perceptions of leaders change. These authors argue that transformational leadership components (discussed above) are particularly relevant to the processes of reconciliation involving healing and repair after violent conflict. It is the use of these leadership approaches 'that make reconciliation activities possible' (2004, 131).

Bargal and Sivan focus their research primarily on national political leaders. They acknowledge this to be a 'top down approach', and recognize that 'secondary and tertiary elites in civil society' are also important to reconciliation efforts. In fact, they state a major finding (and surprising outcome) of their study is the importance of secondary elites rather than leaders in top tier positions. They say,

> Research on reconciliation should devote more attention to secondary elites in both liberal and illiberal democracies. Whether or not the era of gigantic leaders is over, secondary elite groups still have an impact and enjoy growing sway in the global village...they help shape civil society and set the agenda for debate on the reconciliation process (2004, 146).

Bargal and Sivan see a direct connection between transformational leadership and the multifaceted work of conflict transformation. Who leads, how they behave as leaders, and how leaders are perceived are critical dimensions of peaceful transitions. Bargal and Sivan argue leaders adept at using transformational styles are especially important to 'shape civil society and set the agenda for debate on the reconciliation process' at all levels of society.

Feminist critiques of transformational models

Among the critical assessments of transformational leadership models are those from feminist theorists who challenge the idea that a prescriptive, gender-neutral list of traits can be used by anyone with equal effect. A common theme in these critiques is that, too often, the issues of power and privilege remain unexamined. A focus on the behavior of individual leaders or work teams may overlook barriers presented by institutionalized bias and deeply rooted stereotypes. Finally, the overwhelming focus on male research subjects means that the normative models are still predominantly masculine, and the female leaders often are operating within male-dominated organizations.

Leadership scholar Joyce Fletcher examines the current leadership research and finds it weak because it discusses transformative approaches without promoting the necessary actions to affirmatively change traditional concepts of power and gender. She argues that

> 'although these models emphasize leadership as a collaborative, relational process dependent on social networks of influence, the concepts are often presented as gender and, to a lesser degree, power neutral' (2004, 648).

Leadership research, she argues, would be strengthened through the examination of 'deeply embedded, emotional issues', related to 'gender and power-linked aspects of self identity'. To transform, she believes, there must be fundamental change in the way leadership is understood as an interdependent dimension within the constructs of power and privilege. A second area of critique for Fletcher is the reliance on 'heroic individualistic' notions that focus on the actions of elites and the reactions of followers. She understands leadership to be socially

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constructed and collective. Yet, in the study of transformative leadership she finds there is a tendency to analyze prominent individuals rather than collaborative groups. Fletcher argues that transformation is 'more profound and difficult to achieve than the leadership literature would have us believe' (2004, 650).

Leadership scholar Amanda Sinclair emphasizes that leadership is the result of empowering relationships which promote the 'capacity to imagine, think and act in positive new ways'(Sinclair 2007, xvi). She echoes Fletcher's critiques and urges greater attention is needed to the dynamic forces of power, gender and 'the systematic forces that prefigure power relations' if the promise of transformation can be realized.

> Only by challenging the assumptions on which leadership is based will we be equipped to seriously anticipate the 'transformation' so often promised by leadership. We need to bring into the study of leadership more insights about power, gender and the systematic forces that prefigure power relations (2007, 33).

These scholars urge a greater focus on gender as a power dynamic in the generation of leadership, and how this is reflected in leader identity and the complex structures that shape society. How then does gender affect the practice and perception of leadership? Do women and men approach leadership in distinct ways and are these differences important to transformational leadership?

Gender biases and gender differences

As previously discussed, leadership has traditionally been conceived as male behavior. Men have historically been recognized as the powerful, influential figures who lead change and deserve our attention. Too often this means leadership is equated with masculinity, and male-defined 'female roles' do not include leadership. Research involving women leaders and focusing on gender differences in practice and perception is relatively new. There is comparatively little research that profiles women leaders and analyses their understandings and experiences of leadership. Within the existent scholarship is evidence that women are practicing leadership in ways that mirror transformational leadership models.

Political Scientist Nancy Adler's study of global women leaders finds that 'some

appear to use more democratic approaches, including attempting to minimize hierarchy, using more inclusive processes to build consensus, and actively seeking international and national unity' (1996, 152). She argues that there are important distinctions in the way women lead peaceful change, but that historical accounts overlook their approaches and limit meaningful analysis.

> If women's leadership visions and styles, do in fact, differ substantially from those of their male counterparts, then raising the question of women's ability to bring meaningful change to twenty-first century leadership becomes more interesting, and the answer to the question of their ability to bring change becomes a cautious 'yes' (1996, 154).

Adler believes greater study is needed to fully understand the nature of the 'vision and styles' used by women leaders.

Laura Liswood examines the experiences of fifteen female heads of state in *Women World Leaders* (1995). Among those she studied was former Irish President Mary Robinson who reports she finds differences in the way women lead. Robinson states,

> I think there are broad differences, but it's quite hard to pin them down. I think women instinctively are less hierarchical, and I find that very much at the grassroots level in women's organizations and voluntary organizations…They're very open and enabling and participatory and they encourage each individual to have a role and an involvement. And I think it's the same when women are –-generally -- when women are in positions of leadership. It's not as hierarchical, it's not necessarily a question of asserting that a particular woman is an individual, as much as trying to influence others to come along a particular path, and trying to harness in a cooperative way the energies of those who are like-minded, whether it's a political party or in a professional group…(Mary Robinson, quoted in (Liswood 1995, 81)

Although the work of Adler and Liswood draws on the rare few women with experience as global leaders, their findings indicate that women are effectively using non-hierarchical approaches to exert influence and get results. This is consistent with the results of extensive research studies examining gender differences and the role of bias in the perception of leader effectiveness.

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Scholar Alice H. Eagly and her colleagues have conducted a number of comprehensive meta-analyses to study gender differences in the leadership styles of male and female leaders (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly & Karau, 1991). Their extensive work offers two basic understandings about gender and leader effectiveness. First, what is effective for men is not necessarily effective for women, and second, effectiveness for women depends on the social context within which they are working. Eagly and Johnson (1990) conducted a comprehensive review of research on leadership styles and found indications that women use distinct leadership styles. They state:

> The strongest evidence…for a sex difference in leadership style occurred on the tendency for women to adopt a more democratic or participative style and for men to adopt a more autocratic or directive style…[Of the 370 studies reviewed comparing male and female leaders' behavior] 92% of the comparisons went in the direction of more democratic behavior from women than men (Eagly and Johnson 1990)

The 'democratic and participative styles' used by women are thought to be advantageous and highly consistent with the contemporary focus on transformational leadership styles. In light of this evidence, Eagly and her colleagues were challenged to explain why socially constructed gender roles persist and limit the way we think about the leadership capacity of women and men. They find the traditional association of leadership with masculinity has resulted in 'role congruity' that perpetuates a prejudiced view of women's leadership potential and less favorable assessments of their behavior. Eagly and Karau argue 'prejudice toward female leaders follows from the incongruity that many people perceive between the characteristics of women and the requirements of leader roles' (2002, 574). Gender bias impacts the selection, promotion and evaluation of women in leadership roles, especially at elite levels and in male-dominated contexts. They state,

> …because people more easily perceive men as meeting high standards for competence and more readily accept them when they behave confidently and assertively, they are more likely to be thought about as leaders, to behave as leaders, and to emerge as leaders, especially for leader roles given relatively masculine definitions (2002, 585).

This research further indicates that to promote the use of transformational styles it is important to focus on gender bias and barriers that limit the participation of women leaders. Eagly and Karau find that gender bias against female leaders operates at two levels. First, it results in 'less favorable evaluation of women's (than men's) potential for leadership because leadership ability is more stereotypical of men than women.' Second, 'less favorable evaluation of the actual leadership behavior of women than men because such behavior is perceived as less desirable in women than men' (2002, 576). These two forms of bias combine to limit women's access to leadership roles, and negatively impact the recognition of their performance as leaders.

Further, this research considers how these prejudices influence the conditions and organizational contexts within which leaders practice. Eagly and Karau identify several factors that combine to make a context 'uncongenial' for women. These include whether it is male-dominated (especially if the woman is solo), if the work is 'masculine stereotypic', if task completion is the primary goal, and if there is an emphasis on hierarchical structures and power rather that egalitarian approaches and collaboration. To reduce prejudice toward female leaders, they argue it is necessary to 'shift away from a traditional view of leadership and toward a more democratic and participatory view advocated by many modern management scholars' (2002, 591).

In related research Eagly and Carli (2007) challenge the myth that women are less capable and competent leaders. They examine the significant obstacles women face to become leaders and find they are pervasive and persistent. The path of leadership involves running a gauntlet of negative barriers, not just breaking through one exclusionary 'glass' ceiling. They call the pathway the 'leadership labyrinth' and suggest it can be successfully navigated, but the great effort involved deters and exhausts many women along the way. The compounding biases and stereotypes create an inhospitable context for women, and this is largely why they remain under-represented as leaders. The minimal presence of women leaders contributes to the belief that women aren't capable of leadership, especially in the elite positions thought to be supremely important.

Eagly and Carli refute the mythology with strong evidence that women are effective leaders. They state

> What is clear from the meta-analysis is that women leaders, on average, exert leadership through behaviors considered appropriate for effective leadership under contemporary conditions (2007, 5).

Researchers Kolb and Merrill-Sands argue that a 'paradox of success' explains why leadership remains a masculine notion despite more women leaders in business, education and politics. Cultural biases are very resistant to change because they involve subtle and deeply rooted cultural norms and values. So paradoxically, the growing number of prominent successful women leaders has not yet overcome prejudicial perceptions of women's effectiveness and legitimacy. Kolb and Merrill-Sands find these biases also have a constraining impact on the study of leadership. Many critical leadership skills are perceived through the lens of gender stereotypes and are valued differently when men and women enact them. Gender norms shape which leadership skills are most valued and recognized, and this explains the preferential bias toward male leaders as subjects of analysis and debate (Kolb and Merrill-Sands 2001).

Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) also look to contextual influences to understand gender impacts on leadership. They discuss the presence of a 'second-generation' gender bias involving the powerful yet often invisible barriers to women's advancement that arise from cultural beliefs about gender, as well as workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favor men. Among the key structural barriers they discuss are those reinforcing the mythology of women being 'ill-suited for leadership'. These include 'organizational hierarchies in which men predominate' and 'practices that equate leadership with behaviors believed to be more common or appropriate in men' (2011, 475). While singularly negative, the cumulative affect of these biases is what Ely and colleagues find to be most significant in shaping leadership perception and identity. They argue that the layers of bias 'in the aggregate can interfere in women's ability to see themselves and be seen by others as leaders'. They say,

> Integrating leadership into one's core identity is particularly challenging for women, who must establish credibility in a culture that is deeply conflicted about whether, when, and how they should exercise authority. Practices that equate leadership with behaviors considered more common in men suggest that women are simply not cut out to be leaders. Furthermore, the human tendency to gravitate to people like oneself leads powerful men to sponsor and advocate for other men when leadership opportunities arise. (Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb 2013, 63)

These authors demonstrate how biased beliefs shape the practice and perceptions of leadership, and how these patterns compound to impact the cultural context within which women and men operate. Male-dominated hierarchies can deter women leaders, sideline their effective contributions, and reinforce doubts in their capacity to lead. These prevailing cultural biases are highly resistant to change, despite an increasing number of women in visible leadership positions.

Women as Transforming Leaders

As previously discussed, feminist critiques have argued that traditional leadership approaches are often gender-blind or gender-biased. A number of authors have found transformational leadership literature downplays the subtle and systemic biases that constrain women leaders and their use of transformative leadership styles. There is a growing acknowledgment of gender as a leadership dynamic among writers on transformational leadership.

Burns acknowledged an 'assumption of male leadership, especially at the higher levels of power' in his foundational work on transformational leadership explaining that because of gender stereotypes 'women have been seen as lacking in leadership qualities' (1978, 50). He found this biased understanding of leadership persists despite the demonstrated abilities of notable female presidents and prime ministers. Burns suggests this 'male bias' is rooted in a 'false conception of leadership as mere command or control', and predicts that progressive change in the understanding of leadership will reform roles for women and men.

> As leadership comes properly to be seen as a process of leaders
> engaging and mobilizing the human needs and aspirations of
> followers, women will be more readily recognized as leaders and men
> will change their own leadership styles (1978, 50).

Bass and Riggio progress the early work of Burns by examining gender dynamics in the behavior and perception of leaders in *Transformational Leadership* (2006). Like the feminist scholars discussed above, they find compelling evidence of differences in the leadership styles used by women and men. Women in leadership positions, they say, are 'somewhat more transformational' and perceived by their colleagues and followers as 'slightly, but significantly, more effective and satisfying as leaders' (2006, 115). Further they find the leadership environment has been influenced by a global pattern of social, political and economic changes, making the context 'more conducive to transformational leadership and the leadership style more stereotypically conceived of as feminine (e.g. nurturing, socially sensitive, relations oriented)'.

> To be effective in today's world, leaders need to be more
> transformational. And there is growing evidence that women, as a
> group, are more disposed to transformational leadership behaviors
> (2006, 124).

Bass and Riggio also observe that using transforming approaches leads to more positive perceptions of effectiveness by followers. This suggests that women are key leaders and decision-makers, and should be actively enlisted to promote the expanded use of transformational approaches by organizations seeking to be innovative and effective.

In 'Ways Women Lead' (1990), Professor Judy Rosener links her theory of interactive leadership to the conceptual frameworks developed by Burns and Bass. She argues that women leaders are effectively managing organizations by 'drawing on the skills and attitudes they developed from their shared experience as women' rather than by 'adopting the style and habits of men' (1990, 119). Her research interviews with leading women found differences in the way men and women describe their leadership performance. Men were more likely to discuss characteristics that parallel traditional 'transactional leadership' models. They also more commonly used forms of power drawn from their status, position and

level of authority. In contrast, the female leaders' descriptions of their leadership style used characteristics congruent with transformational models. For example, helping followers and subordinates to align their self-interests with those of the group and broader organizational goals. Women attributed their power to influence, interpersonal skills, personal characteristics, effort, and networking rather than position. In short, Rosener says 'women leaders don't covet formal authority. They have learned to lead without it' (1990, 123).

Rosener argues that an expanded definition of effective leadership is needed to enlist women and men skilled at using a variety of interactive and transformative approaches. A broader understanding of leadership will result in a wider path and promote greater acceptance for individual leaders who draw on their unique strengths. She argues that we must see the value in diversity and enlist a diversity of styles and experiences to be effective.

> 'By valuing a diversity of leadership styles, organizations will find the strength and flexibility to survive in a highly competitive, increasingly diverse economic environment (1990, 125).

Her work underscores the need to greatly increase the presence and participation of women leaders to successfully employ transformational leadership approaches. It is the diversity of leadership styles that gives these organizations the advantage of resilience and the capacity for innovation. To successfully achieve the goals of transformation organizations must fully engage women leaders.

Leadership scholar and organizational development author Amanda Sinclair argues a new understanding of leadership is needed that is inclusive of gender. In *Doing Leadership Differently* (2005), she argues that fundamentally 'gender is a central component of leadership'. How we define the practice of leadership, who does it, and where it occurs are 'embedded in broader social relations'. She urges us to see the 'troubling scarcity' of visible women leaders as an opportunity to rethink and 're-appraise' the theory and practice of leadership. She believes advancements in leadership study will come from non-traditional places, roles and people.

> Examining men's and women's experiences of leadership reveals how traditional understandings of leadership have become exhausted – cynically exhorted, barren of meaning and unable to offer us hope. Exploring different approaches to the leadership task provides new insights and fresh purpose (Sinclair 2007, 1).

In addition to recasting notions of leadership, Sinclair argues that it is necessary to disrupt the pervasive social expectations that leadership is male activity. This is possible 'through a conscious act of counter-intuition' that breaks the cycle that associates masculinity and leadership.

> The masculinity of leadership is self perpetuating – the more men are seen to possess leadership qualities, the more status and influence they are accorded, the more they can command resources, the more formal opportunities as leaders they are offered, and the easier it is for other men to be recognized as having leadership. This self-perpetuating loop puts great pressure on women to be like men in order to be judged as 'real leaders' (Sinclair 2005, 25–26).

Sinclair acknowledges that changing this repeating pattern is a complex challenge, involving the removal of systematic and structural preferences that promote men and discourage women leaders. She argues that to do leadership differently requires new thinking and comprehensive actions to break the negative patterns that undermine women's participation and constrain innovation. She urges that researchers and practitioners will find 'new insights and fresh purpose' by studying the non-traditional work of non-traditional leaders. In short, we have much to learn from women about the practice of leadership.

Conclusion

The contemporary study of leadership theory and practice is focused on interactive models with the capacity for innovation and creative change. Transformative leadership models are characterized by constructive interactions between leaders and followers, flattened hierarchies, shared responsibilities, and free flowing communication focused on positive social change. These leadership approaches are particularly relevant in a changing global environment and times of crisis. There is substantial, meta-analytic evidence demonstrating that women are particularly effective transformative leaders, but that gender stereotypes

continue to limit their roles and advancement opportunities. Cultural norms shape our perception of leaders and leadership. The behavior and legitimacy of those who lead is viewed through culturally constructed notions of culture and gender. This is especially true at elite levels, in times of crisis, and in male-dominated organizations and contexts. The status of women in society has a direct impact on the opportunities to participate as leaders in governance, decision-making and policy development. How leaders are valued and perceived reflects societal beliefs about gender roles for men and women. Male-normative understandings of leadership can obscure analysis by overlooking the roles, contributions and participation of women leaders.

As discussed in this chapter, engaging women in leadership can positively impact the work environment, the quality of decision-making and the economic bottom line in many contexts. Working together as partners, women and men have access to the broadest spectrum of experiences and expertise, and thus have the greatest capacity for creative success. This suggests engaging women leaders could have similar positive effects on matters of governance, peacebuilding and security. Transformational leadership can provide a helpful theoretical model to re-examine and revalue the work of leading women.

In the next chapter, I will critically examine the literature and discourse from the study of conflict resolution to understand the importance of leadership, particularly the role and contributions of women leaders. Conceptual changes in the study of leadership have moved from authoritarian, hierarchical management styles to more collaborative, democratic approaches. Similarly, there is a growing emphasis in conflict resolution and peacebuilding models on the importance of inclusivity, women's participation and the engagement of civic society. This will provide the foundation for a later discussion drawing together parallel themes from transformational leadership and sustainable peace to argue for the importance of women's participation as transforming leaders in conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Chapter 2: Women and Peacebuilding – the power of women's leadership

> There are urgent reasons to reopen the question of whether looking at war and security issues through a gendered lens can teach lessons that might advance the projects of peace and democracy (Young, 2007: 117).

This chapter draws together theoretical conversations in conflict resolution and peace to consider the importance of women's leadership. Within the maturing body of work across these fields of study there is a focus on the gendered nature of conflict and peace, the role of women in conflict, and the importance of women's participation in sustainable peacebuilding. There is growing recognition of the varied roles women play during conflict, the distinct impacts of war and violent conflict on women's lives, and a greater understanding of their roles as agents of change. Despite the international policy framework acknowledging the benefits of women's participation in peace processes, there is little work examining their engagement as leaders and the unique ways they contribute to post-war social and political transformation. Similarly, (as explained in Chapter Two) the examination of leadership gives minimal attention to the dimensions of gender, especially in the contexts of violent conflict and peace.

There are intriguing parallels in the literature on transforming leadership and conflict transformation that can expand our understanding of the role of peacebuilding leadership (Bargal and Sivan, 2004, Boulding, 2001, Lederach and Lederach 2010). This work seeks to draw connections between transformative leadership and peacebuilding to better understand the approaches and styles used by women leading peaceful change. Do women use transformative leadership models and approaches in their work for peace and reconciliation? Is women's leadership a critical element of conflict transformation? What is the positive contribution of women's peacebuilding leadership and what it the cost of their exclusion? In this chapter, I will discuss the general context of developments in thinking about peacebuilding and leadership, followed by an examination of peacebuilding and gender, to explore women's leadership in conflict transformation and sustainable peace processes.

Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation and Leadership

Managing the chaotic process of peace requires the leadership of creative individuals and groups who can transcend divisions and promote peaceful progress. There is a relatively small body of work examining the role of leaders in peacebuilding or post-agreement transitions (Lederach 1997, Boulding 2001; Cowell-Meyers 2001, 2003; Bargal and Sivan 2004; Miraftab 2004, Gormley-Heenan 2007, Lederach and Lederach 2010). Too often, the focus is on the charisma and power of a few individuals, on the elite and episodic, and on the roles and impacts of male actors. Culturally defined frames filter out leaders and leadership that is outside the norm. Gender stereotypes equate leadership with masculinity, meaning women are not considered leaders, and their activism and work is often not counted as leadership. The traditional (and prevailing) construct in both leadership and peace has been hierarchical, with escalating levels of importance and power culminating at top levels. The elite leaders, those with greatest impact and influence, are thought to be in top posts, ascending according to their relative effectiveness. Leadership is about obtaining and holding power, managing perceptions of the constituency, and measured in terms of results and length of service. Thus a survey of peace leadership would typically focus primary attention on senior members of the major political parties, paramilitary groups, security and peacekeeping forces, and to a lesser extent government agencies, churches, and traditional social justice agencies. The leaders found in these prominent structures are most often men, and their styles reflect commonly dominant notions of uncompromising strength and authority. As discussed in the previous chapter, women and their leadership can be viewed as the invisible other, cast in minor roles at the margins of politics and peacebuilding.

The theory of 'conflict transformation' emerged in the 1990s within the broader field of peace and conflict studies and argues for comprehensive change in the peacebuilding approach including the understanding of leadership. It was developed through the work of leading practitioners and authors including Galtung (1995) and John Paul Lederach (1995, 1997), to describe the progressive

and comprehensive process of moving societies from war to peace. Conflict transformation involves shifts in the dynamic personal and institutional relationships that shape society, and ultimately, transform the conflict itself. Johan Galtung (1976) defines peacebuilding as the process of creating and achieving peace. His concept of 'positive peace' described the active, structural work to cultivate peaceful conditions that extend well beyond the simplistic ending of violence he calls 'negative peace'. From Galtung I understand peacebuilding as a comprehensive reconstructive process that addresses the underlying causes of violent conflict and promotes justice, equity and cooperation at all levels of society. Narrow definitions of peace, politics, and the role of effective political leadership based on notions of 'negative peace' limit the development of more peaceful societies. The concept of 'sustainable peace' was introduced by Lederach (1997) to describe the extensive and ongoing processes needed to foster reconciliation within societies.

The resolution and transformation of conflict involves many levels of change. Key among these change layers are 'change of character, a change of leadership, a change in the constituency of the leader or adoption of its goals, values or beliefs' (Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse 1999, 21). Transforming society after violent conflict includes a renegotiation of political engagement, and a reconstruction of politics. Democratic structures and practices need to be refreshed, rebuilt or reimagined in light of the conflict so that they support the emerging peace. There is growing attention given to the relative importance of those leading change from within civil society, local government and grass-roots organizations.

In his work exploring the development of sustainable peace, former US congressman Howard Wolpe urges that greater analysis is needed of the 'underappreciated leadership factor' to improve the successful development and implementation of peace agreements.

> The too-frequent consequence, sadly, is that negotiated peace accords
> wither quickly while rickety new democratic institutions wobble and
> sway badly. We "know" what is required of leaders in a conflict or post-

conflict situation; even they often "know" what is required. The challenge is to make what is required for durable peace and sustainable democracy politically achievable. This requires a careful examination of the underappreciated "leadership factor" in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction (Wolpe and McDonald 2006:138).

Wolpe served as a presidential special envoy to the African Great Lakes region (1996-2001) and then directed Burundi's leadership training initiative (2003-2009). In these capacities he worked to assist the peace process from negotiations through the early stages of post-agreement transition. His work with McDonald to enhance the capacity of local leadership was viewed as critically necessary to generate the broader societal changes called for by the Burundi peace agreement.

'…Institutional transformation requires individual transformation—in the way people think, in how they relate to one another, and in how they work together. A key to successful international interventions, therefore, is to reach the critical national leaders. Failing that, institutional transformation will be hollow and fleeting (Wolpe and McDonald 2006:138).

Similarly, Lederach argues that a change in the nature and style of political leadership is one of a series of 'shifts' necessary to move conflicts out of a pattern of violence and toward peace. In *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997), he examines the relational dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding. He argues that to change conflict and promote peace we need to change political relations and the practice of leadership. The nature and style of political leadership can either promote or prevent transformational shifts toward peace. Identifying capable leaders, promoting their peaceful approaches and styles, and investing in transformed relationships between leaders and their constituencies are key parts of the ongoing transformation process. In this text, Lederach uses a hierarchical structure to view the position of leaders within the population of society. This pyramid of leadership reflects a traditional linear view of politics and peace based on escalating power and importance. Using this lens, he describes societal leadership as having three major layers:

- top tier – military, political and religious leaders;
- middle range – ethnic, religious, academic, humanitarian and intellectual leaders; and

- grassroots – local, community developers, health officials, service providers (1997a, 38).

Lederach describes the middle range leaders as having particular significance. These actors have unique capacity and as such are especially critical infrastructure. Mid-range leaders have connections to the other levels (up and down), their positions are less constrained by formal positions of power, their low visibility allows them 'greater flexibility of movement and action', and they most likely 'have preexisting relationships with counterparts that cut across the lines of conflict (1997a, 42).

For Lederach, a society's capacity for leadership is critically linked to the capacity to sustain peace and advance reconciliation. In his book *The Moral Imagination* (2005), Lederach promotes a relational view of peacebuilding that involves transformative changes at the all levels including the personal shifts made by individuals. He discusses how leaders build capacity for sustainable peace as part of vertical or horizontal levels, and those that work to integrate these levels are most significant. He finds the most effective strategies within divided societies are those 'that explicitly engender and support processes linking individuals, networks, organizations, and social spaces that demonstrate a capacity for both vertical and horizontal relationship building' (Lederach 2005, 183).

In *When Blood & Bones Cry Out* (2010) Lederach explores non-linear, non-hierarchical structures to describe the infrastructure needed for conflict transformation. This is a progressive change from his earlier linear models and reflects the developments in transformational leadership discussed in Chapter Two. He and coauthor Angela Jill Lederach suggest we think of community as a vessel, the broadest 'container' surrounding all else, rather than as an underlying foundation for social and political activities. The arena of politics is nested within the larger world of community space from which it draws legitimacy and strength. This reimagining of conflict, peace and leadership uses organic, circular images of societal space that brings women and civil society actors into central focus. In doing so, they also heighten the importance of women's leadership in sustainable peacebuilding and argue for their systematic inclusion.

> The unique and effective approaches women use to foster social
> healing too often remain unnoticed, an invisible reality, lost because
> of the systematic exclusion of women's voice and representation
> (Lederach and Lederach, 2010: 157-8).

The imagery of a vessel allows us to think beyond hierarchies and reconsider the structural value of the component parts of peace and leadership. It also encourages a reviewing of those working in community, leading grass-roots change, and engaging in activism that sustains the basic infrastructure of society. The Lederachs observe,

> The war zones for women span the public and private domains –
> from the frontlines of war to the frontlines of the home, women
> experience violence in a way that dismantles the false dichotomies of
> war and peace, conflict and post-conflict, private and public. The
> reality of women's lives in the midst and aftermath of war poses a
> challenge to the notion that reconciliation is a linear process (2010,
> 158).

This work argues for a revaluing of women's peace leadership throughout the broad spectrum of conflict transformation processes. Moving beyond hierarchies and linear peace models allows the leadership of women to be viewed as critically important sustainable peace infrastructure. Lederach and Lederach believe women's leadership 'is absolutely necessary for cultivating a just peace' (2010, 158).

To gain a more expansive understanding of leadership, many scholars and practitioners echo the Lederachs' point and advise we look beyond those at elite levels. A growing focus is on the leadership capacity of those not in top positions, working without great authority, and located in organizations and places not traditionally considered as being drivers of change. Ronald Heifetz, professor of public leadership at Harvard's Kennedy School, suggests that we look beyond elite positions to find effective leaders. In his view, leaders are found at all levels of organizations, and those most effective may not be in elevated positions of authority. He builds on transformative leadership theories with his own 'adaptive leadership' model that reinforces the value of leaders working at all organizational levels. He observes,

> Many people are doing a good job at adaptive leadership but they're
> not always in the highest positions of authority. There are countless

people scattered throughout organisations, including people at the
periphery, who raise the tough questions without knowing the
answers, and then mobilise people to tackle those tough questions and
generate innovations (2007, 229).

To think anew about peace and how best to bring it about, we need to re think
our expectations of leaders and our understanding of their transforming roles. In
the search for sustainable peace, there is a growing consideration of the
resources offered by civil society leaders. This shift away from political elites and
(para) military commanders considers the influential power of other social and
political actors. Researchers Bell and O'Rourke argue that greater involvement of
civil society groups will bring more women into peace processes. They explain,

Given that women are underrepresented in formal sites of power, and
are more fully represented and even over-represented in civil society
spheres, more attention to how civil society is enabled during a peace
process would be likely to promote the inclusion of women. (C. Bell
and O'Rourke 2010, 979)

In this broader view of the political sphere, women have a central role and their
leadership is distinctly visible.

Faranak Miraftab (2004) argues although women engaged in community-based
activism arenas are often given credit as general contributors to peace, more
expansive roles for these leaders in governance and policymaking is often
overlooked. She believes this is in part because notions of politics, peace
processes and community leadership are often viewed as distinct and separate
rather than overlapping. Feminist scholarship argues for an expanded, inclusive
view of politics to include community activism and grassroots infrastructure. This
shift allows the community leadership of women and women-led civil society
organizations to be acknowledged as significant resources in politics and peaceful
transitions. Miraftab argues,

the exclusionary conceptualization of political arenas of citizenship,
has effectively ignored the political activities and agency of women in
grassroots neighborhood and community-based groups, those most
readily available to them and where they are most effective (2004, 2).

Miraftab draws on feminist concepts of politics, citizenship and participatory
democracy to challenge notions of women's leadership as 'outcast behavior' and

argue for it to be recognized as legitimate political activity. In many cases, this means shifting the focus to find women leaders hidden by the cloak of invisibility.

Elisabeth Porter explains that the invisibility of women's contributions to peacebuilding is due to the nature and location of their activism. She finds women's peace initiatives 'usually are informal, ad hoc and rarely part of formal peace processes, so their stories often drift, unacknowledged' (Porter 2007, 1). Meintjes and colleagues see a discounting of women's peace activism related to its focus on family and community based 'survival' initiatives that rarely get acknowledged or recorded. As a result, 'women's advances – the survival strategies that kept families alive and communities together – are erased from the historical record' (Meintjes, Pillay, and Turshen 2001, 17). The scant recording of women's peace activism limits examination by academics and policy makers, and results in a knowledge gap in peacebuilding literature.

Former U.S. ambassador to Austria Swanee Hunt believes the stereotypical perception of women can be seen as an advantage. She argues that the traditional view of women as second-class citizens and noncombatants provides them a uniquely strong position. They can leverage the stereotypes to become essential partners that enrich the peace process and enhance the prospects for lasting political settlements. Professor Hunt finds peace processes are significantly less likely to fail when they are broadly inclusive and engage women as peace negotiators. The participation of women expands the range of skills and experiences available to effectively address the conflict. This enriched capacity enhances the prospects for dialogue, resolution and agreement. 'Women can work below the radar, because if they were *men* coming out and saying the same things, they would probably be shot on the spot,' (as quoted in "Can Women Stop War?" 2014).

Women and Peacebuilding

The international community now recognizes the importance of gender equality in all phases of peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peacemaking. Formal commitments to these goals are found in the Beijing Platform and UNSC

Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. 1325 and its follow-up Resolutions call for women's protection, participation and perspectives to be taken into account in peace processes and peace-building.

These developments are a consequence of decades of women's peace activism and feminist writing and advocacy. A century ago, women convened in The Hague to discuss ways to end WWI and secure a permanent peace. In 1915, the International Congress of Women met to call for an end to the First World War. The agenda acknowledged the direct connection between peace and gender equality, between democracy and equal political representation. For the delegates, there could be no lasting peace without the full engagement of women. They argued for a permanent 'Constructive Peace' based on the principles of justice, including that 'women should share all civil and political rights and responsibilities on the same terms as men' ("International Congress of Women" 1915, 15 Resolution 15).

The idea that women have particular contributions to make to positive peacebuilding also has a long genesis in feminist writing on peace. In her book *Educating for Peace, A Feminist Perspective (1985)*, Birgit Brock-Utne argues for a comprehensive definition of peace that integrates feminist perspectives on structural violence and engages the global history of women's peace work. Her research provides important documentation of the historical lineage and legacy of women's international peace work. She purposefully makes the contributions of 'women peace heroes' visible and accessible to those studying and promoting peace. She does so to fill the historical gaps and counter the structural 'mechanisms' within patriarchal society that press against women's peace activism. The first and most powerful of these mechanisms, she finds is rendering women's peace work *invisible.* She warns 'this is a mechanism used not only by those who are opposed to the causes women are fighting for (they try to use the same mechanisms against fighting for peace); it is also used by men fighting together with women for the same cause' (1985, 63).

Brock-Utne builds on Galtung's notion of positive peace by adding the dimension of nonviolent action. She explores the connections between gender and women's peace work and finds abundant evidence of the 'special roles women play in the creation of peace' through their involvement in peace movements, peace education, and nonviolent campaigns for social change. Brock-Utne's analysis of women's global peace work reveals three primary characteristics:

1. It is connected to the concern for human life, especially for children, but also for themselves and other women.

2. It makes use of a varied set to of nonviolent techniques, acts, and strategies.

3. It is transpolitical, often transnational, aimed at reaching other women in the opposite camp. (1985, 37)

In her follow-up work, *Feminist Perspectives on Peace and Peace Education* (1989), Brock-Utne turned her attention to making clear the relevance of feminist perspectives to peace studies and nonviolent social change. She analyzes peace and peace studies to better understand what they mean for women, and critically consider how cultural teachings and attitudes shape the relative peacefulness of women and men. She finds that gender is a highly relevant variable in the study of peace. Brock-Utne is highly critical of the mainstream gender-neutral approach to research that has resulted in inaccurate generalized assumptions too often 'based on studies solely including human males'. To address this biased 'neutrality', she encourages peace researchers to focus on the lives of women.

> The easiest way to break this gender neutrality is by deliberately trying to view the world through feminine eyes. And sometimes this is all that is meant by "a feminist perspective"—looking at the world through the eyes of women (1989, 2).

Through this deliberately refocused lens, she believes we can fully consider women's relations to peace, including their roles as leaders, to improve the understanding of how best to promote peaceful societies. To strengthen the study of new and better ways to build peace, she argues for the inclusion of feminist perspectives in all areas of peace research to shift the emphasis away from the mechanisms of war to the architecture of peacebuilding.

Sociologist and peace educator Elise Boulding promotes the understanding of peace as both a culture and capacity that must be developed. 'Peace, like war,' she explains, 'is a social invention' (1995, 436). In this 1995 paper 'Feminist Inventions in the Art of Peacemaking: A Century Overview', she argues against essentialist theories of women as naturally peaceful. On the contrary, Boulding asserts that culturally constructed roles have resulted in women developing important skills and expertise. Her work examines the 'peacemaking inventions' of women throughout history to document the distinct approaches and creative strategies they use. Rather than a constraining factor, she finds that the cultural reality of women's lives has generated their capacity as positive agents of change.

> It is rather that women's knowledge and experience worlds have equipped them to function creatively as problem-solvers and peacemakers in ways that men have not been equipped by their knowledge and experience worlds (1995, 410–412).

Much of Boulding's research explores the capabilities of women, the creative approaches they take to peace work and the effectiveness of their efforts. Boulding advances the understanding of the 'inventiveness' of women in their work as peace activists and leaders. She challenges the 'myth that women are not equipped to function in public spaces' and argues that it is the inherent bias of our social structures that constrains their opportunities and the development of peace.

> Yet, the social vision and abilities of women continue to be frustrated by male-dominated social structures that severely limit the extent to which women can use their peacebuilding skills and inventiveness (Ibid: 437).

Boulding finds the style and location of women's peace leadership to be significant. For Boulding, the historic reality of women's lives has generated their capacity as highly capable agents of change. The nature and location of their peace work is an asset rather than a limitation. Her research documents how women commonly operate within and focus on civil society, and examines the link between women's lived experiences and the distinct approaches they use to be effective as peace leaders. Boulding argues that full and meaningful participation of women at all levels would significantly strengthen peacebuilding initiatives. Contrary to those who view women to be less capable peace leaders,

Boulding finds the barriers to women's greater participation to be structural. The cost of women's exclusion is borne not just by women, but by the larger society weakened by their limited participation in peace initiatives.

Boulding's work highlights two key areas of distinction in the way women, as a group, intentionally work for peace. First is their 'capacity to imagine another and a better future'. The second characteristic is the recognition of social systems as complex and dynamic wholes. This ability to think holistically enables creative women to recognize 'key levers for social change' within systems and structures needing reform. She argues these significant capacities are 'preconditions for social change', necessary for the development of a 'viable peace culture for the twenty-first century' (Ibid: 412). Based on her study of women's global peace activism, Boulding finds the three key elements of peace building to be:

> 1) a vision of a better, more peaceful future,
>
> 2) understanding holistic social systems, and
>
> 3) strategic recognition of how and where to intervene in those systems to make positive change (Ibid).

For Boulding, women across the globe are well-equipped and well-positioned peace leaders. She argues we must reach beyond social barriers and biases to fully engage the inventive capacity of women if we are to advance peaceful change.

Gender and Peacebuilding leadership

As explained in Chapter 2, gender affects the performance and perception of leadership, and this has implications for peacebuilding. Contemporary feminist scholars examine the normative constructions of masculinity and femininity and how these roles shape (and are shaped) by cultural norms related to war and peace. Women and men experience violence and transition differently with variations across cultures, gender norms, and types of war (Chinkin and Kaldor 2013). Gender constructions permeate the way we approach conflict, use war and define peace. The traditional notions of gender equate leadership with masculinity, an extension of male protector roles, particularly in times of war and violent conflict. Aggressive and militarized masculinities dominate notions of peace and leadership. For some patriarchy is the chief cause of violent conflicts and a primary reason for failed peace efforts (Enloe 2005). Cynthia Enloe asks,

'What if the only way to throw these workings of masculinities into sharp relief is to take the lives of women seriously?' (2005, 282).

The issues of violent conflict and peace are interdependently linked with relationships between women and men in society according to political scientist Jean B. Elshtain. Her work exploring notions of gender, war and peace has implications for the study of women's leadership. Through analysis of the imbedded narratives within the mythology of war and peace, Elshtain looks at the themes that cast men as protectors and perpetrators, and relegates women to roles of pacifists and the protected. She argues that the dominant narratives featuring man as 'Just Warrior' and woman as 'Beautiful Soul' serve to recreate and reinforce women's social position as noncombatants and men's identity as warriors.

> We in the West are heirs to a tradition that assumes an affinity between women and peace, between men and war, a tradition that consists of culturally constructed and transmitted myths and memories (Elshtain 1995, 4).

To advance our understanding of women's peacebuilding leadership, we need to explore the cultural constructs underpinning these roles and address the barriers they present (Elshtain 1995). Elshtain's research investigates the history of war, and the involvement of women and men in all aspects of collective violence. She views politics and the making of peace as a civic responsibility shared by all citizens, especially those who engage in war. Society's civic capacity is undermined, Elshtain argues, by the cultural myths that promote 'the split between warrior/woman structured male and female identities' (Ibid, 196). This 'dangerous distortion' is problematic for discussions of leadership as a role and identity of women. If leadership is the work of warriors, and politics is warfare of words and ideas, then political leadership is construed as the work of men, separate from the lives of women. Instead, Elshtain believes, men and women are citizens together, equally capable and responsible as members of society. She urges that we break with dualistic identities drawn from the mythologies of war and peace and explore 'alternatives' that will unlock the potential of 'zestful act takers'.

As individual men and women we are invited to examine, and take up,
the alternatives, woven throughout the story of women and war, to
identities that lock us inside the traditional, and dangerous, narrative
of war and peace (Elshtain 1995, 258).

Feminist researcher Cynthia Cockburn views gender as a central dynamic of war,
and women's work for peace as a global social movement. She documents
patterns across a multitude of countries that demonstrate commonalities in the
way women organize to end violence and prevent war in their communities She
argues that cultural transformation involving gender equality is required to end
war and achieve lasting peace. Cockburn considers gender 'a relation of power'
and gender issues to be significant elements of militarism and war. Her many
decades of international work examines the root causes of violence and the deep
connections between patriarchal systems, imbalanced gender relations, and war.
Cockburn finds that 'gender power' has a dynamic influence that affects 'every
site of human interaction', and is clearly visible in the expression of 'political
power…in representative assemblies, executives and command centres'(2001,
15). Cockburn's analysis of post-agreement transitions highlights the challenges
faced by women seeking to secure justice reforms. She warns,

In post-conflict moments, there is much talk of strengthening civil
society and democratic structures…But women's energies are
often used by the political system without recognition (2001, 27).

Her work adds to the record of historical exclusion of women from the 'places
and spaces' inhabited by the male politicians, combatants and negotiators who
broker peace deals. Despite their exclusion from political elite leadership
positions, sociologist John Brewer believes 'women's groups are among the
longest established and most active civil society groups' and that 'there is a
seamless transition from issues of civil society to gender'(2010, 68). He examines
a broad spectrum of roles for women in war and peace, and discusses the
conflicts that emerge when these roles depart from traditional culture. Brewer
argues that stereotypical gender norms filter out the activism and leadership of
women. He explains,

'powerful men who are normally in control of peace transitions,
either undervalue and ignore women's contribution to peace
processes or try to marginalize it to activities that are stereotypically
associated with traditional gender roles (Brewer 2010, 76).

As the work of these authors indicate, gender norms and relations need to be transformed as part of the larger work of peace and conflict transformation. The gendered nature of war, peace and leadership demand integrated approaches and the employment of women's leadership.

Differences, democracy and justice

Making space for peace, constructing the way out of violent conflict, and designing the structures of new, more democratic and equitable societies must be done in ways that are just. Iris M. Young critically examines the roles of female political leaders working for justice in transitioning societies. She addresses the political and social impact of gender differences as they are expressed and perceived within the politics of peace. She explains differences between women and men as being 'multiple' and 'variable' and having biological and social origins. Young argues a positive regard for differences is central to realizing the democratic ideals of equality and justice. Ignoring the dimension of gender and the existence of gender differences 'disadvantages women in public settings where masculine norms and styles predominate' (1990, 177). She argues against the assimilationist view of differences as having negative implications for community and thus should become invisible in our identities and interactions. She explains the danger of political remedies that deny the existence of difference and discourage the positive expression of ethnic, cultural, gender, age or other identities. Young identifies three oppressive and costly aspects of ignoring difference:

- A 'blindness to difference' works to disadvantage groups who share culture, experience or capacities that are distinct from privileged groups. These areas of uniqueness are not seen as useful assets but measured against the normative standard set by the dominant group into which the others are to fit.

- Differences of the dominant or privileged group are considered neutral and universal rather than specific to that group and resulting from their experiences. Blindness to difference perpetuates cultural imperialism by allowing norms expressing the point of view and experience of privileged groups to appear neutral and universal.

- Finally, individuals within denigrated groups often accept and internalize the devaluing of the traits, customs, or attributes of their group. This can result in a sense of shame when these characteristics or cultural traditions are visible. Those who wish to fit into the

> homogenous society are forced to disavow or disassociate themselves
> with the practices or identifying markers of the minority group.
> (Young 1990, 165–6)

Young argues that differences can be positive and thus are desirable elements in a healthy democratic society. In fact, they may be a necessary element to generate change, innovation and progress. Young sees the dominance of men and the relative exclusion of women in politics and peace as a social construct that is inherently unjust and therefore generative of further injustice. She promotes a 'politics of difference' as a theoretical framework that 'attends to rather than represses difference' and 'fosters the inclusion and participation of all groups in public life' (1990, 10-11). This inclusive democratic model enables 'revaluing the culturally feminine' so that activities and behaviors associated with women are accepted as having equal worth to those considered masculine (1990, 177). This is particularly salient in peacemaking processes characterized by hyper-masculine expressions of violence, power, and leadership.

Young's *social connection model of responsibility* (2007) shifts the discourse from blame to a shared sense of responsibility for justice. She views men and women as essential partners, working together to promote justice and practice peace. In *Global Challenges: War, Self-determination and Responsibility for Justice* (2010), Young presents gender as 'an element of interpretation' to aid the analysis of women's political activism and peace leadership. She says,

> I take gender as an element not of explanation, but rather of
> interpretation, a tool of what might be called ideology critique. Viewing
> issues of war and security through a gender lens, I suggest, means
> seeing how a certain logic of gendered meanings and images helps
> organize the way people interpret events and circumstances, along
> with their positions and possibilities for action within them, and
> sometimes provides some rationale for action (2007, 118).

Young believes the meaningful involvement of women would represent a transforming change in political practice that would positively challenge, reconstruct and reform peacebuilding models.

Managing the chaotic process of peace requires the leadership of creative individuals and groups who can transcend divisions and promote peaceful progress. There is a relatively small body of work examining the role of leaders in

peacebuilding or post-agreement transitions (Lederach 1997, Boulding 2001; Cowell-Meyers 2001, 2003; Bargal and Sivan 2004; Miraftab 2004, Gormley-Heenan 2007, Lederach and Lederach 2010). Too often, the focus is on the charisma and power of a few individuals, on the elite and episodic, and on the roles and impacts of male actors. As I discussed in the previous chapter, women and their leadership are too often the invisible other, cast outside the normal, masculine, male-dominated politics of peace. Culturally defined frames filter out leaders and leadership that is outside the norm. Gender stereotypes equate leadership with masculinity, meaning women are not considered leaders, and their activism and work is not counted as leadership. The traditional (and prevailing) construct in both leadership and peace has been hierarchical, with escalating levels of importance and power culminating at top levels. The elite leaders, those with greatest impact and influence, are thought to be in top posts, ascending according to their relative effectiveness. Leadership is about obtaining and holding power, managing perceptions of the constituency, and measured in terms of results and length of service. Thus a survey of peace leadership would typically focus primary attention on senior members of the major political parties, paramilitary groups, security and peacekeeping forces, and to a lesser extent government agencies, churches, and traditional social justice agencies. The leaders found in these prominent structures are most often men, and their masculine styles reflect the dominant notions of uncompromising strength and authority.

Women's leadership – positive distinctions in style and approach

> If women's leadership visions and styles, do in fact, differ
> substantially from those of their male counterparts, then raising the
> question of women's ability to bring meaningful change to twenty-
> first century leadership becomes more interesting, and the answer to
> the question of their ability to bring change becomes a cautious 'yes.'
> (Adler 1996, 154)

Gender is among the variables that account for the distinctions in leadership behaviors and perceptions. For some there is a spectrum of styles and approaches that are characteristically 'feminine' or 'masculine'. Women are commonly associated with styles that emphasize dialogue, cooperation, and

collaboration. Nancy Adler's research to assess the styles and approaches of global women leaders finds that 'some appear to use more democratic approaches, including attempting to minimize hierarchy, using more inclusive processes to build consensus, and actively seeking international and national unity'(Adler 1996, 152).

Traditional culture privileges masculine and discounts feminine styles and approaches. This is particularly problematic in the context of peacebuilding and peace negotiations. If collaboration, communication and compromise are ascribed as feminine, it can be highly problematic to promote these approaches within contexts dominated by male delegates, negotiators and politicians. The view that these are 'feminine' styles can prejudice leaders to their effectiveness, especially in violent contexts where they are misunderstood as the antithesis of toughness and strength. For example, Sharoni's analysis of the discourse that led to the Israeli-Palestinian Accord of 1993 found evidence that the 'masculinisation' of the peace process involved practices, symbols and ways of thinking' that pushed 'feminine' alternatives to the edges of or well outside the process (1996:121). Peace building models could benefit from an expanded understanding of political leadership that encompasses more cooperative, 'power-with' approaches and minimizes the use of traditional hyper-competitive, combative, and increasingly unproductive style of politics.

There are diverse ways women work for change drawn from their grass-roots locations, models of shared responsibility, and strategic priorities that address the interconnected needs of health, education, housing and safety. UN Special Envoy and former Irish President Mary Robinson observes distinctly powerful ways that women lead to advance community development and social justice. She reports these differences to be

> ...their ability to devise structures, to order priorities, to assemble an agenda and construe a commitment is not only eloquent. To me it often looks distinctive and creative and therefore a style of problem-solving which is different from the ones we are used to in the public and visible power centers of our society (Robinson 2002, 285)

In *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* (2007), conflict and gender scholar Sanam Naraghi Anderlini examines the international record of women's peace work and discusses the structural barriers that limit their greater participation. She argues that a chasm of ignorance separates the considerable expertise of women peace leaders from the arena of international peace and security matters. Her extensive international work has surveyed women's leadership in a multitude of countries over several decades, and includes drafting the first United Nations resolution on Women, Peace and Security (UNSC 1325) in 2000. Her work examines the patterns of women's leadership behavior common across the diversity of conflict zones, and documents central characteristics in approaches that advance a comprehensive agenda of reforms, promote community needs, and enhance the quality of negotiations. Anderlini argues there are important distinctions in the way women lead the peace and that their expertise improves the 'substance and process' of peacebuilding. Anderlini finds that women's peace leadership is distinctly designed to:

- Influence and expand the agenda of priority issues;
- Reflect the experiences of victims and promote their needs;
- Sustain relationships and communication with grass-roots and community-based constituents; and
- Employ distinctive approaches and skills that positively impact process tone and dynamics (2007).

Anderlini finds that women who participate in peace negotiations employ this holistic approach and contribute to improving the quality of process and the durability of outcomes.

> For women in peace negotiations, the challenge is . . . not only to tackle the key agenda items but also to raise other issues . . . Those who succeed alter the substance of the talks by introducing new issues to the agenda and providing new insights. They affect the process, dynamics, relations, and ways in which negotiations are conducted. But perhaps most importantly, they come to the table with a more holistic understanding about the actual purpose of the talks and the centrality of interdependence (2007, 74).

From this comprehensive global perspective she argues that the treatment of women is 'directly relevant to the international community in building sustainable peace' (2007: 229).

The participation of women in peace processes has also been found to 'counter' gender stereotypes exacerbated in wartime. Chinkin and Kaldor (2013) argue that the involvement of women leaders is essential to mitigate for gender-based violence that stems from militarized masculinity, sexism, and patterns of violence that characterize war and violent conflict.

> In many spheres of life such as those pertaining to political and military leadership, traits associated with masculinity are valued. But in according greater value to the traits of masculinity, the traits of femininity are correspondingly undervalued, which may lead to discrimination and even gender-based violence against those associated with feminine traits (2013, 168).

These authors argue for the inclusion of women peace leaders to 'reduce the benefits that the warring parties gain from violence.' Women's agency should be recognized as a force for change, and should be taken seriously as a matter of equality and practicality (2013, 182–3).

Liberian Nobel laureate Leymah Gbowee emphasizes that the distinct perspectives, motivations, and priorities women often have are necessary to address the root causes of violent conflict. She believes women are essential partners because they are likely to take a comprehensive view of the interconnected issues needed resolution.

> Women as partners in peace processes consider the segment and thematic concerns of society that are most often left out of a male-driven peace initiative; for example the focus on reducing access to weapons for combatants, but not on an educational system that drove them to radicalism; the focus on retribution for political enemies while ignoring rehabilitation and community reunification. There is no way you can do peace *and* still reinforce issues and concerns that contributed to war. Women in spaces of peace building tend most often to highlight these issues and offer ways forward without seeking their personal interest or political agenda. (Gbowee 2014)

She sees the greater involvement of women as strengthening otherwise ineffective 'male-driven' peace initiatives by broadening the agenda of priority issues, and expanding the use of creative approaches. She says,

> peace processes are primarily a nation's way of "redoing" their society, where actors review different rules and laws and try to

improve them. Women are pivotal to this process not because they are women but because they constitute half of the population, and have unique, innovative ways of building peace (Gbowee 2014).

For these authors and leaders, the treatment of women is relevant to sustainable peace, and women are essential peacebuilding partners because of their diverse perspectives and unique practices. They argue that women should be actively enlisted in shaping peace, particularly in the processes used to negotiate political settlements and build sustainable transitions. Their meaningful involvement increases the chances that gender dimensions will be acknowledged and gender relations will be addressed in the terms of agreement.

Transforming society after violent conflict often involves a renegotiation of political power and engagement. Whether and how gender relations are part of this restructuring is a matter of growing academic concern. Feminist scholars argue that peace processes carry forward the gender inequalities present in society before violent conflict because of a 'masculinization' of peace processes and the absence or minimal participation of women leaders. As Cynthia Cockburn explains, gender equality often fails to be among the critical priorities in post-conflict transformation.

> ...the civil society rebuilt after war or tyranny seldom reflects women's visions or rewards their energies. The space that momentarily opens up for change is not often used to secure genuine and lasting gender transformations. Effort may be put into healing enmity by reshaping ethnic and national relations, but gender and class relations are usually allowed to revert to the status quo ante (Cockburn, 2001:19).

Researcher Azza Karam also recognizes that peace processes offer the unique opportunity to transform gender roles and relations. She finds that women leaders develop and demonstrate beneficial skills during violent conflict, but are often not enlisted as decision makers afterward.

> The cadres of women skilled in both the processes of war and negotiation need to be seen as sources of strength in any country or region...The end of war can bring with it the opportunity to seize gender relations and traditional roles for women, an opportunity that has to be grabbed and acted upon long before the war ends (2004, 6).

Professor Christine Chinkin underscores the need to seize the opportunity presented by peace negotiations if gender relations are to be improved in the transition to peace. If women are not included and gender is ignored, 'they are unlikely to be given any priority throughout the reconstruction and a window of opportunity for an integrated and comprehensive approach to peace may be lost' (2004, 6).

An international discourse on women, peace, and security issues provides a wider context for women's participation in conflict and peace. This expanded analytical lens is well used by Ni Aolain, Cahn, and Haynes to examine the traditional foundations of 'post-conflict' peace work. In their book, *On the Frontlines* (2009), they explore the overlapping and interdependent nature of transitional justice, post-conflict reconstruction and development, and argue that gender should be an integral concern to ensure short-term and long-term success.

> ...(G)ender must be central to the ways in which the ending of violence is conceived, planned, and delivered. When it comes to reconstruction, investment in women makes a critical difference to achieving both short--and long-term sustainable peace and development (2011, 352).

These authors advance the notion of 'engendered governance' as a framework for political transformation that integrates women's rights and needs in the comprehensive reconsideration of traditional 'masculine' political structures and systems. They argue that this gendered framework could transform post-conflict societies in ways that are beneficial for women and men.

The visible participation of women leaders provides important role models in politics and peace. Increasing the number and visibility of women in leadership positions expands the range of effective behaviors, and can positively change the nature of male-dominant contexts. Research by Hoyt and Simon (2011) shows that female role models can help to overcome negative gender stereotypes if individuals can easily identify with them, and see the path to success is replicable and achievable. If female leaders are seen as exceptional and elite, their success may serve to deter rather than inspire followers. Increasing the participation of

female politicians at all levels is greatly important to equality. Latu and colleagues (2013) state 'not only is an increase in female politicians the goal of equality, it can also be the engine that drives it' (2013, 448). They find the presence of female role models can empower other women and counteract negative stereotypes.

> Female political role models can inspire women and help them cope with stressful situations that they encounter in their careers, such as public speaking. A lack of female powerful role models leads to a vicious circle, because if women fail to take leadership positions, they also fail to provide role models for junior women to follow...by highlighting successful female politicians as potential role models, women can overcome the effect of negative stereotypes (2013, 444).

This research suggests that role models are just one of several contributing factors in a positively reinforcing cycle of 'active steps' that increase the representation of women in political leadership.

Measuring the value of women's leadership and gender equality

Broadened peace processes, ones that are inclusive and representative of different sectors of society, are 64% less likely to fail than those that include only armed actors and political parties (Hudson et al. 2012, 53). New research by Stone suggests involving women as peace leaders may improve the prospects for an end to violence by twenty-four percent, but lasting peace relies on structural changes that ensure post-agreement gender equality.

> 'Building quality representation in local female leadership may be the key ingredient to a peaceful society as women are empowered to transform conflict'(Stone 2014).

Women's equality may also be linked to the prevention of war. In international disputes, domestic gender practices are found to influence the severity of violence used in international disputes. The work of Mary Caprioli (2000) finds that nations with higher levels of gender equality demonstrate lower levels of violence during periods of crisis. Later work with Boyer found that 'even in an environment that exhibits a high propensity toward violence, higher levels of gender equity decrease the tendency toward violence' (Caprioli and Boyer 2001). New research by Hudson and colleagues indicates the status and treatment of women is 'the single best predictor of a state's level of peacefulness'. These authors find it is 'not wealth, democracy, or identity' that best predicts a

country's peacefulness but 'how well its women are treated' (Hudson et al. 2012, 205).

Harvard researcher Steven Pinker argues that the world would be more peaceful if women were in charge. In *The Better Angels of our Nature* (2011) he examines the long term global trend toward peace driven by technological advances, knowledge-based organizational models, and democratization. These changing conditions, Pinker believes favor the 'feminine style' of participatory leadership. He describes the style generally associated with women leaders as being less hierarchical, more team oriented with leaders serving as chief collaborators rather than commanders. His work indicates that involving more women at all levels of the political process helps to improve political discourse, the quality of decision-making, and the advancement of peace processes. He identifies a direct link between the treatment and participation of women in society and the overall levels of violence. "Societies in which women get a better deal, both traditional and modern, tend to be societies that have less organized violence (2011, 686).

Pinker predicts that the use of styles and skills generally attributed to women will prove to be essential for all effective leaders in the 21st century. He promotes a respect for the full spectrum of skills that effective leaders must draw on to manage political power in the changing world. Successful women and men will be those who strategically employ the appropriate styles needed to suit the circumstances and will not be constrained by gender conventions or biases.

Achieving gender equality is also important for economic reasons. Gender equality is a 'critical long term driver of peace' according to the Institute for Economics and Peace. They find countries with greater equality between women and men are, on average, more peaceful. Nations with poor equality tend to be more disrupted by violent conflict. These male-dominated countries also suffer economically, with lower GDP and lower development rates. The IEP's comprehensive report measures 'key societal structures that are statistically prevalent in the most peaceful countries in the world' using key economic, governance and cultural indicators ("Pillars of Peace" 2014). In related work, the

World Economic Forum examines the costly impacts of gender disparities, and promotes the valuable benefits of closing the gaps. The Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2014* finds 'gender equality is fundamental to whether and how societies thrive', and 'strong correlation' between the vibrancy of a nation's economy and the level of gender equality, including 'political decision-making power'. The gender gap for economic participation and opportunity stands at 60 per cent worldwide, having closed by only four percentage points since 2006. The largest gap is found in political empowerment at 21 per cent. At this rate of change, the Forum says it will take more than eighty years to achieve global gender equity and fully engage the world's human talent.

> The most important determinant of a country's competitiveness is its human talent—the skills and productivity of its workforce...Ensuring the healthy development and appropriate use of half of the world's available talent pool thus has a vast bearing on how competitive a country may become or how efficient a company may be ("Global Gender Gap Report" 2014, 59).

The Gender Gap Report offers strong evidence of the value of women's leadership in all areas of governance and decision-making. It provides a comprehensive comparison of national levels of gender equality to demonstrate that women's participation is a significant factor in overall competitiveness.

> When the number of women involved in political decision-making reaches a critical mass, their decisions – which take into account the needs of a wider segment of society – lead to more inclusive results. Companies that recruit and retain women, and ensure that they attain leadership positions, outperform those that do not ("Global Gender Gap Report" 2014).

In 2014 the countries with the lowest gender gap were Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. For comparison, Ireland is ranked at number 8, the United States at 20 and the United Kingdom at 26. (A distinct country profile with unique data is not available for Northern Ireland.) A closer look at several key decision-making measurements find that both Ireland and the UK are much further behind than these overall scores indicate. In both cases, the overall ranking is significantly improved by the years each nation had a female head of state[3]. With this factor

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[3] Margaret Thatcher was Britain's first female Prime Minister, serving three terms, 1979-1990. Mary Robinson was Ireland's first female President, 1990-

removed, both countries would have much lower rankings for economic participation and opportunity (Ireland: 55/142, UK: 47/142) and political empowerment based on women in parliament (Ireland: 92, UK: 63).

The costs of gender bias and exclusion

> Time and time again humanity has failed to appreciate the deep anger and resentment, the very real and very dangerous pain that comes from being told you are inferior (Sirleaf, 2009:202).

Structural gender bias and negative gender stereotypes limit leadership and decision making opportunities for women. As I have discussed above, this exclusion deprives society of the benefits of women's expertise, undermines leadership capacity, and reduces the prospects for lasting peace. In *Sex and World Peace* (2012) Hudson and colleagues state the 'lack of decision-making parity between men and women in the councils of humanity at all levels,' is one of 'three great wounds' challenging human society (2012, 53). The governmental representation of women globally is less than twenty percent. This combines the number of women in parliaments, and cabinet or ministries of executive branches of all nations. Hudson et al conclude that this is one reason the general condition of women in the world is 'one of insecurity and oppression'(2012, 62). New medical research examining the impact of sexism helps further understand this global 'wound'. The compounding impact of subtle and systematic gender discrimination is understood to produce significant levels of fear and anxiety in women. This systemic misogyny may explain why, 'women are 70 percent more likely than men to experience depression and twice as likely to have an anxiety disorder'(Valenti 2015).

The lack of women leaders has also been shown to impact how the past is remembered and what lessons are used to shape the future. Viewing the past and the future without acknowledging the gendered nature of war and peace comes at a cost. Researchers Gray and Neill argue,

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1997. Mary McAleese served two presidential terms, 1997-2011, becoming the world's first woman to succeed another as president. She is also the first Irish president from Northern Ireland.

> [W]omen, and especially young women, have been left out of much of the conflict discourse and suffer as a result, not least in that they are implicitly encouraged to be silent about their experiences (2011, 473).

These authors find the dearth of female narrators, historians and perspectives serves to discourage the participation of women in the transition to peace. Finally, male privilege and women's marginalization are pervasive, normalized and ubiquitous. Gender is conflated with women and femininity, and the costs of disparity are not commonly thought to apply to men. Cultural norms skew the perception of gender and also the perception of true equality. As a result, efforts to address gender equality are often viewed as being biased in favor of women. Lucy Gillam explains,

> The vast, vast, vast majority of institutions, spaces, and subcultures privilege male interests, but because male is the default in this culture, such interests are very often considered ungendered. As a result, we only really notice when something privileges female interests (Gillam 2005).

This may help to explain why the underrepresentation of women is not yet viewed as an urgent practical matter by those leading peace processes, democratization programs and post-war transitions. Women and women's leadership are not yet understood as integral elements of peacebuilding.

Conclusion

> This is what we call Smart Power, using every possible tool…leaving no one on the sidelines, showing respect even for one's enemies, trying to understand, and insofar as is psychologically possible, empathize with their perspective and point of view, helping to define the problems [and] determine a solution, that is what we believe in the 21st century will change the prospect for peace (Hillary Clinton 2014).

There is growing consideration of the varied roles women play during violent conflict, and greater research into their work to stabilize communities and promote peaceful transitions from war. Legitimacy and entry in peace processes is given to those engaged in the violence and the state actors central to the conflict. Women and 'women's issues' are often thought to be distractions, or low priorities that must wait for better days. Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin

expressed this view when he advised there was a necessary hierarchy of political matters leading up to the Northern Ireland peace talks. 'When the national question is resolved, then we can all have our diversity of attitudes, religions, hang-ups' (Adams in O'Connor 1993:127).

The prospects for peace in the 21st century will be greatly enhanced by the 'untapped resource' of women leaders. The literature discussed in this chapter underscores the importance of gender as a category of analysis in the study of violent conflict and peace, and provides a theoretical framework to consider women as powerful change agents with the capacity and responsibility to lead. The subtle and systematic gender bias against women and feminine traits, and in favor of men and masculine traits has serious implications for peace leadership. The pervasive underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles critically undermines the economic, development and cultural integrity of peaceful societies.

The gendered nature of leadership and peace compound to mean that most academic work focuses on male actors, at the elite levels of politics, government and military institutions. This results in androcentric (male centered) literature and discourse. Gender stereotypes omit and invalidate the experiences of women and subjugate their work into a narrow, homogenous subculture. Most of all, it results in deficient analysis and limited understanding of peacebuilding.

The overlapping themes in transforming leadership and conflict transformation indicate the nature and location of women's leadership represents a highly valuable resource for peacebuilding. Re-viewing women's peace leadership through a transformative lens may expand the understanding and visibility of their work at all levels of society. The study of women's leadership is challenging, but has the potential to deepen our understanding of sustainable peace and expand the capacity for peaceful change. In the next chapter I will critically review the discussions of women, leadership and peacebuilding in the literature on Northern Ireland.

Chapter 3: Recognizing Women's Peacebuilding Leadership in Northern Ireland

> Today, we are keenly aware that if we are to build the culture of consensus promised by the Good Friday Agreement then we need to create a mutually respectful space for differing traditions, differing loyalties – for all our heroes and heroines (McAleese 2011, 256).

To better understand peacebuilding leadership, it is important to take a broad view of peace processes and all those who make positive contributions to lead change. Much has been written about the history of the Troubles, the violent conflict in and about Northern Ireland. The contributions of women peace leaders have not been sufficiently documented or examined in this vast body of literature. There is a severe underrepresentation of women's experiences and expertise in mainstream academic and political discourse, and the relatively small body of literature that examines political leadership in the peace process neglects women's roles. This chapter builds on the previous chapter discussions with an overview of the Northern Ireland peace process as a historical framework for an examination of scholarly debates about leadership, peacebuilding and women's participation within the local context. It explores how female social and political leaders worked to prevent, resolve and transform the region's violent conflict. Further, it examines how the cultural and political context is both a challenge and opportunity for their efforts.

Overview of the Northern Ireland Peace Process

The multi-party peace process that resulted in a political settlement in 1998 followed decades of public, private and sometimes secret efforts to end violence, build trust and enlist the participation of the main protagonists and political leaders in formal negotiations (Gormley-Heenan 2006, 67; White 2013). Although the precise start of the peace process is debated, a number of key developments contributed to movement toward the dialogue and negotiations that produced the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Among these progressive steps is the Anglo Irish Agreement (1985), which formalized the commitment to cooperation between the UK and Irish governments to achieve lasting political settlement in

Northern Ireland. In the years that followed there were various efforts involving community leaders and senior government officials to engage political parties and paramilitary groups in dialogue toward settlement. For example, the 1993 Hume Adams Initiative (1993) was the result of a prolonged secret discussion between SDLP leader John Hume and Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams that informed the Downing Street Declaration between the British and Irish Governments later that year (Darby 2003; Melaugh 2006). The Downing Street Declaration issued by British Prime Minister Major and Irish Taoiseach Reynolds featured British government recognition of the right of the people of Ireland for self-determination. The Republican and Loyalist ceasefires of 1994 increased the hope and possibility of political talks by dramatically reducing levels of violence and shifting debate to preconditions for all-party negotiations. Among the contentious issues of the day were the decommission of weapons, policing and security matters, as well as the structure of negotiation process and the selection of participants (Mitchell 1999). The Irish government convened the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, as called for in the Downing Street Declaration, to foster constructive encounters, promote dialogue, and develop recommendations about ways to progress the peace process. Leaders from Northern Ireland and Ireland political parties met weekly in Dublin to discuss a wide-range of issues central to political settlement (Fearon 1999; Gillespie 2009; McKittrick and McVea 2012).

The Framework for the Future Document (February 1995) set out a series of proposals addressing the key issues of debate. The British and Irish governments published their 'shared understanding…to assist discussion and negotiation involving the Northern Ireland parties' ("The Framework Documents - A Framework for Accountable Government in Northern Ireland" 1995). In early 1996 the Mitchell Commission published its report on decommissioning of weapons in Northern Ireland. The commission members Senator George Mitchell, former Finnish Prime Minister Holkeri, General John de Chastelain advised that decommissioning should not be a precondition of talks, contrary to the British held view. The commission members viewed their report as a progressive step in the peace process, building on the 'essential element' of the paramilitary

ceasefires of 1994, and creating opportunities for multi-party political talks to reach an agreed settlement (Grogan 1996; Mitchell, John de Chastelain, and Holkeri 1996).

The Forum and Negotiations - 1996-1998

In February 1996 The British and Irish governments announced that a multi-party peace process aimed at reaching a political settlement would take place with delegates elected to form two concurrent bodies. The Forum and Negotiations Elections were devised using a hybrid system of party-list proportional representation in eighteen constituencies from which 110 delegates from the top ten political parties were selected. In addition to five representatives chosen from each constituency, the ten political parties receiving the most votes won an additional two 'top up' positions (Whyte 1998). A coalition of women leaders persuaded government officials to include a new all-women party and the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition was among those listed on the ballot for the historic election (Fearon 1999).

The Northern Ireland election held in May 1996 determined the delegates and political parties who would participate in the negotiations process and shape the terms of political settlement. In order of their respective results (highest to lowest) they were: the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Sinn Féin (SF), Alliance, United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP), Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), Unionist Democratic Party (UDP), the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) and Labour. Fourteen other parties contested the elections but failed to gain sufficient votes for entry into the negotiations. The NIWC placed ninth overall winning 1% of the total votes cast and securing two seats at the talks table (Whyte 1998, 1).

The Forum for Political Dialogue (the Forum) and smaller Negotiations or 'Talks' bodies met concurrently for two years beginning in June 1996. All delegates from the ten member parties were allowed entry into the Forum meetings, but Sinn Féin representatives chose not to take their seats as they were prohibited from

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joining the talks due to ongoing IRA violence. Later the SDLP withdrew its delegates from the Forum but continued to participate in the negotiations. The talks began with eighteen delegates representing nine parties (without Sinn Féin), and government officials meeting in closed-door sessions facilitated by lead mediator United States Senator George Mitchell (Fearon 1999; Whyte 1998). Substantive issues were divided into three concurrent themes or 'strands' of negotiation during the talks. The focus of Strand I was the democratic institutions and structures within Northern Ireland, Strand II addressed North-South relations on the island of Ireland between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and British-Irish or East-West intergovernmental issues were dealt with in Strand III negotiations (Fearon 1999; de Bréadún and King 2001). In 1997 Sinn Féin entered the talks and as a result the DUP and UKUP withdrew their delegates. These two parties remained outside the talks for the duration but did take part in the post-agreement Northern Ireland Assembly elections in 1998.

An intense period of meetings, draft proposals, and negotiation sessions reached a conclusion on 10 April 1998. The Agreement drafted by the parties and UK and Irish governments contained two inter-related parts. The first section covered terms agreed by the participating political parties, and the second involved international relations between the UK and Irish governments. (The DUP was the only major political party to oppose and actively campaign against the Agreement). Voters approved the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement through public referendums held in Northern Ireland and Ireland on 22 May 1998. The focus of community and political attention then shifted to transferring the terms of the Agreement into law through the Northern Ireland Act (*Northern Ireland Act* 1998) and establishing the new devolved power-sharing government, executive and legislative assembly based at Stormont. Elections to select the first post-agreement Northern Ireland Assembly were held in June 1998 and devolved powers were transferred to the new power-sharing government in December 1998 (Fearon 1999; White 2013).

A critical review of the literature on Northern Ireland

Much of the existent political and historical scholarship fails to account for women's leadership as a contributing factor to the development of peace (O'Rourke 2015; Roulston and Davies 2000; Rooney 2006; Ward 2006; Women's Resource and Development Agency 2008). Women working in voluntary and community groups are minimally discussed in debates about civil society and grass roots peace efforts. Their leadership beyond traditional roles and arenas is commonly overlooked. For example, there is little consideration of their participation in the formal peace talks process, in the public referendum approving the Agreement, or in the political structures tasked with implementation (McCullough 2013). The scholarly focus remains preoccupied with the ethno-national divide, prominent male figures and the relations between the two dominant political parties – Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party. A skewed focus resulting from 'the dominance of these competing nationalisms' has constrained the political space and 'yielded little to women of whatever tradition'. The hyper-masculine political system is unwilling or unprepared 'for contemplation of its gendered dimensions' (Wilford 1999, 196). Within the extensive study of Northern Ireland is a relatively minimal focus on gender inequalities which 'exacerbates' the omission of women's perspectives in the 'analysis of the conflict and in the processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding' (A. M. Gray and Neill 2011, 483–484).

In contrast to this predominant narrative, I will argue that women were key actors throughout the decades of violent conflict and in the transition to peace, offering a transformational approach to leadership. The spectrum of influential leadership positions women held can be traced through the literature focused on women working for social justice and political reforms (Maguire, McWilliams, Hinds, Galligan, Sales, Wilford, Ward, Fearon), women active within churches and faith communities (Porter, Galligan), the experiences of female republican and loyalist political prisoners (McCafferty, Darragh, Calamati, and Brady et al.), and those engaged in grassroots activism and community development (Aretxaga, Cockburn, Sales). Issues of gender inequality, political exclusion and violence are centrally relevant to

addressing the conflict and shaping a lasting, sustainable peace in Northern Ireland (Ashe 2012; Cockburn 1998; Galligan, Ward, and Wilford 1999; Roulston and Davies 2000). Recognizing women's work as transformative leaders is necessary to understand and advance the peace process.

Women's leadership- marginalized, discounted and ignored

> There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless.' There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.
> (Arundhati Roy 2004:1)

The vast body of literature devoted to Northern Ireland's peace process is distorted by a failure to account for the strategic leadership and achievements of women. Much of the existing work is written by male authors and focuses on male actors, without regard for gender as a source of cultural difference and division. The presence, participation and contributions of women leaders is often discounted and ignored. Writing in 1995, Professor Monica McWilliams reflected on the history of women's activism and the prospects for peace after the paramilitary ceasefires. She addressed the predominant attention given to men and the need for greater attention to the overlooked roles and experiences of women. She observes,

> Although much has been written about the political struggles in Northern Ireland, too often it has been the women's experiences which have been left out. Questions are now being asked as to why they should have been so marginalized by those who centered their historical or political attention on the role of male activists. The role which women played behind, and indeed within, the macro scene of party politics has rarely been a focus for analysis and consequently there have been many gaps in most interpretations of recent political events (McWilliams 1995:16).

McWilliams' concern about the marginalization of women's experiences remains pertinent today. Her observations would accurately describe the current political environment more than twenty years later. Seventeen years after the signing of the Agreement, there has been little improvement in the attention paid to the role of women in politics and peace in Northern Ireland. The interpretive 'gaps' McWilliams observed in the analysis of the conflict are equally apparent in debates about the ongoing peace process. Then as now, there is an obscuring

focus on male leaders, and a predominance of male voices in the mainstream political commentary. Little of the reflection, evaluation and learning underway benefits from the experiences and expertise of women leaders. Women are not 'located' on the map of the conflict, or viewed as notable features by most surveyors of the unfolding peace. Little attention and even less credit is given to the intentional ways women lead the change in Northern Ireland. Making women's peacebuilding leadership more visible, assessing their leading ways, and understanding the positive impact of their contributions can help to address these analytical and historical gaps.

Women were key actors throughout the decades of violent conflict and in the transition to peace. As discussed in the Introduction, women held an array of influential leadership positions in social justice, politics, churches and faith communities, republican and loyalist groups, grassroots activism and community development. Issues of gender inequality, political exclusion and violence are centrally relevant to addressing the conflict and shaping a lasting, sustainable peace in Northern Ireland (Ashe 2012; Cockburn 1998; Galligan, Ward, and Wilford 1999; Roulston and Davies 2000).

There are systematic stereotypes and biases that blind us to women's leadership, and the capacity of their considerable experience. The efforts to promote nonviolent solutions and end the violent conflict in Northern Ireland engaged women from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. For example, two of the most visible early leaders were Máiread Corrigan Maguire and Betty Williams, cofounders of the Peace People movement. They effectively mobilized a series of community peace marches against violence that brought more than 150,000 residents into the streets across Northern Ireland in 1975. A comprehensive agenda of nonviolent and justice issues involved projects addressing prisoner rights, criminal justice reform[4], peace education and community safety. Their

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[4] Máiread Corrigan Maguire is a cofounder of the Committee on the Administration of Justice that fought for the repeal of the Emergency Provision Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act imposed by the British government in Northern Ireland. The CAJ, founded in 1981, is an independent, cross-community

vibrant grass-roots movement gained global attention and their leadership was acknowledged with the award of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1976. Professor Adrian Guelke cites the Peace People movement as one of two significant factors that changed the perceptions and violent tactics of the Ulster Defence Association, a loyalist paramilitary group. He says, 'the advent of the Peace People convinced the UDA leaders that Catholics in general did not support the Provisional IRA's campaign of violence', and they began to develop political alternatives. Between 1977-1981, the number of political murders attributed to loyalist paramilitary groups dropped dramatically to 12 percent of the total, from 40 percent recorded in the previous four year period (Guelke 1999, 46).

The story of the IRA ceasefire illustrates that there is value in the stories that remain hidden and obscured. It was a leading Republican woman who delivered the carefully worded announcement of the IRA ceasefire to a pair of local journalists on 31 August 1994. The statement would soon become the leading headline in world news. Twenty years later her identity is not publically known. Journalist and author Brian Rowan was on hand that day to receive and relay the message declaring 'a complete cessation of military operations'. Although he will not reveal the name of the woman he met in that secret meeting, he has reflected on the significance of her leading role. She was, according to Rowan, the person chosen to deliver 'the most important message in 30 years.' Her selection indicates that she was 'someone around for a long time' with the credentials to be trusted with this 'hugely important role' (2012). In fact, he recalls she had delivered another critical IRA message some eighteen months prior at Easter 1993. According to Rowan, she was far more than a simple messenger and her involvement should not be dismissed as a minor detail of the larger story. He believes she was chosen to ensure the highly anticipated and precisely worded statement would be delivered 'as intended' without amendment or delay. The name of this woman is not known, but her identity as a leader is evident. As with many others, the political conditions do not yet allow her to openly discuss her experiences in the way that leading men trace their journeys through the

group that advocates for human rights and civil liberties (Buscher and Ling 1999).

transition from violent conflict to peace. She remains one of many hidden, unrecognized women leaders of Northern Ireland.

There is a vast body of literature devoted to the analysis of the violent conflict and emergent peace in and about Northern Ireland. Much of the existing work is written by male authors and focuses on male actors, without regard for gender as a source of cultural difference and division. The presence, participation and contributions of women leaders is often discounted and ignored. This imbalanced narrative presents a distorted and incomplete record of the peace process in Northern Ireland that fails to account for the strategic leadership and achievements of women. The following examples reflect the ways women's leadership and the dimension of gender are often overlooked, minimally discussed or ignored in primary texts. This recurring theme suggests women leaders are not viewed as central actors or agents of change within the mainstream literature on Northern Ireland.

Overlooked

John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary give no consideration to the gendered aspects of culture in their 1995 work *Explaining Northern Ireland.* Neither 'women' nor 'gender' appear in the Subject Index of the book. They do not discuss women's activism as a cultural or political dimension, mention Nobel Peace Laureates Maguire and Williams or the contributions of the Peace People movement, or acknowledge the extensive network of women-led community centers. Their work on the conflict fails to be comprehensive as it doesn't recognize gender 'as a source of distinction and division in the province' (Coulter 1999:101). McGarry and O'Leary represent the writers and researchers who believe that it is sufficient to 'explain Northern Ireland' with an exclusively male focus and gender-blind analysis of the conflict and peace.

Minimally discussed

In some cases, authors reveal an apparent bias through an analysis of women's peace work that attaches disproportionate responsibility for peaceful results, or appears to dismiss the positive impact of their work. Authors McKittrick and

McVea follow this pattern in their book *Making Sense of the Troubles* (2012). This text does not discuss women or gender, and fails to mention the emergence of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition as a political force. Their minimal analysis of female peacemakers does include a brief discussion the Peace People, and its leaders Williams and Maguire. While noting the inspiring scale of their grass-roots campaign against violence, the authors criticize the movement as being a 'transient phenomenon…which in the end did not deliver peace' (2012, 136). They ascribe no lasting credit to the group or its leaders[5]. Despite gaining international honor and recognition the movement is not viewed as having lasting significance as if failed to 'deliver peace'. The authors do not include other leaders in this critique or assign responsibility for this failure to other groups. McKittrick and McVea follow this brief mention of the Peace People, by reporting that 'late 1976 and early 1977 were to mark the end of the most violent phase of the troubles', as the 'killing rate dropped dramatically' (p136). They do not however, explore the reasons for this notable development, and overlook the plausible connections to the Peace People and the unprecedented grass-roots activism they organized.

For other texts, the discussion of women and gender is limited to one chapter or a small section of a larger work. Women authors, if included at all, are severely underrepresented. Women are considered a separate and stand alone topic, rather than an integral dimension in the discussion of other subjects. *Politics in Northern Ireland* (1999) is an example of this male-centric construct. The editors Mitchell and Wilford present 13 chapters, one of which addresses 'Women in Politics'. The predominance of indexed references to 'women' and half the four noted for 'gender' link back to this one chapter. Just one of the thirteen chapters is co-authored by a women writer.

In other cases, authors may state that issues of women or gender are important, but fail to engage them as priority topics. For example, John Darby discusses issues related to 'minority rights' in a chapter of his book *Scorpions in a bottle:*

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[5] The Peace People continues to operate from its base on the Lisburn Road in Belfast.

*conflicting cultures in Northern Ireland (*1997). He acknowledges that a predominant focus on the ethno-national divide 'has distracted attention from other issues as deserving of concern' and says the gender issue is 'prominent among these' neglected topics.

> The economic and social disadvantages facing women in Northern Ireland are arguably greater than those facing Catholics, at least following the reforms of the last two decades (Darby 1997:139).

He concludes his brief discussion of women and gender with the statement 'The gender minority, which is actually a majority, has lost out' (Ibid: 140). Darby's analysis sidesteps these 'prominent topics' and is further evidence of the need to integrate women and gender as central dimensions of the broader discourse.

In Feargal Cochrane's *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace* (2013), there is a similar imbalance of attention that favors men and their leading roles. The author acknowledges a 'broader range of voices at the table, including those of women' was a positive feature of the more inclusive talks process in 1996. The Women's Coalition, created in response to 'the dearth of female political representation' was important as they 'played an active and influential role in the negotiations' (2013, 174). He credits the involvement of Sinn Fein, the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), and the Coalition as making the negotiations 'different from those that had gone before' (2013, 175). Both the NIWC and PUP are noted as important emerging political parties, but Cochrane gives no further attention to the role and impact of the Women's Coalition, while discussing the PUP on seven other pages throughout the book.

Another notable example is Professor Lee Smithey and his book *Unionists, Loyalists, & Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland (2011).* Smithey informs his readers that that he has primarily focused on the lives of men, although this admission is not reflected in the book's title. Within the text he declares the limited focus of his work with the following disclaimer:

> This is largely a book about men, even though they make up less than half of Northern Ireland's population. Surely conflict transformation as a process that includes broad-based cultural change, must involve both men and women (Smithey 2011, 75).

Smithey's disclaimer is an important warning that could enhance most similarly male-dominant, gender-blind work. And yet, beyond this notable feature, his work doesn't offer much in the way of a broader, more inclusive analysis. He concludes his brief (two paragraph) discussion of women and gender by saying,

> we are overlooking an important segment of the population, and the loss of women's contributions and memories leaves the public consciousness impoverished and may mean that they also miss out on opportunities for empowerment (Ibid).

Despite his stated concern for the inclusion of women, his book offers little examination of their roles and contributions. Smithey, like most other authors writing about Northern Ireland, fails to take women and their peace leadership seriously. They promote a discourse and history that features men as the only significant, legitimate agents of change.

Another example of this seemingly dismissive treatment of women peace leaders is found in Professor Enda Mc Donagh's 'New forces for positive change in Ireland' contained in *Northern Ireland and the Politics of Reconciliation* (1993). Mc Donagh recognizes women's movements among the powerful dynamics of change in Ireland and highlights the significance of the 1990 election of President Mary Robinson in one paragraph of this chapter. He appears to dismiss and deride the work of the Peace People and its female leaders in one brief sentence.

> The disappointments associated with the Peace Women in Northern Ireland and their Peace Movement obscured the continuing work for reconciliation between peoples pursued by many women's groups throughout the island (McDonagh 1993, 145).

Upon reflection, Mc Donagh now takes a different view of the Peace People and their contribution to advance the peace process. Writing in 2015 in reply to a question from this author he clarifies what he meant by the 'disappointments' and obscuring impacts of the Peace People. Mc Donagh explains:

> I agree entirely that the brief and apparent dismissal of these two fine leaders and Nobel Laureates was quite wrong and I regret the remarks now very much...I would very much like to state at this stage and earlier if I had remembered my admiration for them and many lesser known women who educated me in the importance and ways of peace-making (McDonagh 2015).

Ignored as historical figures

Finally, one of the most egregious examples of omission comes from Nobel Peace Laureate John Hume. In his personal retrospective, *Politics, Peace and Reconciliation in Ireland* (1996), Hume offers a primer on the roots of conflict and the prospects for peace. He provides his readers with a 'Glossary of Names' to identify leading figures reaching back to twelfth century Ireland. These are the individuals he believes are central to understanding the island's history. In this list, Hume includes just one woman: British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1996, 189). In the 'Chronology' section that follows, he mentions Nobel Peace Laureates Máiread Corrigan and Betty Williams in a reference to the year 1976, but does not discuss the significance of their grassroots peace campaign elsewhere in the book. Apart from this one minor reference, Irish and Northern Irish women do not appear as leading figures in this otherwise comprehensive work.

Women have no political presence, they stand apart and outside the critical events that shaped and changed Ireland. Women's experiences, their lives, their roles in history have been filtered out, and erased. Hume's account overlooks many well-known Irish historical figures such as Countess Markievicz, Maud Gone and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, and equally dismisses the influence of contemporary leaders Bernadette (Devlin) McAliskey, Joyce McCartan, and May Blood. Despite Hume's desire to chart a path toward a shared and peaceful future, he cannot see beyond the traditional constraints of the conservative culture. In omitting or dismissing the leadership and contributions of women, these authors deem them to be insignificant non-actors. The narrow understanding of historically relevant people and events they discuss excludes the contributions of the women of Ireland, north and south. These texts, like so many others, perpetuate a women-less, gender-blind view of history that overlooks many leaders and much leadership from the story of politics, peace and reconciliation.

The power of narratives is that they shape our understanding of historical events and the meaning we attach to what happened. Dominant narratives cast a shadow that obscures other stories and voices. This powerful influence is heightened when

the storytellers are distinguished individuals and leading academics recorded in the primary texts used to 'explain' and 'make sense of' the Troubles. Stereotypically narrow accounts that deny the active role of women sustain the myth that women are passively or subordinately engaged in community and political life. It perpetuates essentialist views that women are naturally and effortlessly peaceful, rather than strategic, courageous agents of change. Conversely, it promotes the essentialist stereotypes that men are inherently prone to violence and more capable of leadership, making their work for peace more heroic and worthy of analysis.

Professor Fidelma Ashe examines the cultural foundations that underpin the predominance of men and heroic masculine notions in politics. She explains, 'Irish nationalism and Unionism are ideologies based on the glorification of hegemonic masculine virtues such as national pride, courage, physical strength and self-sacrifice'. This shared narrative is deeply imbedded in the local cultures. Too often, 'mainstream political commentary has tended to ignore this facet of the Northern Irish conflict'(2006, 151,161). The general lack of gender awareness is one of the 'dysfunctions' of regional approaches designed to address the violent conflict according to Professor Catherine O'Rourke. Her research of local initiatives attending to the hurts and harms of the Troubles finds 'an absence of any official recognition of gender as a structural element of the conflict, or even as a relevant consideration, in crafting state responses to dealing with the past' (2015). O'Rourke identifies a set of 'repeating and reinforcing' gender dynamics evident in transitional justice work underway in Northern Ireland.

They are:

- the physical absence or unequal presence of women from negotiations and institutions;
- highly legalised and individualised processes;
- a focus on those who lost lives (but not, for example, to the on going socioeconomic and relational harms experienced by those left behind);
- a gendered division of labour between 'political' and 'material' work of dealing with conflict legacy; and
- little recognition of gender-specific conflict harms or gender as a structural factor of conflict (2015, 4).

The omission of gender, according to O'Rourke is the result of the constrained policy and decision-making context that gives priority to the '"primary" conflict and primary conflict protagonists,' to the detriment of other dimensions and actors.

To fill in the gaps of history, expand and deepen the analysis, we need to look for the missing stories and dimensions. A full understanding requires we consider who is being left out, overlooked, and written out of the history of Northern Ireland. Where are the women? The following sections seek to answer this question before returning to the question of what recognizing this 'hidden history' can add to our understanding of the issue of leadership.

Women as civil society and community leaders

> I believe that if the true story of the Troubles ever comes to be written, women will figure very prominently in it, because in the 80s and early 90s it was certainly the women, on both sides of the peaceline, who held their communities together, and developed themselves while they were doing it...(Blood and Camplisson 2005, 11)

As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a growing consideration of the value of civil society leaders in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. This shift away from political elites and (para) military commanders considers the influential power of other social and political actors. In Ireland there is a rich history of women's activism. Historian Myrtle Hill surveys the influence of Irish women over a century in her book *Women in Ireland: a century of change* (2003). She examines the impact of their collective activism and believes it to represent 'a powerful agent of change'. She identifies their work to develop networks of local groups as providing important political leadership against the backdrop of conflict. She documents the expanding role of women in community politics, and their leadership as key features of the late twentieth century.

> One of the most interesting phenomena of the 1980s and 1990s was the development of women's role in community politics, much of it originating in local organizations where women came together to provide support, resources and leadership (Hill 2003, 225).

Nobel peace laureate Máiread Corrigan Maguire discussed a century of Irish nonviolence and women's peace initiatives during a Dublin conference in 1998. She explained contemporary peace efforts as an extension of earlier movements promoting social justice reforms. She traced the long history of women's leadership, highlighting the legacy of 'heroic and selfless' contributions by women.

> [T]he building of peace has been going on for a long time now. I am conscious of the role of peacemaking women in Northern Ireland. I hold the deepest admiration for so many women in the North, especially those women who live in the "troubled" areas of our cities. Their heroic and selfless efforts, caring for their families, serving their own local communities in the midst of terrible suffering, should not be left unrecorded in the annals of peace history (Maguire 1999, 39).

 Maguire describes a lack of leadership as a factor in the launch of the Peace People movement in August 1975. She reflects on the desperation of the first six months of that year, 'the worst single period of sectarian murders during the entire Troubles,' and says 'we genuinely believed that we were on the brink of civil war'(Maguire 1999). She and others were unimpressed with the lack of response from those in traditional positions of power and authority. 'We were looking to our churches for leadership. We were looking to our politicians for leadership. And we never received any' (1999, 12). Conventional leaders and leadership approaches were unable to meet the challenges of the violent conflict and the need develop non-violent solutions.

In Northern Ireland, women have long been prominent civil society and grassroots leaders (Porter 2003). Their location in community based, socially concerned, local level organizations means their work is often invisible or undervalued. The conservative nature of politics in Northern Ireland constrains leadership opportunities for women and 'women's activities are not seen as building political or leadership expertise; rather stereotyped assumptions about women's roles' hide the 'potential of such activities to organization and leadership post conflict'(Chinkin 2004:7). Women leaders often address unmet community needs and gaps in government services by establishing their own groups. As Cynthia Cockburn explains, women often chose to form their own organizations, 'because they find the male leadership style prefigurative of

neither democracy or non-violence' (Cockburn 2001:23). These women-led organizations are often viewed as belonging to a separate 'women's sector', subordinate to mainstream, male-led groups.

In a 2015 St Patrick's Day address, Hillary Clinton praised Northern Ireland women such as Inez McCormack and Joyce McCartan for being 'unstoppable leaders' who demanded 'an end of violence' and 'would not take no for an answer'.

> ...The women of Northern Ireland helped bring peace to people's everyday lives. Where the work of peace permeates down to the kitchen table, to the backyard, to the neighborhood, around cups of tea, there is a much better chance that the agreement will hold (Hillary Clinton quoted in Carswell 2015).

Throughout the troubles, women were effectively organizing to improve the social, economic and political conditions faced by their families and threatening their communities. They were responding to urgent unmet needs created by decades of deprivation and violence. Kate Fearon estimates there were 'more than 1000 groups working for or by women' in 1996 (Fearon 1996). These diverse organizations represented an extensive infrastructure focused on community, research, networking, education and advocacy matters. While most were primarily concerned with local needs, some like the Women's Information Group (WIG) brought groups together, addressed broader policy issues like the Women's Support Network, or as the Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) provided regional research and training. The collective resource of these women-led programs, centres and groups demonstrate that

> 'women clearly identify as women and that they organize as such. ...at every level women are creating and maintaining a space for themselves which society, as they have experienced it, has failed to provide' (Fearon 1996).

Through this collective leadership, women provided critical services, spaces and experiences that positively contributed to progress in Northern Ireland ("United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women: National Report of the UK" 1994, 27).

Elisabeth Porter draws on feminist social and political theory to examine women's political and civic participation during the early stages of the peace

process in the late 1980s. She explores the gendered nature of conflicting nationalisms in Northern Ireland and highlights the innovative political approaches women devised in response to the structural impediments of sectarianism and gender discrimination. Her work considers the dynamic relationship between citizenship, identity and politics to understand how and where women engage in politics. She positions women's civic engagement work at the 'heart of transformative politics'.

> Women's participation in formal electoral politics is statistically low, but is strong in informal community activism where women instigate cross-community ventures that reach across the divided boundaries of religion, culture and conflict (Porter 2000: 164).

Porter argues that women who promote and defend this essential middle ground demonstrate a 'commitment to deal creatively and constructively with the inevitable tensions between contradictions, conflicting views, opposing priorities and plural narratives (1998, 57). She describes the arena of work to promote community cohesion, address practical economic and social issues, and resolve problems as being as a 'politics of everyday life'. This pluralistic rather than hierarchical view positively frames the participatory spaces and approaches used by women as legitimate parts of a vibrant political system. In particular, she documents the use of 'alliance politics' based on the acknowledgment of legitimate otherness or what Porter calls 'respectful differences' enabling the development of 'some solidarity over mutual concerns' (2000, 170).

The turmoil and instability produced by escalating violence was a generator of, rather than a barrier to, greater political activism for women, according to Porter. Resilient cross-community networks built by women activists allowed them to pursue an agenda of shared concerns across national boundaries and between traditional political groups. In the early 1970s, many women became active in community centers and social change programs to address discrimination in housing, employment, and education. Others responded to violence by joining grass-roots peace movements that brought large numbers of women together to push for political solutions. Women leaders emerged and together cultivated inclusive practices that acknowledged but sought not to antagonize the diverse complexity of national, ethnic, religious and class identities. Their efforts

countered the divisive norm in Northern Ireland, where 'identity polarizes differences' and segregation 'induces mutual ignorance' and limits opportunities to encounter 'others' (2000, 164). Porter finds that a comprehensive definition of 'women's work' is needed to capture the extent of their 'dynamic roles in peace-building in civil society' (2003, 245). The holistic scope of women's peace work involves 'constructing the conditions of society to foster peace through development and aid, human rights education, reconciliation and the restoration of community life' (Ibid: 250).

Women and the Ceasefires

> Ceasefires were not the end... just the beginning...Those announcements were the first steps into a different place (Brian Rowan 2014a).

The summer of 1994 galvanized hope for peace, and signaled major shifts in thinking about the merits of political dialogue in Northern Ireland. It was a time of endings and many hopeful beginnings. During this dramatic period, progress toward peace accelerated and the momentum encouraged hope in a better future. It was a pivotal time in the region's history, and a particularly significant time for women activists engaged in the broad spectrum of peace, social justice and conflict resolution work. As hope and expectations grew and violence subsided, the prospects for talks yet again looked promising. There was a shared concern among many women activists that these negotiations would not be inclusive and that women would be shut out of the politically controlled process. As Fearon and McWilliams recount, 'There were many allegiances and perspectives among the women...but they shared a strong desire to see women making a decisive move into the political mainstream' (2000, 118).

In her work, 'Women, the peacemakers?' (1998), Sales assesses how nationalist and unionist women responded to the 1994 ceasefires. In order to create the means to work together on a common agenda, many women activists defined the scope of their work as being separate from constitutional issues that bounded the 'formal' political process. As an administrator of a women's center noted, 'We

don't talk about politics here. We only talk about women's issues'(Sales 1998:150). For practical reasons, many women sought to create 'neutral or non-sectarian space' to mobilize broad community support for social change. They located themselves and their work as 'outside' the contested space of politics, reinforcing stereotypical views of women's activism as 'other' and thus being 'less significant'. In Sales view, the reconstruction of democratic society needs to be predicated on a deconstruction of the discriminatory and inherently undemocratic structures that exclude women. She finds in Northern Ireland women made 'substantial moves into the public sphere' through community-based 'informal' politics, the creation of a network of women's centers, and general employment gains. However, this progress did not result in similar gains in the traditional arena of 'formal' politics that 'remains dominated by men'(Sales 1998: 160).

Sales cautions that the exclusionary structures of Northern Ireland politics, once used to limit Catholics' access to power, would work against all women unless gender equality was central to the reformation of the post-conflict state. Structural change is necessary to embed the gains women made during the conflict and after the cease-fires. She forewarned that women and the issues for which they have mutual concern would remain marginalized if they did not work from within the established, formal political structures to renegotiate the status of women.

> But unless women are involved with politics as it is traditionally defined in Northern Ireland, their influence is likely to remain marginal. If women are to reconstruct the meaning of politics in Northern Ireland, they face the even more difficult task of engaging with the issues which divide them (Sales 1998:160).

Sales argues that this meant the recognition and impact of women's achievements would not reach far beyond the community level. Joyce McCartan of the Ormeau Road Women's Center describes the troubling disconnect between women community leaders and those controlling public policy.

> The most frustrating thing, and again we are in agreement about this, is that women are still on the outside when decisions are being made about policy. It is still men who make the decisions, and very often they don't have a great appreciation of what is needed. Where there's

> violence and a lot of insecurity in the area, it's women that are the most put upon, and yet they are the greatest support and the hardest workers trying to resolve the problems (McCartan 1994:47).

McCartan describes the perplexing gap between women leaders with expertise in identifying and resolving urgent community needs, and the policy-making arenas dominated by men. The marginalization of women leaders served to sideline their considerable knowledge and skills and this weakens community development initiatives. It was for these reasons that the NIWC was founded to ensure women would not be outsiders to the formal peace process.

The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC)

Professor Paul Arthur credits the formation of the Women's Coalition and their entry into politics as the catalyst for progressive change in the dialogue process. He served as a convener of 'Track Two' diplomatic efforts that produced a series of informal working sessions for NI political leaders in the early 1990s. The aim of these events was to bring political party leaders together to promote awareness, trust and understanding necessary to allow peace to emerge. These early workshops did not enlist the participation of women, and issues of gender did not feature on the agendas. The entry of the Women's Coalition changed the balance of representation and their presence made gender visible for those previously unaware. Arthur reports,

> There was no female representation before the Strasbourg workshop in December 1993. Indeed the issue of gender did not properly surface until the formation of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition in June 1996. In more recent workshops an attempt has been made to establish a more equitable balance (1999, 89).

The established parties and process conveners had not previously viewed women's participation or issues of gender equity to be important. None had sought to enlist female party delegates, or invite women civic and community leaders to take part. Arthur acknowledges that the selection of participants was somewhat 'arbitrary' and 'not statistically representative'. The Coalition's presence on the political landscape garnered women's legitimacy as political leaders, and secured their place in the peace process. As participants, they were able to expand the agenda and 'properly surface' previously overlooked issues

like gender. Finally, the Women's Coalition achieved a lasting impact on the capacity of follow-on workshops that were designed with a more 'equitable balance' in mind.

For Monica McWilliams and the members of the Women's Coalition, the election of 1996 signaled a time of unprecedented promise and possibility. It would prove to be a time of greater visibility for women as leaders and decision-makers. While the presence of women leaders is notable, there is evidence that the quality of their participation was most significant. The Coalition mobilized an extensive regional network of women's groups and organizations into a political force for change. The Northern Ireland Women's European Platform was among those instrumental in launching the new party (Fearon 1996). Women leaders were determined to influence this phase of the social and political change in Northern Ireland. They believed their leadership in community politics and social justice initiatives made them legitimate, seasoned candidates. May Blood, a founding member of the NIWC, urged women in 1996 to take their place at the center of political change in order to sustain their cause for peace in Northern Ireland.

> For all of us, peace is the bottom line. For 25 years politicians have said that it's been women who have held Northern Ireland together through all the violence. What's always happened before is that we've been pushed back into the margins. This must not happen again (May Blood, address to the NIWC, May 1996).

As a new, small party lead by women, the Coalition faced a unique set of challenges. Support for the new political group was not universal among women or women's organizations. For example, the Women's Support Network made the 'difficult decision' not to formally endorse the Coalition fearing 'a women's party representing women as women would be obliged to adopt neutrality on issues that were at stake in the Constitutional debate', limiting their effectiveness (Cockburn 1998, 83). The Coalition's surprising electoral success provoked hostility from many in the political establishment. Many women within the established parties were skeptical, viewing the Coalition as latecomers draining scarce resources without the political power to achieve their goals. Their very presence challenged the ultra conservative nature of politics and sought to

change notions of violent conflict, peace and leadership as being male-only territory. Candidates and campaigners received verbal taunting and harassment targeting them as women and 'feminists' who should 'get back into the kitchen'. The DUP's Peter Robinson (now First Minister) is reported to have dismissed the formation of the Coalition while campaigning for the 1996 elections, by saying 'women should leave politics and leadership alone' (Kilmurray and McWilliams 2011, 2). Journalist Fionnuala O Connor says the 'Coalition's greatest hour was in the talks that led to the Agreement.'

> Volunteer drafters and researcher's gave them a seriousness disproportionate to their size and their presence made an impact, the sight of women negotiating for themselves being enough to attract attention in the male-dominated talks. Attitudes towards them said something about the need to redress the gender balance in Northern Ireland's lop-sided public representation (O Connor 2002, 132).

She credits their presence as challenging gender stereotypes, and showcasing the capacity of women leaders to be effective despite the male-dominated political culture.

Researcher Kate Fearon provides the most comprehensive documentation of the Coalition in *Women's Work: The Story of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition* (1999). She traces the formation, structure, and membership of the group including a detailed account of the intense two-year talks process. Central to the Coalition's core principles and ethical framework is the belief that women are agents of change. The party established core principles of inclusion, equality and human rights that also served as the strategy for political engagement[6]. These guiding principles were enacted through commitments to shared leadership responsibility, collaboration, inclusive discussion processes and consensus decision-making. Fearon considered the set of core principles proved to be 'the most valuable tool in dialogue and communication within the organization on difficult issues' (1999, 13). The strategic direction used by the party and the

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[6] A five-point manifesto was created as an election plan, and this then formed the framework for policy development and the party's internal and external practices. Using the acronym WOMEN, these key points were: Working for a Solution; Offering Inclusion; Making Women Heard; Equity for All; and New Thinking (Fearon 1999).

refusal to assume an absolute 'fixed position' on the divisive constitutional issue was devised to strengthen the party's political position.

> 'This meant that the NIWC would be able to negotiate, accommodate and include views from all the participants in the process (and some outside it). It would listen to the views of others, and attempt to incorporate them, as opposed to merely stating its own position and expecting others to accept it…The NIWC guaranteed it would attend the Talks come what may. A solution would not be reached if any parties were kept out and the NIWC believed that the issue of dialogue must take priority over all other issues (Fearon and McWilliams 2000:124).

Coalition members were determined to advance a comprehensive set of issues they saw as addressing the primary causes of the conflict and thus key to building a sustainable peace. They promoted an integrated framework of peace and reconciliation measures to be included in the final agreement. Community outreach, education, and dialogue were key activities throughout the talks. Their advocacy and 'successful pressure' resulted in the inclusion of commitments focused on 'victims and reconciliation, integrated education and mixed housing' (Wilson 2010:140). They organized vigorous campaigns to secure public ratification of the agreement and contest the election for the new Northern Ireland Assembly. Fearon concludes that impact of the Coalition's participation reached beyond issues of women's involvement and the period of negotiations. She believes they positively influenced 'the dynamics of politics in Northern Ireland' by demonstrating the importance of civil society inclusion and prioritizing community-based issues necessary to gain public support for political settlement[7].

> The NIWC's involvement in the negotiations not only facilitated and promoted women's participation, it also demonstrated the possibility that civil society can participate in and influence formal political negotiations. It revealed that politics is not necessarily the exclusive preserve of customary politicians...

> Some of the issues the NIWC put on the agenda – such as victims' rights and reconciliation – became touchstone issues in the referendum campaign. It is arguable that if the agreement had not

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[7] The campaign to publically ratify the agreement was problematic and a 'Yes' vote was not assured. Among the ten political parties involved in the negotiations to draft the agreement, the DUP and UUP campaigned for a 'No' vote. The Agreement was approved through public referendums held in both Northern Ireland (71%) and the Republic of Ireland (94%) on 22 May 1998 (Wilson 2010, 154; Whyte 1998).

addressed these concerns, many people could have voted against it and thus jeopardised the greatest opportunity for peace in 30 years (2002, 33).

Coalition leaders were subject to disrespectful and derogatory treatment during their campaigns and at meetings of the Forum. Senator George Mitchell witnessed the hostility and disrespect received by women at the start of the negotiations. He observed,

> The women overcame a great deal of adversity. Early in the process they were not taken seriously in our talks and they were insulted in the Forum. I would not permit such conduct in the negotiations, but it took many months for their courage and commitment to earn the attention and respect of the other parties. In the final stages of the negotiations they were serious, important participants, and were treated as such. (Mitchell, 2000: 44).

The inhospitable welcome received from some colleagues strengthened the Coalition's focus on intra-party relations throughout the peace processes. They saw the adversarial and exclusionary dynamics to be caustic and were determined to make positive change.

Wilson (2010) notes that a hierarchy of issues existed that put an overriding focus on the paramilitaries, namely the IRA, and their entry into the formal negotiations. Some viewed other issues, like those relating to the agenda of topics to be discussed, the design of the negotiations process, and the practical elements of post-conflict reconstruction, to be much less important. The preeminent concern for many senior officials was 'the hard core of reaching an agreement' not the particulars of the accord or how it would be implemented. Wilson cites an unnamed Irish government official as saying, 'I don't think the whole thing around victims, reconciliation, and all that complex of stuff did loom as large for them and they probably regarded it as a footnote'(2010, 141). Being champions for the 'soft' issues compounded the marginalization of the Coalition and their civil society partners fighting for an agreement and the mechanisms necessary to promote lasting peace. Despite intense pressure to 'take a side', the Coalition maintained a non-aligned status, determined to play a problem-solving role and enhance the overall quality of the peace talks process.

In 2000, Kate Fearon and Monica McWilliams reflected on the relative success of their small party and the impact of their political leadership. At that early stage of the peace process they thought it 'too soon to tell whether or not women's contributions will be valued in any post-conflict reconstruction.' They were confident that the Coalition had demonstrated women are capable leaders and that their lasting significance was 'being able to show the process of peace-building can be done differently'(2000, 133).

The 1996 Forum and Peace Talks

One of the most illuminating examples of this hidden story of women's leadership can be told through the political dialogue and negotiations that began in 1996. The involvement of women in the NI peace process is often reduced to a story of one political party and two women. This overly simplistic narrative focuses exclusively on the activities of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and the two female delegates elected to sit at the talks table during the formal negotiations for political settlement. The full story of the transition to peace in Northern Ireland is much broader, and features many thousands of women working across society and in all aspects of social change throughout the decades of violent conflict. A closer examination of this intense period of the larger peace process reveals the breadth and depth of women's peace leadership.

During the dialogue and negotiations of 1996-1998, women were unusually visible as community and political leaders, and were key delegates in the formal peace talks that produced the 1998 Agreement. In 1996 the British Government announced a special election to select political representatives for two multi-party bodies that would form the peace talks process in Northern Ireland. Among the 110 political representatives chosen from ten political parties, fifteen women delegates secured seats in the Northern Ireland Forum/Entry into Negotiations Elections (Table 1). The Forum for Political Dialogue was comprised of 90 members elected directly and an additional 20 'top-up' seats from the ten parties receiving the most votes (Whyte 1998). The election of 15 women delegates to the Forum ranks Northern Ireland among the most gender-balanced peace

processes in history (Castillo-Diaz and Tordjman 2012). Five women represented the newly formed Northern Ireland Women's Coalition along with ten other female delegates from five political parties. These fifteen women (12.5%) participated as members of the Forum for Political Dialogue, and two (10%) were among the select twenty delegates convened for peace talks. Four of the top ten parties included no women among their delegations. Two women, Pearl Sagar and Monica McWilliams of the NIWC were the only women to win seats at the negotiations table (Fearon 1999). In addition, the list shown in Table 1 identifies women selected by their parties to participate in a variety of strategic advisory roles within their respective talks teams. This comprehensive picture of women's participation in the negotiations process is drawn from several sources including official election records, published accounts, and interviews. While it is the most complete accounting of women's participation to date, it may not include all those who took part. It is also important to note that role and level of involvement of individual delegates varied by party, and may have changed over the course of the intense two year process.

Looking beyond the party delegates, there was an unprecedented number of prominent women in senior leadership positions representing the Irish, British and American governments. For the British government Marjorie 'Mo' Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, was in charge of day-to-day oversight of the proceedings. Mary Robinson was President of Ireland, the first women so elected. Her successor in 1997 was Mary McAleese, the first Irish President from Northern Ireland. The Irish government delegation to the talks was led in part by Liz O'Donnell, Minister of State for the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. Inside the process management team was Laura Pope, assistant to chief mediator George Mitchell. Among the advocates for a peaceful settlement from the United States were Secretary of State Madeline Albright, US Ambassador to Ireland Jean Kennedy Smith, and First Lady Hillary Clinton. Each of these women served to facilitate dialogue and foster the conditions that resulted in a peaceful settlement of the decades long violent conflict. Together they helped encourage, empower and enlist the contributions of local women leading the peace.

The Northern Ireland peace talks process ranks among the elite for women's participation in global peace processes (Castillo-Diaz and Tordjman 2012). Among 14 peace negotiations analyzed in a groundbreaking report by UN Women in 2012, fewer that 8% of participants and only 3% of signatories to peace agreements were women. They further found that women's participation in negotiating delegations averaged 5.9% of the 10 cases for which such information was available. Northern Ireland is included among the negotiations featured in this study, but the the report does not fully reflect the extent of women's participation in the region's process. First of all, the number of women elected as participants was 15 of 110, or 12.5%, larger than the 10% (2 women in 20) negotiators reported. Secondly, many more women were actively engaged as advisors and strategists within their parties talks teams througout the intense period of negotiations (see Table 2). These appointed team members were centrally involved in policy development, internal and external communications, and strategic dialogue througout the two-year talks process. Third, the agreement drafted by the party negotiators was ratified by voters in a public referendum held simultaneously in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Therefore it is important to look beyond the negotiators and consider the participation of women leaders involved in the successful campaign for public approval. Finally, fifteen women (14%) were among the 110 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in the first post-Agreement Northern Ireland parliament. As such, they served as key implementers and monitors during the critical early stage of transition. For these reasons women's peace leadership in Northern Ireland is much greater and more influential than has been previously acknowledged. This is just one example of how women's leadership is not adequately recognized resulting in an inaccurate and distorted record of the peace process.

Women leaders were key actors in the Northern Ireland peace process, and the quality of their participation was a significant factor in the talks that that produced an agreed political settlement (Mitchell 1999). Women emerged as leaders and demonstrated considerable skill as they sought to challenge and change society during the extensive period of violent conflict. (Kilmurray and McWilliams, 2011). There was significant leadership provided by individual

women and collectively through a network of women's groups that helped to cultivate social and political shifts toward peace (Carr 2014a). Women in Northern Ireland are often heralded for their contributions to foster peace and political transition. The nature of their participation in community and civic work throughout the decades of violent conflict, during the political negotiations process, and in post-agreement transition are considered remarkable. The following accolades are fine examples:

> The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and the 'emergence of women as a political force' was 'a significant factor in achieving the Agreement' (Senator George Mitchell 1999, 44).

> The impact of women leaders in Northern Ireland is 'clearly evident'…their contributions were 'essential' to the 'ongoing process of fostering reconciliation' (Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Report to the Council of Europe, December 2003).

> The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and women negotiators in Northern Ireland 'secured commitments…to involve young people and victims of violence in reconciliation; to accelerate the release and reintegration of political prisoners; and to ensure an integrated education system and integrated housing' (US President Barak Obama, 2010, Executive Order, US National Action Plan, UNSC 1325).

> I have seen this in many places around the world, where women moved from being victims to being agents for change, but I have never seen it more clearly, more resolutely than I saw it in Northern Ireland (Hillary Clinton quoted in Carswell 2015).

Despite these acknowledged contributions and achievements, women are marginalized in the ongoing transition, excluded from leadership and decision-making roles, and unable to fully participate in the initiatives to shape a new Northern Ireland (Ward 2013).

Women's Leadership, Gender & Politics in Post-agreement Northern Ireland

Post-agreement politics in Northern Ireland has not been transformed. There is a 'significant gap between a political commitment to the inclusion of women and practice on the ground'(Ward 2006, 283). As Wilson puts it, the post-agreement reality has a 'gulf between the "two communities" in Northern Ireland as wide as ever, …and governance arrangements by no means adequate by democratic standards' (Wilson 2010, 4). There is a glaring gender imbalance in governance,

policymaking and peacebuilding. Professor Monica McWilliams finds little progress in the level of participation of women in decision-making has followed the peace accord. She believes this has broad impacts on Northern Ireland society. She states,

> There are still no women in the role of high court judges in Northern Ireland. There were no women appointed to the important peace enforcement processes. The electoral system remains the same – returning fewer women that Scotland and Wales. There is an absence of affirmative action. The European peace programs and reconstruction funds did recognize women's role in the community and resources in the first two funding rounds. However, in the current Peace Three phase, women's organizations are struggling to maintain their resources as funding is diverted to other projects (McWilliams, 2010, p 90).

The 1998 peace agreement called for the formation of a new power-sharing parliamentary body. The first post-agreement Northern Ireland Assembly, composed of 95 men and 15 women, was responsible for implementing the terms of the political settlement[8]. Sociologist Kimberly Cowell-Meyers examined the presence of gender differences in the priorities and perceptions of these pioneering representatives. She found that women and men did 'not differ significantly in their interests and concerns or in their styles of public representation'. However, there were two notable exceptions. First, women and men 'had different understandings of politics and of themselves as politicians'. Secondly, the area of greatest difference between women and men in the 1998 Assembly was in the importance given to 'unrecognized issues or groups and representing women' (Cowell-Meyers 2001; 2003). According to Cowell-Meyers, the relatively low level of observable gender differences may be the result of the 'absence of a critical mass of women' and by the pressures unique to a transitioning society. This suggests that a change in the contested and male-

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[8] In the 1998 elections to the NI Assembly few women were selected as candidates. There were 49 women out of 296 candidates (16.5%). Of the main parties, the Ulster Unionists stood four (8.3%); SDLP stood six (15.8%); DUP stood four (11.8%); Sinn Fein stood eight (21.6%); Alliance stood six (27.3%). There were eight candidates for the NI Women's Coalition and the smaller loyalist parties stood one woman. Fourteen women were elected (13%) and 94 men. The retirement of John Hume (SDLP) and his replacement with Annie Courtney raised the total to 15 and 13.8 % (Hillyard, McWilliams, and Ward 2006, 16).

dominated culture of politics could foster a greater range of leadership behaviors, increase the impact of women and expand the discourse beyond a narrow set parties and issues.

Authors Fearon and Rebouche (2006) examined the continuing low representation of women and the impact of gender differences on political behavior after the Agreement. This study identified perceived differences in substance and style between women councilors and their male colleagues. Chief among these distinctions was the influence of partisanship in the work of local councils. Through in-depth interviews with women local councilors they sought to 'discover whether female leaders believe that women have a distinctive contribution to make to the political situation in the region'. They found that female and male councilors were perceived as having distinct approaches, with women's behavior characterized in much more positive terms.

> ...there was a striking level of agreement about perceived stylistic differences between male and female councilors. In general, men were portrayed as partisan, garrulous, irrational, and obdurate while women were characterized as pragmatic, practical, logical and hard-working....The composite self-image that emerges is of approachable, rational women, motivated by a concern to serve the wider community but who feel constrained by dominance of security and constitutional matters...(Fearon and Rebouche 2006, 350–351).

Further, the authors found female councilors, 'drew analogies with social and community workers in describing their own roles, while their male counterparts were portrayed invariably as exponents of ideological warfare' (2006, 342). For some researchers Northern Ireland provides an illuminating case study to consider how women and men differently participate in and are impacted by violent conflict (see Alison, Enloe, Goldstein, Chinkin, Cockburn, and Porter and Sales). Jennifer McCann, Sinn Féin Junior Minister insists the skillful work of women deserves greater attention.

> ... the role of women needs to be examined and their contribution remembered. Women were in the forefront of their communities. They had to undertake that role because the men were in jail. There were very strong women who took ownership of campaigns and who were positive role models. We need to remember their contribution ("Is Gender Part of Good Relations?" 2007, 22).

It is disappointing but not surprising that women leaders are not more equally engaged as decision-makers shaping the new Northern Ireland. Political and social gains achieved by women during armed conflict are rarely sustained during the transition to peace. Northern Ireland is not alone in failing to use mandates and measurable outcomes to advance women's rights and ensure their participation in post-war society. This is a common problem that is symptomatic of the lack of gender mainstreaming in all aspects of peace processes. Feminist academic Cynthia Cockburn has summarized the consequences in stark terms, and her words echo the concerns of many in Northern Ireland:

> ...the civil society rebuilt after war or tyranny seldom reflects women's visions or rewards their energies. The space that momentarily opens up for change is not often used to secure genuine and lasting gender transformations (Cockburn, 2001:19).

The exclusion of women is a common weakness of post-conflict societies, their guiding agreements are most often lacking in mechanisms to enlist and safeguard them.

> If women's particular human rights and concerns are not explicitly integrated into peacebuilding mandates, strategies, and plans, then women's concerns will continue to be marginalized and treated as matters that can be attended to later (Kuehnast, Oudraat, and Hernes 2011, 15).

In contrast to the principles of power sharing and inclusivity that are at the heart of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, women remain minor players in post-agreement governance. Northern Ireland 'has continued to be run largely by men' (Cockburn 2013, 164). Fearon sees the lack of advancements for women as the result of inherent weaknesses in the language of the Agreement. It states a commitment to 'the right of women to full and equal political participation'("The Agreement: Agreement Reached at Multi-Party Talks" 1998), but includes no implementing mechanisms. Fearon explains 'most of the promises that relate to women in the GFA are not binding, being phrased more in terms of aspirations' (Fearon, 2006, p 284). The Gender Equality Strategy (2006) includes a statement of vision for Northern Ireland that says:

> Men and women will be able to realise their full potential to contribute equally to the political, economic, social, (including caring

roles) and cultural development of Northern Ireland and benefit
equally from the results.

Among the key Action Areas of the strategy is 'representation in public
life/decision- making', and the following strategic objectives:

- To achieve better collection and dissemination of data
- To achieve gender balance on all government appointed committees,
boards and other relevant official bodies
- To actively promote an inclusive society
- To ensure the participation of women and men in all levels of peace
building, civil society, economy and government ("Gender Equality
Strategy: A Strategic Framework for Action to Promote Gender Equality
for Women and Men 2006-2016" 2006).

A comprehensive report for the Northern Ireland Assembly titled 'Who Runs
Northern Ireland?' found women are 'under-represented across all major
positions of political, economic, social and judicial power' and this 'demonstrates
a gender-related systemic impediment to access to decision-making (Potter
2014a). Among the areas of reported concern, there were no female senior judges
in the judiciary, no female permanent secretaries in the civil service, and no
female university vice-chancellors. Although not included in the report, there are
also no female senior police commanders[9], and also no women members of the NI
Assembly justice committee[10]. Among the positions with 20% or fewer women
are Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), chairs of public bodies, and
county court judges. The categories that are near gender-balanced or
predominantly female are voluntary and community sector CEOs, school
principals, district judges and lay magistrates, and Members of the European
Parliament (Potter 2014b). Women are under represented in the Northern
Ireland Assembly holding 19 percent of the seats. This is a nominal change from
the 11 percent representation in the first post-agreement parliament elected in
1998. Although women's representation on public bodies is higher at 34 %, this is

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[9] Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie retired in March 2014. She was the
highest-ranking female member of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
There are currently no women with the rank of assistant chief or deputy chief
constable.
[10] ("Northern Ireland Assembly Justice Committee Membership" 2015. Accessed
on 16/6/2015)

nearly unchanged from 1995 levels. In Northern Ireland, these public bodies are appointed and responsible for housing, social care, health, education and policing.

There is no corresponding report that measures 'Who Runs the Peace' in Northern Ireland. Contrary to the official policies and rhetoric, women are not fully or meaningfully represented as peace building leaders. Women remain severely under-represented in the political party talks held since 1998 to amend and expand the original agreement. The Haass-O'Sullivan Talks (2013), 'Cardiff Talks' (2013) and Stormont House Talks (2014) are just the latest examples of the disproportionate access to decision-making that women and men have on key issues related to the post-agreement transition. The multi-party talks chaired by Richard Haass and Meghan O'Sullivan in 2013 involved just two women delegates among fourteen political party representatives. The Proposed Agreement (not adopted by the executive parties) contains no mention of women and only one reference to gender in thirty-nine pages ("Proposed Agreement: An Agreement Among the Parties of the Northern Ireland Executive" 2013, 18).

Gender-equality is not a central concern in government strategies to deliver a shared, united society.[11] The core values of inclusivity, equality and shared-future are intended to address sectarianism and racism, and engage the formerly warring parties. In this construct, sexism, gender discrimination, and the participation of women are not priority issues. Women's organizations, despite their deep roots in civil society and expertise in cross-community initiatives, are often not considered to be part of the peacebuilding infrastructure. Little progress on women's participation in peace or governance has resulted from the international discourse on Women, Peace and Security, or the national action plans created to implement United Nations Resolution 1325. In fact neither the Irish nor British National Action Plans addressing UNSC 1325 apply to Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Executive has not chosen to voluntarily adopt and

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[11] The Northern Ireland Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) Strategy does not reflect an understanding of the link between gender and conflict. The 'Together: Building a United Community' (TBUC) has one brief paragraph on women. Neither of these policy frameworks incorporates the NI Gender Equality Strategy.

employ the recommendations. McCullough (2013) finds the contribution that women make to peacebuilding, community development, and addressing the legacy of the past, 'remains outside the formal policy-making arena and is thus under-valued.' The ongoing exclusion threatens to undermine the capacity of government-led initiatives to achieve lasting peace (McCullough 2013, 4). This pattern illustrates that a pervasive gender-gap persists in the peace process. Women are not enlisted as equal partners, and this near exclusion as decision-makers disables the transition to peace.

The severe gender gap visible in political leadership is also evident within the segregated peace and reconciliation sector. For example, the Corymeela Peace and Reconciliation Centre, Northern Ireland's largest and oldest, has had only one female chief executive in its fifty-year history. In the Republic of Ireland the Glencree Peace and Reconciliation Centre has benefited from just one female CEO[12] in forty years. The lack of leading women in paid decision-making posts in this sector reflects rather than challenges the gendered context within which they operate. While many organizations reach across national and religious divides, most fail to use gender inclusive practices, promote women's participation or meaningfully address the gender dimensions of the violent conflict. Researcher Paul Nolan and colleagues conducted a study of leadership in the community relations sector of Northern Ireland in 2009. They concluded 'leadership is weakly formulated, under-researched and under-theorized in the field of community relations', and that 'gender might be one of the more interesting determinants in leadership and management style' (Nolan et al. 2009, 48-49).

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[12] Máirín Colleary served as chief executive of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation from 2004 and 2007, and was previously Board Chairperson.

Public perception of leaders and leadership

There is evidence of a growing public dissatisfaction with political leaders and the quality of political leadership in Northern Ireland. Two recent studies highlight interesting trends in public perceptions of local leaders. A 2002 public attitude survey found a high correlation between the attributes considered desirable and those associated with women politicians. The Northern Ireland *Life and Times Survey* found that the most favored politicians were those characterized as being 'honest, able to compromise, hard working and approachable'. The top traits attributed to women were 'approachable, able to compromise, and honest,' followed by 'level-headed and practical'. More than half (57%) of people believed things would improve with more women in politics, with the majority of women (66%) and men (57%) wishing to see more women elected ("Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey: Women in Politics Module" 2003).

The quality of political leadership and peacemaking was among the highest priorities in a public survey of issues to advance good relations and reconciliation in 2012. Among the topics raised by participants were the desired qualities of effective leaders. Some of those surveyed characterized existing leadership as 'immature' or not 'positive' and noted this as a negative factor slowing or preventing further progress towards peace and reconciliation. The survey report by Gráinne Kelly for the University of Ulster states:

> Disappointment was expressed by several (respondents) that the political leadership or "peacemaker qualities" witnessed during the negotiations of the Agreement, have not subsequently appeared as evident to them. One community and voluntary sector respondent put it thus:
>
> 'Great efforts were made to get to that point in 1998. That took guts and determination and they should be congratulated for that. But peace does not happen on that day. It requires positive leadership to continue every day afterwards. We are exhausted from looking at them fighting over every policy, because they can't agree on anything. They fought for this Assembly. Now they need to use it' (Kelly, 2012: 54-55).

The research findings did not identify the participation of women in politics, or gender equality as distinct public priorities. Instead, respondents expressed a general desire for more positive leadership approaches to facilitate peaceful progress.

> Several interviewees indicated that there is a continued need to support the current political leadership to take on the challenge of addressing the divisions in society, while acknowledging that their own political system reflects, replicates and functions through these very cleavages that exist in society (Kelly, 2012: 54).

These two studies suggest there may be links between the perceived ineffectiveness of current political leaders and institutions, and the underrepresentation of women leaders in peace and governance.

Women leaders – role models, pioneers and trail blazers

The sections above show that while women have long been leaders in community activism and found vital space for action in the Peace Talks, many barriers to their political inclusion and recognition of their contribution as leaders is still persistent. In Northern Ireland limited historical narratives offer few images of female actors or women leaders to instruct future political action. Traditional cultural identities for women constrain their leadership opportunities, and complicate their practice as leaders. Stories of male heroism fuel a mythology that is notable for the absence of women actors. Begoña Aretxaga says 'Republican historical myth contains powerful gender models of historical action – models that erase the historical agency of women in favor of individual male heroes' (Aretxaga 1997, 80).

Moreover, the lineage of Researcher Valerie Morgan argues that women's lives in Northern Ireland deserve greater research attention. She finds they are worthy subjects

> ...because their experiences, attitudes and aspirations have so frequently been neglected in analyses of our situation or subsumed into composite pictures which are actually based on data collected predominantly from men, attempts to present women's views of the Northern Ireland conflict do seem justified. This is especially relevant at this point in the peace process when the voices of all sections of society - from as wide a spectrum as possible - need to be heard and understood (Morgan 1996, 2).

Colonialism and patriarchy cross at the roots and shape contemporary experiences of conflict and peace. This legacy is written into the power structures of government and society. Professor Cathy Higgins argues that patriarchy, 'in its various guises has legitimated violence in Northern Ireland, whether state, paramilitary, domestic or other'(2012, 38). Gender norms and stereotypes can be traced back to the region's colonial history and patriarchal culture. This gendered political context has created deep gender divisions that marginalize and devalue women. Colonialism gave credence to the patriarchal practice of control and domination and the abuse of power as a legitimate way to achieve goals. It confirmed the existence of superior and inferior groups and treated the latter as of no value and undeserving of equal treatment and respect. Using the tactics of divide and rule, colonial forces justified oppression of the 'weaker' group by the privileged one. Finally it used religion to endorse and explain the need for cultural, economic and political oppression. Women in Ireland were viewed through patriarchal lenses as possessing all those qualities associated with colonized, subject people, i.e. passive, in need of guidance, incapable of self-government, romantic, passionate, and unruly (2012, 29).

The legacy of colonialism and patriarchy is reflected in the way leadership is understood, practiced and perceived. Higgins' work explores the impact of women's community activism and the importance of their various grass-roots peacebuilding initiatives. She finds women's leadership distinctly significant because it 'kept hope alive in the midst of violence'. She states,

> Women have been to the fore in leading and participating in rallies condemning violence, calling instead for just peace….They have shown imagination and creativity in visioning an alternative way of relating that recognizes the need to dismantle sectarianism, racism and sexism. In their journey toward liberating interdependence they have shown transformed inter-community relationships are possible (2012, 38).

Women who enter spaces dominated by men often face unique challenges and find a less than hospitable welcome. The indifference or open hostility can be most severely felt by those who are the first to enter, or those who do so alone. Trade unionist Inez McCormack reported, 'There is no fun being the first women on anything, including the first woman president of congress'(Carey 2000). In

these male-dominated spaces, women are minorities, and their every move can be viewed as unconventional. Each finds their own way to wrestle with the complicated set of gender expectations and perceptions. Aretxaga considers gender awareness and desire for equality became primary motivators, propelling many women's move into leadership. She argues 'women in Northern Ireland were not unaware of gender hierarchy; it was simply taken for granted'. Through their activism, many women came to understand the political dimensions of gender, and 'gender relations came to appear as susceptible to transformation as were other social relations'(Aretxaga 1997, 78).

There are many examples of women who recorded important 'firsts' during the Troubles and in the transition to peace. A sampling of the descriptions of their entry and style indicates the change they brought to unprepared or unwelcoming institutions. For example, Mo Mowlam, was the first Secretary of State for Northern Ireland appointed by Prime Minister Tony Blair, and the first woman to hold the post. She became known for a bold, determined style that 'jarred a male political society to its roots', and 'unsettled unionists' and 'establishment-type males' working in civil service posts during the political transition to peace (O Connor 2002). Martha Pope served as chief of staff to Senator George Mitchell during the peace talks. She is described as bringing

> 'a new dimension to the male world of senior officials in Belfast, London and Dublin, by being female, serious-minded,…a diplomatic and sensitive woman, her presence alone caused a degree of culture-shock. (O Connor 2002, 108–109).

Although both agents of change, Mowlam's style was bold and brash, while Pope worked quietly behind the scenes. Each held senior positions and as such represented a change in tradition linked to the wider shifts associated with the unfolding peace process. Mowlam, Pope and the many others were important role models who inspired and enlisted the leadership of others. Their rise to public prominence brought new approaches, styles and expertise into view. Many of these new elected and mobilized leaders drew on the considerable skills and expertise forged in community groups and grass roots activism to be effective negotiators within the peace process.

Measuring the cost of inequality and exclusion

Although the costs of excluding women are not fully understood, some impacts are measurable. The Women's Resource and Development Agency finds 'peace building in NI is perceived as male territory.' Although women are directly impacted by the legacy of the conflict and the challenges of the transition to peace, they have few ways to participate in the work to shape a new Northern Ireland. 'Such opportunities have decreased over the years of the Peace Process' (WRDA 2013:3). Evidence of this worsening picture can also be found in the financial resources invested in the community infrastructure of women's groups and organizations For example, the Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium recently conducted a study of gender issues and peace work along Belfast's interface areas. The BCRC report provides a rare look at gender relations within the community of organizations promoting peace in contentious areas across the city. The study finds that '...mainstream funding for promoting women's equality has diminished significantly since the Good Friday Agreement, placing the infrastructure of the community and women's sector under considerable strain, and marginalizing the issue of women's equality'(McKeown 2011:17). A broader perspective of peacebuilding structures is needed to protect the significant assets found in the community and women's sector.

Conclusion

In Northern Ireland there is a wealth of experience among women leaders, amassed through more than forty years of violent conflict and peaceful transition. They represent a collective leadership that positively changed the nature of politics and helped transform the conflict into an emerging peace. Women leaders leveraged their disadvantaged and challenged positions to make constructive contributions that cultivated peace. There is evidence that the participation of women leaders served to disrupt traditional politics, promote cross-community development, generate more inclusive and constructive negotiations, and achieve a durable agreement. The expanded set of priority issues, drawn from the urgent needs of their communities, became central points of debate: access to housing,

integrated education, the needs of victims and survivors, and prisoner release. These local and cross-community efforts helped to sustain civic society during the violent conflict and generate the capacity for a peaceful transition. Their entry into the formal peace talks was an extension of the well-developed networks of community-based women's groups addressing local housing, education, social justice and employment needs of women and families throughout the decades of violent conflict.

How women leaders are understood, valued and remembered is greatly impacted by a patriarchal legacy that extends across ethno-national divisions. Contrary to the one-sided, male-centric historical narrative, women were actively involved as change leaders in Northern Ireland. The nature and location of their work helped to sustain their communities, cultivate peaceful change, and shape political reforms. Despite the strong record of women's peace leadership, political leadership in Northern Ireland remains engendered, male-dominated and not transformative.

An expanded analysis of leadership and peacebuilding may offer a richer, more nuanced understanding the role of women leaders in this divided and transitioning society. In the following three chapters I document and assess the fieldwork conducted in Northern Ireland examining the work of women leaders. The results of in-depth discussions reveal transformational characteristics in the leadership approaches and styles women used to promote peaceful change. In Chapter Four I discuss the methodology and approach used to conduct this social research project. In Chapter Five there is a compilation of the interview material drawn from face to face interviews with 26 women who led social and political change as part of the Northern Ireland peace process in the years 1994-2000. And in Chapter Six I analyze the data using transformation leadership theory to assess the value and impact of women's peace leadership.

Chapter 4: Methodology

> The only real voyage consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes; in seeing the universe through the eyes of another, one hundred others—in seeing the hundred universes that each of them sees (Marcel Proust).

Research Approach

This qualitative social research project explores the landscape of leadership through the lives of 'others'. It examines women's leadership to document the contributions of women and assess the transforming impact of their work. The focus is on a pivotal time 1994-2000, beginning with the ceasefires, during the peace talks process, and into early post-agreement Northern Ireland. My aim was to collect original material from a diverse set of women leaders, to explore how women practiced and perceived leadership within a divided and transitioning society. I expected to find distinctive approaches, skills and strategies used by women in their leadership practices, and characteristics that mirror transformative leadership and sustainable peacebuilding models. I hope that their experiences will enhance the historical narrative and expand narrowly defined concepts of leadership and peace. In the following sections I explain the reasons for my choice of research method, the ethical considerations taken into account and the implementation of my approach. I also reflect on my positioning as a feminist researcher exploring this field and the challenges and learning encountered in this research process.

Research Strategy and Design

As previous chapters show, there is a severe underrepresentation of women's experiences and expertise in mainstream academic, policy and political commentary. The absence of women's leadership, voices and views has 'discursive and material implications' (Rooney 2006, 353) for those that seek progressive social changes in the post-agreement transition. There is a dearth of information about women leaders and their roles in the ongoing peace process.

To augment existing literature and enable a more comprehensive analysis, I chose to collect information from primary sources. This work identifies and introduces a sizeable group of women leaders, and presents a discussion of their diverse experiences leading change. A critical analysis of this fieldwork examines distinctiveness in their leadership approaches, the impact of their contributions to peace, and the transformational character of their leadership.

I conducted face-to-face interviews with 26 women who were in leading positions of responsibility and influence. Almost all consented to be named. The list of interview participants is provided at the end of this chapter in Table 3. I looked for discernable differences between traditional hierarchical approaches to leadership and in the way these women viewed and practiced leadership in their work to promote peaceful change.

This study focuses on the way women practiced leadership, how they worked to exert influence and exercise power, and the priority issues they advanced to cultivate peace in Northern Ireland. This work is a group portrait, a composite picture of women leaders who participated in a significant period of the region's transition to peace. Their individual stories and collective contributions are impressive. So too is the extent to which their participation has been dismissed and excluded from the mainstream narratives of the peace process. I sought to undertake a fresh analysis, one based on the premise that women are leading agents of change. I welcomed the opportunity to explore the leading lives of women for lessons in peacebuilding. This meant stepping beyond the obscuring glare of lights set on male leaders, to examine the work, ways, and location of leading women.

How could a purposeful examination of women leaders shed new light on their value as peace building partners? What are we missing without their expertise and experiences enlisted in full measure at all levels of peacebuilding? As a practitioner and researcher I believe to learn we must first listen. To listen, we must believe there is a story to be told, ask to hear it, and be open to accepting new information. For me, this means focusing on the lives of women, learning

from their experiences and developing a more complex understanding of peacebuilding leadership.

As Carole Gilligan says,

> As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak….The failure to see the different reality of women's lives and to hear the differences in their voices stems in part from the assumption that there is a single mode of social experience and interpretation. By positing instead two different modes, we arrive at a more complex rendition of human experience, which sees the truth of separation and attachment in the lives of women and men and recognizes how these truths are carried by different modes of language and thought (Gilligan, 1982:173-74).

Finally, the focus on women peace leaders was inspired in part by the subject of my M.Phil. thesis, Elizabeth 'Liz' Kennedy, a nearly forgotten peacemaker in Belfast (Barbara Hart 2011). The story of Elizabeth's work as Senior Social Welfare Officer at Long Kesh inspired me to search for the stories of other leading women whose work was overlooked and forgotten.

To start, I surveyed the landscape with both a wide angle lens and precise eye to find notable women within civil society, the community sector, local government, churches, education, health, and policing. I looked away from the lists of notable men presented in the core texts, beyond traditional elite political positions, and across a wide spectrum of social, community and grass root activism. I identified and contacted women who were in positions of influence and responsibility during the political and social transition that occurred between 1994 and 2000. This significant period featured many pivotal events, including formal negotiations that produced an agreement to end decades of organized violence and reshape regional governance in 1998.

In order to find information about women leaders, you have to dig deeply, survey the footnotes for clues, and consider the absence of women in the discourse as a clue to their participation. I soon found the challenge was in sorting through the abundance of material, narrowing a list of interviewees from the large number of

women leaders and navigating through the wealth of leadership stories. There are many women I wanted to interview, that time and circumstances did not allow.

After this initial survey of the field, I drew on a network of community, professional, and academic contacts developed during the first two years as a researcher in Northern Ireland to establish a list of potential participants. To begin, I compiled the list of women delegates elected to the NI Forum for Political Dialogue and Peace Talks in 1996, and female MLAs in the first NI Assembly (Tables 1 and 2). To this group I added women who were appointed members of their parties' talks teams during the two-year negotiations period. To my knowledge, this comprehensive list of women participants in the formal multi-party peace process did not previously exist. To expand beyond the elite level of the formalized peace talks, I also identified women working across the region to make positive change through community initiatives, civil society groups, grassroots organizations and government agencies. I used personal and professional contacts developed during the course of my MPhil dissertation research in Belfast to identify influential women considered to be leading lights, role models, influencers, pioneers and change makers. In particular, I sought women who were working to address the social, economic and political impacts of the violent conflict, and promote reforms to advance peace, social justice and equality. I sought out women from the community and voluntary sector, public agencies, political party activists and local councils. I drew on the literature and personal biographies to identify women who had led community service reforms, shaped social justice and human rights campaigns, facilitated cross-community dialogue and encounters, established women's centers and advocated for an end to violence.

The eventual selected participants are those with whom I was able to arrange meetings during a six-month period in 2014. I sought an inclusive if not representative selection of adult women from nationalist and unionist backgrounds, urban and rural areas, belonging to all of the major political parties, and of different economic classes. I used email, letters, phone calls and personal

meetings to contact those on this large list of potential participants and arrange interviews. I chose to use semi-structured interviews to provide participants flexibility to reflect on their leadership experiences, and facilitate the collection and analysis of data. The same basic questions were used in each interview with additional follow-up questions emerging from the conversation as time allowed. The average interview was 60 minutes long, with some shorter and others exceeding two hours. I audio recorded each interview with permission of the participants. A written transcript was offered to participants and their corrections and revisions are incorporated into the final material used in this dissertation. I am grateful for all those who agreed to participate and generously share their knowledge and experience. Many of these women are public figures familiar with the interview process and have discussed their leading roles on many occasions. Others seemed glad for the rare opportunity to look back, reflect and discuss their work. I sought to accommodate the needs and preferences of each participant when arranging suitable interview locations and times. Travelling across Northern Ireland by train and coach to meet participants was a great pleasure. In many cases, I was welcomed into sitting rooms and kitchens for in-depth conversations. Other interviews were held in professional offices allowing a glimpse into vibrant community centers, constituency offices, and government buildings across the region. Meeting people in the context of their home or office added a dimension of intimacy that interviews in libraries and cafes did not. The private and familiar settings allowed for frank discussions. I am grateful for the generous hospitality extended to me by each of the participants.

Interview questions

A preliminary set of questions was tested and refined to develop the final set. These same core questions were used with each participant to discuss their leadership roles within the broader transition from violent conflict to peace.

A. The Leadership of Women – Roles and Contributions

1. What roles did you play, during the peace process (1994-1998) and in the post-agreement transition (1998-2000)?
2. What contributions did you make?

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3. What were the approaches, styles and strategies you used to promote improved conditions, influence others, and contribute to the development of political solutions?
4. What barriers or obstacles did you face?
5. Who were your female role models?
6. Was being a woman a factor in your experiences?
7. Has your work as a leader been recognized and valued?

B. Participation and Practice
1. Was the presence and participation of women leaders a positive factor in the transition to peace?
2. Have women leaders been appropriately recognized, have their contributions been sufficiently included in the story of conflict and peace?
3. Is there anything else you want to tell me? Is there something more you want to say about leadership and peace?

Research Ethics and Compliance with Policies on Good Research Practice

I received approval for this methodological approach and project design from the ISE Research Ethics Committee on 15 December 2012. In accordance with this commitment I conducted good and ethical research that fully complies with the guidelines and procedures of:

- the 'Policy on Good Research Practice' of the University of Dublin, Trinity College, and
- the 'Statement of Ethical Practice for he British Sociological Association'.

This project reflects the Trinity College Dublin ethical principles of:

- Respect for the individual subject or population;
- Beneficence and the absence of maleficence (research should have the maximum benefit with minimal harm); and
- Justice (all research subjects and populations should be treated fairly and equally).

- Voluntary participation and consent
- Confidentiality (Anonymity)

I have drawn heavily on the social research methods presented in the 'Social Research for Transformation' module (EM 7445) at the Irish School of Ecumenics in 2012. Of particular importance were the resource materials provided in the course designed for research projects in and about a divided and violent society.

Throughout the research project, I have shown respect for the autonomy of potential research participants and facilitated their independent and informed decisions about whether to take part in this project. A written communication plan was developed in advance to guide contacts with participants at all stages of the project. Information to potential participants was presented in a clear, accessible written format and included a consent form to describe the terms of confidentiality, the process to review and approve their own data, and the right to withdraw from research at any time. Many participants were public figures familiar with the interview process or had previously engaged in similar research projects. I used due care with those less familiar with social research to thoroughly discuss the interview process and the overall research approach.

Additional Field Research -- Participation and Observation

There is a longstanding interest in women's participation in peace building, and a growing focus on the dimension of leadership in Northern Ireland. This is demonstrated by a host of regional events and discussions on these topics. I have benefited from participation in numerous conferences, workshops and seminars examining these issues. Through these events I was able to meet leading women from across the island, learn of courageous and innovative work, and listen to vibrant debates. I was also able to observe whether and how women leaders were included, treated, and discussed. The following events (and the resulting reports and publications) were especially important as sources of information and inspiration during my research project. I am grateful to the organizers and funders who produced these critical discussions.

Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)

- Women and Peace Building Project
    - o Women: Community and Political Participation (May 2013)
    - o 'Women: Dealing with the Past' (October 2013)
    - o 'Haass-O'Sullivan Talks: What do women think?' (March 2014)
    - o 'Women and Peace Building: Sharing The Learning' (March 2014)
    - o 'No Peace Without Women' (June 2014)
- The Anna Eggert Lecture Series – Belfast Women: Tales from the Past (October, December 2011, January, February & March 2012)
- 'How to Elect more Women in NI' Conference (March 2012)

Institute for Irish-British Studies (IBIS)

- 'Women in Leadership North and South' (July 2015)
- 'Women, Peace and Decision-Making in Post-Conflict Societies' (May 2013)
- Impact and Innovation: UNSC 1325 in Ireland and Globally (April 2013)

Nobel Women's Initiative

Moving Beyond Militarism & War: Women-Driven Solutions for a Nonviolent World, (May 2013)

- I served as a volunteer member of the NWI documentation team during the three-day conference convened by Nobel Peace Laureates in Belfast for 100 women peacemakers from global conflict zones.

Miscellaneous

- Gender & Dealing with the Past: UN Resolution 1325, Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium (June 2014)
- Leadership in a Shared Society Project Closing Conference, Workers Educational Association (September 2013)
- Delivering Women Peace & Security, Hanna's House (November 2012)
- The Troubles with Women Conference, International Fund for Ireland (June 2012)

Research Challenges

(1) Practical considerations

Arranging interviews with these extremely busy women was often difficult. Most are active public figures with tightly scheduled calendars. Many are in high demand as advisors, speakers, and lecturers. On several occasions, interviews were planned around professional travel to distant conflict zones, international meetings and conferences, and visits to leading academic institutions. In other cases, the pressures of caring for family members, personal health issues, seasonal political tensions, and the dynamic upheaval of local events conspired to delay or prevent interviews.

The most elusive participants were the senior republican women of Sinn Féin. Unfortunately, I was unable to conduct interviews with any of the elected women who represented Sinn Féin in the Talks, or those who were members of the party talks team. I made numerous direct requests through formal party contacts including the party press office, staff of Tar Anall and Coiste, and several Sinn Féin party members. Despite repeated attempts I was unable to arrange interviews with Lucilita Bhreatnach, Bairbre De Brún or Dodie McGuiness. I look forward to a time when they are willing and able to publically discuss their leadership experiences as part of the comprehensive story of the peace process.

(2) Conducting research in a divided and sexist society

Doing fieldwork in a divided and transitioning society has unique challenges. The normal stress and pressures of a PhD are compounded by living 'in the field' of study. The pain, trauma, grief and ongoing struggle for justice are raw and ever present. In many ways, the violent conflict has shifted but not ended. The fighting rages on to settle old scores in new arenas, despite rhetorical commitments to create a shared, peaceful future. This project has allowed me to meet and develop relationships with people from a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives. Through them I am aware of the complicated tensions and complex histories that weave through the community. As a semi-outsider, I have a broad view drawn from a wide spectrum of personal connections. This diversity of perspectives can both enrich and overwhelm.

Living in Belfast will wind you up and wear you down. There are few opportunities for shared celebration or the commemoration of common achievements. Those who sustain hope and continue the determined work for lasting change are profoundly impressive. Belfast is a world destination for those seeking to understand violent conflict and peace. There are endless distractions provided by community initiatives, public policy discussions, and political debates, as well as a full calendar of peace related conferences, workshops and seminars. It can be very hard to focus on a narrow set of research questions and tasks amid the din. There are days when the urgent need for activism is more compelling than the desire to complete a research project.

It is often weary work being a feminist researcher in this change-resistant, male-dominated, post-war society. I regularly observe gender segregation and gender bias within academic settings and public discourse. It is very common to find all male or mostly male panels in academic meetings and public events dealing with issues of the violent conflict and emerging peace. Most surprisingly, this is even the case when the topics are inclusivity, equality and sustainable peacebuilding. The local media features a recurring chorus of political party leaders, former combatants, and faith leaders on matters of peace, security, policing and the past. These experts and spokespeople are almost entirely male. As a result the spaces and places for discussion almost exclusively feature the voices, experiences and priorities of powerful men. This male-dominated territory often goes unnoticed, unquestioned and unchallenged. Local women leaders, considered world experts elsewhere, are not major figures in the ongoing discourse.

Below are a few highlights of the unconscious sexism and systemic bias I encountered during the research process. These examples offer a glimpse into the cultural context of Northern Ireland.
- I asked a leading historian why he only briefly mentioned women in his presentation, he replied: 'I only had ten minutes, there wasn't time to talk about women.'
- A senior lecturer asked graduate students about the design of a seminar:

'Is it better to have no women or a token woman on a panel?'

- I asked a gender-mixed panel why they had not discussed women's participation in the ongoing peace process, or commented on male-dominated nature of public policy discussions in their presentations. A leading conflict resolution lecturer replied: 'I was just about to talk about gender…It is important we remember to talk about women and other minorities'.

- I asked the organizers of two public discussions of sectarianism and reconciliation about the all-male panels they presented. They responded: 'I believe the panel was largely chosen according to who we had previous connections with and who has had prior experience speaking to relevant topics.'

- I contacted a local university about the program for a winter school on peace and security dominated by male lecturers and presenters. I asked, 'Am I correct that among the 17 named speakers there are two women, and their participation is planned for the final day? The response was 'We are aware of the gender imbalance in the speakers, we either drew on people involved in the institute or senior people in relevant institutions and this then reflects the gender imbalance in these bodies.'

- The newly selected moderator of the Presbyterian Church Reverend Ian McNie said ' I would have concerns about a woman taking on the leadership of the church.' In his first comments as the new moderator in 2015 Reverend McNie addressed the selection process and explained:

> Those who are not all that in favour, if you want to put it like that, of women's ordination don't hold that point of view from the position of personal preference. They hold that position from the point of view that as they interpret the scriptures, the leadership role within the church is not necessarily the leadership role within society - that men and women complement each other, and consequently, possibly that's why many people have taken the view that they take and that's why the church has not embraced the election of a woman moderator. I would have a conviction that, like many other people within all major denominations, that there are some concerns about that issue, and yes, I would share that conviction as well (*BBC News* 2015).

These comments and practices reveal that women's leadership, their participation as decision-makers and thought leaders, and issues of gender remain tangential rather than central concerns. The exclusion or minimal participation of women leaders is normal and acceptable throughout the web of organizations and institutions. There is a surprising lack of self-awareness or critical reflection by those shaping public discourse and academic study. When questioned, most shift responsibility away from themselves and their institutions to partner groups and systemic inequities beyond their reach. While there are male allies and champions, few organizations prioritize the inclusion of women in leadership, decision-making and public discourse.

 (3) Positionality and Assumptions

I came to Belfast for a year and a master degree; I stayed for five and a PhD. What began as a mid-career break developed into an intense academic sojourn. I moved into the unknown and stayed there. Living abroad, immersed in a transitioning society is an exceptionally rich learning opportunity. The concepts and theories others discuss at a distance are alive here, and a part of the complex and dynamic landscape of daily life. I believe that some of the best, most innovative and courageous work happens at the community level and is undocumented. For this reason, I chose to move to Northern Ireland and learn directly from those working for peace. This is a very different experience than observing from afar, or relying on brief research visits to get to know a place and its people. Living and working in Belfast continuously for five years has provided a deeper, more nuanced view of the questions and issues. I have a better grasp of the perplexing issues, the paradoxes and the puzzles. The issues of violence and peace are 'irreducibly complex' and that is clearly evident in Northern Ireland. As a fulltime research student I have fully invested myself in learning. I have gained perspective, knowledge, skills and humility through this process. I have learned as much by engaging in community life as I have in formal academic pursuits. In Northern Ireland there are abundant opportunities to learn, and many great teachers willing to share their experiences. There are also many untold stories, many unheard voices, and many layers of deep change that go unnoticed.

This research project draws on my extensive professional experience in conflict resolution and communication, and a life-long commitment to social justice, women's rights, and peace. As a feminist, I believe women to be essential partners in peacebuilding and transforming leaders of change. I have drawn heavily on my professional background as a leader and practicing mediator. I know that cultivating peace is a difficult and messy process. The road to progress is not linear; it is circular, meandering, and fraught with snares. Often the hardest work follows agreement when the focus shifts to implementing and sustaining the fragile peace.

After five years, I am neither outsider nor local. I am not of this place, but my extended stay has produced a personal history that influences my views. I am not dispassionate or objective and this has improved my analysis. I acknowledge that I am not an objective observer but begin from feminist commitments and a belief in the value of what women do – and the thesis – choice of topic and approach reflects this positionality.

I understand that as outsider there are things you can see and hear that others cannot. There are things only you can say, and ears that prefer the sound of your words. There are things that can be told to you, stories and secrets that cannot safely be shared with locals. As an outsider there are also things I will never see or hear, never know or understand. I loved living in Northern Ireland and learning about the struggle and reward of peaceful transition. Belfast offers extraordinary access to those doing the hard work to move forward. I have a humble appreciation for those who face the painful legacy with determined efforts to build sustaining relationships and cultivate peace.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research methods adopted, the questions posed and an acknowledgement of the strengths and limits of the approach taken. Chapter 6 now presents the data based on interviews with the women listed in the table below.

Table 3: Interview Participants

Name	Leading Roles	Political Party	Roles in the Forum, Talks Team, and First NI Assembly	Interview Date
Female Republican	Party member	Sinn Féin	MLA, First NI Assembly	17-9-2014
Carr, Anne	Dialogue Facilitator Educator, founder of Shimna College, County Down Coordinator, Women Together 1990-2001 Founding member Community Dialogue 2001 Councilor, NIWC 1997-2001	NIWC	Talks Team	22-8-2014
Beattie, May	Alderman, Carrickfergus Borough Council Former Mayor and Dep. Mayor	DUP	Forum Member Talks Team (periodic participation)	22-9-2014
Bell, Eileen	Gen Secretary Alliance Party, 1993 North Down Borough Council, 1993- Deputy Leader, Alliance, 2001 Speaker, NI Assembly, 2006-7 Chair, Women into Politics	Alliance	Forum Member Talks Team, MLA, First NI Assembly	11-9-2014
Blood, May Baroness	Founding member NIWC Shankill Women's Center Trade Unionist	NIWC	Talks Team Member	14-4-2014
Carroll, Lesley	Minister, Fortwilliam Macrory Presbyterian Church, Founding member of WAVE			24-4-2014
Carson, Joan	MLA Dungannon Borough Council	UUP	MLA in first NI Assembly	6-6-2014
Clarke-Glass, Mary	Chair and Chief Executive, Equal Opportunities Commission, 1984-1992 Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, 1992 Alliance Party Council, 1992 Law Lecturer, Ulster University	Alliance	Talks Team Member Forum Candidate, not elected	27-8-2014 15-9-2014
Donnelly, Debbie	Statistics & Research Agency Northern Ireland Office, 1984-95 Statistics and Research, RUC, 1995-98 Statistics & Research Agency Northern Ireland Office, 1998-2006 Deputy Chief Executive, NI Policing Board, 2006-			9-10-2014

Gadd, Breidge	Chief Probation Officer, Probation Board NI, 1986-2000 NI Chair, Big Lottery Fund, 2000-2009 Board Member, Cooperation Ireland Chair, Washington Ireland Programme			8-4-2014
Glenholmes, Eibhlín	Sinn Féin National Coordinator for Gender Equality Support Coordinator Tar Anall NI Victims and Survivors Forum	Sinn Féin		10-10-2013 10-9-2014
Gray, Barbara	RUC Officer Chief Superintendent PSNI, 2014-			21-5-2014
Hinds, Bronagh	Director, Ulster People's College Director, DemocraShe Chair, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)	NIWC	Talks Team Member	7-5-2014
Kelly, Bernie	Party member, 1995 North and West Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Trauma Resource Centre Councilor, Belfast City Council, 2005-2015 Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast 2007-8 Assistant Director, Physical and Sensory Disability Services, Belfast Health and Social Services Trust	SDLP		16-5-2014
McGlone, Roisin	Community Relations Officer, Belfast City Council, 1992-1994 Community Development Centre, North Belfast, 1994-1999 InterAction Belfast, 1999-2014			18-9-2014
McNeice, Marie	Sisters of the Cross & Passion Founding member, first director of WAVE, 1991			3-6-2014
McVicker, Anne	Director Women's Resource & Development Agency, 2014- Director Women's Tec, 1999-2014 Director Shankill Women's Center 1989-1999			23-5-2014
McWilliams, Monica	UU Professor High Commissioner, Human Rights of NI MLA South Belfast 1998-2003 Founding member of NIWC	NIWC	Forum Member Elected Delegate to Negotiations MLA First NI Assembly	30-5-2014

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Montague, Mary	Co-founder and Operational Director, TIDES Training, 2000-present Community Mediator, Corymeela, 1990-2000			12-5-2014
Morrice, Jane	Head of NI Office of the European Commission, 1992-1997 MLA North Down, 1998-2003 Deputy Speaker of the NI Assembly 2000-2003	NIWC	Talks Team Member MLA in First NI Assembly	14-8-2014
Murphy, Pauline	Professor, University of Ulster 1985-2002, Emeritus 2002- Founding Director, Women's Opportunities Unit, University of Ulster, 1990 Founder, Training for Women Network NI, 1996			9-6-2014
Nelson, Jane	Science Staff Tutor, Open University Ireland			8-5-2014
Orr, Jean	Head of School, Nursing & Midwifery Queens University Belfast Patron and Chair, WAVE Trauma Centre			15-5-2014
Purvis, Dawn	Branch Secretary, South Belfast PUP, 1994 MLA, South Belfast, Party Leader Chair, Healing Through Remembering Director, Marie Stopes Clinic	PUP	Talks Team Member	20-8-2014 26-8-2014
Ritchie, Margaret	MP for South Down 2010-present MLA 2003-2007 Minister for 2007-2010 Party Leader, February 2010 to November 2011 Councilor, staff to MP Eddie McGratty, 1994	SDLP	Forum Member Talks Team Member	20-6-2014
Rodgers, Bríd	MLA Upper Bann Minister, Agriculture & Rural Development, 1999-2002 Founding member and Deputy Leader of the SDLP Party Chairperson in 1978, TD Republic of Ireland,	SDLP	Forum Member Chairperson of SDLP Talks Team MLA in first NI Assembly	26-6-2014

Chapter 5: Field Research in Northern Ireland - the experiences and perspectives of women leaders

> In the early 90s, however, it was arguably the women's sector that got closest to squaring the circle of reconciliation and difference. They agreed to work together on issues of common interest while respecting one another's right to hold different opinions and aspirations. Fast forward to the euphoria of the 1994 ceasefire—and despite the grumbles of some, and the misgivings of others, I would argue that it was a euphoric period.
> (Avila Kilmurray in "Reconciliation: Rhetoric or Relevant?" 2005, 44)

In this chapter I present excerpts from in-depth face-to-face interviews with twenty-six leading women. These women have extensive leadership backgrounds working in local communities, in government and non-governmental organizations, and at regional and national levels. They are community builders adept at networking and creating coalitions to span cultural and political division. They were all in positions of responsibility and influence during the study period of 1994-2000. A detailed list of the interview participants and their leading roles is provided in Chapter 4. My aim is to draw together their individual perspectives and experiences to form a composite portrait of women's leadership that documents the breadth and depth of their work and investigates their contributions to peace in Northern Ireland. Through their experiences leading change I explore their roles and contributions, the leadership approaches and styles they used to be effective, distinctions in the leadership of women and men, how they influenced the region's transition to peace, and their perceptions of how women leaders are recognized and valued.

I have intentionally structured this chapter to report on the fieldwork with minimal commentary. This approach reflects feminist research methods that seek to amplify the unheard voices and roles of women. While it is not possible to include all of the material contained in the 26 lengthy transcripts, I have selected excerpts that best articulate the range of views and experiences. This structure also serves to bring these leaders into conversation to highlight areas of agreement and debate. A critical analysis of the interview data follows in Chapter 7.

A significant period, a pivotal time

I began each interview with a brief review of the project scope including the particular attention on the period of 1994-2000. The focus on this phase of the much larger history of peacebuilding prompted several women to comment on the significance of these years. These preliminary discussions helped to frame the interviews and confirm the research decision to look intensely at this period. In the following responses, four women recall the hope, optimism and achievements they associate with this time.

> So we look at that period of time between 1994 and 2000, I refer to the sense of hope. But I also believe within communities and within wider society in Northern Ireland there was a sense of almost hopelessness and despair and concern and worry about so many huge atrocities. When you look at that period in '93 and '94 just Loughan Island, the Shankill bombings, there was so much happening at that time, and the recognition that things had to change (Gray 2014, 4).

> There was a lot of hope. You're looking at the hopeful years. You definitely are. If you were doing 2000 to now it mightn't be quite so hopeful unfortunately (Carroll 2014, 2).

> It wasn't easy but there was also an air of optimism (Female republican 2014, 3).

> We were the first women who had been involved in negotiating a peace process, and actually it's often forgotten about now (Hinds 2014a).

What roles did you play during the peace process (1994-1998) and in the post-agreement transition (1998-2000)? What contributions did you make?

I have presented a detailed list of the 26 participants in Table 3 in the previous chapter. In this section I introduce fourteen women leaders using their own words to demonstrate the breadth of roles and peacebuilding work they were leading. These are selections of their responses to questions A1 and 2. This approach reflects the space limitations of this dissertation and is not meant as a commentary on the relative importance of those profiled here. Many of these women were engaged in unseen, private, behind-the-scenes, local initiatives that were not widely known or have been forgotten. The later sections include

excerpts of responses from all the research participants as they discussed the issues raised in the interview questions.

Lesley Carroll, Minister, Fortwilliam Macrory Presbyterian Church

> Previous to 1994, probably from about 1992, I'd been meeting with Sinn Féin in Clonard on a monthly basis. So that was ongoing throughout that period. We finished that some time after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement...But that would've left good enough relationships to have regular meetings. So I was still working on the Republican side, I was living in the midst of the Loyalist community and working with that side. How was I perceived, I suppose is one of the questions. How you see yourself is different than how other people see you. But it was interesting to work with the Loyalist community and have Republican connections, because I thought when I moved there that that would be a problem. But actually everybody knew, nobody said anything, but they made use of it. On one occasion within in a meeting with the Orange Order, the person who'd invited me said, 'We've invited Lesley because she has connections with the other side.' I didn't think we were in a séance so.... And then throughout those years up until, well, at least until full decommissioning had taken place, I would have been around and about shall we say with Alec Reid, and that's probably it (Carroll 2014, 1).

Ann McVicker, Women's Support Network

> Women's Support Network, I mean that, that was set up in the early 90's and the reason why that was set up was because the Falls Women's Centre who we worked with closely and again, it was probably because I was a Catholic that that happened. Belfast City Council had withdrawn the Falls Women's Centre's funding. So we actually came out in support of Falls Women's Centre so they withdrew our funding too. And then Ballybeen Women's Centre, and Castlereagh had their funding withdrawn. So we realised that we needed, we needed to come together. We needed to be all singing from the same hymn sheet. And we set up the Women's Support Network and that's how the Women's Support Network came about (McVicker 2014, 6).

Barbara Gray, Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

> Well I guess the role that I had between 94 and 2000 certainly didn't feel as influential a role I would have now, a higher grade. Actually, I was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1994, so I had 5 years service and was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1994. That was quite interesting because I was probably the youngest person in the unit that I was promoted into. I was the only female sergeant at that time. I think there had been one female sergeant in the unit that I was in, a public order unit. We were known as the

mobile support units in those days. That would now be the tactical support group, the TSGs. So it's the public order policing crews that you would see in the Land Rovers in the areas of high conflict. That was the role that I was in for the first couple of years. You'll obviously know that tied in with the time of the first Drumcree crisis as well. So I was deployed with the public order unit to Drumcree in 1995. Then in 1996 and 1997 I was involved in a different role, but still involved in public order policing in and around areas of North Belfast, or the Greater Belfast area, it was actually more towards the Newtownabbey area (Gray 2014, 1).

Mary McNeice, Sisters of the Cross & Passion and WAVE

A friend of mine was killed in 1987 and I was of little help to his wife because I was so angry. And she was very religious about it, so I kind of couldn't face her with it all. So I looked about for some kind of help. I figured there must have been a support group and there wasn't. Then of course that planted a seed. During that time there were a lot of sectarian murders going on, and the families were being interviewed by the media, so it was on the TV a lot. A lot of these women were saying things like 'I don't want this to happen to any other family.' I remember thinking, gosh if they got together, what a voice against violence they would have…Eventually with the help of a friend we went to the papers and got some addresses and I wrote out to them. We called on doors to see if they would like to meet with other people who had suffered similarly. To see if it would it be of any help or use, and they all agreed that it would be…Initially it was about trying to give a voice to people who didn't have it at the time, and working against violence. I think the motivating factor for me was guilt, because at a time when this friend needed me most, I couldn't be there. Couldn't be there…But in hindsight, looking back, it kind of pleases me that it was out of guilt, because in terms of leadership even, leadership comes from imperfect people, you know. We're not great, or as great as we'd like to be even. So that even the not so good things can actually call forth something in people to produce some kind of good out of something (McNeice 2014, 1–2).

Debbie Donnelly, Statistics & Research Agency Northern Ireland Office and later the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)

I started with the NIO in 1984. That was when I began to be aware of the contribution I could make. As a woman and a Catholic, I was different. It was not typical to be visible in these sectors….Risky, yes, but it was the right thing to do. I wasn't always greeted well by the audience. But I was able to challenge assumptions…My family didn't know what I was doing. That was for their protection, their safety. A key part of the work is identifying gaps and change points. It is about system development. My role was not a passive one. My role and approach to work was to be actively involved in change. I helped pioneer the relationship and use of objective

information, the use of data to inform policy. In 1995 with the RUC, I was working to build up the professionalization of the data department and the larger organization. My work was central to the whole system development, the process of reforms in policing. Also promoting communication and discussion about the information. Having robust conversations at all senior levels. This meant we had accuracy, the knowledge based on detailed information, of data. Conversations at the highest level were robust, and that added legitimacy and allowed the development of trust. I was involved in the pre-Patton work, the preparation, it was the renewal of policing that later became the Patton Report. We moved forward recommendations from Ronnie Flanagan as Patton Report recommendations. This work opened my eyes to the potential, to the better use of information in policy development. I was in a very privileged position to be doing that work (Donnelly 2014, 1–2).

Joan Carson, Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

I was the first woman elected for the Unionist party in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. I felt that I had done something, not only for the party, but for women. At that particular time when I did get elected to the Assembly, I didn't just appeal to my Ulster Unionist voters, or just the Unionist women. I also went out of my way to appeal to women in other parties. When I was canvassing I would always say, 'Well, you mightn't agree with me or give me your Number 1, but please give me your number 2.' An article was written in the Irish Times that said for the first time ever in that election the SDLP women and people transferred to me. I was so pleased. I think that was the first election where the UUP got good cross-community vote (Carson 2014, 2).

Jean Orr, School of Nursing, Queen's University Belfast

I came back from England in '91 to start the School of Nursing...I was rather dubious coming back to Northern Ireland at that time. But on the other hand, I felt I wanted to make a contribution. I still had family here and I'd grown up here, trained here. I came in 1991 to start the Nursing School in Queen's. That was interesting because it was only me. I was it! I was the School of Nursing! But as Head of School, I think the only female head of school at that stage, I got to sit on all these other committees, which was very useful and powerful. I used to say to the boys, 'I'm only here to make you respectable, you know?'...Anyway, by 1994 we had degrees going, and Masters courses going and some students registered for PhDs... We brought in a lot more feminism, we brought in women's issues, we brought in much more questioning. We brought in all the colleges of nursing together in 1996. So overnight we went from about thirty staff to about three hundred and something, and like 3500 students overnight, literally overnight (Orr 2014, 1–2).

Jane Morrice, European Commission Office in Northern Ireland

It's a sort of a perfect start for me because at that time I was, my position was Head of the European Commission Office in Northern Ireland. I'd been appointed two years previous, in '92. And I had come from journalism. I'd been a BBC radio/TV reporter previous to that. So I was at a moment in my life that I was looking at the issues in Northern Ireland rather than running away from them, which I'd been doing previous to that. I was reporting on the Troubles and then I got myself into a pretty high level position, which was a type of diplomatic consular type position representing the European Union in Northern Ireland. And when, well and there's a third thing to add, my journalism background, my new relatively well-respected position, and my son was 3 years old. So those are the 3 things that combined in my life in '94 to make me ready when the ceasefires happened, to pick up the phone to the President of the European Commission who was in a, in a car in London on the day and say "it's happened". And he said "Right". That was the start of the European Union Peace Programme and I was on the task force setting it up. Now, 20 years later, the programme has been worth 1 billion Euros. So you picked a wonderful moment in time there (Morrice 2014, 1–2).

Eileen Bell, Alliance Party

In 1993 I decided I would become General Secretary. I had worked very closely by that stage with women in the community groups. We worked together and tried to make them more politicized. Because I realized that you were going nowhere if you didn't, same all over at that stage. So I decided to take the position of General Secretary (Alliance Party) to see if I could help there. So in 1993 I decided to go into political leadership and I was there for over 10 years. That was weird because at that stage the negotiations had started as well. I was there in the group when the Mayhew talks started here and it was really quite scary (E. Bell 2014, 3–4).

Roisin McGlone, Chief Executive Officer of Interaction Belfast, and formerly

with the Community Development Centre (CDC).

So what had happened, between 1994 and 1996 was the whole Drumcree dispute. I was working in North Belfast in the Community Development Centre, which is now defunct, but was a thriving community development centre that did training, printing, a crèche…[W]e were just absolutely plunged into this civil unrest that was just unparalleled. We obviously had very bad violence over the years in 94 and 95, but this was sustained over the summer of 96. We had the Drumcree dispute that started to close down the ports and started close down the streets. What happened was in 96, in the first part of the week the Chief Constable decided that the parade wouldn't get down the Garvaghy Road. And then the decision was taken the parade would get down. So for the first couple of weeks before the Drumcree, all of the Protestant communities basically burned the barricades were along the roads. In fact a small private school that was the

Jaffa complex, two doors down from our community centre, it was burned to the ground. So we had that, and then when the decision was reversed and Trimble and Paisley famously walked hand in hand, the other side of the community completely exploded. What happened was there were approximately 110 families displaced from their homes. We had the world's media here. You know the war correspondent Kate Adie? Well she arrived. So we basically had the world's war media here on our doorsteps. We were plunged at CDC in North Belfast into this very difficult situation where we were working with both communities. We had to open our centre twenty-four hours a day because people were being displaced on a regular basis (McGlone 2014, 1).

Monica McWilliams, University of Ulster, and the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC)

Well in the Women's Coalition I was the so-called designated leader. I actually happened to be out of the country when they decided that. It was more by accident than design…So I was the designated leader (in 1996), although we tended not to use that term so much because we wanted every woman to see herself as a leader. We were very clear from the start that there wouldn't be one leader, that there would be many and we were a team. So I very rarely describe myself as the leader of the Coalition. I talk about myself as the co-founder of the Coalition, and the leader of the delegation that was at the peace talks. But as far as the team in the party was concerned, in the coalition there were many leaders (McWilliams 2014, 1).

May Beattie, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

Well first of all, I wasn't involved in party politics. The main object wasn't belonging to a party, it was to speak on behalf of people who couldn't speak for themselves, if I could help because as I said, I was already helping people through being a Home Help, I was already speaking to different authorities on their behalf so I wanted to take that a bit further. I had heard a lot of complaints and I thought well, if I can do something about it I'll put my neck on the line and go ahead. And it was after that I was contacted by a party representative to ask would I represent the area in the election, and I went ahead with that (Beattie 2014, 4).

Bríd Rodgers, Civil Rights Association, and Socialist Democratic Labour Party (SDLP)

A lot of women in particular started in community, most women that I know started in community. I never intended to be a politician; I started as a civil righter when I saw the huge problems of discrimination in Northern Ireland. Back when I came to live here first in the mid-60s, and although I was then what you would call a middle class housewife, married to a dentist with small children and the last person expected to get involved. I

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became involved in the civil rights movement and at my first meeting I was made secretary, women were all secretaries then, not chairs. And then eventually I became the Chair of the Civil Rights group in my own area, in Lurgan. I led the first civil rights march in Lurgan and had to go up to the police lines and do my usual statement and that when we were stopped. And then I was approached by John Hume. I actually wrote to him when the SDLP was formed. I knew him very well through civil rights, I would have been very friendly with him, and I wrote and said that something that was going on in Lurgan, that the newly formed SDLP were doing nothing about it. I was upset about the council and he wrote me back a one-liner, just saying 'What are you doing about it?' So I joined in 1971 or 1972. I was elected onto the executive of the party, into the deep end immediately and was on the executive from '74 to '76, and then I ran for the vice chair of the party and was elected. And then two years later I was elected party chair in 1978. I was actually the first woman ever to chair a political party in the whole of the island(Rodgers 2014, 2).

Anne Carr, Women Together, and Community Dialogue

It was in the light of this (the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement) that Women Together began the transformation process to focus on a new initiative, People Moving On. In the early post Agreement, post Referendum period, we worked very hard, campaigning and lobbying for the full implementation of our Agreement… Whilst our campaigning work through People Moving On was in full flow, I represented Women Together in the tentative early conversations about the need for continued dialogue amongst ordinary people. We saw politicians having conversations behind closed doors and wanted to ensure that people on the ground, from across all the divided communities, understood what our Agreement was all about and could hear one another on the difficult, challenging issues like policing, parading, sectarianism and identity. These were very quiet, very in-depth, very challenging processes to help people who had hurt, were devastated, even full of hate, to come together with the aim of building understanding and ease with difference. Community Dialogue was born, an organization still operating in Belfast. I moved across to become Dialogue and Research worker with Community Dialogue in May 2001 with the support of Women Together. We closed our office, transferred our material assets, energy and enthusiasm for reconciliation and change to this new organization (Carr 2014b, 1).

Did you see yourself as a leader? Did you consider your work to be leadership?

Many women expressed a reluctance to identify themselves as leaders or seemed hesitant to describe their work as leadership. I posed this follow-up question to explore these issues further and clarify the reasons for their discomfort.

Reverend Lesley Carroll did not consider herself a leader at the time, and had this

to say about the language of leadership:

> I saw myself as a church person doing things in the community that it was important to be done. I would never have called myself a leader.
>
> *Author: And do you now?*
> I'm trying to take on board the fact that people think I am.
>
> *Author: That people see you in that role, but it's harder to self-identify?*
> It's harder to self-identify, yeah…And I wouldn't have understood myself, just talking the leadership kind of language, I wouldn't have understood myself to be in leadership in the congregation. I wouldn't have understood myself to be in leadership in the denomination, but within my congregation I think… Whether it's difficult to talk about being a leader because I'm a woman or because of my approach, that would be difficult to disentangle. I've always argued for the church to take its place in the community alongside everybody else as an equal partner. So you don't go in patronizing, and you don't go in as if you don't count. You go in on an equal level. So therefore to start talking about leadership would've been an uncomfortable thing within the church. I just wasn't calling myself a leader…So because we're having that conversation, I can look back through that lens and say, 'Yeah, there were acts of leadership there, amongst many other acts of leadership.' So yes, I can see it as I look back. I wonder if I had thought of myself as a leader, if I'd have done anything differently, if I'd have been more bold, or more public, and then it wouldn't have been the same thing. So we wouldn't be talking about the same thing. You begin to wonder. If you saw yourself differently, would you have been different? (Carroll 2014, 1–4).

For Jane Nelson, leadership is a destructive militarized practice in Northern

Ireland and for this reason she doesn't define her own work as leadership. She

was emphatic about making this point to begin the interview.

> I have always thought that the perception of leadership is not helpful in the Northern Ireland context. The number of young lads who are inside (prison) because they did something that their leader told them to do just shocks me, amazingly shocks me. I think that this concept of leadership is wrong in many cases and in many contexts and that it was invented to serve empire, the building of empire, the building of armies. It's militarised, and this militarised view is something I'm terribly against, in fact I'm going to hit that before I hit anything else. Well I think it makes me what they would call an anarchist. I don't mean I want to go round and tear everything down, it means that I don't believe in 'archy', hierarchy of any kind really and I don't think it's done any religion or institution any good. I don't want it. What we started was very nice when I started work with the OU (Open University), we started to co-operate, it was a co-operative, nobody was on top, nobody thought they were on top but we all knew where we were going, we were all

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going the same place, we all knew that lack of education and deprivation were big factors in what was happening in our little country and we were all for wiping that out. There wasn't a leader, there wasn't a lead, we didn't disagree, we thought the same way.

Author: And you had a common sense of purpose?
Yes and that was very important and it was "This has to be done, we'll do it, can you do it?

Author: So you see a different leadership style, it's a different model?
It would not be called leadership I don't think.

Author? So the word it doesn't fit? Do you have another word, an alternative?
I don't know, I must think more about this; the word that fits the process best is synergy, the outcome is facilitation or enablement (Nelson 2014, 2–3).

Roisin McGlone considered her work activism rather than leadership.

> I don't think I would have called it leadership. I would have called it activism at the time. Looking back, I'm older now and looking back I can see I was young and enthusiastic, and I just threw myself into everything. And it was all about making the quality of life better for people in the country. I also wanted to contribute to my own peace process. I was very, very passionate about that. I saw so many people coming in from other places, and they had a role to play, but I felt we had a role to play and we had to get good at it. And we had to do it for the right reasons. It was never about ego for me. That was never at the forefront (McGlone 2014, 8).

Mary Montague is puzzled by the perceived link between men and

leadership.

> So men very often don't understand. Part of that is, at the end of the day, men look upon themselves within society as the leaders automatically. And they don't give, they don't acknowledge where women have been leaders. So if you are living with that constantly, that's giving a message to you sub-consciously. So it could be that. But I don't know. I've no answers to it (Montague 2014, 15).

Marie McNeice discussed the need for better leadership models that involve 'leading with' and 'alongside'. I asked if this was her preferred style.

> Yes, probably that's the preference. I was just trying to visualize how you would make a distinction. Maybe it's standing with people. I suppose we're back to that relationship thing. People know you're there, the people know you're with them, and therefore what you say or how you are becomes important. So it's like you need to be true to whatever it is (McNeice 2014, 9).

Monica McWilliams shared this example of the different notions of leader and

leadership and how they impact political decision-making.

> I often tell the story that one of the funny moments was the discovery of the cult of the leader amongst some of the other political parties. I was very conscious of this notion of the other parties, particularly the Ulster Unionist Party frequently at the table saying 'I defer to the leader' or 'I'll have to go and check with the leader.' This term 'the leader' used to really pull me up short because that was not the way we made decisions. We made decisions on a consensual basis, having everyone discuss them, and then I would speak about them. But it almost seemed like they (the UUP and others) couldn't make a decision, they couldn't speak, they couldn't represent anybody unless the leader was present. And often in our committee meetings with them, like the business committee for the talks, they wouldn't make a decision until they'd gone back and spoken to the leader. It was almost as if none of them had been empowered in their own right, whereas we had empowered women to state what had already been considered in our meetings and also when they felt based on our principles that they would do, the right thing and we knew that it was this kind of process that would work for us. If there was any time they made a mistake, which was not often, they'd come back and say I didn't feel that I did the right thing there and ask 'should I try to change it'. But it was very clear that only one man made the decisions in the other parties and that was the leader...(McWilliams 2014, 2).

For Barbara Gray leadership involves building relationships and building

trust with authentic community leaders

> I often say we have much to do to find the true voice of communities, because sometimes there is a gatekeeper role that happens. To actually find the true voice of the community can be difficult and that's where it comes back to relationships and engagement and trust which will always, always, always be a challenge for policing. For us to try and improve relationships, maintain relationships around all that we're delivering in the service. Hopefully we can get the trust and confidence of communities to come forward and individuals within that (Gray 2014, 11).

Bronagh Hinds shares this story of the formation of the Women's Coalition and

how Monica McWilliams became the designated party leader. She reflects on the

traditional expectations and perceptions of the person with the title role.

> Monica and I spent about half an hour on the phone brainstorming...We brainstormed on the phone and we came up with the name the Women's Coalition, then we came up with the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. Then we said we need a party leader. She said 'well you just put down your name as party leader' and I said 'no, I'll put down your name' and she said 'no, put down your name.' Anyway, she left understanding that my name was going to go down and I put her name down and that's how it happened.

As simple as that…What led me to put her name and instead of mine? I don't have to be seen to be in the key position to be there and do the work. I was going to do the work anyway. I don't know if everybody else operates on the same principle, you know. I would have backed whoever it was, but would everybody have backed me? Maybe it was a feeling that the others wouldn't, or maybe it was a feeling that I lacked the confidence that people would. Or that if I was doing it, and this was very much on my mind, if I was doing it and organising it people saying well she did it all, and she just put her own name down, you know. That turns a lot of people off and no matter how good I would have been at it, and I think I would have been good, that's very destructive. It's not about that, it's actually about the bigger picture. It's about getting the job done (Hinds 2014a, 11–12).

What were the approaches, styles and strategies you used to improved conditions, influence others, and contribute to the development of political solutions? How did you approach your work as a leader?

The focus on peacebuilding leadership brings the dynamics of change into

view for Pauline Murphy, Emeritus Professor, Social Inclusion, Ulster

University. Her leadership approach involves being a catalyst for change and

enlisting the participation of others.

It's an interesting lens, looking at the role of leadership and how far can you go with peacebuilding, especially leadership in a time of change. They (leaders) should be capable of being agents of change and enabling others to become part of the process of change and all of that, and they're definitely not (Murphy 2014, 1).

Marie McNeice was leading efforts to support victims and survivors of the

violent conflict. She describes her role as creating and holding space for

those experiencing trauma.

But then I saw that gathering people together because of their own trauma, it was like kind of holding a space. The space was needed, and it needed to be held so that there was a beginning, a middle and an end to that particular form of it. I suppose that's what happened. I held that (space) for a while, a long time. It was another learning…And I think that is also a leadership role…And then at some point I kind of realized, well I'll just hold the space, even if nobody comes. I'll hold the space for these people. In hindsight again I actually see the importance of that, particularly in community leadership where people come and go. Actually holding the space is, I think, of vital importance (McNeice 2014, 3).

For Ann McVicker, leadership is involving grassroots women in change.

Well I would say that I constantly seek the views and engage with grassroots women. And it's only through I think doing that that you can

truly say that you are then representing those views, you know at a higher
level. And what I've found out as well is that you can't take the views of
women and go and do something with them. You always have to report
back to the women and let the women know what you've actually done
(McVicker 2014, 9).

Empowering the leadership of women in the party is a critical leadership role

according to Joan Carson of the Ulster Unionist Party.

I would encourage women. I would still see my role as encouraging women.
If a woman within the party does anything, I would always make a point of
encouraging her and saying 'Well done.' On a personal level I thought that
women weren't recognised for being the achievers within the
constituencies, and that they needed to be recognised. Our constituencies
would grind to a halt without UUP women. I presented a cup for the Woman
of the Year. The men weren't a bit pleased. They said, 'Oh, you should have
one for the men.'… 'It's presented each year at our Annual General Meeting
(Carson 2014, 10).

Monica McWilliams of the Women's Coalition discusses the importance of

building trust and forging relationships. She recalls how she hosted meetings to

bring people together and build relationships during the negotiations process. I

asked her if she saw this as part of her leading role as a member of the Coalition?

Yes, I did that frequently…we invited people from other parties over to the
house for dinner. We invited the secretariat of the talks, the Americans and
Canadians and Finland for dinner as well, because they were staying in a
hotel and probably didn't have much of a home environment. Well those
social occasions were extremely important. And yes, it was also building
trust in us and trust in me. Trust because initially people didn't trust each
other. The loyalist party leaders, you've often heard me talk about David
Ervine. We became very close friends. I think that was because David
realized that he needed to talk to me, and I needed to talk to him to test out
things that were being said and concerns that we were having. So we
became friends. I had a very good working relationship with him. Some of
the parties at the table took the view, the unionist parties, mainstream
unionist parties said they would never talk to people on the other side like
Sinn Féin. They saw that as a strength. Well going into negotiations not
knowing your negotiators is a weakness. At times we were able to talk to
some parties about how we saw others. So I suppose everybody was talking
to us, although some parties weren't talking to others (McWilliams 2014, 9).

Marie McNeice describes the critical work of listening and sustaining vision:

Facilitator and leader and all those words are so common now that I think
they've lost their meaning. In terms of leading, I think it's more of a listening
role. I just don't mean hearing what people are saying. I mean the kind of
listening that goes in, (this is going to sound crazy) but it kind of goes into a

space within you that has no agenda. It's a clearing if you like… I think the leadership role, if you could call it that, is that listening role, that listening for the next step, or holding the vision of what it could be (McNeice 2014, 3).

For May Beattie, empathy is a central element of leadership.

> I haven't had an easy go in anything I've done but at the same time I can feel for other people because of what I've been through, put it like that.
>
> *Author: Do you think it gives you some empathy perhaps?*
> Very much so.
>
> *Author: Do you think that empathy is important to leadership?*
> Very much so. I would say it would be very hard to make decisions when you haven't got the evidence, put it like that, especially when you're speaking for and on behalf of other people (Beattie 2014, 3).

Building consensus, leading alongside toward a shared vision are key leadership components according to Mary Montague.

> It is using about consensus leadership, you're not hierarchical…that for me is the key. If you're trying to take people on a journey of any kind, you can't drag them…You're walking alongside. And you're not necessarily at the back either because there is leadership needed. So you can't be right at the back, but you're walking alongside. And for me, that's the key. You've helped them articulate their vision. You don't create the vision for them. You support them in articulating that and thinking it through. One of the big pieces that is missing here in our situation and why we're still (transitioning) is that there is no shared vision of what the peaceful future looks like. We can't get round the question of marches, we can't get round the question of parades and flags, and we can't get round the question about how to we acknowledge the victims. That's all part, you know. If we had a vision of the future and we could work backwards from that, we could answer those questions (Montague 2014, 15–16).

Community leadership, leadership development, and capacity building are central to the leadership of Bronagh Hinds of DemocraShe and the NIWC.

> One is we would have been one of the leading organisations in building community leadership and building working partnerships with people from different parts of the community, in working in leadership together. So we ran the first kind of accredited community development and community leadership programmes, community relations programmes in the Ulster People's College. We established a community training partnership where we designed with leading community-based organisations the kind of leadership training that they needed…For example, I remember one of the key people from Newry said it was the first time out of that programme

they developed an exchange with a group in East Belfast. It was the first time people from the Nationalist area of around Newry and Mourne, South Armagh would have been meeting with a group from the other side in North Belfast. So those leadership programmes in the community were pioneered and led by the Ulster People's College. Secondly, we developed a mix of programmes that included community development, community economic development, community leadership, equality rights and justice, culture and identity, history. All of those issues that touch at the point of the conflict, and we would have been probably one of the first, if not the first organisations specifically providing training in political leadership (Hinds 2014a, 1–2).

For Dawn Purvis, being a leader of the Progressive Unionist Party during the peace negotiations meant promoting communication within the party and the broader loyalist constituency.

> I think communication was really important and again, I come back to this issue about people being or feeling that they're being kept in the loop or out of the loop because we'd talked a lot about having a weekly newsletter or sending out information but email wasn't great in those days and not a lot of people had access to it, not a lot of people had access to the internet either, you know, but there was a real strong desire for constituencies and branches to know what was going on and what was happening in the talks. And so what I used to do was I asked branch secretaries to ring me once a week, I didn't always have time to ring them but get them to ring me to say right, what's happening and I could tell them as much as I could tell them without breaching any confidence of what was going on in the talks and that worked well for a while but then people don't stop calling or whatever, you know, so I think communication was one of the things that I did well for a while but then as things became more and more intense it was just impossible to keep that and that was probably the most important time to keep that communication going (Purvis 2014b, 14).

Breidge Gadd was Chief Probation Officer for Probation Board NI. She reflects on her leading role within the organization.

> At the time, the specific time you're talking about was fascinating because I was still the only female head of a criminal justice agency, and the only Catholic in Northern Ireland. On top of that my leadership style is always creative and innovative. My view would be change is part of good leadership, not something you have to see as a problem. Our organization was always, it's changed a lot since then, but was then a very flat organization in that the probation officer had the legal authority in court, not the chief probation officer. That meant that probation officers had a lot of autonomy, and that suited my style. Probation officers have to have, in management theory terms, and I certainly did have, the belief that people intrinsically are good and can be trusted. Whereas now, the public sector is pervaded by the belief that people are bad and have to be supervised. That

style I think suited the needs of the community at that time. It was *loathed* within the criminal justice system. It sat very badly within the criminal justice system. All my time as the chief probation officer I was always doing stuff that *utterly irritated* the Northern Ireland Office. Supported by my board, but irritated them because they were more comfortable with the prison service and police who saw themselves on the forefront of the battle against terrorism, i.e. have guns and shoot the bastards. We were accused, actually, of being the soft security guys because we did it in a different way (Gadd 2014, 4).

Roisin McGlone, Chief Executive Officer of Interaction Belfast, says her leadership involves being an activist and advocating for the inherent strengths of the community.

It is very hard to speak truth to power. Part of my job is speaking that truth to power. But also it's about being that activist and saying 'no the community doesn't need that'. So for example, we won't go for funding streams where it is for something we don't need. I spoke at a conference on Monday and I put this one line in. I said, 'we are not service providers we are change agents.' At least a dozen people came up to me afterward and said. 'I got it'. What is happening is that people are going in to procurement and providing services for statutory bodies and some of us have to stay true to community activism. My leadership style comes from my beliefs, not the other way around. For example, I don't think there is anyone in the community that doesn't have a contribution to make. I don't argue for people's limitations, or communities' limitations. I say 'don't argue for your weaknesses' (McGlone 2014, 10).

Reverend Lesley Carroll was promoting dialogue across community divisions as a trusted church leader.

In the days when (it must've been over all around the time of the ceasefire), in the days when Sinn Féin weren't allowed to speak publicly, and the Unionists didn't talk to them, I would've taken messages from Republicans to Unionists. So that was one way. Sometimes it was a letter, sometimes it was a verbal message, and it came down the line to me on one side, I took it up the line on the other side. And you always had to make a judgment in that, which I used to struggle with. Do you just say word for word what you were told to say, or do you try to interpret it? And if you try to interpret it, have you got it right or wrong? And sometimes that would depend on how much time you'd had when you were getting the message, to try to unpack what exactly this meant. And sometimes if it was in a letter you still had to try to work it through with people, and so there was a lot of sitting around, waiting for these things to happen (Carroll 2014, 2).

For the Female Republican, leadership is collective and a group process. She had this to say about her leading role within Sinn Féin party:

I think that's one of the things, when you talk about leadership - and obviously people are leaders on whatever level - but it's also about the collective. It's about moving forward as a group of people and bringing people along with you and maybe cajoling people along with you at times. Obviously in '98 the conflict still hadn't finished and things were still happening but it was about moving forward. So while it was difficult I never felt that I was on my own. It's not about one person standing out there; it is about a collective leadership and that drive and moving people forward (Female republican 2014, 2–4).

During the peace talks Bronagh Hinds worked with her colleagues to accommodate differences and sustain trusting relationships as part of the Women's Coalition principle of inclusivity.

Two things in particular stick out to me as an example. May (Blood) was always very clear on that, and said to me often when I was giving advice, if I was telling her this was the best that was possible then she invested quite a lot of trust in me. She also said to me because of my role, because I was kind of full time in the negotiations, doing the papers, co-ordinating it, doing the political advice to Pearl and Monica and other people were writing stuff, but I was there permanently doing that. May would say to me it's really important that I made sure that things weren't one-sided. But it also meant then that people invested a lot of trust in you when you had to do things quickly. We developed an approach where you were always trying to find a solution that would accommodate differences...Because how on earth could we come out with solutions that were going to reach across warring political parties if we couldn't accommodate some of those things among ourselves with different political perspectives from the unionist to the nationalist/republican perspectives. Including, you know, I suppose taking proposals that didn't seem naturally nationalist or didn't seem naturally unionist. They were still robust having worked through them so people could accommodate them. I mean certain things about being able to proof our policies, so that they were human rights equality compliant, that they were inclusive in their consideration. Those were constructed around specific policies but it was an approach that we applied to the way that we did our work. Therefore (and this is going to bring me to one of the issues) and therefore, the protection of the Women's Coalition's capacity for inclusiveness was absolutely essential (Hinds 2014a, 14–15).

Jane Nelson says being innovative and having autonomy was critical to her being an effective leader within the Open University.

One thing that would characterise the way I worked...we didn't ask anybody. We did it and afterward it was approved. But I think we were all blessed with the fact that there really weren't any rules for either the Prison Service with a concentration camp to deal (at Long Kesh Prison), or

for the Open University because we were just making it up as went along, we were getting there and there weren't rules, and you couldn't really be castigated for failing to follow rules because they were not set down. The OU top brass were too busy, but they wanted to get things done too (laughs). Certainly Mike Pentz would never have criticised me for not asking, never. He used to say, 'You know, sometimes I have very good ideas about how the teaching operation should be carried out', because they were writing in the centre and we (the first 13 science staff tutors, 12 male) were, you know promulgating it at the periphery. He'd say, 'And I write round to all the staff tutors, and six of them will tell me excellent reasons why it cannot be done and another six will tell me reasons why it's a very good idea and they will seek to implement it at the first opportunity and then of course there's Jane – She's already done it'
(Nelson 2014, 14).

As Chair of the talks team for the Social Democratic Labor Party, Bríd Rogers says her role was to build group consensus during the intensity of negotiations.

> Well my approach really was to chair the party, the party group at the negotiations. I wasn't a chief negotiator, the chief negotiators were, you'll guess…men, Mark Durkan, Sean Farren and then John (Hume) and Seamus (Mallon) of course, they were the chief negotiators. Now having said that, Mark Durkan is a powerful negotiator, he is very good… But my job was to chair the group meetings when they reported back, and we were told what was going on and what decisions were being made, and discussed whether we agreed with them or not. I took the view always that the chair's role is to try and get a consensus within the group and we invariably did (Rodgers 2014, 11).

Do you think women use different styles, do they lead differently than men?
I asked participants about the ways women approach leadership and peacebuilding. For Dawn Purvis, women leaders draw on experiential knowledge and empathy to be effective.

> I think women make good leaders because they have a lot of empathy, they often walk a mile in another person's shoes and I'm not saying that men don't do that, I just very often think that the purpose of peace building sometimes gets lost, where women can keep that long-term strategic view in place. That's why I think it's important to have that breadth of mix, if you like, involved in peace negotiations and peace building, otherwise we're working to one view and we're working to one vision that very often women are excluded from when it does come to actually living in the peaceful structures that are built thereafter (Purvis 2014b, 21).

Marie McNeice sees strength in the 'invisibility' of women leaders

And certainly the stance that men would seem to take would be more along the lines to do with power. I think the role of women leaders, particularly at a community level; their strength is in being invisible nearly (McNeice 2014, 8).

Breidge Gadd says women are creative and often leading through community organizations.

Women are more, I think, naturally inclined (these are great generalizations) to find the third way of doing something. You want A, I want B, let's go for C. I think the Women's Coalition had a *huge* role in that. And in some ways were teaching people how to even *talk* in a different manner, to invite people to tell their point of view. All the stuff that mediation teaches you. The community workers also had a key role, and some of the top community groups were led by women. There was a huge treasure really of women's groups. Also University of Ulster played a humdinger of a role in helping women's groups develop programs, etc. So you had women bringing up a family, studying, and also playing a key role in their community. So they were the peacemakers really (Gadd 2014, 5).

Eibhlín Glenholmes of Tar Anall doesn't see differences in the way women and men lead in elite positions.

I am not so sure there are gender differences in leadership at the top levels. You see that at community level, but the structures influence what is visible at the top. In collective leadership it is more about how we hold power, how we work together to make decisions. It is the organizational structure more than the individual style or approach that is important (Glenholmes 2013, 1).

Joan Carson believes women leaders take a wider view.

I think a man says 'That needs doing and there's only one way to get it straight.' I think a woman looks at it and she'll say, 'That needs doing but if I go straight at it I mightn't get the result I want, so back off a wee bit, look at it and maybe chat up a few people, and go round it another way.' I think women can look at a broader picture (Carson 2014, 11).

Bernie Kelly has this to say about the way women lead:

I think women are more pragmatic. They tend to work together as mothers. I see in the council men seem to have a much more aggressive attitudes, posturing for cameras and the respect of constituents, but women are much more pragmatic I think. They just work behind the scenes together, you know? Generally women have been able to work together and work across the divide a bit more without feeling it necessarily threatens them, or their identity...But I think women have always worked through community centers and peace building initiatives...We do need more women in politics and leadership (Kelly 2014, 3).

May Blood, founding member of the Women's Coalition, suggests that women

leaders have important knowledge of community needs and priorities.

> I think as women who'd been working for long years in their own
> community, what ever it was, whether it was in education, whether it was in
> health or community, women knew what needed to be done. I think we just
> knew that if we got this chance that being at the talks table and then being
> elected into the assembly that there was issues that weren't gonna be
> raised, that only women would raise (Blood 2014, 4).

For Barbara Gray, leadership styles are flexible and adaptable. She has this to say

about the ways women lead:

> And in fairness, I suppose my leadership style would change depending on
> the circumstance that I'm in. I think we're all very adaptive within policing.
> Because if it's an operational, and my background is entirely in the
> operational world with some really high risk scenarios, so if it's not an
> operational scenario and there are things on going, my leadership style is
> much different than if it's in the preparation for that. If it's within
> community meetings, if it's negotiating about budgets, or about resources or
> whatever else. So it is that sort of adaptation, and in fairness again, you
> know I will see that change in style in a lot of my male colleagues as well.
>
> *Author: So being effective requires you to be adaptable regardless of who you*
> *are? You've got to fit the circumstances with a range of styles?*
> Yeah. And I think that's the same for any senior female executive by all
> accounts. But I think it's very, very important not to lose yourself within
> that and I often use the words 'just be true to yourself.' Knowing what you
> want or need the outcome to be and what leadership style you adapt around
> that. I think probably leadership, I mean we have covered it, but I think
> certainly leadership within policing, there is an increasing awareness that
> that leadership is much more than leadership within the Police Service, it's
> leadership within communities. It's leadership with partners and actually
> it's also knowing when do you lead from the front and when do you lead
> from behind and when do you be led. (Gray 2014, 13)

Dawn Purvis reflects on her role within the Progressive Unionist Party talks team,

and the importance of enlisting women and the diverse skills and perspectives

they contribute.

> I think from my point of view whilst it might have felt as a minority in the
> wider talks process, I never really felt a minority within my talks team, and
> that's probably because of David and Gusty and others, Eddie Kinner, Plum
> Smith. I felt valued, I felt an equal if not even more important part of the
> team and I brought more women from the Women's Commission (of the
> PUP) on board to help with the talks as the talks progressed because we
> needed more and more help and those women were very happy to be part

of that. And I didn't bring them in just because they were women, I was conscious that we needed more women there, I brought them in because of the skills that they had because of similar to me, they could read things. They could read a room, they were focused on outcomes, they were focused on what can we achieve and could cut through some of the gobbledygook and the stuff that was being talked about.

Author: So it was that mix of people and skill sets, the diversity of abilities that was important to you in rounding up the team?
Crucial, absolutely crucial because you've people who are good at negotiation, people who are good at networking and building relationships, you've others who are focused on detail, you've others who are not so focused on detail and that mix of skills is really important. So if you've an all-male negotiating team sometimes the egos get in the way so you need a mix, you need women in there, you need a mix of people in there, you need to broaden out that representation so that not only are they bringing their experience to the talks and very often things that you forget about because you're in that enclosed space and you forget. It's intense, so they bring in a new insight and sometimes you're like a breath of fresh air because you think right, never thought about that and there's a new angle that we hadn't discussed or here's something that is happening on the outside that we should be aware of (Purvis 2014b, 11).

Lesley Carroll believes women leaders are relational, focused on innovation and getting good results for everyone.

I think one of two things happens to women in leadership. Either they become more stylized men than the men are, and therefore, you know that that's not the kind of leader I want. Or they take with them something about who they are (and again I don't want to suggest that men don't have it). I find it difficult to tie down. I do think about it sometimes, so it's something about openness to a relational way of working which isn't self-protective or about power and control. It's about achieving something. And the achieving something in this second category of women is about achieving something for the best reasons, and for people's sake, as many people as possible. And sometimes that means there's a slower, more reflective way of working which must seem, I think, to men, like dithering. When in fact it's not dithering, it's about balancing out pros and cons, hoping in the conversation (which sounds like dithering), hoping that something new will emerge, a different bit of light, a new direction. And sometimes it does and sometimes it doesn't. So I think there's a different pace of working as well as a different methodology of working (Carroll 2014, 16).

For Bronagh Hinds, the key to women's leadership is inclusivity.

Thinking ahead. Guys think ahead too, but it's often a focus on the big groups as the only power brokers. I was thinking about how does this agreement become sustainable, how does it bind in all the players. How is it inclusive of all of the parties so that they are going to have to go out and stand up for it and sell it.

Author: So do you think that women would be more inclined to do that sort of thing because women are typically not in positions of power?
Yes, I do. Yes I do really, when you put it like that. I haven't written it like that. But also if you're in the straight on power you're going to say well I'm in that power group or that power group; that suits me.

Author: You're not going to necessarily be thinking about or as empathetic to those parties who are smaller or at the margins?
Yeah. You don't need them. So our view is you have to value them all. You do need them. And by the way, you need to value the people, so there needs to be stuff that speaks to people in the agreement. It's not powerless (Hinds 2014a, 29–30).

Do you see your work leading change as part of the larger peace process?
This follow up questions was used with some of the participants who may be perceived as working outside the formal peace process. Their responses help locate their leadership in education, probation, policing, health care, and civil rights within the larger peacebuilding context.

Pauline Murphy says her leading work to promote community education and empower women contributed to building the capacity for peaceful change.

> Yes. In the Women's Opportunities Unit my main purpose was to create opportunities for women to fulfil their potential. For that they needed personal, professional and political development - PPP. And I had in my previous work in West Belfast where I was head of the Economics and Social Sciences Department. I had also become aware of the gaps in education and I started a community education project. I organised a body called NICEA; the Northern Ireland Community Education Association voluntary NGO…. And lots of women were just pouring in as they hadn't had any opportunities at an earlier stage to continue their education, or they hadn't the confidence or they hadn't the capacity to do it in terms of resources etc. (Murphy 2014, 13).

For Jean Orr, leading the development of skilled nursing care, the largest workforce in the National Health Service, was important to sustaining the community during the horror and disruption of the decades-long violent conflict. She now recognizes this work to be part of the broader peacebuilding effort.

> Well, when you first asked me, I thought, oh dear, there's nothing I can say about that. But on reflection, if you want a good nursing and midwifery workforce you had to give them the best education that you can. And you need a good nursing and midwifery workforce because of all the problems out there. A workforce that is open-minded, that is liberal as far as you

could make it, that is questioning and that mixes with other people in the university. So that was our aim, you know? Give these women and men the best possible opportunity…So I suppose it was the whole thing of trying to get the best workforce that we could get. Now I didn't see that necessarily as peace building, but I suppose I saw it as improving the overall infrastructure of the largest workforce in the NHS. It's not a concept I was thinking of, but I suppose when I reflect on it in a way that's what I was trying to do (Orr 2014, 14).

For Marie McNeice, working with the founding members of WAVE to support grieving families helped lead the way for comprehensive trauma services. Working together these women demonstrated empathy and leadership by creating an urgently needed response to sectarian violence.

> There were about eight women in the original group (WAVE) and they were all fairly recently bereaved at that time. In terms of leadership I think they showed it because they went to every funeral after that of somebody who was murdered. Every funeral. Somebody from that group went and that was quite obviously traumatic for them (McNeice 2014, 5).

Leading changes within Probation Service to promote community partnerships and facilitate the release of ex-prisoners put Breidge Gadd at the center of the peace process for many decades.

> Oh yes, very much so. Again from the mid 1980s, if not earlier, in response to our work in prisons and in the community, we dramatically changed the way we worked. For example, one of our strategic vision statements was 'working in partnership with the community'. We were one of the first public bodies to say that. That meant that at the time, out of the 9 million pound budget, 1 million pound was spent on buying in community programs, to help us in our supervision of ordinary offenders. Programs run in the local communities, and in those local community projects were ex prisoners, paramilitary, both loyalist and republican. They were mostly men, mostly men because at the time they were the released prisoners (particularly from the republican side, but also the loyalist) were coming out and going into community organizations to work, promoting the cause of peace. Well, promoting the peace process… The other layer that we worked on, was we worked with the community and we fairly dramatically changed our services, pre-1994, in order to try and meet the needs of the prisoner population. And that required much more active partnership with the welfare orgs for all of the paramilitary organizations. All of them…That meant we were providing a very different sort of service, and we were working in the middle of the troubles in a way. We had met with the top level of all those organizations, the welfare organizations for the paramilitaries. So for example, transport service to prisons, the funding of Save the Children and Quakers, and other organizations providing very

basic childcare and hospitality at prisons, was all provided by probation service. The other area, because these welfare organizations were meeting, some of these organizations were very keen on the peace process. When they met in our offices they had a *rare* chance to talk about how they were getting on. I knew the peace process was happening about 6 or 7 years before it started (Gadd 2014, 1–2).

For Joan Carson of the Ulster Unionist Party, implementing the terms of agreement was essential to protect the 'fragile' peace. She recalls her first day as an elected member of the post-agreement parliament in 1998.

I think for me personally, and for everybody elected in the Ulster Unionist Party, we felt it was a tremendous achievement to have peace, also to work for the good of Northern Ireland and all the people. That first morning (of the Assembly) I will admit I had an intense feeling of pride that I was there at the beginning. I was willing to work, and work hard to enable this fragile thing to bed in and proceed (Carson 2014, 4).

As a police officer, Barbara Gray saw her leadership role as critical to support political settlement and enable a peaceful transition.

I think yes. I think there was a hope and there's a real optimism in Northern Ireland that the politics of the day was being challenged. Policing has this very unique role, I think universally, but in Northern Ireland again and we're kind of working within that political vacuum. But most certainly there was an appetite towards it and I think our role within that. Certainly the role that I saw and speaking as a police officer, not as a female as such, I think I certainly recognised a very critical role for policing within all of that. But a role that was being tested and continued to be tested, as we saw when the ceasefire sort of broke down and there were difficult times by many accounts (Gray 2014, 3).

Being an educator enabled Jane Nelson to foster new ways of thinking and challenge behavior patterns developed through war.

Yes, well that's what I was after. Oh yes, I mean at that time in academia there were occasional social contacts between the military officer class and the university, and I remember being attacked some times because I was a chemist and I was teaching in the prison, therefore I was teaching the terrorists to make bombs. And I said 'oh no, no it's much worse than that, I'm teaching them to think.' I think I saw it in a very personal way, that this guy thinks so little of himself that he will follow a stupid order, I will show him that he's no reason to think little of himself, and that I could do. That's very important in any kind of education and in any kind of situation (Nelson 2014, 17).

For Bernie Kelly, leading changes in health care using community development approaches was urgently needed in areas intensely impacted by the Troubles.

> I worked in North and West Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, which is all round here- Shankill, Ardoyne, New Lodge, all the troubled areas- it was the most intense, my job in what we refer to as the Legacy Trust, as Belfast Trust, was to set up a trauma centre. The vision for that trauma centre was not just dealing with clinical stuff, but more a community development approach. So I was really trying to improve clinical services, you know, get counselors, psychologists etc. I was also trying to work with community groups to provide a continuum of care, a lot of self-help stuff, and some counseling services, advice, and advocacy services. I was very focused on getting that started because it was very clear that there was an awful lot of damaged people there. I thought it was one way of contributing to things. We needed to address that...One of the things that I was proud of was that it was very hard to engage men, generally in counselling and things, but we were able to. I think that was because people felt that we were safe, we were kind of neutral. We dealt with a lot of ex-combatants who had a lot of guilt and that were very damaged (Kelly 2014, 7).

Bríd Rodgers sees civil rights and women's rights work at the heart of the peace process. She stresses the need to lead changes in 'attitudes and mind sets' as part of her leading role.

> But I suppose I did realise at the very beginning that I was part of something that was trying to change attitudes and mind sets in Northern Ireland, from the old fashioned traditional view to a more, slightly more complex view of a complex situation. You see women always got jobs in anything that was happening, women were the secretaries, the 'goffers' as they called them here. You know, a goffer is someone that does the donkey work, and the men were the chairs. I started as secretary of my branch, then I became chair of my branch, then I became chair of the SDLP. Up to that point it had always been men. So I suppose, I thought it was unfair that women should always be just the goffers and that women should have more say. It's taken a long time and yet I still don't think they have. No matter how much Sinn Féin talk about their women and the role of women, if you look how many of their women front up on television – not one of them. They have two ministers, the Agriculture Minister gets to talk on the morning agriculture show on agriculture stuff and the other one, Culture and Arts, talks on issues to do with her department. They're not very high profile departments anyway but you never see any of them on panels or on the issues of the day; it's always Alex Maskey, Gerry Kelly, Martin McGuinness or whoever but never any of the women. So they don't really have leadership roles (Rodgers 2014, 10).

Mary Montague operational director of Tides Training explains peacebuilding as a comprehensive process with many interwoven elements. She sees her peace leadership as building creative responses to address urgent community needs.

There's a whole intertwining. We often describe our methodology as being intertwining between community development, mediation and peace-building work. Mother Teresa used to say, 'You can't teach a child about Christ if they are hungry.' The first thing you have to do is put bread in their hand. So for me, you can't say to people, 'Well you have to come away from violence and be peaceful,' if there's huge community needs which aren't being met. And the system is letting them down (Montague 2014, 7).

What barriers and obstacles did you face?

For Ann McVicker gender bias and the widespread discrimination against women is the largest obstacle.

I suppose it comes down to the gender thing. And, in that you know, women aren't valued the way they should be. Because you know, because there's huge underrepresentation of women in politics, women in business, you know women in public bodies and decision-making bodies. You know let's even go to the schools here, even like careers guidance is so blatantly you know, traditional. And I think you see that unless you actually take affirmative action then things will remain the same (McVicker 2014, 15).

I asked Barbara Gray about her experience as one of the first women to join the Royal Ulster Constabulary. She had this to say about her experiences as one the few women in policing, and whether she viewed herself as a leader in this capacity:

Yes, and I probably didn't realize I was at that time. I just probably didn't realize that. I've been asked this question many times over the years. I don't believe that I have had any, you know, barriers put necessarily in my way any more than anyone else has had. I think I've worked pretty hard and some people say because you're a woman you have to work harder. I possibly overcompensated, tried to overcompensate in the early 90s. It was before we were issued with the firearms, because I felt in the nature of the work I was doing at that time my male colleagues certainly felt a responsibility for me when we were out because I didn't carry a firearm. So I certainly worked very hard to ensure that my local knowledge was the best as it could be (Gray 2014, 7–8).

Bernie Kelly of the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) views the male-dominated political system as a barrier to women's leadership.

I think that the party pays lip service to electing women, but sometimes those selection conventions can be real bear pits. They support you, but it's still hard, it's tough. And those selection conventions really put women off because they're bear pits. They can get very, very nasty. It puts a lot of women off, there's no question about that, it is the system itself. I think the public are happy to see women. The barrier's not really often at the public,

it's getting through the party system. A lot of parties are the same. It can be very competitive, and another thing men will often say, 'Oh well, nobody's coming forward', or 'It's not our fault', but they don't really encourage women coming forward (Kelly 2014, 5).

Lesley Carroll sees the primary obstacle to be that women are not taken seriously as peace leaders in the conservative culture of Northern Ireland.

Well sometimes if I didn't have a man with me I wasn't taken seriously. Other than in that kind of message delivery service, that was okay, as everyone knew I was doing it and it was kind of agreed. But on many other occasions, if I hadn't been in the company of Father Alec Reid I mightn't have been taken seriously. It would not have been possible actually, for me to do all of the things I did as a woman on my own. It just would not have been possible. And Alec, thank God for him, always wanted to have a woman present in the conversation, always. So whether it would've been UDA, UVF, David Trimble, it didn't matter, you know, he had a female in company. Which was really good. So that was the main obstacle. In some ways that makes me feel sad, because men will often function without women, whether it's a good thing or not. It's not just that women don't function without men in those situations, it's that you can't. So that is an obstacle. Until, hopefully you're somewhat established, I would hope by this stage, when you're over 50, that you wouldn't need that (Carroll 2014, 6–7).

As a newly elected Member of the Assembly (MLA), Joan Carson found the outdated institutions of government resistant to change and reluctant to cooperate in the post-agreement transition. She also found some men unprepared to work alongside female colleagues.

It was the attitude of the Civil Service at the very beginning. The Civil Service, they were so used to, after thirty years of doing their own thing and whenever elected members came and asking simple questions, I found that they just typically brushed you aside. If you sent staff to ask simple questions, it was quite difficult to get answers. It was also quite difficult at the beginning; we had to get the Civil Service out of the Stormont Building. They ran the show…Also what was difficult at the beginning was the committee system, and getting used to that and the fact that people could go in and sit at the back of a committee and listen to you. As was the behaviour of some of the different party members, they were still fighting the war across the table. I, being an Ulster Unionist, found some of the DUP men, as chairmen were very dismissive of a female. On one occasion I challenged the chairman Reverend McCrea, I think he nearly had a heart attack. 'Nobody has ever said that to me before!' (Carson 2014, 12)

Although she acknowledges sexism does still exist within Sinn Féin, this Female Republican doesn't consider it to be a barrier for women within the party.

I've never found being a woman has been a barrier within the party in terms of doing a particular job, going into particular positions; all of that. Is there sexism in the party? Yes, there is. Is everybody sexist? No, they're not. So I'm not going to pretend to paint anything as being perfect, I think there's some men in the party who are sexist and there's varying degrees of it. But having said that, I do think that there are genuine attempts within the party to positively, and I'm saying positively, very deliberately, positively address the issue of under-representation of women but I think there's still a way to go, both within the party and in terms of how political institutions operate. If you look at the make-up of most political parties, they are mostly male. There's a reason for that and let's be honest, there's sometimes you go in and just in terms of how, not all of them and again, you can't, you just can't paint a broad brush but how some men conduct themselves in meetings and all of that, you just sort of think for God's sake, stop talking nonsense. So while there have been no barriers put in front of me institutionally within the party – I've been working in policy areas that are traditionally not seen as being a female role (Female republican 2014, 8).

As one of three female representatives of the Democratic Unionist Party in the Forum (among fifteen women overall), May Beattie found the minority status was an obstacle. She had this to say about the nature of this male-dominated arena:

So all women didn't have it easy either. But (in the Forum) we were making up the numbers and it just happened that, this is the way I think they (men) saw it, 'so women got elected so we have to put up with them', because there was only three of us don't forget (Beattie 2014, 7).

For Lesley Carroll, being a woman leader within male-dominated groups and structures makes working for change very challenging. She finds being an agent of change inside these systems brings added pressures for women leaders.

I think there's a challenge back to women. And it's an okay challenge to make, but people need to understand that women are mostly breaking their necks to keep up with the system as it is. But the challenge back to women is how to be in the system in a different way that looks as edgy and effective – not looks as- *is* edgy and effective without becoming the system as it is. So how do you be inside the system and be transformative of the system? (Carroll 2014, 11).

Debbie Donnelly reflects on difficulties related to shifting expectations as women enter male-dominate cultures and take on new roles. Like many women, she talks about being determined to navigate and overcome the barriers she encounters.

Yes, there's something about, I think there's something about me and the way I do things that just triggers some very, very negative responses in some men, I've just had to accept that, I've tried to work with it and all the rest of it but no. And it's not a criticism of me or them, it's just that seems to and I would like to know what that is. But in terms of barriers, actual

barriers, I have always taken the view that you sort of plough on and you know, you try to bring people with you and you work within the best framework that you can in terms of the sort of authorised environment and just go for it (Donnelly 2014, 8).

Safety and security were ever present concerns for leaders during the violent conflict. Joan Carson talks about the risks associated with her leadership role and the political events she organized.

Sometimes at night I'd come home, and my husband would have a message that had come in from the police saying, 'No matter what time you come back at, get in touch.' Because there had been a warning or a threat, because of the way I had voted for some particular issue, I said, 'Well what can I do?' And all they could say was 'Take care.' So we did take precautions, you just were aware. Then in later years I did hear whispers about different things. People were watching the way you voted.

Author: It was scary at times?

Yes, it was, particularly in the constituency, mine was a border constituency. Going out to meetings you were aware bringing people together in numbers. It was a worry at that particular time.

Author: Would you have felt a bit responsible because you were drawing people together?

Yes. That's very true. You're the first person who has really said that. Because even for a social event I was aware, trying to keep the people safe, because they didn't get out or about much. A social event, a dinner dance I used to organise for twenty years. I would pray going and coming, that the people would get safely to it and home again, because you were bringing out fathers and mothers together (Carson 2014, 7–8).

Who were your female role models? Were there women leaders who inspired and supported your work?

For many participants this was the most difficult interview question. Only a few could readily name a source of inspiration, or identify a woman in a leading role within their community, country or profession. A third of the participants could not name an individual woman leader that had served as a model for their own work. Many provided names after a long pause allowing them to retrieve the memory of a schoolteacher or family member that was particularly influential during their childhood. This meant they often had to 'just get on with it' or look beyond their

area of work or community to find inspiring women in leading roles. Most discussed that the study period was a time of expanded opportunities for women with many pioneering new roles and forging new paths for women in arenas that had previously been exclusively male. The exceptional landscape of prominent women leaders is captured in Table 5. A complete list of the women named as role models and others who were particularly inspirational and supportive is provided in Table 6. In additional to individual women leaders, a number of groups and organizations were identified as leading institutions, reflecting the extensive infrastructure for peaceful change. A list of these key organizations is provided in Table 7.

Among the most common public figures named were Mo Mowlam, Mary Robinson, Nuala O'Loan, Inez McCormack, Monica McWilliams and Hillary Clinton. The election of Mary Robinson as Ireland's first female president made a powerful and lasting impression on many of the participants. Most participants believed role models to be important and wished there to be a greater number and diversity of women leaders from which to learn and draw inspiration. Many of these women discuss promoting women's leadership and participation as a priority in their own work, and realize that they have become important role models for others.

A third of the participants said they had no female role models, or could not name any one woman leader who had been influential. The following five responses are from women who reported they did not have a female role model.

May Blood

> I am very often asked that, and I have to be perfectly truthful. I was not aware of *any* female leaders that would have been a role model. Probably the biggest influence in my life, but she died in 79, was my mum. My mum always taught me to believe that if I thought I could do it, give it a shot. That was just the way it was…Today of course there is Hillary Clinton and there's a number of people I could name who are perfect role models. But when I was a young woman there wasn't that about because women didn't do those kind of things (Blood 2014, 6).

Barbara Gray

Do you know it's strange, I probably didn't know any. It was back when I joined the police again, so few female officers would actually have known many female officers, you know… I get an awful lot of inspiration through members of the community that I meet. I get a lot of inspiration from, and it's not to take away from a great support that I would get from peers, but I get an awful lot of inspiration from particularly female officers. Well I know that's unfair to say but you asked me specifically the question about the female role, but I get a lot of inspiration from the people below me probably rather than above me. I think that's something, we shouldn't always be sort of looking up the way for that kind of inspiration…I learn a lot from the people around me and it sounds wrong when I say below me but just in the lower grades or ranks that haven't had the opportunity yet to move on through (Gray 2014, 9).

Lesley Carroll

No. I mean it's just a straight no…. In terms of church, no, there wasn't. Often I just didn't tell anybody what I was doing, so there was not much in the way of support from it. That actually, maybe on one level for me, wasn't a great thing. There wasn't a debriefing space, or a thinking-through space or whatever. On the other hand it meant you really relied on those local relationships that you were trying to build and work with. You became part of them because there was no role model. There was nobody to check it out with, other than Alec. There was no place to talk about it really. It was really hard. I don't know really how I sustained it. I know I would've had some close friends, but I suppose I came to exist within that world and allow that to be my world. There was no other way to survive it. There really wasn't.

Author: So it just became the normal for you?

Yeah, it did. Even when it was terrifying, which it sometimes was (Carroll 2014, 7–8).

Female Republican

In politics, I can't really think of any, to be honest with you I actually can't think of any woman who would have impressed me at that time. Maggie Thatcher is certainly not a role model anybody would hold up (Female republican 2014, 7).

Bronagh Hinds

There weren't very many female role models. I was the first woman president of a Student's Union in Ireland. I didn't run because I wanted to be the leader, I actually ran because we needed to do something about certain things, you know, and my track record was in people's rights and health and social welfare issues. Who would have been the role model around in those days? You didn't see many women visibly running organizations. There weren't many women internationally visible because the first woman who really because visible in Ireland was Mary Robinson (Hinds 2014a).

The discussion of role models prompted many of the participants to acknowledge the work of other women leaders they admired. I have included these responses to help document the many women in positions of influence and responsibility working to advance peace during this period.

Dawn Purvis, a member of the Progressive Unionist Party talks team, acknowledges the work of Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and Martha Pope, Chief of Staff for Senator George Mitchell as being key during the negotiations.

> I think during the talks probably Mo Mowlam and Martha Pope. Yeah, they were probably two of the biggest influences on me. Mo because of her irreverence, I suppose which was something I was not used to and not used to seeing. She often liked to shock either with words or actions but could also cut through the nonsense as well but with a sense of humour and a determination really and a commitment and a bravery and a courage that was really inspiring. And Martha Pope, Senator Mitchell's Chief of Staff who was really a woman who went about her work quietly, honestly with dignity and respect for everyone that she came into contact with and an integrity really that meant that she had great connections with everyone involved in the talks process. So both very different in their approaches to the negotiations but both absolutely crucial in getting progress and assisting the parties and reading the signs I think as to where the help was needed and how to get people over the lines (Purvis 2014a, 16).

For Joan Carson, the leadership of a local UUP colleague was most impressive.

> The one that I admired was actually my predecessor in Fermanagh, South Tyrone. She was a local solicitor called Noreen Cooper. She had served during the war, in the ATS. I can remember her, walking down the street with her father who was a local MP, in a pair of trousers…She was a very strong unionist, no nonsense. Whenever she got old, she said to me 'Right, you can take on as secretary for Fermanagh and South Tyrone.' So I followed her footsteps (Carson 2014, 13).

Watching Monica McWilliams and Jane Morrice of the Women's Coalition face hostility and abusive treatment as political leaders made a lasting impact on Lesley Carroll.

> I would add, I suppose the one thing that goes through my head when you mention the word hopeful. For me at the time of the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, to see Monica and Jane and others there was really, really important. And to have a personal connection with them as well. But in those days I wouldn't have been that close to them in that

sense. I wouldn't have felt equal with them in any way. But to see them there would've been really important, was really important. But to have to live with the way they were spoken about would've terrified you from taking any other chance...Or what people would've said to me about them. It kind of had a subtext which was 'how can you women be proud of those women?' That was the kind of subtext (Carroll 2014, 17–18).

The election of Mary Robinson as Irish President was momentous for Bríd Rodgers and many other women. President Robinson's approach to leadership and her work to empower women is what Rodgers most admires.

Mary Robinson is the perfect example, I cried the day I heard she was elected, I couldn't believe it. Some women pull the ladder up after them, Mary Robinson never did. She has been very supportive of women. She ploughed a furrow for women. She spoke up. She was unafraid. She was brave when it wasn't popular… I admired her because she opened up the Presidency. Which was a male area up to that time. She made it not just possible but *desirable* to have a woman President (Rodgers 2014, 4).

Are role models helpful to promote leadership and peaceful change?

To further explore this issue I asked several of the participants who didn't have a female role model if they considered them important resources. Debbie Donnelly is certain they are and wished she had enjoyed the benefits of a female mentor in her career.

Absolutely they are, completely. I would have loved to have someone to say to help me and show me the way and mentor me, and there weren't any women who did that. I mean there was some of the, I suppose later on in the NIO there were women who you'd have a chat with and be supportive with as well but there was blokes as well. So I cannot think of anyone. I've had women which again, a great privileged, have come to me and said "You are my role model" and I'd be thinking 'oh Jesus!' I have coached and mentored and I have been particularly conscious of women who are under my charge, you know, who are my responsibility in terms of encouraging them, in terms of leadership and development and aspirations. So I have been very conscious of that (Donnelly 2014, 7).

For Monica McWilliams, having women in visible leadership positions is important to promote change.

I think it's good for other women to see women in those positions. Otherwise we'd just get accustomed to only seeing men doing these jobs. And that goes for the law, and whether women are judges. It goes for the media in terms of women as broadcasters and being interviewed. So few women still sit on political panels in our Northern Ireland discussions. So it's one of many reasons for women being in politics but I do think there are others. I mean their expertise, the fact that certain things happen to women

that don't happen to others. We need to be put at the table; inclusion, equality, democracy, deliberation, women can deliberate on issues that no one else can. So role models is one of many factors that I would suggest is important in terms of change. I mean there are very few public appointments of women in Northern Ireland. I think on public boards it's really important to have women, but also chairing those boards. When Nuala O'Loan took over as Police Ombudsman, she made her mark. I think that people had to sit up and see her. Here was a very senior, serious woman who wasn't going to take any nonsense (McWilliams 2014, 15).

To counter sexism and racism, Roisin McGlone believes we need visible champions to lead the way forward.

I think we are a very sexist society. If you listen to the language of politicians, we are also a very racist society. As well, we don't have any champions. Women don't have any champions, and people involved in this work don't have any champions. You don't regularly see someone on the TV or in the media that is a peacemaker (McGlone 2014, 15).

May Beattie believes you learn valuable lessons by watching those you respect and admire. She had this to say about her own models of anti-sectarianism:

Where I lived in the same area, Woodburn, Carrickfergus my mother would have been, maybe you don't want to hear this but my mother would have been a Salvation Army type of person and her two best friends were Roman Catholics, devout Roman Catholics, this is the mother who reared me and I would have been sitting at night when I wasn't supposed to be listening and I could hear them, they were the greatest of friends, they were like sisters the three of them. Never once did I ever hear "You're that and you're that", religion never came into it, the all three went to wherever they belonged to. Full stop (Beattie 2014).

For Lesley Carroll, the issue is valuing women leaders and recognizing the models provided by leading groups as well as individual women.

So men can value their work because they can see where it fits in the big picture. Often women don't really see how that fits in the big picture. It's partly because there aren't women out there that they can connect themselves to, to tie into that bigger picture. It's partly because the men don't value that, or I certainly don't feel often that men have valued that. I think I feel more these days that they do. But in the beginning I certainly didn't. So sometimes I think I use a 'we' in the hope of it being a 'we'. So it's as much about the hope of, as the comfort with, or the experience of. I suppose that does then speak to, for me, certainly, I would prefer to be working in a team with other people. If I have to go out front, I'm saying if I have to go out front, I've always had to flippin' go out front! But I would

much prefer if there were two or three people around me who would understand that I don't feel like I'm out front (that's not a good feeling), and who would be prepared to debrief. To just talk that through and say, 'I didn't get that bit.' Or 'I did get that bit.' Or 'What was that like?' Or 'Could you have done it this way?' And that's maybe as much about me just trusting myself as about being a woman. I don't know. But again the role model, the landscape has to have some impact on that, definitely has to have (Carroll 2014, 17).

Jane Morrice didn't have a female role model and has this to say about how that affected her work and influences her mentoring of other women.

Again, it wasn't hugely important for me. And I don't think they have to be because there aren't enough you know. Even the male role models, I mean everyone does the Nelson Mandela's etc. Jacques Delors was mine. But I think that my way would have been better served if I had female role models. Yeah, mentoring might have been a very useful thing. In fact I try and do more mentoring now (Morrice 2014, 18).

Women as Agents of Change

During the interview conversations many women discussed the compounding difficulty of leading change within organizations during a time of great societal upheaval and transition. In many cases their very presence as the first or among the first group of women to enter previously all-male arenas presented additional pressures and risks. In Northern Ireland many levels of governance, policing, social services and education were being reformed and restructured. For many women the expanding leadership opportunities were within unwelcoming work environments. Many discussed the challenge of being women within male-dominated settings operating within a society under siege and divided by protracted violent conflict. They were agents of change in many interwoven contexts, perceived as 'others', often treated with disdain and disrespect. Against this complex backdrop women were taking risks, challenging norms and changing the dynamics within their organizations.

Barbara Gray shared this perspective on being among the first women to join the Royal Ulster Constabulary:

Actually I'm glad you raised that point because probably in and around the early 90s, and into that sort of period of '94/95 and again, you should note 1994 as being the year that women were first trained and issued with

personal issue firearms. So this was a time of great change. 1994 was the first time that female officers were allowed and regulated to wear trousers and boots and be suitably attired because you were carrying the firearm. Whereas previously, prior to that it was in the RUC code that only during the winter between the hours of 11pm and 7am and with the permission of your inspector, who is invariably a male (laughs), very few female inspectors, could you have permission to wear police issue trousers at that time. So there's just really interesting dynamics. So we were issued with firearms, we were trained and issued with firearms. We then wore what seemed to be more serviceable and more practical policing uniform to go around our duties. That coincided with the time that I was certainly promoted. That was interesting because there weren't many female faces, I suppose in policing. Communities didn't really see that. And a lot of times with the line of work I was doing, if I was out on foot patrols, perhaps accompanying the army or with our own crews, a lot of local people in the rural areas could very much relate to myself and say that they worried about me. They would say, 'You look after yourself' and they actually picked the female out. I think from that they probably had a little bit more empathy for some of the roles we were actually playing at that time. So through that it was interesting because you could open a lot of different areas of conversation and build some form of relationships as well, just through that kind of contact (Gray 2014, 2).

Bronagh Hinds reflects on her work with the Women's Coalition aimed at changing the nature of politics from inside the Forum and Negotiations.

I'm just thinking in relation to that. I proposed as soon as we went in that we actually created a counterbalance dynamic in the negotiations. We agreed to do that and it comprised of inviting the four smallest parties. I invited the Alliance Party but they didn't want to join in. And we met frequently. What we did was a create a counterbalance dynamic but it also gave us more power than we had as single groups to actually make things happen. [We created] a coalition of the smaller parties, the Loyalist parties and the small Labour group. So that would have been another example of what we did to change the dynamic. The other thing that we did was to challenge the behaviour and the language and the militaristic tone. Actually naming and shaming that kind of language and behaviour, taking it on as a debate. For example, the media were saying to us 'ach you poor girls, you don't understand politics.' We were saying to them 'we understand politics very well. We're not taking this that masquerades for politics.' They thought we didn't know what we were doing. They didn't know we were deliberately doing that just as we were deliberately standing up to the behaviour in the Forum in order to change the language and the culture of what was going on. Also putting a stop to things deliberately. So it's about being the forerunner for some of the things that have to happen. It was challenging what people's understanding of democracy is about (Hinds 2014a, 26).

I asked Ann McVicker if she thought women's participation made a difference in the peace process?

> Definitely. I mean that's why they had to manipulate things. You know what I mean? For the Forum and Talks, getting parties to the table, you know. Because I think they saw themselves, they thought 'You know we can't do this without women', you know. I think definitely it did. But it feels like a slap in the face that once the Assembly did get up and running that it seemed to be back to the same old jobs for the boys. I also think that the Women's Coalition played a really good role in raising the visibility of women. Or the lack of visibility of women in politics you know. And it was very necessary at that particular time. That's not to say that I support a women's party, I don't. I think that women have got the right to choose what political party they want to be part of, but I just want political parties to be more inclusive and accommodating and welcoming places for women. So the Women's Coalition played a very big role at that particular time (McVicker 2014, 21).

Monica McWilliams shared this view of her work within the peace negotiations. She describes how the Women's Coalition took risks to establish relationships, foster dialogue and practice inclusion.

> We also in that first year worked behind the scenes with Sinn Féin, encouraging them to come into the talks. Oh we were meeting with Gerry Adams' right-hand person, Siobhan O'Hanlon on a frequent basis. It's interesting that they wouldn't want to have that known. Michelle Gildernew was at the Dublin Conference last year, and she got up and admitted that we had been helpful. But not all of them would have known it, Bairbre (de Brún) would have, I think. The person we were meeting with was Siobhán O'Hanlon. Alistair Campbell describes her as the main point of contact for him from the British Government's side…Well it was known, nobody got to Gerry without going through Siobhán… She was very influential. And the other women I would have spoken with was Dodie McGuinness, who was very active in Derry. But we met with them, frequently met with them. Much to the nervousness of some of the women in the Coalition who were concerned that if this was made public it would make our position very difficult. But we said our principles are inclusion, human rights and equality. The principle of inclusion meant we'd try to work with people who are outside the talks as well as people who are inside (McWilliams 2014, 7).

As an MLA in the post-agreement Northern Assembly, Jane Morrice was involved in establishing the parliamentary rules and procedures. She recalls the challenging traditional practices and promoting 'family friendly' work hours.

> So I was on the committee setting up the rules for the Assembly. The standing orders committee and we had a couple of very interesting, very interesting debates. Looking at the rules of the Assembly we took the

rulebooks from Westminster, from Strasburg, from Dublin and from previous Northern Ireland parliaments. So we had all these rulebooks and were then picking out the rules and regulations for all these different things to put together the right ones for the Assembly. And one thing we came to was the working hours of the Assembly…I suggested that we have family friendly working hours. One of the members of the Assembly boomed "You can't do the business of government on a 9 to 5 basis" and I simply said "Why not?" And we won and we got family friendly working hours in the Assembly. And I think we can claim, I don't know whether this is myth or reality, that the Scottish followed our lead. There's what I would say when you asked originally about my methods and things. One approach is always questioning. Maybe I learned that as a journalist, always wanting to put in that "Why not?" To be challenging and questioning of traditions and the normal way of doing things. In fact that's a perfect example of it. I mean everyone around the table was ready to consider that because, whether it's men or women, you have people coming from Fermanagh who wanted home for the evening. It wasn't just for women; it was also for men getting home to their wives or their families or whatever (Morrice 2014, 13–14).

Was being a woman a factor in your leadership experiences?

As a follow-up question, I asked participants to talk further about their experiences being women leaders during this dynamic time.

Jean Orr had this to say about women leaders and how they are perceived in Northern Ireland:

> I think there is an awful lot of community work and cross-community work that goes on, often led by women. But it seems to me, it is often talked about in the press as being by men, you know, the male spokesperson. Women's voices are quite mute in this society. It's not that I think that they're not doing good work many of them, but it is just such a patriarchal society and no sign of that changing (Orr 2014, 15).

Mary Montague recalled her involvement in dialogue meetings:

> Moving towards the ceasefires, there was a lot of sensitive meetings held through Quakers and particularly with women representatives simply because men couldn't come into the room. It wasn't safe enough. But women could. So we would have met Ronnie Flanagan (RUC Chief Constable) for example, at the time when he took over. And that became important because when Drumcree happened, which was in '95, the first Drumcree, it meant that I had a direct link to him. I could voice opinions to him that other people couldn't so I was actually in the room saying, '…we cannot accept this form of policing…' sort of thing. So you did have a key role because of that to say what

other people wanted to say but had not an opportunity. Or couldn't say because of security reasons (Montague 2014, 1–2).

Breidge Gadd had this to say about the attitudes and approaches of women leaders:

> Now, this is along side the time of the growth of the Women's Coalition. Paralleled by, it just so happened, key, very, very strong women in organizations like NIACRO, and the Community Foundation. Avila (Kilmurray) was there as well, and Monica (McWilliams). We were strong, bloody-minded in a way, and determined. Bloody-minded means you were passionate and determined that we were going to get our way. Now in a man this would be seen as great leadership. All these women, we were all the same, badly treated. And we were dealt with by the males in charge as if we were having personal problems. I think this is true about most of the women. We were often dismissed, in public situations, criticized by senior public officials as having psychological issues... I think all of the women at the time who put their head above the parapet had a lot of courage really and conviction, and I think suffered. I used to be appalled at the way the Women's Coalition were treated, the way they were slagged-off, to use an Ulster word, in Stormont (Gadd 2014, 5).

Margaret Ritchie, SDLP Member of Parliament shares this view of women in political leadership:

> Women, I suppose if you put it like this, it's difficult for a woman in politics because for years women were seen as people who assisted in the branch. They were branch secretaries who helped to make the tea post branch meetings. But people were much more than that. Women identified with the community, they knew the needs of their community and they knew the measures that had to be applied to resolve them. So in that respect we just simply got on with it (Ritchie 2014, 4).

Carrickfergus Borough Council Alderman May Beattie hasn't experienced discrimination as a woman within the Democratic Unionist Party.

> I can definitely say from my party, as a representative of the DUP I always had every opportunity, I would be about 24 years involved with the DUP and I've had every opportunity to run in every and any election, no discrimination whether you're a woman or a man, I could never say any different. I was Mayor of Carrickfergus here for one year and Deputy Mayor as well for another year and I've been Chair of a committee, one committee or another, at the minute it's Support Services. So I had every opportunity as a DUP person, let's say, I'm not kept back because I'm a woman, I could never say that, you know the way some parties will say women are kept down, women don't get jobs – I could never say that (Beattie 2014, 2).

Roisin McGlone reflects on her experiences as a community activist in Belfast. She sees women have different but not less important leading roles.

In the early days, when men couldn't fit me in, they said I wasn't an ex-prisoner and they couldn't figure me out. I used to say, 'Look folks I was a combatant, but I was a non-violent combatant.' I am a combatant as much as anyone else. In some senses it made them think of me differently, because they couldn't fit a woman into the process. So women have had *as* important but *different* roles. As important a role but different. They've held families together, held communities together, fought for peace. They might not have been involved in the conflict but they certainly were involved in peacemaking. But not in the numbers I'd like to see, and not in the numbers that normalize it. Which means people like me are odd. I don't want people like me to be odd. I want there to be loads of us. But I am still seen as an oddity. Not by the people who work with me and not by the communities I work in, but in the larger community. And they don't know how to handle me. I have been working out in the world, in Liberia, I've been to South Africa and there they don't have any problem with me. But here in *this* society guys won't even acknowledge me sometimes, they just write me out of the picture. It is almost like I don't fit. I am not an ex-combatant, I'm not in the public sector, or a politician. When I hear them talk about community leaders, I never hear the name of a woman mentioned in terms of community leadership. Now isn't that strange? (McGlone 2014, 18).

I asked Joan Carson if being a woman was part of her experience as an MLA in the first post-agreement assembly.

Very much so. In the first Assembly the men had a twitchy, bolshie, feeling. They did not like women. We were all women. When the Women's Coalition stood up the men would start to moo, mostly DUP. I found that the women didn't work particularly well together. They did try at times, but they were very conscious of their own party issues. The biggest regret that I have was the abortion bill, the first abortion bill, I thought, well at least the women in the Assembly have the opportunity now to work together and say something. They never did (Carson 2014, 5–6).

Author: And what about within the party and in the wider community?
I found that there was no problem being female. I was well accepted as a member of the party. I was also a party officer…I was a member of the local church; I was a leader and organiser in training women. Within the ornithological world I was a ringer. I was the only woman trainer in Ireland so that was quite a thing to do. I was used to taking the initiative, putting my head over the parapet and taking flak! (Carson 2014, 7–8)

I asked the Female Republican if she found it harder being a woman leader?

No, it wasn't additionally harder being a woman. My husband and my family were very supportive. Coming from a Republican background, I had no rose tinted spectacles about the implications of being involved on a full time basis in politics. It's not just Sinn Féin but any political party. Being involved full time in the cut and thrust of politics, particularly politics here, I knew that it would be very demanding. So I did give it a lot of thought because I knew it

wouldn't be easy and I knew if I committed myself to it, it would be full on. I also knew that my constituency was a difficult area to be in. I did know it would be difficult. And I also knew, and again, it's like anything, political parties do their figures and they run their figures, I also knew that when I put my name forward that it was a winnable seat, that I was likely to be elected. So it wasn't about putting a token woman in (Female republican 2014, 3).

Author: What was your experience as a female MLA inside the new Assembly? But you could see, for example, when Bairbre de Brún was Health Minister, she got a hard time in the Assembly from the unionists on both counts, because she was a Shinner and because she was a woman. I think it was a double dose. I remember the first time I was getting up to speak in the Assembly and some of the DUP ones trying to shout me down and I just shouted the louder. You know the way it goes through your head very quickly, I just thought I have to let these people see they're not going to intimidate me, and I just kept on talking as they were cat-calling and shouting, I just talked all the louder and just kept going. That was how I dealt with it (Female republican 2014, 9).

Monica McWilliams had this response to the question of whether being a woman was a factor in her experience as a leader:

I never could see myself in any other way except for that. I was reminded every moment that either because I was a woman I shouldn't have been there, and I had to remind myself it was because I was a woman that I *was* there. It is the main aim of my life to have more women involved and women in peace building. So is it a factor? It sure is (McWilliams 2014, 15).

For Jane Morrice being a woman has cultural advantages and disadvantages.

Yes it was a factor and it was both positive and negative. Being rare was valuable in my experience because it sort of allowed me to say different things. To throw the curve ball and that's always been my way. In my role in the equality commission, and in my role in the public accounts committee of the Assembly, most people described me as the one with the most unusual approach. You know sometimes it could be seen as whacky. Sometimes it could be seen as nail on the head. So that was the positive part of being a woman, being different, because there were very few others. The negative part was dealing with the difficulties of people accepting that a woman was equal. Whether it be in a domestic situation or in a professional situation. You know certainly in the early days of the Women's Coalition when you know we heard 'back to the kitchen' sort of stuff, the derision and the distain and that sort of thing was well, interestingly. I often turned that in our favour. Pearl and Monica were in the Forum and were being berated and ('bit bated'?) you know. All this was being shown on TV. So when I was out saying 'Vote for the Women's Coalition', people were responding 'of course we will, we see how you're treated.' So go on, keep going lads, you're

just getting us votes. Because the world outside doesn't like what you're doing (Morrice 2014, 19).

Bríd Rodgers had this to say about being a woman leader being a factor in her experience:

> I think initially it was. Well do you know, it was a factor in how I was seen by politicians but not by people. I never, ever had the sense that people saw me as anything different because I was a woman, but in political circles and people, particularly with men, I think definitely they saw me as, well some of them would have seen me as a bit too big for my boots and some of them would have seen me as just an abrasive woman, you know, if you're assertive as a woman then you're abrasive, if you're assertive as a man you're wonderful, you're affective, yes (Rodgers 2014, 14–15).

Mary Montague shared this story about the perceptions of her as a woman peace leader in the community.

> I remember Peter O'Reilly of Mediation Northern Ireland, introducing me to a group one day. He just said, 'Look in short, instead of going through it all, let me tell ya, she is the mother of every paramilitary in Northern Ireland.' And I looked at him thinking, 'is that supposed to be a compliment?' And he laughed, and he often said that the paramilitary leaders here see me as a mother figure, and a lot of the ex-combatants. And that brings responsibility because if you are looked at in that role, you definitely have to be a disciplinarian of some sort. But I think, a lot of the time, those challenges that came for me couldn't have been carried into those places by a man. They just could not. I remember we'd had a breach in an agreement across the East Belfast interface and people were coming into rooms being really, really angry. And I remember coming into one of the rooms, and it was Peter O'Reilly, and Chris O'Halloran and myself. We were working it, the three of us. And we came into this room and I said, 'this is a blip in our agreement' and Peter O'Reilly looked at me like this, and waited, and nothing was said. And when we came out, he said, 'Nobody else could have said that. Nobody else Mary would have got away with that.' I said, 'Yeah, but I can, because this is how we are going to have to look at this if we're going to see through this, this is how we are going to have to look at this' (Montague 2014, 10).

Has your leading work been recognized, valued and acknowledged?

The responses to this question were somewhat divided between those who said yes, those who explained they didn't seek recognition, and those who said no on behalf of themselves or their organizations. Some women felt well recognized for their individual roles and contributions. Those who were more visible, more prominent in their positions were more likely to have received some recognition for their work. Women who were less well known for their civic leadership or

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grass roots activism were those most likely to feel overlooked. Others believed their work had been overlooked or forgotten, but described this as common for women, especially those working within communities.

Ann McVicker believes her professional contributions have been well recognized.

> Yeah I think so. I left a great legacy with Shankill Women's Centre. I think I left a legacy with Women's Tech. I've worked in the community for nearly 30 years you know. I know that other people see that with the experience that I have and experience maybe that they've had working with me in particular projects or that; there's big expectations of me here. The way that I work is fair, it's transparent, it's trying to get people to be participative. And, and I suppose above all fair you know (McVicker 2014, 20).

Mary Clarke-Glass has this to say about the recognition of her work:
> Oh yes, I think more so than most others. I was in the right place a lot of the time to take advantage, I got a CBE (Clarke-Glass 2014, 21).

For many of the participants, recognition of their leadership and contributions has been limited or muted.

Joan Carson explains her work at the local level has been overlooked.

> Not really, I was just accepted as a member. I was just a member of the group. I'm still involved; I'm one of them…I wasn't acknowledged as a woman within the party at local level…I don't think they realised the work that I was actually doing at that particular time in the constituency office. People forget that there was local work coming in as well (Carson 2014, 13).

For Bernie Kelly, acknowledgement isn't what motivates her leadership.

> Ach well, not really, but you don't really, it's an uncomfortable thing I suppose. I've just always tried to work across those sectarian boundaries as far as possible. I just don't particularly look for accolades for that. It's just the right thing to do (Kelly 2014, 6).

Mary Montague thinks there should be greater recognition for her organization and other leading practice groups.

> I would love the work to be recognized to support TIDES for the future. That would be very important for me, for this organization, because I am 62. I am starting this year to go towards part-time work. And I have brought the leadership up behind me. I've a very strong young woman, and there's a very strong woman sitting there as well inside. So there's good women leadership there that will take over. But I would hope that TIDES as an organization, even if it is through me, gets the recognition for being a good practice organization and for having done very effective work over the years (Montague 2014, 11–12).

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Breidge Gadd wishes there had been adequate recognition of the valuable work provided by the Probation Office staff.

> No. It is one of the areas I feel guilty about. On behalf of the staff, not just me as a person, on behalf of the staff, because I think the role they played has not been recognized and valued. It was a *critical* role in the peace process; I have no doubt about that. Some of the women I remember, like Edna, some of the women who worked in the Maze died fairly soon after they left it, like Elizabeth (Kennedy). I think that was to do with the level of stress being so high. While we tried to support them, the fact is that they were *always* under stress. Look, as long as you know yourself what you've done. When you to out publically, in some ways you damage it. The other thing is in the interest of history, something like what you're doing, that will be there as a record for anyone who might want to see it. Therefore it exists. To know it exists and it does matter (Gadd 2014, 10–12).

Bronagh Hinds believes women as a group are not adequately recognized for their leading work.

> I think women do not. I think they'll see the big male players and to be fair, because I've commented on this myself, John Hume was big picture. The man who deserves I think the hugest amount of credit is actually Seamus Mallon. He is the detailed negotiator from SDLP who never gets a look in. So it's not just women they're forgetting about, it's various people. Not that I always agreed with Seamus, but he was a remarkable negotiator. I think women are a footnote actually, not sufficiently recognised. I wouldn't want to overstate it because we can overblow what we do. We cannot say look, we're the same as the larger parties with the larger mandates or whatever. But I do think it's underwritten and underrepresented in terms of the Women's Coalition bit of it. I would say in women, and I'm only talking about women in community groups and what they have done, and we're not even talking about what ordinary individual women have done in their communities. In as far as possible, keeping people out of trouble in what they've had to contend with in terms of paramilitarism, in terms of maintaining community relations, relationships within their communities and whatever else. And I'm sure some men have done that as well but I'm sure that's mainly women (Hinds 2014a, 32).

Was the presence and participation of women leaders a positive factor in the transition to peace? Did women peacebuilding leaders make a difference?

The participants discussed a variety of reasons to support their strong conviction that women leaders made significant contributions to end the war and cultivate a peaceful transition.

May Blood was emphatic in her response that women were critically important peace leaders.

> I have to tell you straight up, I really believe that the ceasefires and all those kind of things would never have happened if it hadn't have been for women. I think on the ground, women were saying, 'we've had enough!' I think our politicians would still be in the state they were in the early 90s if they hadn't recognized the community was moving on ahead of them. And community today is still moving on ahead of them, still taking issues forward (Blood 2014, 11–12).

For Debbie Donnelly, women changed the nature of politics at all stages the peace process.

> Yes, I think that an observation was that the Women's Coalition, for example was part of a game changer in terms of the peace, and the development of the Good Friday Agreement and you know, when they took so much flack. But what they did was they crystallised some of the views of women, they crystallised some of the issues, which were of importance to women, and they negotiated the inclusion within the Good Friday Agreement...In order to make things happen you need political will that can be operationalized through legislation. You need leadership in governance. The role of women is important right through the implementation process (Donnelly 2014, 9).

Mary Montague offers several examples of the innovative and courageous ways women worked as evidence of their leading contributions to peacebuilding.

> You know now, we're talking in the now in terms of peace, they're writing it (others elsewhere). They're writing up about systemic peace building. We were doing that years ago. Every action I took I thought, well what if? Could it have this impact? Might it have this impact? What if it goes that way? What if it goes this way? And you were working it right through. Are you any nearer your goal really by doing it, by taking that action? Should you be taking this action? So the theory of change and all of that, which people are academically all saying this has to be part of your peacebuilding, a lot of that was already being done by women here (Montague 2014, 10).

> Very much so, especially in the earlier days when it was risky for me. But I also think women raised their voice. I often say this; it was women who walked behind the coffins. And it was women who went in and out visiting the prisons, and brought their families through, as single parents. I'm not demeaning single parents in any way. What I mean is a single parent where the partner was either in prison or their partner had died as a result of the conflict. So even in that, there's your women's leadership for you. And they took those experiences and they raised their voice from very early on saying, 'We cannot sustain this.' 'This does not give us a future'. I mean we went in the early days to the IRA in Andersonstown in my parish and that's the very words we said to them. We cannot go on with this; this level of violence is impacting so negatively on our community. And when Mary

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Robinson came up to Andersonstown when she was President and she shook hands with Gerry Adams, then Sinn Féin and everybody else took the women seriously. Because suddenly, 'Oh these women have clout'(Montague 2014, 14).

Jane Nelson had this to say about whether women leaders made a difference.

I'm sure they did. You would know the Peace People saga of course, and it looked like it failed, but I don't think it did, I think it started something (Nelson 2014, 11).

Barbara Gray reflects on the power of women's voices in community.

You see I always think women are key factors in any process I have to say (laughs), yes. I know there have been studies that have suggested with the early release schemes through the Good Friday Agreement that many women who had adopted leadership roles within their communities, and be that they probably consciously didn't realise they were leadership roles, but they were roles within youth clubs or community roles; whatever it was. I know there has been research to suggest that those women were moved to the background as the early release scheme went through its process. So you know, whether those voices were lost or not, I don't think they were. I still think they were influential voices but they weren't given the same space to be influential. I do believe women always have a very powerful voice. I believe they're a very, very powerful voice within communities (Gray 2014, 10).

Jean Orr is certain the participation of women made a positive difference.

Oh God yes. I think women have a different view. When you say to a man to do a job, he says 'What's in this for me?' When you say to a woman to do it, she says 'How can I do this to the best of my ability?' And I think you need women to be looking at the issues like health, like childcare, like the good of the community sort of thing. They don't tend to play the power games. I mean, I don't know how many of those boys up on the hill has ever taken a buggy on a bus, or has ever had to queue at the dole! They're just not connected. And women have to be connected, because if they don't go out and get the food there ain't no dinner! And I think the fact that they're half the population, they need to be engaged (Orr 2014, 11).

The early leaders of change were women working in their communities according to Bríd Rodgers. She recalls the first civil rights march lead by Patricia McCloskey.

I think it was, it's very hard to quantify it but if you think about it, it probably was because women in their own way were making an input and were making an input even in party groups and particularly through community groups. I mean, if you think of Patricia McCloskey, the first civil rights march was her leading a group of women through the streets of

Dungannon and women with their push chairs and their babies and everything, you know, it was amazing. That created a situation where people realized that you can bring about change, they did bring about change in that particular by doing that...So I suppose women do make a difference, it's just unfortunate that they don't, you know, they're not given top posts. It's difficult for women to get into those but they can make a difference without necessarily being in very, very top positions, obviously when they get into top positions like Mary Robinson they can make a much bigger difference (Rodgers 2014, 19).

Breidge Gadd stresses there were many women and women-led groups leading through a 'silent movement' for change.

I would say it was critical, absolutely critical. If that whole range of women, including the kind of strong personalities that women were known for hadn't been there, the men would still be going, talking about ....I mean Mo Mowlam from the Labor Party was critical. Mo Mowlam's work was critical because she laid all the groundwork. She was accepted, liked and respected by the Republicans. Previously the bit was 'let's beat them militarily.' So she actually was the first person who understood that would never work. So she was critical, absolutely critical. She was critical when Labor was in opposition, and then when Labor took over the Secretary of State all the stuff she had stacked up was able to flow, all the contacts etc. She also was as likely to invite the lowest person in the room as the highest person in the room to do something. That was critical as well. So she took away this idea 'we cannot talk to Republicans' or whatever. She realized we had to keep both sides going. She then quickly went to the Loyalist. So I think she was critical. But there was a whole range of very important people who had leadership roles. We had the Vital Voices, you had the Women's Coalition, but women didn't actually have to come together to work together. So it was a silent movement pushed towards change in the community (Gadd 2014, 14).

Margaret Richie emphasizes the pivotal role women played in community change.

I would say that you had in the Women's Coalition, and that was really a call from the heart, from women generally, that they wanted to be represented. Because if you took the Belfast and I suppose the Derry situation, women were very much at the fulcrum of political and community change, and they felt they had something to contribute to negotiations (Ritchie 2014, 5).

Monica McWilliams is certain women were vital to the success of the negotiations and the quality of the agreement. She explains three ways women positively influenced the peace process.

Well I think that women are good at three things; they pay attention to the process and they ask who's at the table, who's not at the table, they ask how can we make this a better process, what do we need to do to make it a

sensitive process, what do we need to do in terms of making it an inclusive process, not just in terms of combatants but in terms of civic society and others. Who do we need to reach out to, they're creative, they're courageous, they're imaginative, they take risks, they're funny, they're colourful. Process. Then I think interests, I think women have specific interests that often men take not a blind bit of attention to, but which turn out to be absolutely crucial for peace building. A perfect example of that was our own agreement over issues of victims and education, mixed housing, civic forum, community development, work for young people, the right of women to be in politics, public decision making - those are all words I'm lifting directly from the agreement that wouldn't have been in the agreement if we'd not been there. And then we also work pretty well, we are good on other issues that have to do with sustainable peace, not just for the short term but for the long term. Yes, we engaged in the release of prisoners and stood up for that issue. We also looked at the issue of reparations for victims and reconciliation, and the legacy of the past. So there are issues that wouldn't be put in, that should be put in, that men could put in but they don't think of as relevant. And there are gender specific issues that only women think of. So there's the process, second there's the set of interests, the third is women work extremely hard to implement what they have agreed. They work really hard to enforce the peace because they know more than anybody the price that they're going to pay…So I think women are not just not there for the adrenaline surge, they're there because they see there's a prize of peace that's really worth working for. Even in moments of despair when they're frustrated and fearful and they know nothing but failure, those are the moments they know to support each other, and help each other through (McWilliams 2014, 15–16).

The Female Republican stressed the benefit of women's participation and the need to increase their present involvement.

Absolutely, absolutely, yes. I think that it would be good to see more women involved, and it's back to the point again when you come into institutional politics, I don't think it's conducive to attracting more women (Female republican 2014, 10).

For Lesley Carroll, the positive nature of women's leadership can be seen throughout the conflict and peace. She believes men are not ready or able to recognize their contributions.

I think there is an unpreparedness for men to admit that women did, but I think that they did. I think the Women's Coalition is the key, kind of coalescing of a whole lot of stuff into the dialogue at the time of the Agreement. But the Women's Coalition wouldn't have been what it was without unknown work at all sorts of levels, in all sorts of ways. I think of Pax Christi, there was Ruth in Restoration Ministries, there was Kate Kelly in the Belfast Action Team and 'Making Belfast Work'. There was Community Dialogue Roisin McDonagh was involved there. There was the

Women's Information Group and people like Kathleen Feenan. There were all sorts of women doing all sorts of things that people will say 'Yeah? And? So what?' But without all of that foundation I don't think the Women's Coalition would've been what it was (Carroll 2014).

Women made significant impacts at many levels according to Bronagh Hinds. She stresses they influenced the process and terms of agreement in many critical ways.

Yes, it did. I don't think we can overstate it. There are big players and there are small players, but I think it had an impact on the dynamic. I think we set out specifically to try and create relationships between people and it certainly had an impact on the content. Perhaps in the design of some of the big picture content you know, because we had to discuss that as much as anything else, the institutions and arrangements. Certainly we were asked on occasion to develop some ideas and concepts around what might work. I think, what might work in the North/South arrangements that would be acceptable to everyone would have been one of the things, but also in the context of, which was I would say, underdeveloped in our agreement compared to some other peace agreements, but the content that matters to people. And some of the content that matters to people wouldn't have been there without the Women's Coalition. So victim's issues were going to be there, integrated education, references to community development, references to the advancement of women in public life, full and equal political participation of women (Hinds 2014a, 18–19).

Have women leaders been appropriately recognized, have their contributions been sufficiently included in the story of conflict and peace?
Participants were unanimous in their belief that women had not been appropriately recognized for their peacebuilding leadership, and not sufficiently included in the region's history.

Dawn Purvis says women have struggled for recognition and involvement because of the patriarchal culture.

Not usually, not usually. I feel women have to fight their way to the front constantly to say 'woo hoo, here I am, do you remember this, do you remember what I did?' And I remember actually the Northern Ireland Women's Political Forum during the referendum campaign when it was the Yes camp and the No camp and the media were just loving this battle between yes and no. And the Women's Political Forum issued a statement saying all of these political parties together and we are all campaigning for a yes vote and it was all of the political parties except the DUP and none of the media ran with, they never, it was a good story, it was a positive story, it

was here are women that have come together, that have discussed the agreement that are pro the Good Friday Agreement and are campaigning for a Yes vote – they didn't carry it. So we protested outside the BBC and protested outside UTV and there was a snippet somewhere, you know. So again, it's women fighting their way through to the front to say 'notice us, listen to us, see us, hear us, we're visible as part of this.' But you struggle when a lot of the structures of society are very patriarchal and media is male dominated and political parties are male dominated. So I think women often have to fight their way to the front (Purvis 2014b, 17).

In a lengthy response, Roisin McGlone surveys the many 'critical' and 'unseen' leading roles women had during the conflict and peace.

No, no I don't. What I mean by that is they weren't *allowed* to. I only met one woman that was in the UDA. I don't know any women that were in the UVF. So we are talking about the conflict now. Women weren't in the police. Women in the IRA carried the arms, and the men carried out whatever they were involved with, and the women carried the guns away. So they were stereotyped within the combatants. Women weren't allowed to carry guns in the police…But the women were the ones that went to the prisons, and brought up the parcels. I have great admiration for those women. I think they played an absolutely *critical* role for the community, in terms of community organizations because so many of the men were either in prison or on the run. So women were *absolutely* critical. Looking in on it you wouldn't think it, but they were. The reason we're in the mess we are in is because women haven't played a more important role in politics. There are individual women who have had an impact, and then you have all the working class women on the grounds that have carried through…In terms of the community they had a silent role, or an unseen role or unheard role, which was keeping families together and keeping communities together. I think they did that very, very well. When the war started to come to an end in 1998, the men then moved from being the combatants into those roles, the community roles, and moved back into the families. In some cases, for every one person in jail there were three on the run. So women brought up the communities, but it was all unseen and unheralded (McGlone 2014, 16–17).

In the story of peace Joan Carson believes 'women lost out'.

No, I don't think the Ulster Unionist women were acknowledged for the fact that they were peacemakers. Fermanagh and South Tyrone is a very rural constituency, many isolated houses. Women were there, keeping house, getting children out of school. They were doing tremendous work. I don't think that work was ever recognised. I think at the level of the peace talks I think the women that came in, like the Women's Coalition, I don't think that they ever will get recognition. I feel women lost out (Carson 2014, 14).

Marie McNeice credits women with being the 'initiators of the peace'.

I would go so far as to say that they (women) probably were the initiators of peace here, simply because they went against their own feelings really and reactions to hold that space…You know there they were holding that space and three, four years later there was a movement. That to me is the importance of holding that space. It's like that's the reason you hold a space. Because it isn't an empty space, it's a living space that something is actually living and growing in. You don't see it, but it makes itself known at some point. I think they did that at great cost to themselves. They did that, so I see them really as initiators of the peace. I don't care what anybody says (McNeice 2014, 10).

For Debbie Donnelly, women played essential roles to create and sustain peace,

and they have not been well acknowledged.

Absolutely not. And I suppose the question is the extent to which women wish to be acknowledged for the role and the work they have done. For many it has been and continues to be at the coalface within communities and within families and for many, many women it's what they do, it's just how they do things and what they do. But there has been virtually no acknowledgement of the importance of that role and one can only imagine if that broke down. If we didn't have it. What would our societies and communities look like? There hasn't been anywhere near a significant or sufficient acknowledgement of the role that women have played in acquiring peace and sustaining the peace (Donnelly 2014, 9).

No, they don't. Because we're a male-dominated, conservative with a small 'c', patriarchal society still. Don't let anybody disabuse you of that. (Clarke-Glass 2014, 21)

Not enough, they definitely don't get factored in enough because I think men will, has been, and will always be seen as leaders before women. Maybe it's back to the one where I said they seem as though they could give all their time to one thing, and many people think, as I said to you earlier 'How could she do that?' They think of women, 'well she has a home, she has a family, how could she be giving enough to the job?' Maybe that's it, if you know what I mean? I think people think that about women. (Beattie 2014, 13)

Bernie Kelly believes women leaders working behind the scenes and at the

grassroots level to make change get overlooked. She highlights the impressive

work of two female school principals during the Holy Cross dispute as examples

of the value of their contributions.

I would think that they (women leaders) were, from the Peace people on really but it was a lot of the time behind the scenes work. I think that they were a factor and I don't think that they've always been given the credit that they should. But I think that there have always been women working behind the scenes. Whether it's the trade union movement or whatever, there have always been women working at grass roots level…At the time,

say, of the Holy Cross dispute, there were two very inspirational women, Betty Orr, the Principal of Edenbrook Primary School in the Shankill here, and Anne Tanney (both are now retired) she was in the Holy Cross School, and they worked very closely together. Both showed great leadership, both had very different styles, but very good leadership. At a real crisis point in their community they were really quite impressive. They just tried to make their schools a safe haven for the pupils and not let all that was going on enter in to the school. They refused to become pawns in the bigger picture, so they were very good. I remember definitely being very impressed with both of them (Kelly 2014, 5).

Women 'were at the table and made it work', but Monica McWilliams believes they do not receive recognition for their peace leadership.

No, not at all. They're actually more acknowledged internationally and outside of the country than they are here. I think it's for two reasons, I think the British Government have never really acknowledged the role of women here because it would have meant they would have to highlight the fact that there was a 30 year old conflict in their own back yard. So under UNSC 1325 they've never acknowledged that this was an internal armed conflict. They saw it as a criminal wave of violence. The political ideological conflict is not something that they have focused on. Yes, the second one is internally in Northern Ireland the parties don't really pay much attention to it because they see other things as having made the process work. You never ever hear them talk about the fact that women were at the table and made it work (McWilliams 2014, 21).

Jean Orr is certain that women made significant contributions, but the patriarchal society gives them no recognition.

No I don't. This is such a patriarchal bloody society, as you know. So I'm not surprised that women's voices have been silenced. And the few that you could name have really had to struggle. I mean, the way the Women's Coalition was treated in the Assembly was appalling. It was so sexist. I think women kept the show on the road. Internment is before your time, but all those women who were married to guys going in and out of jail, the widows, you look at the number of deaths, and the number of young men within those deaths. You had all their mothers, all their wives. You look at the figures, women have suffered –I know the men died and that's a big suffering too of course- but women were left to pick up the pieces, pick up the families, and they did. Because women do that! What other option, one could say, did they actually have? But there was very little support and of course, they were largely working class. Now some women were complicit in some horrendous murders and stuff like that. But the ordinary--I think May Blood makes this point very strongly--it was the ordinary women who kept it all going together, and the nurses (Orr 2014, 10).

The Female Republican believes women are 'written out of history'. She had this to say about the recognition women receive for their peace leadership:

> Not enough. I think in history women are written out or at least are given a footnote and there's always a sense that women have to fight to get in there and be recognized a lot of the time. Women are hidden a lot and in a lot of ways their traditional role was seen, whether it's right or wrong, their traditional role was seen as supporting and raising families and doing all of that. But even when women were active, I'm just thinking for example of the women, Republican ex-prisoners, they certainly wouldn't have got the same attention, for want of a better word, as the men. They don't have the same profile. And it's just the way it works, there's proportionately less women in politics and it's male dominated. I don't think the role of women is always fully recognized but, is that something that aggravates me on a daily basis, no-- you just get on with it (Female republican 2014).

Bronagh Hinds emphatically says no.

> No, no, no. I don't think it has been sufficiently and I mean that at every level. I mean the Women's Coalition, I think it's valued outside NI, but not so much here. I think the women, the work that was done by women in grassroots communities, the work that was done by the Women's Information Group in grassroots communities which was the heart of where some of the people came from to fight, and they continued to meet throughout the conflict in those estates, time after time, together in a cross community way. All of that is remarkable. The joint work that women's centres did, the work that the community and voluntary sector did, much of that was led by women (Hinds 2014a, 20).

May Blood states: 'if the true story of Northern Ireland ever gets to be written, it will be about women.'

> No, no. I think they should but I don't think they do. I think they should because at the time, certainly in the 90s, we were at a very vulnerable time here. In the early nineties it was particularly vicious. We went into the ceasefires. I have to tell you straight up, I really believe that the ceasefires and all those kind of things would never have happened if it hadn't have been for women. I think on the ground, women were saying, we've had enough. I think our politicians would still be in the state they were in the early 90s if they hadn't recognized the community was moving on ahead of them. And community today is still moving on ahead of them, still taking issues forward. But you are quite right, and I very often say this, if the true story of Northern Ireland ever gets to be written, it will be about women (Blood 2014, 12–13).

Conclusion

This presentation of interview responses intentionally included very little commentary or analysis. The knowledge and perspectives of these leading women warrant this dedication of space. In the next chapter I critically assess the interview material presented here using the theoretical framework of transformational leadership and peacebuilding discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 6: The Transforming Nature of Women's Peace Leadership in Northern Ireland

> I have had the privilege of spending a lifetime at the service of warm strong women, who challenged injustice not just for themselves but for the people and communities they cared for and whose only affirmation has been that of their own conscience. (Inez McCormack, *BBC News* 2010)

This chapter draws together theoretical discussions in the previous chapters to assess the interview material presented in Chapter 6. Theories of transforming leadership and conflict transformation indicate the nature and location of women's leadership represents a highly valuable resource for social change (J. M. Burns 2003; Boulding 1995; Brock-Utne 1989; Bass and Riggio 2006; Lederach and Lederach 2010). Developments in the study of leadership and peace have moved away from directive, hierarchical styles to more collaborative, democratic approaches. There is a growing emphasis on the participation of women, gender dynamics, and community development in peaceful transition. Using models of transformative leadership and peacebuilding, it is possible to examine the data for deeper and more expansive understandings of women's leadership. The discussion in this chapter is centered on three primary questions:

- Does the data fill gaps in knowledge about women's leadership in Northern Ireland?
- What distinctions are revealed in the interview discussions of women's leadership? What transformative characteristics are evident in their leading work for peaceful change?
- What positive contributions have women leaders and women's leadership made to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland?

Fill the gaps in knowledge about women's leadership

This research analyzes a neglected dimension of the Northern Ireland peace process - women's peacebuilding leadership. As was made clear in earlier chapters, most of the existent political and historical scholarship fails to account for women's leadership as a contributing factor to the development of peace (McWilliams 1995; O'Rourke 2015; Roulston and Davies 2000; Rooney 2006; Ward 2006; Women's Resource and Development Agency 2008). The disregard of

women's leadership is 'exacerbated' by the minimal focus on gender inequalities in the 'analysis of the conflict and in the processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding' (A. M. Gray and Neill 2011, 483–484). This research addresses these interpretive gaps by expanding what is known about the nature and extent of women's peacebuilding leadership with a transformational analysis of material collected through in-depth interviews.

While not exhaustive, I believe this to be the first comprehensive record of the women who led the peace in Northern Ireland. The names of women leaders documented here are drawn from many disparate sources. Among those featured are notable figures from across community and civil society, the fifteen women elected to the Forum and Negotiations in 1996, female members of the political party talks delegations, women serving as senior UK, Ireland, and US government officials, and the female MLAs of the first Northern Ireland Assembly.

The study participants are a small group drawn from across this rich leadership landscape. As Lederach and others suggest, it is important to acknowledge the multiple levels at which leadership is exercised. Women's leadership roles can be found throughout community, civil society and political arenas. Women leaders are activists, change makers and thought leaders motivated by a sense of responsibility to meaningfully contribute to a more peaceful Northern Ireland. It is not surprising that most remain actively engaged in leadership roles promoting peaceful change in Northern Ireland and in the world's other conflict zones.

The interview data underscores that 1994-2000 was an exceptionally hopeful and exciting period, offering unprecedented opportunities for women leaders. Many leaders overcame obstacles and risks to seize the opportunity presented by the ceasefires, mobilize the extensive network of women activists and groups, and participate in shaping a lasting peace. As elected and appointed participants in the 1996 Forum and Negotiations, they did what no women had done before, and few have since achieved.

The diversity, extent and impact of women's peacebuilding leadership is much greater than is commonly acknowledged. The interviews confirm that women

played leading roles promoting a broad spectrum of peacebuilding activities and initiatives. These women view their own work and that of other women as contributing to the leadership of peaceful change. And yet, many participants report their work is invisible, obscured by cultural norms, gender bias and the low status of community based work. Most do not seek or want individual recognition as leaders, but believe women's leadership has been disregarded as an important contributing feature of the peace process. They perceive many people and organizations to be unwilling or unable to recognize women as leaders, or acknowledge the value of women as peacebuilding partners.

The Distinctiveness of Women's Leadership: Transformational leadership in Practice

Are transformative models and attributes evident in the way women practiced leadership in their peacebuilding work? The work of Burns, Bass and Riggio, introduced in chapter 2, is a critical framework for this analysis. Transformational leaders inspire followers to work together toward a shared vision and goals, challenge them to be innovative problem solvers, and empower their leadership capacity with mentorship and support to achieve superior results for the common good. These leaders inspire high levels of effort and achievement from their groups and organizations. They behave in ways that 'motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible' including 'helping followers to develop their own leadership potential' (Bass and Riggio 2006, 4–5) For example they can be observed to be 'developing and articulating a vision, providing a positive role model, inspiring and empowering others to look beyond their self-interest, maintaining trusting relationships with peers, displaying empathy, and demonstrating initiative and courage' (2006, 28–29). Transformational leadership is primarily 'about issues around the processes of transformation and change' (2006, 225). The discussion in Chapter Two referred to studies which provided evidence that women are especially effective as transforming leaders, and that their transforming approaches are particularly important to promote social justice.

To assess the transformative quality of leadership practiced by the participants, I will compare their practices and perceptions with the four interdependent components of transformational leadership formulated by Bass (1997):

> *Idealized influence* refers to leaders' ability to display conviction, emphasize trust, present their most important values, and highlight the importance of purpose, commitment, and ethical consequences of decisions. In this context, leaders are admired as role models. As such they generate pride, loyalty, and confidence, in addition to mobilizing support for a common cause.
>
> *Inspirational motivation* concerns leaders' ability to articulate an appealing vision of the future, challenge followers with high standards, express enthusiasm, and provide encouragement.
>
> *Intellectual stimulation* relates to the following leadership capabilities: to question existing assumptions, traditions, and beliefs; to stimulate others to adopt new perspectives and behavior patterns; and to encourage expression of new ideas and reasoning.
>
> *Individualized consideration* involves leaders' ability to deal with others as individuals, and provide personalized coaching and mentoring.

In the discussion that follows, I use relevant examples from the interview material presented in the previous chapter to demonstrate the transformative characteristics of the participant's leadership styles and approaches.

1. Idealized influence

All the women interviewed discussed a deep sense of commitment to their communities and determination to make a positive contribution to peaceful change. Their participation as leaders involved taking risks, facing uncertainty, overcoming obstacles, and demonstrating to others that innovative approaches could succeed. Many pioneered roles, established new organizations, created initiatives and were the first or only women in their institutions. Marie McNeice was one example of this, displaying faith and persistence in the development of support services for victims and survivors. What began as a small team of women taking initiative to address the grief and trauma of victims has grown into the

WAVE Trauma Centre providing comprehensive services at five locations across Northern Ireland. She says,

> 'In hindsight again I actually see the importance of that, particularly in community leadership where people come and go. Actually holding the space is, I think, of vital importance' (McNeice 2014).

Similarly, Jean Orr was an innovator in her leading work in developing the School of Nursing at Queens University Belfast, creating opportunities for women in health care and shaping the delivery of high quality health services during the violent conflict. As the first and only female head of school, she was leading change on many levels within the institution and in the wider community.

> 'But as Head of School, I think the only female head of school at that stage, I got to sit on all these other committees, which was very useful and powerful...We brought in all the colleges of nursing together in 1996. So overnight we went from about thirty staff to about three hundred and something, and like 3500 students overnight, literally overnight. (Orr 2014, 1–2)

As well as being innovators, many women discussed their commitment to ethical behavior, fairness, and positive regard as central to their leadership style. This principled and participatory ethos is described well by Ann McVicker,

> 'I know that other people see that with the experience that I have and experience maybe that they've had working with me in particular projects or that, there's big expectations of me here. The way that I work is fair, it's transparent, it's trying to get people to be participative' (McVicker 2014, 20).

2. Inspirational motivation

<u>Articulating and promoting vision</u>

Nearly all the participants discussed the value of a shared vision of the future, the need to articulate, 'hold' and act in accordance with this vision as integral to their leadership. This was clear in Bernie Kelly's words,

> The vision for that trauma centre was not just dealing with clinical stuff, but more a community development approach. So I was really trying to improve clinical services, you know, get counselors, psychologists etc. I was also trying to work with community groups to provide a continuum of care, a lot of self-help stuff, and some counseling services, advice, and advocacy services. I was very focused

on getting that started because it was very clear that there was an awful lot of damaged people there (Kelly 2014, 7).

Articulating vision was also central to Marie MacNeice,

I think the leadership role, if you could call it that, is that listening role, that listening for the next step, or holding the vision of what it could be (McNeice 2014, 3).

However, some women recognized that although they were inspired by visions of a peaceful society, this is still something lacking in the political situation overall. As Montague said,

One of the big pieces that is missing here in our situation and why we're still (transitioning) is that there is no shared vision of what the peaceful future looks like. We can't get round the question of marches, we can't get round the question of parades and flags, and we can't get round the question about how to we acknowledge the victims. That's all part, you know. If we had a vision of the future and we could work backwards from that, we could answer those questions (Montague 2014, 16).

Promoting communication

Women leaders proved to be very adept at ensuring communication systems were maintained among the networks. Many women developed communication systems designed to keep people informed, dispel rumors, challenge misunderstandings, calm fears, share progress, and generate confidence throughout the intensity of the violence and transition. Dawn Purvis stressed this in her interview,

I think communication was really important and again, I come back to this issue about people being or feeling that they're being kept in the loop or out of the loop because we'd talked a lot about having a weekly newsletter or sending out information...there was a real strong desire for constituencies and branches to know what was going on and what was happening in the talks (Purvis 2014b, 14).

The determination to keep lines of communication open was a key facet of women's approach to leadership. McGlone talked about the very practical ways she adopted in ensuring communication channels were open,

What happened was the mobile phone network would meet every Friday. I decided that I would bring them food, get them food. These people were volunteers and I thought well the least we can do is feed them every

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Friday. So we would come together and talk about the incidents that happened during the week, what riots, who attacked who, what they done about it. And we'd do it over a meal. At our heyday there would have been thirty people in the room (McGlone 2014, 22).

3. Intellectual stimulation

Building and working through networks

Women leaders demonstrated great skill in building and sustaining networks across deep divisions. This infrastructure enabled creative responses to social deprivation, violence and political exclusion over many decades. What was particularly inspiring was that women were able to find ways to link and sustain networks, even across pervasive divides. The story told in the interviews by McVicker of how women's groups supported each other and formed a network to protest the withdrawal of funding is a case in point,

> Belfast City Council had withdrawn the Falls Women's Centre's funding. So we actually came out in support of Falls Women's Centre so they withdrew our funding too. And then Ballybeen Women's Centre, and Castlereagh had their funding withdrawn. So we realised that we needed, we needed to come together. We needed to be all singing from the same hymn sheet. And we set up the Women's Support Network and that's how the Women's Support Network came about (McVicker 2014, 6).

Women in communities adopted non-hierarchical ways of engaging in peacebuilding by collaborative networking, as Monica explained,

> What we did was to work through the networks, where the women were, in the women's centres, and women's groups and women's organisations. I always say there was a pre-existing network already in place so it made our job easy. All we had to do was go out and contact them and invite them in (McWilliams 2014, 3–4).

Fostering dialogue, facilitating conversations

In line with expectations around transformational leadership, facilitating dialogue and communication between adversaries and across divisions was central to the work of all those interviewed. Most women described an element of leadership as facilitating conversations between those who couldn't or wouldn't speak directly to each other. This critical work was necessarily hidden, secretive and highly sensitive requiring extraordinary trust and diplomacy. It was also highly risky,

stressful and isolating for those involved. Many examples arose in the interviews

of women facilitating dialogue when it was difficult or even dangerous to do so:

> The other area, because these welfare organizations were meeting, some of these organizations were very keen on the peace process. When they met in our offices they had a *rare* chance to talk about how they were getting on. I knew the peace process was happening about 6 or 7 years before it started (Gadd 2014, 2).

> We also in that first year worked behind the scenes with Sinn Féin, encouraging them to come into the talks. Oh we were meeting with Gerry Adams' right-hand person, Siobhan O'Hanlon on a frequent basis…The principle of inclusion meant we'd try to work with people who are outside the talks as well as people who are inside (McWilliams 2014, 7).

There was also a sense that women were in a position to facilitate such

dialogues because they were considered outsiders to the political elites and

to the violence. As Montague explained,

> Moving towards the ceasefires, there was a lot of sensitive meetings held through Quakers and particularly with women representatives simply because men couldn't come into the room. It wasn't safe enough. But women could (Montague 2014, 1).

<u>Challenging assumptions, changing practices, building understanding</u>

Many women discussed their work as agents of change, daring to participate

and speak in unconventional ways. They believed they had a contribution to

make and wanted to be involved in transforming society through their work.

Donnelly, Gadd and Carr are good examples:

> That was when I began to be aware of the contribution I could make. As a woman and a Catholic, I was different. It was not typical to be visible in these sectors…Risky, yes, but it was the right thing to do. I wasn't always greeted well by the audience. But I was able to challenge assumptions…A key part of the work is identifying gaps and change points. It is about system development. My role was not a passive one. My role and approach to work was to be actively involved in change (Donnelly 2014, 1).

> Again from the mid 1980s, if not earlier, in response to our work in prisons and in the community, we dramatically changed the way we worked. For example, one of our strategic vision statements was 'working in partnership with the community.' We were one of the first public bodies to say that. That meant that at the time, out of the 9 million pound budget, 1 million pound was spent on buying in community programs…(Gadd 2014, 1).

We saw politicians having conversations behind closed doors and wanted to ensure that people on the ground, from across all the divided communities, understood what our Agreement was all about and could hear one another on the difficult, challenging issues like policing, parading, sectarianism and identity. These were very quiet, very in-depth, very challenging processes to help people who had hurt, were devastated, even full of hate, to come together with the aim of building understanding and ease with difference (Carr 2014b, 1).

4. Individualized consideration

It was intriguing that although most of the women struggled to identify female role models who had inspired them, without exception, all the participants viewed the training and empowerment of other women as central to their leadership and the development a capacity for peaceful change within society. Many women worked to encourage women (and men) within their organizations and promote women's leadership in the wider community. They describe the need to inspire confidence, develop political skills, create opportunities, and enlist participation of individuals and groups. The following quotes from Carson, Hinds and Bell are all good examples of this,

I would encourage women. I would still see my role as encouraging women. If a woman within the party does anything, I would always make a point of encouraging her and saying 'Well done.' On a personal level I thought that women weren't recognised for being the achievers within the constituencies, and that they needed to be recognised (Carson 2014, 10).

One is we would have been one of the leading organisations in building community leadership and building working partnerships with people from different parts of the community, in working in leadership together. So we ran the first kind of accredited community development and community leadership programmes, community relations programmes in the Ulster People's College. We established a community training partnership where we designed with leading community-based organisations the kind of leadership training that they needed (Hinds 2014a, 1).

In 1993 I decided I would become General Secretary. I had worked very closely by that stage with women in the community groups. We worked together and tried to make them more politicized. Because I realized that you were going nowhere if you didn't…(E. Bell 2014, 3).

Women as Transformational Leaders

On the basis of the analysis and examples above I would assert that the women in this study demonstrate leadership behaviors and attitudes characteristic of transformational leadership. The approaches they describe as important to effective leading of social and political change involve one or more of the core components outlined by Bass. These results are consistent with the growing body of evidence that finds women are more likely to use transformational leadership styles and approaches, and to use them more effectively than men. Further their expertise and location in civil society is highly relevant to peacebuilding.

Two other aspects of transformational leadership are worthy of further discussion. The use of collective approaches and the significance of role models are of integral importance and are among the distinctive features of women's leadership revealed through the interviews.

The women interviewed described leadership as being collective, relational, democratic, participatory and team-based. This is consistent with Burns' belief that transforming leaders and followers work collectively to make lasting, comprehensive change. In the process people, situations and group structures are also transformed. 'Transforming change transforms people *and* their situations' and 'flows from the collective achievement of a "great people"'(2003). He promotes collective approaches and interactive styles that enrich followers by raising aspirations, empowering capacity, and sustaining the momentum necessary for purposeful social change. As Burns describes, transformative leaders,

> 'raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality….Power bases are linked not as counter-weights but as mutual support for a common purpose' (J. Burns 1978, 20).

Bass and Riggio (2006) find that leaders are transformational if their work 'inspires followers with challenge and persuasion', providing 'meaning and understanding' and the support needed for their enhanced participation in the collective achievement. Many of the women interviewed valued this collective leadership approach and attribute it to being an approach more effectively used by women than men. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is congruent with the

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extensive research conducted by Eagly and colleagues (Eagly and Johnson 1990; Eagly and Carli 2003; Eagly, Hohannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen, M. L. 2003) that finds women as a group to be more likely and better transformational leaders. Most relevant for collective approaches, Bass and Riggio cite research that finds gender balance is essential for transformational leadership 'rather than the traditional leadership stereotype of masculinity' (2006, 123). In these mixed gender contexts transformational leader behaviors are more widely accepted and 'this allows female leaders to more freely display this leadership style' (2006, 122).

In *Peacebuilding in Traumatized Societies*, Hart examines the transformative power of collective peacebuilding leadership, and argues it 'builds peace most effectively and strengthens the social fabric after violent conflicts.' He finds

> Peacebuilding leadership, in this *collective* sense of citizens working in partnership with their leaders, helps lift a community or an entire society of people to new levels of relationship, well-being and overall social, political, economic and human security (2008, 123).

Hart is concerned by the 'abuse and exclusion' suffered by women in violent conflicts and urges this 'be changed into an awareness of the social and professional skills (including leadership) women bring to their communities and societies' (2008, 116).

Collective approaches feature prominently in the interview discussions of leadership. Many women resist or reject traditional notions of leadership that focus on individuals, momentous occasions, elite levels of hierarchies, militaristic approaches, and 'masculine' styles. There is a strong discomfort with a focus on their individual roles and contributions as being noteworthy. Instead they praise the work of other women with who they shared leadership, and the collective impact of women leaders across society. When asked about their own leadership approaches, they described working in teams, being inclusive, sharing responsibility, using consensus decision-making, valuing diversity and accommodating differences. They viewed the use of these approaches as centrally important to community development, conflict resolution, and enlisting support

for peaceful change. For example the work of the NIWC was premised on this commitment as Bronagh noted,

> We developed an approach where you were always trying to find a solution that would accommodate differences…Because how on earth could we come out with solutions that were going to reach across warring political parties if we couldn't accommodate some of those things among ourselves with different political perspectives from the unionist to the nationalist/republican perspectives (Hinds 2014a, 14–15).

> I think that's one of the things, when you talk about leadership - and obviously people are leaders on whatever level - but it's also about the collective. It's about moving forward as a group of people and bringing people along with you and maybe cajoling people along with you at times…It's not about one person standing out there; it is about a collective leadership and that drive and moving people forward (Female republican 2014, 3–4).

> It is using about consensus leadership, you're not hierarchical…that for me is the key. If you're trying to take people on a journey of any kind, you can't drag them…You're walking alongside. And you're not necessarily at the back either because there is leadership needed. So you can't be right at the back, but you're walking alongside. And for me, that's the key. You've helped them articulate their vision. You don't create the vision for them (Montague 2014, 15).

Even in a situation where one person did find herself singled out as a leader because the political system expected that someone be identified as such, the commitment to collective leadership remained. This was McWilliams intention,

> So I was the designated leader (in 1996), although we tended not to use that term so much because we wanted every woman to see herself as a leader. We were very clear from the start that there wouldn't be one leader, that there would be many and we were a team. So I very rarely describe myself as the leader of the Coalition. I talk about myself as the co-founder of the Coalition, and the leader of the delegation that was at the peace talks. But as far as the team in the party was concerned, in the coalition there were many leaders (McWilliams 2014, 1).

An important element in the four transformational leadership components listed above is modelling positive behaviour, leading by example, inspiring innovation and adaption, and empowering new leaders. The experiences of violent conflict and peace can change the practice and perception of leadership. For some this shift is triggered by the way those around them emerge and operate as leaders. During the study period, women achieved significant firsts, held pioneering roles,

and their leadership helped to diversify and reform male-only arenas. The landscape of leadership featured many prominent women and groups as demonstrated in Tables 1-7. For many women, female role models were scarce or difficult to recall. A third of the study participants could not name any female role model. The most commonly named women were national and international leaders, including Mo Mowlam, Hilary Clinton, and Mary Robinson. Many were proud to acknowledge the guidance and support provided by their grandmothers, mothers and sisters. However, all those interviewed believed role models to be important resources that could have assisted their way forward. Most report they are now recognized as being sources of inspiration and support for others. As leading women they have become the visible models they did not have themselves. A list of the all the women named as role models and inspirational figures by the interview participants is provided in Table 6.

Many were working within changing organizations and actively working to foster reforms on multiple levels. Most saw change as an integral factor in their leading roles. Many women in the study reported working under extreme pressure, risking their own personal safety and that of their families, experiencing loneliness and isolation, having little or no peer support, and facing a gauntlet of rigid or resistant boundaries. Stepping out and into unconventional roles was often met with hostility, threats and violence. Nuala O'Loan is one of the pioneering leaders of this time. On the third anniversary of her appointment as the first Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, she reflected on the enormity of her new role. 'No other country in the world has a Police Ombudsman, so no one could tell the police, the public, my staff or me what to expect when it all began in November 2000' (O'Loan 2003).

Women's leadership and sustainable peace

Contemporary understandings of peacebuilding bring the variety of practices and approaches women use into focus. There is ample evidence in the literature that women leaders are valuable agents of change, and their expertise as peace builders expands the capacity of divided societies to negotiate political settlement and transition to peace (Boulding 1995; Boulding 2001; Brock-Utne 1989; Brock-Utne 1985; Anderlini 2003). To recall chapter 3, Brock-Utne (1985)

argues for a comprehensive definition of peace that integrates feminist perspectives on structural violence and engages the global history of women's peace work. Her work documents the 'special roles women play in the creation of peace' and how this peacebuilding work is systematically made invisible by patriarchal mechanisms in society. In related work, Boulding argues peace is both a culture and a capacity that must be developed. 'Peace, like war,' she explains, 'is a social invention' (1995, 436). She argues that the 'inventiveness' of women's peace leadership is generated through their unique lived experiences and reflected in an expansive scope of work. She finds a key distinction of women's peace work that it is holistic, involving community development, education, and conflict resolution initiatives that combine to cultivate a 'culture of peace'. Like Brock-Utne and others, Boulding (2001) argues that it is the inherent bias of our social structures that constrains women's peacebuilding leadership and as a result the capacity to develop lasting peace.

John Paul Lederach identifies the value of relational networks that provide strength and resilience to divided communities in his many works on sustainable peace and reconciliation. He has documented a robust community infrastructure made of interwoven layers of constituencies as a characteristic of Northern Ireland society. He finds this resilient 'cross-stitching of communities' generated through 'webs of people, relationships and activities' provided a powerful stabilizing infrastructure key to the development of sustainable peace.

> When I look back across the history of the Troubles it is my contention that the single most important aspect that made the processes of transformation stick and overcome considerable obstacles in the 1990s-2000s as opposed to similar efforts that collapsed at various points in the earlier three decades is found in the community based webs of people, relationships, and activities that were not nearly so robustly present in earlier timeframes (Lederach 2007: 8).

To Lederach, a healthy vigorous community sector is of primary importance and it generates the capacity for peaceful change. This is a progressive move away from the linear, hierarchical pyramid model he previously used to identify levels of leadership important for reconciliation in divided societies (1997b, 39). The expansive community-based model brings women and the power of

their peacebuilding leadership into full view. In his latest work, Lederach argues that 'the leadership of women, is absolutely necessary for cultivating a just peace' (2010, 158). He sharply criticizes peacebuilding literature that 'scarcely accounts for or simply fails to give credit to women who have, by *intentional design*, imagined a way to work for the healing of their communities.' These essentialist perspectives fail to acknowledge 'the enormous resource of women's particular approaches to reconciliation, which are translatable across the borders of gender, culture and nationality' (2010, 168).

Building on theories like these and the advocacy of women's movements, international commitments like UNSC 1325 that imply that women must be protected from gendered violence in conflict but must also be integral to peacebuilding as participants with unique perspectives, have come into existence. However, most peace processes tend to remain very hierarchical and elite driven, with women not recognized or involved as leaders. As discussed throughout this thesis though, when a transformational understanding of leadership is adopted, women emerge as effective peacebuilding leaders who are adept at facilitating dialogue, building cross-community coalitions, and creating spaces for problem solving.

The women of this study discuss a range of interwoven activities involved in social change, peacebuilding, and political transition. As highlighted above, these collective approaches are grounded in the constructive dialogue and relationships needed to generate solutions and address urgent community needs. Their peacebuilding leadership encompasses a broad spectrum of community development, education, healthcare, conflict resolution, and civil rights work. Mary Montague describes this holistic approach as 'intertwining' what others view as separate and distinct practices. She explains, 'We often describe our methodology as being intertwining between community development, mediation and peacebuilding work' (Montague 2014, 7). As leaders, these women were working to change attitudes, challenge stereotypes, and cultivate new thinking about the causes of conflict and prospects for peace.

As Bríd Rodgers says, 'I was part of something trying to change attitudes and mind sets in Northern Ireland, from the old fashioned traditional view to a more complex view of a complex situation'(Rodgers 2014, 10). Regardless of their role and focus, these women were motivated by urgent unmet community needs, the personal and social impacts of violence, and a determination to create a more equitable, democratic and peaceful society. Their leadership histories extend well beyond the limited study period and involve work through the various stages of the peace process.

Barriers to women's leadership: Gendered notions and inequalities

It is undoubtedly the case that while women in Northern Ireland and elsewhere can be identified as transformative leaders there are still many barriers to this being recognized and utilized for effective peacebuilding. Partly this issue stems from a theme in the literature discussed in Chapter 2 - the power of social norms to shape understandings of leadership and leading roles for women. Leadership scholar Amanda Sinclair explains,

> 'Our understanding of leadership and our recognition of who has it are embedded in broader social relations, springing from our early experiences and our socialized expectations of leaders (Sinclair 2005, 34).

Sinclair believes leadership to be a relationship and a primary role of leaders to 'inspire or mobilize others to extend their capacity to imagine, think and act in positive new ways' (Sinclair 2007, xvi). She explains many women have difficulty identifying female role models and says this not about women's capacity and effectiveness, but rather the scarcity of women in visible leadership positions. Gendered notions of leadership as male behavior screen out influential women and the organizations they lead. Begoña Aretxaga discusses the constraining influence of traditional cultural identities that limit leadership opportunities and complicate participation for women in Northern Ireland. Stories of male heroism fuel a mythology that is notable for the absence of women actors, and these pervasive stories 'erase the historical agency of women in favor of individual male heroes'(1997, 80). As Porter, Cockburn and Chinkin argue women and their leadership are often hidden within civil society, linked to organizations not

traditionally valued as building leadership expertise, or focused on stereotypically 'low priority' community development issues. Traditional leadership and cultural norms train women (and men) to look for models among charismatic elites in elected positions or high-ranking posts, rather than to leaders and leadership groups within their own communities.

Research by Hunt and colleagues reports women peace leaders find traditional notions of leadership to be ill-fitting or incongruous with their own understandings and practices. In a study of over 100 female peace leaders from ten different conflict zones they found, 'Simply put, women do not always fit the predominant image of leaders in many segments of social experience' (Hunt, Amiri, and Edmunds 2000, 61). Ibarra, Ely and Kolb find leadership identity, self and perceived, to be especially problematic for women.

> Integrating leadership into one's core identity is particularly challenging for women, who must establish credibility in a culture that is deeply conflicted about whether, when, and how they should exercise authority. Practices that equate leadership with behaviors considered more common in men suggest that women are simply not cut out to be leaders. Furthermore, the human tendency to gravitate to people like oneself leads powerful men to sponsor and advocate for other men when leadership opportunities arise (2013, 63).

The women interviewed for this study encountered the idea that women do not fit the expected mold of leadership. As May Beattie said,

> ...I think men will, has been, and will always be seen as leaders before women. Maybe it's back to the one where I said they seem as though they could give all their time to one thing, and many people think, as I said to you earlier 'How could she do that?' They think of women, 'well she has a home, she has a family, how could she be giving enough to the job?' Maybe that's it, if you know what I mean? I think people think that about women (Beattie 2014, 13).

Not surprisingly, the women in this study did find traditional notions of leadership problematic and constrained. For several reasons they were uncomfortable identifying their own work as leadership or identifying themselves as leaders. Many women understand leadership as activity not identity; shared responsibility rather than individual achievement. Being a leader

is one of many changing roles within teams, groups and organizations engaged in 'acts of leadership' for peaceful change. They presented their own work within the context of teams and groups and thus resisted a focus on their individual roles. Some expressed discomfort with the 'leader' title. For example, Leslie Carroll expressed a hesitancy to be called a leader despite serving for decades as a prominent Presbyterian Minister in North Belfast. Instead she agreed she had demonstrated 'acts of leadership.' Jane Nelson robustly refused the leader title due the strong negative connotations she associates with militarized and violent hierarchical structures. She and others offered preferable words to describe their leading roles like activist, listener, facilitator, catalyst, or initiator. Still others weren't concerned about what to call the work they were doing, they 'just get on with it'. For these women, terminology, labels and status were far less important than getting results.

The participants discussed that women (and their work) are often invisible or unrecognized by men and the wider society. As 'others' they operated 'behind the scenes', 'off the radar', or were 'hidden' in their community-based roles. Some said this 'cloak of invisibility' was advantageous as they could move into, through and across dangerous spaces. Others perceived this to be a form of gender blindness that screens out women, women-led groups and their leading work. Some were surprised to learn their own personal discomfort with traditional leadership models was shared by many of their peers. Lesley Carroll surmised,

> So if you ask women have they played a part, they're more likely to be positive than if you ask them if they've been leaders? It's got to be something about our concept of leadership and what we want to be as leaders, or *not be* more importantly! (Carroll 2014, 18).

As Bríd Rodgers explains, 'I suppose like a lot of other women, you are working away all the time without thinking you are a leader, you know' (2014, 19).

The other obvious barrier to women's leadership is the continuation of gender inequality in relation to political power and recognition. In Northern Ireland the nature of politics has not been transformed in the post-agreement transition. The oppositional framework that dominates political discourse does not reflect an inclusive approach that prioritizes the participation of women. The construction

of politics around community loyalties gives little space for raising other forms of inequality. As discussed in Chapter 4, the obscuring focus on competing nationalisms has constrained the political space and 'yielded little to women of whatever tradition'. A hyper-masculine political system is unwilling or unprepared 'for contemplation of its gendered dimensions' (Wilford 1999, 196). There is a 'significant gap between a political commitment to the inclusion of women and practice on the ground'(Ward 2006, 283). As Wilson puts it, the post-agreement reality has a 'gulf between the "two communities" in Northern Ireland as wide as ever…and governance arrangements by no means adequate by democratic standards'(Wilson 2010, 4). Within the extensive study of Northern Ireland is a relatively minimal focus on gender inequalities which 'exacerbates' the omission of women's perspectives in the 'analysis of the conflict and in the processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding (A. M. Gray and Neill 2011, 483–484). Women have traditionally been absent from public roles in politics, and largely unseen at the highest levels of leadership within churches, business and the wider society. The traditionally conservative views shared by the Catholic and Protestant churches were equally inhospitable to feminism and women's rights.

> 'Sectarianism, and the construction of political and social life around community loyalties, has been a powerful force in maintaining women's subordination. A national identity based on religious affiliation has strengthened the Churches within both communities as a focus for their common interests (Sales 1997:4).

The Opsahl Commission discussed in Chapter 1 found compelling evidence that women represent 'the other divide' in Northern Ireland, a division they observed to be 'as deep as that between the Protestant and Catholic communities'. To strengthen the capacity for peaceful change, the authors urged expanded roles and support for women leaders, and called for actions to 'dismantle' political barriers that segregate women and men.

> While there is no simple relationship between women's political participation and the resolution of conflict, the experience of women's involvement in local community groups suggests that they could have an important contribution to make in the search for a political and constitutional settlement (Opsahl Report, 1993:85).

Bernadette McAliskey believes a Civic Forum and Bill of Rights to be 'essential pillars of peace-building' that would have established a critical 'framework for civic discussion' reaching 'beyond the competing interests of "Orange and Green" to strengthen peace and reconciliation efforts. Writing in 2014, McAliskey argues for a comprehensive peace building approach that actively promotes the interconnected tenants of human rights, democratic participation and equality.

> Integrating structures for the understanding, protection of human rights and access to local remedy resolving human rights disputes are at the heart of peace-building as is equal access to power, democracy, social and economic resources and opportunity.

The absence of these fundamental democratic structures, according to McAliskey, has meant the post-Agreement period has been 'no more than a non-militarized peace-keeping process, which is running out of time'(McAliskey 2014).

There was common understanding among the participants in this study that a culture of sexism existed in Northern Ireland. Many women listed gender bias and discriminatory practices among the barriers limiting their participation and that of women leaders generally. They understood gender bias was detrimental to how they were perceived, valued and treated as leaders. For example, Joan Carson of the UUP talks about the nature of political relations and discourse within the first post-agreement assembly in 1998. As an MLA, she found women of all parties were poorly treated as they were seen by many to be a homogenous group of unwelcome intruders. She saw sexist views had a detrimental affect on the behavior of men and women, undermining the productivity of the legislative body. I asked her if being a woman was part of her leadership experience.

> Very much so. In the first Assembly the men had a twitchy, bolshie feeling. They did not like women. We were all women. When the Women's Coalition stood up the men would start to moo, mostly DUP. I found that the women didn't work particularly well together. They did try at times, but they were very conscious of their own party issues. (Carson 2014, 5–6)

The Republican interviewee encountered similar sexism in the Assembly:

> But you could see, for example, when Bairbre de Brún was Health Minister, she got a hard time in the Assembly from the unionists on both counts, because she was a Shinner and because she was a woman. I think it was a

double dose. I remember the first time I was getting up to speak in the Assembly and some of the DUP ones trying to shout me down and I just shouted the louder. You know the way it goes through your head very quickly, I just thought I have to let these people see they're not going to intimidate me, and I just kept on talking as they were cat-calling and shouting, I just talked all the louder and just kept going (Female republican 2014, 9).

Transforming a negative situation into an advantage was one way women responded to the sexist treatment they received. Jane Morrice describes how she and the Women's Coalition exposed the worst male offenders to public scrutiny and gained community support for their cause.

The negative part was dealing with the difficulties of people accepting that a woman was equal. Whether it be in a domestic situation or in a professional situation. You know certainly in the early days of the Women's Coalition when you know we heard 'back to the kitchen' sort of stuff, the derision and the distain and that sort of thing was well, interestingly. I often turned that in our favour. Pearl and Monica were in the Forum and were being berated you know. All this was being shown on TV. So when I was out saying 'Vote for the Women's Coalition', people were responding 'of course we will, we see how you're treated.' So go on, keep going lads, you're just getting us votes. Because the world outside doesn't like what you're doing (Morrice 2014, 19).

In this study, participants were asked about their leadership approaches and many referenced perceived differences between women and men. Most believe there to be important differences in the way women and men understand and practice leadership. For example:

...at the end of the day, men look upon themselves within society as the leaders automatically. And they don't give, they don't acknowledge where women have been leaders. So if you are living with that constantly, that's giving a message to you sub-consciously (Montague 2014, 15).

As discussed above, this may reflect the relative low numbers of women leaders, the overriding influence of male-normative styles and structures of leadership, and the contextual pressures of division and transition. However, when women did emerge in leading positions, the interviewees saw that they brought highly desirable skills to the process. As Dawn Purvis recounts,

I brought more women from the Women's Commission on board to help with the talks as the talks progressed because we needed more and more help and those women were very happy to be part of that. And I didn't bring them in just because they were women, I was conscious that we needed more women there, I brought them in because of the skills that they had because of similar to me, they could read things. They could read a room, they were focused on outcomes, they were focused on what can we achieve and could cut through some of the gobbledygook and the stuff that was being talked about (Purvis 2014b, 11).

Women's participation -- the positive dimensions of difference

As previously discussed, a growing body of research indicates that the participation of women beneficially expands the creative capacity of groups and generates better results. It is understood that collective approaches often used effectively by women are highly transformative and important for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Young argues that to achieve a just society, we must 'embrace the ideal of a heterogeneous public' and openly acknowledge group differences (1990). In a related work, Christine Littleton develops a notion of 'equality as acceptance' to promote policies that value the feminine as much as the masculine. These feminist authors argue that justice demands that we move beyond tolerance to appreciate the value of differences and eliminate the costly disadvantages for women. Diana Francis argues that conflict transformation involves 'wide scale and long term' change involving the 'transformation of culture and structural relationships.' She argues that engaging women as partners is essential.

If we are to replace the methods of domination with those of equality and cooperation, we shall need the equal involvement of all kinds of people in that change: women and men and those from all cultural backgrounds. Not only does justice require it, but, without the involvement and contributions of all, there can be no adequate and inclusive process (2004, 15).

This emerging focus on the interaction between men and women, especially in decision-making and governance, highlights the beneficial aspects of gender dynamics and underscores the value of women's participation as leaders. Caprioli and Boyer (2001) find that biased perceptions of women as less capable leaders influences how women conform to normative (masculine) leadership styles, and impacts the behavior of male leaders with whom they interact. They suggest,

> If women are by nature more pacific than men but must operate in a social and political environment that has been defined, structured, and dominated by men for centuries, it may not be plausible to understand the true implications of women as leaders in any conflictual situation…(Caprioli and Boyer 2001, 505–6)

Chilean President and Former UN Women executive director Michelle Bachelet believes 'We all suffer for failing to make the most of half the world's talent and potential. We undermine the quality of our democracy, the strength of our economies, the health of our societies and the sustainability of peace' (Bachelet 2011). Recent studies indicate that the presence of women positively influences the behavior of men, inspiring them to be more compassionate, generous and innovative. Grant considers the 'warming effect' of women on men and says the dimension of gender relations has important implications for leadership. He says,

> We recognize the direct advantages that women as leaders bring to the table,…But we've largely overlooked the beneficial effects that women have on the men around them…Increases in motivation, cooperation, and innovation in companies may be fueled not only by the direct actions of female leaders, but also by their influence on male leaders (Grant 2013, 4).

Pinker (2011) examines the global trend toward peace driven by technological advances, knowledge-based organizational models, and democratization. These changing conditions favor the 'feminine style' of participatory leadership. He believes women leaders and the use of leadership styles and skills generally attributed to women will prove to be essential for all effective leaders in the twenty-first century. A comprehensive examination of peace negotiations by the United Nations finds that peace agreements are significantly less likely to fail when they are broadly inclusive and engage women as peace negotiators (UNIFEM 1999). The participation of women expands the range of skills and experiences available to effectively address the conflict, and this enhances the prospects for dialogue, resolution and agreement. Involving women in peacebuilding increases the probability that violence will end by 24 percent, but institutionalized gender equality is needed to secure lasting impact (Stone 2014).

Inclusivity and diversity are highly valued by the women interviewed and the primary reason they promote the greater participation of women leaders. Many viewed a wider range of perspectives and skills important for creativity and sound decision-making. They see women leaders to be more empathetic, pragmatic, knowledgeable about community needs, concerned with relationships, and focused on the long-term progress. These critical skills and perspectives would enhance decision-making and leadership at all levels. For example:

> That's why I think it's important to have that breadth of mix, if you like, involved in peace negotiations and peace building, otherwise we're working to one view and we're working to one vision that very often women are excluded from when it does come to actually living in the peaceful structures that are built thereafter (Purvis 2014b, 21).

> I think one of two things happens to women in leadership. Either they become more stylized men than the men are, and therefore, you know that that's not the kind of leader I want. Or they take with them something about who they are (and again I don't want to suggest that men don't have it)... it's something about openness to a relational way of working which isn't self-protective or about power and control. It's about achieving something. And the achieving something in this second category of women is about achieving something for the best reasons, and for people's sake, as many people as possible…. So I think there's a different pace of working as well as a different methodology of working (Carroll 2014, 16).

Women as effective agents of change

In contrast to mainstream historical narratives, the women interviewed share a strongly held belief that women helped lead the peace in Northern Ireland. They report women were effective agents of change, their leadership positively influenced the process and outcomes of the peace process, and that women's peacebuilding leadership has not been sufficiently recognized and valued. Eileen Bell is convinced that women made a difference during the violent conflict and the work for peace. She credits their leadership and activism with containing escalating levels of violence during the Troubles. She says,

> 'From my experience during the bad days in communities of all descriptions, if the women hadn't have been active as they were, there would have been a lot more deaths (*Eileen Bell* 2010).

Among those interviewed there was unanimous agreement that women's leadership was critically important to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. For example:

> So women were *absolutely* critical…The reason we're in the mess we are in is because women haven't played a more important role in politics. There are individual women who have had an impact, and then you have all the working class women on the ground that have carried through…In terms of the community they had a silent role, or an unseen role or unheard role, which was keeping families together and keeping communities together. I think they did that very, very well (McGlone 2014, 16–17).

> I have to tell you straight up, I really believe that the ceasefires and all those kind of things would never have happened if it hadn't have been for women (Blood 2014, 11).

> I would go so far as to say that they (women) probably were the initiators of peace here, simply because they went against their own feelings really and reactions to hold that space… I think they did that at great cost to themselves. They did that, so I see them really as initiators of the peace. I don't care what anybody says (McNeice 2014, 10).

As these accounts indicate, many women were leading in distinctly significant ways and places. The collective discussion of leadership presented in here is a rare look at the varied ways women develop, practice and understand leadership as part of peacebuilding. The interview material contains important information about their work to disrupt traditional politics and promote courageous dialogue, cross-community development, more inclusive and constructive negotiations, and a durable agreement. As elected and appointed participants in the 1996 Forum and Negotiations, they did what no women had done before, and few have since achieved. Women leaders and women-led groups made significant contributions to enable Northern Ireland to survive decades of violent conflict, cultivate peaceful conditions, and forge political settlements. As the study participants report, women leaders made significant contributions to peace in Northern Ireland and their leadership warrants greater acknowledgement, further study and deeper analysis.

Conclusion

As previously discussed, transformational leadership drives social and political change, and women are highly effective transformative leaders. The elements of transformative leadership models align with those of sustainable peace to underscore the value of women's peacebuilding leadership. There is growing evidence that women lead in distinct ways that can positively influence peace building and post-agreement transitions. There is increasing research evidence that gender-balanced teams are more innovative and effective than traditional male-dominated ones. Women and men working in partnership expand the creative potential of decision-making groups and can generate better results. However, gender norms limit opportunities for women, prejudice views of their leadership abilities, compromise the transformative potential of political leadership, and weaken the prospects for peace.

This study suggests there was significant leadership provided by individual women and women's groups during the Troubles that helped to cultivate social and political shifts toward peace. Taken together, the contributions of women leaders were an important collective resource for constructive change. As they worked to transform the conflict, women were transforming the leadership landscape, reforming and rebuilding societal structures, modeling more effective leadership in the female form, improving the nature of politics, and strengthening the prospects for peace. The women of this study are pioneers who were often fighting their way into and through unwelcoming, hostile arenas. They developed and mobilized robust networks of women-led groups and initiatives over many decades. Their leadership is particularly remarkable given the obstacles, pressures and risks they faced. There is strong evidence in the interview material to suggest that women and women-led organizations effectively used transformational approaches as peace leaders. The presence and participation of women leaders was an important factor in the region's transition to peace.

Chapter 7: Conclusion of Research

If the true story of Northern Ireland ever gets written, it will be about women. (Blood 2014)

Introduction

Conceptual changes in the study of leadership have moved from authoritarian, hierarchical management styles to recommending more collaborative, democratic approaches (Burns, Bass, Bass and Riggio). Similarly, there is a growing emphasis in conflict resolution and peacebuilding models on the importance of inclusivity, women's participation and the engagement of civic society (Boulding, Brock-Utne, and Lederach, Lederach and Lederach). This thesis was designed to explore parallel discourses in the study of transformational leadership and conflict resolution that emphasize the significance of gender dimensions and women's participation in order to critically assess women's peace leadership in Northern Ireland. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, theories of transformational leadership and conflict resolution indicate the nature and location of women's leadership represents a highly valuable resource for social change. The project was designed to document and explore distinctions in the approaches, skills and strategies used by women in their leadership practices. And further, to examine their leadership attitudes and practices for characteristics consistent with transformative leadership and sustainable peacebuilding models.

This social research project sought to reconstitute a composite picture of women leaders in Northern Ireland, to document their experiences and to help correct the one-sided narrative presented in the literature that is disproportionately written by and about men. It aims to fill the gap in knowledge about the extent, complexity and impact of women's peace leadership in Northern Ireland. This thesis demonstrates that women's leadership was a transforming factor that significantly contributed to the end of violent conflict and the advancement of peace.

Findings: the importance of women's transformative leadership to peace

To be effective in today's world, leaders need to be more transformational, and there is growing evidence that many women are more disposed to transformational leadership behaviors (Bass and Riggio 2006). A growing theme within the literature examines how gender affects leadership, how women and men perceive and practice leadership differently, and whether these differences are relevant to social and political change. Leaders and leadership are considered important factors in the study of politics and peace, and the research suggests transformational models are highly relevant in contexts of conflict and peacebuilding. The contemporary study of leadership theory and practice is focused on interactive models with the capacity for innovation and creative change. Transformative leadership models are characterized by constructive interactions between leaders and followers, flattened hierarchies, shared responsibilities, and free flowing communication focused on positive social change. These leadership approaches are particularly relevant in a changing global environment and times of crisis. There is substantial, meta-analytic evidence demonstrating that women are particularly effective transformative leaders, but that gender stereotypes continue to limit their roles and advancement opportunities and therefore the use of transformative models. The status of women in society has a direct impact on the opportunities to participate as leaders in governance, decision-making and policy development. How leaders are valued and perceived reflects societal beliefs about gender roles for men and women. Masculine or male-centered perceptions of leadership obscure the analysis of the practice, purpose and location of leaders. It also devalues and overlooks women's roles and contributions and limits their critical participation as transforming leaders.

Engaging women in leadership has positive effects on the work environment, the quality of decision-making and the economic bottom line. Working together as partners, women and men have access to the broadest spectrum of experiences and expertise, and thus have the greatest capacity for creative success. This suggests engaging women leaders could have similar positive effects on matters

of governance, peace and security. Transformational leadership can provide a helpful theoretical model to re-examine and revalue the work of leading women.

The literature discussed in Chapter Two underscores the importance of civic society and community leaders, and gender as a category of analysis in the study of violent conflict and peace, and provides a theoretical framework to consider women as powerful change agents with the capacity and responsibility to lead. Contrary to those who view women to be less capable peace leaders, Boulding finds women across the globe are well-equipped and well-positioned peace leaders, and the barriers to women's greater participation to be structural. She argues we must reach beyond social barriers and biases to fully engage the inventive capacity of women if we are to advance peaceful change. The international discourse on Women, Peace and Security promotes women's leadership in all stages of violent conflict, peace and reconciliation processes. Moving beyond hierarchies and linear peace models allows the leadership of women to be viewed as critically important sustainable peace infrastructure. Gender equality is a 'critical long term driver of peace' according to the Institute for Economics and Peace. The subtle and systematic gender bias against women and feminine traits, and in favor of men and masculine traits has serious implications for peace leadership. The pervasive underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles critically undermines the economic, development and cultural integrity of peaceful societies.

The issue of gender and its intersecting relationship to violent conflict and peace building is largely unexamined in mainstream academic and political discourse about Northern Ireland (Ashe 2006, 161). As a result, there is an incomplete record of the peace process that fails to account for the distinct and significant contributions made by women leaders. By researching and analyzing the case of women's leadership in the Northern Ireland peace process in the light of theoretical perspectives on leadership and peacebuilding, I have shown that women were significant leaders of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. They were involved in peace building at the grassroots, civil and political society levels. A broad network of diverse women-led initiatives focused on equality, education,

health, employment and voting rights, and were among the first to address the trauma and injuries of war. The presence and participation of leading women generated 'a new quality of debate' in the peace talks process and produced a more durable, community-supported agreement (Mowlam, 1999: xi).

This thesis presents original interview material gathered through extensive fieldwork to examine the roles and contributions of women leaders in Northern Ireland. It highlights the range of opportunities and challenges faced by these women as they led peaceful change through a prolonged violent conflict. It provides a valuable record of key women leaders and their involvement in a pivotal phase of the ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland. This thesis strengthens the evidence that women were peace leaders and their distinctive leadership approaches were significant and collectively powerful. Women's peace leadership was a factor in the region's transition to peace. The results are consistent with Eagly and others who find clear evidence from the meta-analysis 'that women leaders, on average, exert leadership through behaviors considered appropriate for effective leadership under contemporary conditions' (Eagly, 2007:5).

This thesis revealed that there was an abundance of outstanding individuals and 'a huge treasure of women's groups' (Gadd 2014, 5) operating across the region. Women's leadership was a transforming factor that significantly contributed to the end of violent conflict and the advancement of peace in the following ways:

- Women led in distinct ways that positively influenced peace building, particularly by connecting civil to political society, engaging in cross-community dialogue and expanding the issues to be discussed.

- Women practiced leadership in distinct ways and places. They strengthened and stabilized communities, took risks to foster dialogue and healing, and collectively made significant contributions to the region's peaceful transition

- Women are especially effective as transforming leaders. Their approaches to leadership are visionary, collaborative, non-hierarchical,

democratic and are particularly important to promote social justice and peace.

- Working together as partners, women and men have access to the broadest spectrum of experiences & expertise, have the greatest capacity for creative success

The leadership of women was an important element of the transition from violent conflict to peace. Their collective leadership represented a robust infrastructure that enabled communities to survive through decades of conflict and build a peaceful path forward. This clearly indicates that women leaders and the strong networks they mobilized were critical elements of the peace process. The powerful stories of women's courage, skill and determination speaks to their capacity as leaders of change.

Despite the multiple spaces in which they work and the transformative approach to leadership they employ, women's innovative and courageous activism has been largely ignored, overlooked and dismissed in mainstream historical documentation of Northern Ireland's peace process. Today, women are still marginalized in the ongoing transition, excluded from leadership and decision-making roles, and unable to fully participate in the initiatives to shape a new Northern Ireland (Ward 2013). There is a 'present absence' (Cockburn 1998, 12) of women in the unfolding peace process, demonstrated by their severe underrepresentation in recent political negotiations and in regional governance. Very little progress has been made to bridge the 'other divide' and achieve women's full participation in a shared and peaceful future. A recent Northern Ireland Assembly report says

> Women are under-represented across all major positions of political, economic, social and judicial power. This demonstrates a gender-related systemic impediment to access to decision-making...Updates to the Gender Equality Strategy have not demonstrated significant change in the position of women in Northern Ireland over time (Potter 2014a, 1).

The grave situation described in this report omits several additional areas of gender segregation in the highest levels of government. The Justice Minister is

currently advised by an all-male Assembly Justice Committee, and there are no women among the senior command staff of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Most disturbing is the exclusion of women in the political negotiations convened to amend and extend the 1998 peace agreement. Women were severely underrepresented in the political party delegations chosen for both the Haass-Sullivan Talks (2013) and the Stormont House Talks (2014). Perhaps it is not surprising that both failed to produce agreed solutions to address outstanding political issues threatening the power-sharing arrangements for the devolved government. In a written submission to Haass and O'Sullivan in 2013, the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform reported

> The peace process had paid little or no attention to gender equality in moving forward and developing the new post conflict structures (McCullough 2013, 14).

A gendered framework is needed to effectively respond to a range of conflict related issues. New research suggests links between the lasting negative effects of the violent conflict, the lack of government attention to the gendered nature of conflict, and declining confidence in the political system among women as a group.

> [I]f local women's voices and experiences continue to be ignored, many women will continue to experience feelings of vulnerability and remain skeptical of the current political system. The women clearly demonstrated that they are still experiencing a range of emotions related to the decades-long conflict: degradation, powerlessness, resentment, anger, disappointment, pessimism, anxiety, and rage. They experience those feelings as women, and therefore, it is essential that the processes of addressing them be contextualized within a gendered framework ("Dealing with the Past in Ireland: Where Are the Women?" 2015, 8)

This report is further evidence that marginalizing women, their unique experiences, and their distinctly powerful leadership can pose a real threat to political stability and peace. It is unnecessary and unwise to sideline women and their considerable transformative leadership skills. Reflecting on the contributions of women leaders in 1999, Bronagh Hinds says,

> Despite their differing aspirations, women in Northern Ireland have proven themselves to be leaders of a different kind of politics in which differences are respected and not simply repressed (1999, 116).

Her latest assessment is that peace 'is more unsteady than it needs to be' in part because 'women cannot see themselves reflected in the progress that has been made.' Hinds argues a 'transformation is required' to sustain progress toward a lasting peace (2014b).

The absence of women's leadership, voices and views has 'discursive and material implications' (Rooney 2006, 353) for those that seek progressive social changes in the post-agreement transition. A fragile and fragmented peace exists in Northern Ireland, and the ongoing process has yet to address many of the root causes of the violent conflict. Some regard the status quo as 'no more than a non-militarized peace-keeping process, which is running out of time' (McAliskey 2014). However, there is a general failure to acknowledge, value and enlist some of the most capable and experienced leaders in the building of a sustainable peace. Leaving women out of the leadership equation, the public policy debates, and the decision-making at the heart of the peace building appears to be unwise and unnecessary. The full complement of our leadership capacity is only possible when women and men are equal partners. Peace building is strengthened by inclusive gender policies and gender balanced leadership teams across all phases and decision-making arenas.

Policy Implication

This thesis provides new material to challenge the mythology that peace was exclusively achieved by an elite group of men - leaders of paramilitary groups, political parties and governments. It argues instead that women were key actors who individually and collectively made significant leadership contributions that helped to cultivate political settlement and peaceful transition. There is growing recognition of the varied roles women play during violent conflict, the distinct impacts of war on women's lives, and a greater understanding of their roles as agents of change. Despite the international policy framework acknowledging the benefits of women's participation in peace processes, there is little work examining their engagement as leaders and the unique ways they contribute to post-conflict social and political transformation. Although recognized by many as

being significant participants in the peace process, women leaders are still constrained by cultural bias and gender stereotypes. Understanding the role of women's leadership in ending violence and cultivating peace is critical to advancing goals of reconciliation.

Stereotypically narrow accounts that deny the active role of women sustain the myth that women are passively or subordinately engaged in community and political life. The intense and exclusive focus on male leaders casts a glare that obscures the accomplishments and contributions of women. The lessons from Northern Ireland's conflict and peace are incomplete without a full accounting of women's leadership. The transforming ways women lead the peace are being dismissed and forgotten. The discriminatory and exclusionary practices that produce gender divisions block a powerful partnership. Equality, power sharing and mutual respect are unevenly applied without regard for the 'other divide' segregating women and men. These women made history, and are still leading the change in NI. They invested in their communities and strengthened the capacity for peaceful change. The failure to recognize and enlist women leaders is a symptom of deeply held, institutionalized prejudice against women.

Peace building needs to prioritize gender equality and gender balanced leadership teams in all phases and decision-making arenas. Without engaging women as full partners, the political structures are under resourced and ill equipped to deliver on the series of settlement agreements since 1998 or further advance the peaceful transition. Systematic devaluing of women's activism and leadership leads to their being written out of history. This exclusion makes the considerable knowledge, skill and experience inherent in their contributions virtually inaccessible through mainstream literature and public debates. The distinct perspectives, motivations, and priorities women often have are necessary to address the root causes of violent conflict. 'Women as partners in peace processes consider the segment and thematic concerns of society that are most often left out of a male-driven peace initiatives'(Gbowee 2014). There is a lack of political will and mechanisms to advance gender relations and equality in governance and peacebuilding efforts, despite the agreed commitment to the

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right of women to 'full and equal political participation' in Northern Ireland. Ironically, women's peace leadership helped to inspire the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security but it has not been applied to Northern Ireland by the UK or Irish governments.

Conclusion

This research project was designed to document and investigate the extent to which women leaders contributed to social and political transition in Northern Ireland. It sought to examine the extent to which women's leadership reflected transformative models and sustainable peacebuilding approaches. It presents original material gathered through in-depth interviews with twenty-six leading women engaged in peacebuilding work across the region. It is a group portrait, a composite picture of women leaders who made important contributions to the region's transition to peace. It seeks to make women's peace leadership more visible and examine the transforming nature of their contributions to address analytical and historical gaps in the literature.

There is substantial research evidence demonstrating that women are particularly effective transformative leaders, but that gender stereotypes continue to limit their roles and advancement opportunities. An expanded analysis of leadership and peacebuilding offers a richer, more nuanced understanding of the role of women leaders in divided and transitioning societies. The interview material presented in this dissertation strongly suggests that women and women-led organizations effectively used transformational approaches to transform the conflict and cultivate peace. Further, it demonstrates the extent of women's participation in the peace process is much greater than commonly acknowledged in mainstream literature. This research documents that many women in Northern Ireland proved themselves to be skilled and innovative leaders, commanding a variety of pioneering and often dangerous roles during the decades of violence.

The women leaders who participated in this study practiced leadership in distinct ways and places. The location and nature of their leading roles align with

Transformation Leadership models. They represent a collective leadership that positively impacted the nature of politics and helped transform the conflict into an emerging peace. Women leaders leveraged their disadvantaged and challenged positions to make constructive contributions to peacebuilding. Their influence and contributions warrant much greater examination from peacemakers, policy makers and academics. This research provides additional evidence to suggest that the presence and participation of women leaders was an important dimension of Northern Ireland's transition to peace.

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Appendix

Table 1: Women elected to the 1996 Northern Ireland Forum / Entry into Negotiations

Party	Women Members Elected to the Forum	Women Elected as Delegates to the Negotiations	Women's Participation within Party Delegations	
			Number	%
Alliance	Eileen Bell	—	1 of 7	14.2
DUP	May Beattie Joan Parkes Iris Robinson	—	3 of 24	12.5
NIWC	Pearl Sagar Monica McWilliams	Pearl Sagar Monica McWilliams	2 of 2	100
SDLP	Dorita Field Margaret Ritchie Bríd Rodgers	—	3 of 21	14.0
SF	Annie Armstrong Lucilita Bhreatnach Maria Caraher Dodie McGuinness Michelle O'Connor	—	5 of 17	29.4
UUP	May Steele	—	1 of 30	3.3
UK Unionist Party PUP UDP Labor	No women members		0 of 3 0 of 2 0 of 2 0 of 2	0 0 0 0
Total	15 women members	2/20 female delegates to the negotiations	15/110	12.5

Table 2: Participation of Women in the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue and Talks Process, 1996-1998

Party	Elected Delegates to the Forum for Political Dialogue (15)[13]	Elected Negotiators to the Talks (2)	Appointed Members of Party Talks Teams (13+)[14]
Alliance	Eileen Bell		Mary Clarke-Glass
DUP	May Beattie Joan Parkes Iris Robinson		
NIWC	Pearl Sagar Monica McWilliams	Pearl Sagar Monica McWilliams	May Blood Avila Kilmurray Bronagh Hinds Annie Campbell Kate Fearon Barbara McCabe Ann Pope Anne Carr Jane Morrice
SDLP	Dorita Field (d 2005) Margaret Ritchie Bríd Rodgers		Bríd Rodgers, Chairperson of SDLP talks team
SF	Annie Armstrong Lucilita Bhreatnach Maria Caraher Dodie McGuiness Michelle O'Connor		Lucilita Bhreatnach[15] Bairbre de Brún Michelle Gildernew[16] Siobhán O'Hanlon[17] (d 2006)
UUP	May Steele		
PUP			Dawn Purvis[18]

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[13] (Whyte 1998)
[14] (Fearon 1999)
[15] (Wilford 1999, 207)
[16] (Adams 2001, 273)
[17] (Adams 2001, 274)
[18] (Purvis 2014a)

Table 3: Interview Participants

Name	Leading Roles	Political Party	Roles in the Forum, Talks Team, and First NI Assembly	Interview Date
Female Republican	Party member	Sinn Féin	MLA, First NI Assembly	17-9-2014
Carr, Anne	Dialogue Facilitator Educator, founder of Shimna College, County Down Coordinator, Women Together 1990-2001 Founding member Community Dialogue 2001 Councilor, NIWC 1997-2001	NIWC	Talks Team	22-8-2014
Beattie, May	Alderman, Carrickfergus Borough Council Former Mayor and Dep. Mayor	DUP	Forum Member Talks Team (periodic participation)	22-9-2014
Bell, Eileen	Gen Secretary Alliance Party, 1993 North Down Borough Council, 1993- Deputy Leader, Alliance, 2001 Speaker, NI Assembly, 2006-7 Chair, Women into Politics	Alliance	Forum Member Talks Team, MLA, First NI Assembly	11-9-2014
Blood, May Baroness	Founding member NIWC Shankill Women's Center Trade Unionist	NIWC	Talks Team Member	14-4-2014
Carroll, Lesley	Minister, Fortwilliam Macrory Presbyterian Church, Founding member of WAVE			24-4-2014
Carson, Joan	MLA Dungannon Borough Council	UUP	MLA in first NI Assembly	6-6-2014
Clarke-Glass, Mary	Chair and Chief Executive, Equal Opportunities Commission, 1984-1992Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, 1992 Alliance Party Council, 1992 Law Lecturer, Ulster University	Alliance	Talks Team Member Forum Candidate, not elected	27-8-2014 15-9-2014
Donnelly, Debbie	Statistics & Research Agency Northern Ireland Office, 1984-95 Statistics and Research, RUC, 1995-98 Statistics & Research Agency Northern Ireland Office, 1998-2006 Deputy Chief Executive, NI Policing Board, 2006			9-10-2014

Gadd, Breidge	Chief Probation Officer, Probation Board NI, 1986-2000 NI Chair, Big Lottery Fund, 2000-2009 Board Member, Cooperation Ireland Chair, Washington Ireland Programme			8-4-2014
Glenholmes, Eibhlín	Sinn Féin National Coordinator for Gender Equality Support Coordinator Tar Anall NI Victims and Survivors Forum	Sinn Féin		10-10-2013 10-9-2014
Gray, Barbara	RUC Officer Chief Superintendent PSNI, 2014-			21-5-2014
Hinds, Bronagh	Director, Ulster People's College Director, DemocraShe Chair, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)	NIWC	Talks Team Member	7-5-2014
Kelly, Bernie	Party member, 1995 North and West Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Trauma Resource Centre Councilor, Belfast City Council, 2005-2015 Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast 2007-8 Assistant Director, Physical and Sensory Disability Services, Belfast Health and Social Services Trust	SDLP		16-5-2014
McGlone, Roisin	Community Relations Officer, Belfast City Council, 1992-1994 Community Development Centre, North Belfast, 1994-1999 InterAction Belfast, 1999-2014			18-9-2014
McNeice, Marie	Sisters of the Cross & Passion Founding member, first director of WAVE, 1991			3-6-2014
McVicker, Anne	Director Women's Resource & Development Agency, 2014- Director Women's Tec, 1999-2014 Director Shankill Women's Center 1989-1999			23-5-2014
McWilliams, Monica	UU Professor High Commissioner, Human Rights of NI MLA South Belfast 1998-2003 Founding member of NIWC	NIWC	Forum Member Elected Delegate to Negotiations MLA First NI Assembly	30-5-2014
Montague, Mary	Co-founder and Operational Director, TIDES Training, 2000-present Community Mediator, Corymeela, 1990-2000			12-5-2014

Morrice, Jane	Head of NI Office of the European Commission, 1992-1997 MLA North Down, 1998-2003 Deputy Speaker of the NI Assembly 2000-2003	NIWC	Talks Team Member MLA in First NI Assembly	14-8-2014
Murphy, Pauline	Professor, University of Ulster 1985-2002, Emeritus 2002- Founding Director, Women's Opportunities Unit, University of Ulster, 1990 Founder, Training for Women Network NI, 1996			9-6-2014
Nelson, Jane	Science Staff Tutor, Open University Ireland			8-5-2014
Orr, Jean	Head of School, Nursing & Midwifery Queens University Belfast Patron and Chair, WAVE Trauma Centre			15-5-2014
Purvis, Dawn	Branch Secretary, South Belfast PUP, 1994 MLA, South Belfast, Party Leader Chair, Healing Through Remembering Director, Marie Stopes Clinic	PUP	Talks Team Member	20-8-2014 26-8-2014
Ritchie, Margaret	MP for South Down 2010-present MLA 2003-2007 Minister for 2007-2010 Party Leader, February 2010 to November 2011 Councilor, staff to MP Eddie McGratty, 1994	SDLP	Forum Member Talks Team Member	20-6-2014
Rodgers, Bríd	MLA Upper Bann Minister, Agriculture & Rural Development, 1999-2002 Founding member and Deputy Leader of the SDLP Party Chairperson in 1978, TD Republic of Ireland,	SDLP	Forum Member Chairperson of SDLP Talks Team MLA in first NI Assembly	26-6-2014

Table 4: Female MLAs in the First Northern Ireland Assembly, 1998-2003

Armitage, Pauline	UUP	
Bell, Eileen	Alliance	
Carson, Joan	UUP	
Courtney, Annie	SDLP	Appointed to replace John Hume, 2000
De Brún, Bairbre	Sinn Féin	
Gildernew, Michelle	Sinn Féin	
Hanna, Carmel	SDLP	
Lewsley, Patricia	SDLP	
McWilliams, Monica	NIWC	
Morrice, Jane	NIWC	
Nelis, Mary	Sinn Féin	
O'Hagan, Dara	Sinn Féin	
Ramsey, Sue	Sinn Féin	
Robinson, Iris	DUP	
Rodgers, Bríd	SDLP	

('The 1996 Forum Elections and Peace Process', Whyte 1998)

Table 5: Women Leaders Pioneers, Trailblazers & Significant Firsts

Bell, Eileen	First female Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly 2006-2007 First female Deputy Leader of Alliance Party, 2001-6
Fitzduff, Mari	Founding Director of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, 1990-1997
Hinds, Bronagh	President QUB Student's Union, first woman to hold post in Ireland, 1975-76
McAleese, Mary	First Irish President from Northern Ireland, 1997-2011. World's first female president to follow another female president.
McCormack, Inez	First female president of Irish Council of Trade Unions
McWilliams, Monica	One of two women to win election as delegates to the NI Peace Negotiations with Pearl Sagar, and first women in the world to officially participate as delegates to peace negotiations, 1996-1998. First female Chief Commissioner NI Human Rights Commission, 2005-2011
Maguire, Máiread	With Betty Williams, the first Northern Ireland recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1976
Morrice, Jane	Head of the European Commission Office in NI, 1992, first woman in UK to hold this EC post. First Deputy Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, 2000
Mowlam, Marjorie 'Mo'	First female British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 1997-1999
O'Loan, Nuala	First NI Police Ombudsman, and the world's first police ombudsman, 1999-2007.
Patterson, Ruth	The first woman to be ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1976.
Robinson, Mary	First female President of Ireland, 1990-1997
Rodgers, Bríd	SDLP Party Chairperson 1978, first woman to be chair of a political party in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
Sagar, Pearl	One of two women to win election as delegates to the NI Peace Negotiations with Monica McWilliams, and first women in the world to officially participate as delegates to peace negotiations, 1996-1998
Smith, Jean Kennedy	The first female US Ambassador to Ireland, 1993-1998
Stephens, Kathleen	First female U.S. Consul General in Belfast, 1995-1998
Sutherland, Veronica	UK's first female Ambassador to Ireland, 1995-1999
Williams, Betty	With Máiread Maguire, the first Northern Ireland recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1976

Table 6: Female Role Models

Women named by interview participants as their female role models:

Vivienne Anderson
Betty Boothroyd
May Blood
Barbara Castle
Emily Chubb, grandmother of Mary Clarke-Glass
Hillary Clinton
Noreen Cooper
Celia Davies
Maura Dougherty (sister of Roisin McGlone)
Arlene Foster
Carmel Hanna
Avila Kilmurray
Patricia Lewsley
Mary McAleese
Bernadette McAliskey
Joyce McCartan
Patricia McCloskey

Inez McCormack
Monica McWilliams
Máiread Maguire
Josephine Marley, sister of Mary Montague
Mary Marley, mother of Mary Montague
Shirley Morrow
Marjorie 'Mo' Mowlam
Rosemary Nelson
Nuala O'Loan
Sadie Patterson
Mary Peters
Martha Pope
Mary Robinson
Eirlys Roberts

Women identified as influential and inspiring leading lights:

Ruth Agnew
Annie Beattie (mother of Anne Carr)
Pat Campbell
Gerry Cosgrove
Madge Davidson
Kathleen Feenan
Kate Fearon
Mari Fitzduff
Bronagh Hinds
Anne Hope
Kate Kelly
Avila Kilmurray
Barbara McCabe
Mary McAleese
Bernadette McAliskey
Ann McCann
Sally McErlearn
Monica McWilliams
Joyce McCartan

Jean Mayhew, wife of Secretary of State Mayhew
Sadie Menzies
Marie Mulholland
Shirley Morrow
Ellen Neill (grandmother of Anne Carr)
Monica Patterson
Sadie Patterson
Sandra Peake
Betty Orr
Janet Quilley
Betty Sinclair
Anne Tanney
Margaret Thatcher
Daphne Trimble
Margaret Ward
Jane Wilde
Anne Walker
All the ordinary women in the community

Table 7: Leading Groups and Organizations

The following groups and organizations were reported by research participants as being particularly important to peacebuilding work in Northern Ireland. This list, though not exhaustive, represents the collective leadership provided by diverse groups led by and for women, engaged in community development, non-violence and social justice work across Northern Ireland.

Ballybeen Women's Centre
Centre for Research on Women
Community Dialogue
Community Development Centre
Community Foundation Northern Ireland
DemocraShe
Derry Women's Centre
Falls Women's Centre
INNATE (Irish Network for Nonviolent Action, Training and Education)
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Northern Ireland Women's Political Forum
Peace People
Quaker House Belfast
Reconciliation Ministries
Shankill Women's Centre
Training for Women Network
Ulster Quaker Peace Committee
Windsor Women's Centre
WAVE (Widows Against Violence Empower)
West Belfast Parent Support Group
Women into Politics
Women Together (for Peace)
Women's Information Group
Women's Network
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Tech