

Gender, conflict and peacebuilding in informal local markets in Aba, Southeastern Nigeria

By
Oluchi Gloria Ogbu

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Peace and Conflict Studies
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

Copyright © 2021 by Oluchi Gloria Ogbu

Abstract

This study explores how market women perceive and experience peace and conflict in informal local markets in Southeastern Nigeria. The study seeks to enrich the understanding of gender and peacebuilding in 'local' contexts by exploring market women's peacebuilding practices and how they negotiate the structures that can hinder this experience. Examining market women's contextual understanding of peace and conflict in informal local markets also exposes the varied ways in which the informal sector embeds structures of injustice on the one hand and provides a space for resilience and agency on the other hand.

Through a feminist and Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) framework, the study demonstrates how women's survival strategies developed to meet their basic needs contribute to the understanding of positive and feminist peacebuilding in Africa. Feminist perspectives are wide-ranging; however, many feminists have argued that patriarchal gender norms strengthen women's marginalization in all spheres, in addition to excluding women's experience from peacebuilding literature. African feminist perspectives contextualize the challenges African women encounter and emphasize the processes they undertake to address these issues. Generally, PACS and feminist scholarship address the structures that can cause inequality and the necessary conditions for positive peace experiences.

The primary data source used in this study was in-depth semi-structured interviews. The participants were fifteen market women drawn from seven different markets in Aba, Abia State, Southeastern Nigeria. The study findings reveal two types of pervasive conflict in informal local markets, interpersonal conflict between traders over customer rivalry and structural conflict between traders and market authorities and state officials caused by perceived unjust policies, high levies and inadequate infrastructures in the market environments.

The study findings also reveal that market women develop strategies to meet their basic needs, and these practices contribute to peaceful relations in the markets. The provision of adequate infrastructures and financial support from the government at all levels can help to alleviate the devastation that may arise due to potential global and local crises and to decrease the possibilities of traders suffering from both direct and indirect forms of violence in their marketplaces.

Acknowledgments

When I embarked on this Ph.D. journey, I did so with a tremendous leap of faith even though I was uncertain of what the process and outcomes would be. Today, I am very grateful to all those who made my journey a success. Many thanks to my very supportive supervisor, Dr. Maureen Flaherty, for encouraging me and guiding me towards the path that has culminated in this study. During my studies, Dr. Flaherty's guidance and mentorship fueled my desire to dig deeper into the contextual understanding of gender and peacebuilding, and I am thankful for all her feedback and mentorship. I am grateful to my advisory committee members, Dr. Laura Funk and Dr. Chima Korieh, whose valuable intellectual input and contributions have shaped my thesis and my academic journey positively. I am indebted to Dr. Korieh, who assisted me with several pieces of literature that formed this thesis's context. I am also grateful to Dr. Funk for her valuable feedback and contributions to my thesis. My gratitude also extends to Dr. Hamdesa Tusso, my previous advisor, whose wise counsel led to the creation of my thesis committee, and Dr. Adam Muller for his advice and support.

My appreciation would be incomplete without recognizing this study's participants, brave and insightful women who agreed to be part of this work despite the ongoing pandemic and its impacts on their livelihoods. The participants' narratives have given voice and structure to this thesis and the experiences of other women. I can't also forget the support of lecturers and program administrators in the PACS program. I am thankful to my gracious friends who patiently listened, encouraged and made suggestions on how I could navigate this intricate thesis trajectory. I am appreciative of my colleagues, whose acumen added to my understanding of the complex nature of the field of Peace and Conflict Studies.

I am also honored to have known many inspiring and supportive women throughout my life, relatives and non-relatives, including my dearest grandmother, *Nma* Esther Okoro, with whom I spent some part of my childhood and who passed away in 2019. These women fostered and nurtured me while also encouraging me to aspire to do meaningful work; their love, kindness and visions for my life made me the woman that I am today, and I am forever grateful to them for this. My gratitude also extends to countless individuals in different parts of the world whose kindness and knowledge I have benefitted from; I am thankful to have crossed paths with you. I also acknowledge the help I received from my research assistant Chidi Irondi and my community

contacts, who assisted in the participant recruitment process during this challenging COVID-19 pandemic period. Lastly, to my siblings and loving parents, Elijah Ogbu and Roseline Ogbu, I can never thank you enough for your faith in me.

Dedication

To God Almighty, whose abundant grace and unending love brought me this far. And to my family—my inspiration, for their unlimited support, relentless encouragement, prayers and assurances that brought me light in my gloomiest moments. *Kaa.*

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Dedication.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables and Acronyms.....	ix

Chapter 1

Background and Study Context

1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Overview	3
1.2 Gender Relations and the Socio-Cultural Context of Southeastern Nigeria.....	5
1.3 The Informal Sector in Perspective.....	11
1.4 Gender, Informality and Inequality	13
1.5 Informal Local Markets in Africa.....	16
1.6 Women in Informal Local Markets in Africa: Challenges and Survival Strategies.....	17
1.7 Study Location in Context.....	24
1.8 Thesis Format and Overview of the Chapters.....	27
1.9 Conclusion.....	28

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction.....	31
2.1 Causes of Conflict, Direct and Indirect Violence.....	31
2.2 Gender and Intersectionality.....	34
2.3 Conceptualizing Peacebuilding.....	36
2.4 Peacebuilding Approaches: From the Liberal to Local.....	37
2.5 Human Security, Gender and Peacebuilding.....	43
2.6 Conclusion.....	48

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction.....	49
3.1 Researcher’s Standpoint.....	49
3.2 Methodological Approach.....	52
3.3 Data Collection Process.....	54
3.4 Research Instruments.....	54
3.5 Participants’ Recruitment.....	56
3.6 Participants’ Demography.....	56
3.7 Study Location	57
3.8 Language.....	58
3.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	59
3.10 Ethical Considerations.....	61
3.11 Study Limitations.....	62
3.12 Conclusion.....	63

Chapter 4

Gender, Conflict and Conflict Management in Informal Local Markets: Global

Perspectives and Local Insights

4.0 Introduction.....	65
4.1 Literature Review.....	65
4.2 Research Findings.....	70
4.3 Discussion and Conclusion.....	91

Chapter 5

Market Women’s Experiences of Place and Insecurity in Aba, Southeastern Nigeria

5.0 Introduction.....	95
5.1 Literature Review.....	95
5.2 Research Findings.....	100

5.3 Discussion and Conclusion.....	115
------------------------------------	-----

Chapter 6

Market Women, Livelihood and Food Security: Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 and Women's Responses

6.0 Chapter Overview.....	119
6.1 Introduction.....	119
6.2 Literature Review.....	121
6.3 Research Findings.....	124
6.4 Discussion and Conclusion.....	144

Chapter 7

Recommendations and Conclusions

7.0 Introduction.....	149
7.1 Key Findings.....	151
7.2 Five Notions of Peace.....	158
7.3 Addressing Structures of Violence.....	161
7.4 Future Research.....	162
7.5 Conclusion.....	164

References.....	165
------------------------	------------

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview consent form.....	194
Appendix B: Interview guide.....	198

List of Tables

Table 1: Participants' Profile.....	56
-------------------------------------	----

Acronyms

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

ILO: International Labour Organization

IMF: International Monetary Fund

NBS: National Bureau of Statistics

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development

PACS: Peace and Conflict Studies

TJ: Transitional Justice

UN: United Nations

WFP: World Food Program

WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

Chapter 1

Background and Study Context

1.0 Introduction

The study seeks to understand how market women in Southeastern Nigeria build peace and navigate the constraints they encounter in this endeavor. Through exploring market women's lived experiences and their interpretations of peace and conflict, the study contributes to the literature on gender and peacebuilding in Africa. Informal local markets in Africa provide a viable site for studying and understanding peace and conflict in many African countries. However, few studies on informal local markets have utilized a Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) and feminist lens. This introductory chapter provides some contextual understanding of gender relations in Southeastern Nigeria and explores relevant literature on the nature of the informal sector in West Africa, where women play dominant roles in informal local markets as traders. At the end of this chapter, you will find a roadmap for the body of the thesis.

Research Questions and Study Objectives

The central research question that guided this study is: How do market women build peace and manage challenges? The objectives of the study are to understand market women's peacebuilding and conflict resolution strategies in Aba, Southeastern Nigeria; to examine women's livelihood experiences in Aba, and the opportunities and insecurities in their location; to amplify their voices and experiences; to build on and extend the body of knowledge on gender and peacebuilding in Africa. The primary data used for this study comes from in-depth semi-structured interviews. The participants were fifteen market women from seven markets in Aba Abia State, Southeastern Nigeria. The findings from the study are presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

The Rationale for the Study

My long-standing desire to contribute to knowledge in gender and peacebuilding influenced my research topic. I have always wanted to explore issues related to gender equality, conflict and peacebuilding. However, I became interested in exploring market women's

peacebuilding practices and the structures they navigate while ensuring stability in their families and their work environment because of my early history with women traders. I grew up around women in the informal sector, and I chose this research topic to further explore women's work and how they balance their multiple roles and responsibilities with being traders. Therefore, this thesis provided an opportunity for me to pursue my research interests and also contribute to knowledge.

My interests in research and practice center on the intersection of conflict, gender, livelihood and social justice. I am interested in exploring the challenges associated with gender, livelihood, and peacebuilding. This includes examining the structures, sources, and activities that create insecurities for women and those that build their resilience, support their sustenance, and promote their safety. My research interests inspired me to pursue a project focused on examining structural violence (Galtung, 1969) and how to promote women's positive peacebuilding practices in their local context through skills acquisition training. This project was a one year skills-building and peacebuilding venture that I initiated in Delta State, Nigeria, to provide financially challenged women with tailoring skills that they can use to support themselves and their families (Ogbu, 2020). Some of the participants of this project had low levels of literacy, which impacted their chances of securing jobs in formal organizations.

My project yielded valuable insights. Findings from this project emphasize the critical importance of livelihood, peer support and resilience. For example, follow-up evaluations from this project revealed that some participants took up petty trading as their primary occupation even after completing this tailoring training because petty trading gave them access to quick cash compared to tailoring (Ogbu, 2020). The most insightful finding for me in this project is that the informal collaborative learning process provided women an opportunity and a space to be emotionally supportive. These findings also show that the skills-building process served economic purposes and improved participants' mental well-being; as women learned how to sew, they shared their personal challenges and built each other's self-confidence (Ogbu, 2020). Thus, the process of learning a new skill fostered an environment of collaboration and connectedness. In this study, I build on my previous work on informal learning and collaboration by exploring women's perceptions and experiences of place, including the strengths and insecurities embedded in their context.

One of the objectives of this study is to amplify market women's voices and their peacebuilding practices; in doing this, the study also seeks to make their challenges visible, such as the challenges associated with COVID-19 and its impact on women's livelihood. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacted numerous livelihoods globally. During the data gathering phase of this study (June-July, 2020), most of the markets in the study location were on a restricted schedule as part of the measures put in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease. However, market women, particularly the ones who sell food items, continued in their roles in making food available to numerous households in Aba, Abia State.

The pandemic and its related challenges affected market women's economic activities, but the impact was not the same for all market women in this study, and through an intersectional lens, I explored these varied experiences of women traders and their survival strategies. I argue that the relational practices and activities women have created to meet their needs, and their strategies for resolving interpersonal conflict have strengthened their resilience, reinforced their sense of belonging and ensured economic continuity and sustenance for them and their families. This study's findings open up new ways of understanding peace and peacebuilding based on people's realities. Additionally, there is a growing body of work in PACS that seeks to understand what it means for people to experience belongingness and peace in local contexts, including the factors that contribute to people's sense of home and those that can cause disruptions or insecurities (Mac Ginty, 2019; Maiangwa, 2020; Watson, 2019), and this study contributes to this body of knowledge.

1.1 Overview

This section presents an overview of the literature on women's socio-economic contributions and their challenges in Africa. Women's economic activities in the informal sector have drawn significant attention globally; the gendered nature of informality and women's vulnerabilities in the informal sector have been the focus of numerous literature (Chant & Pedwell, 2008; Chen, 2016; Delaney & Macdonald, 2018; ILO, 2018; Malta et al., 2019; UN Women, n.d). In Nigeria, informal local markets are pivotal to the country's economy, and women play critical roles as informal traders.

Nigerian women have had a long history of commerce and social activism, and they have played significant roles as agents of change in their communities. Women in these varied

communities in Nigeria often utilized collective actions to protect their economic interests and resist oppressive norms even during colonial rule (Achebe, 2011; Byfield, 2003; Van Allen, 1972). Also, women in present-day Southeastern Nigeria were active in this region's economic transformation from the start of colonialism in Nigeria in 1901 (Chuku, 2005).

Women's many roles in Sub-Saharan Africa, including their economic contributions, were sidelined by imperialist representatives who portrayed a hierarchical gender structure in these societies that placed women in a position of subjectivity and passivity (Beoku-Betts, 2005; Cornwall, 2005; Hafkin & Bay, 1976). Representations of women's ostensible passivity failed to capture the essence of women's everyday responses to challenges and the gender relations that existed before colonialism (Okonjo, 1976; Oyewumi, 1997). Additionally, these misrepresentations diminish the experiences of Africans and “leads to the silencing of African voices in the articulation of their own realities” (Oyewumi, 2003, p. 15).

Realizing the damages of women's misrepresentation and the importance of highlighting their varied contributions, gender scholars have focused on giving voice to women's realities in Africa. For example, women's livelihood and leadership engagement, and contributions were central to Africa's gender scholarship in the 20th century (Chuku, 2005; Cornwall, 2005). And according to Nzegwu (1994):

Since the mid-1980s, a major ideological shift occurred. Following the lead of sociologists, international development planners and economists interested in gender issues, a new group of African women scholars emerged and concentrated their research on the status of women in the economic sphere, and on their role in the mode of production in the continent. (p. 88)

Additionally, this literature on the socio-economic activities of women in Africa include those of Africans and Non-Africans who have examined gender relations in Africa, women's leadership roles, and their economic resilience, and some other scholars have situated feminism in the African context (Acholonu, 1994; Aina, 1998; Amadiume, 1987; Clarke, 1994; Chuku, 1999; Chukukere, 1998; Iweriebor, 1998; Lewis, 1976; Ogundipe, 1987, 1994; Okonjo, 1976; Sofola, 1998; Van Allen, 1972, 1976). Likewise, the contributions and challenges of market women in informal trading in West Africa have been examined by others (See Clark, 1994; Lewis, 1976;

Nezic & Kerr, 1996). Similarly, other scholars have shed light on gender relations in Africa to challenge the static representation of women and the “Inadequate appreciation of the various indigenous modes of power distribution” (Agbasiere, 2000, p.42). In their writings, African scholars challenge the negative consequences of colonial gender ideology and also highlight gender relations before and during colonialism (Abaraonye, 2011; Achebe, 2011; Amadiume, 1987; Ekpo, 2011). Although the colonial economy largely marginalized women, scholars have highlighted the significance of women’s local economic activities despite the limitations they encountered (Chuku, 2005; Martin, 1984).

1.2 Gender Relations and the Socio-Cultural Context of Southeastern Nigeria

This section discusses gender relations and women’s varied roles in Igboland before and during British colonization in the region. The Igbos are predominantly located in Southeastern Nigeria, and they are one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Igboland covers about “40, 922 square kilometers” and includes the States of Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, Anambra, Enugu, and some parts of Rivers and Delta States (Chuku, 2005, p.5). Whereas culturally, the Igbos speak a common language and have similar traditions (albeit with varying degrees of differences and similarities), the traditional Igbo socio-political structure was multifaceted and comprised of village gatherings, monarchy, and gerontocracy (Chuku, 2005, 2018). Many traditional Igbo societies did not have a formalized or centralized political structure; what they had were independent village assemblies (Korieh, 2006; Nwoye, 2011). Some of these village groups were facilitated by a dual-sex council, led by the oldest individual in the council; thus, leadership was often based on age (Achebe, 2011).

In many parts of Igboland, political power rested with different institutions, such as diviners, age-grade system, lineages, secret societies, titleholders, elders, and leaders of lineages (Korieh, 2011; Njoku & Adams, 2011). These groups, recognized as "traditional intellectuals," were very insightful and provided guidance and direction on matters of economic, political and social concerns to their communities (Korieh, 2011, p. 56). Most Igbo societies were based on a patrilineal lineage structure where succession is through the male (Nwoye, 2011), with a few exceptions, such as the Ohafia Igbos (Mbah, 2017). Politically, different women's associations provided women with opportunities for political participation in their communities (Azodo, 2019; Chukukere, 1998).

Traditionally, gender roles and gender relations were flexible in Igboland. To demonstrate the structure of gender relations, scholars have used the concept of gender complementarity (Acholonu, 1994; Azodo, 2019; Jell-Bahlsen, 1998; Okonjo, 1976) or co-rulership (Sofola, 1998) to describe the socio-political relations between men and women that allowed for power balance in Igboland and many traditional societies in Africa. The dual-sex system prevalent in Igboland allowed for the distribution of power (Chuku, 2005) and for males and females to manage their affairs and guide their interests (Okonjo, 1976). This dual-sex system also enforced the principle of relatedness: a social structure that enabled men and women to participate equally in their communities' affairs (Sofola, 1998). Furthering this argument on power-sharing between the sexes, Okonjo (1976) describes the dual-sex political structure of the Igbos in present-day Delta State, Nigeria, in which the Omu and the Obi (female and male rulers) had equal power but distinct roles. Both rulers were not related but were both elected into office; they had their separate council of elders, and in their separate roles, acted in the best interests of men and women (Okonjo, 1976). The Omu, together with her advisory council, took charge of all female-related spheres, including enforcing guidelines that governed the marketplaces (Okonjo, 1976). As head of the market, the Omu also carried out ritual rites to cleanse the market; trading only commenced as declared by the Omu or her representative (Okonjo, 1976). The Omu institution is still an ongoing practice in Delta State, and the Omu is still in charge of the local markets and still presides over the affairs of women amongst other functions (Punch, 2019; The Guardian, 2017; Ugobude, 2019).

Another association through which women ensured communal harmony was the council of wives, made up of women married into a clan or lineage (Azodo, 2019). The council of wives was also known as *Umunwunyeobu* (Nwapa, 1998), *Inyom di* (Amadiume, 1987) or *Otu inyemedi* (Okonjo, 1976), the name of the association varies, depending on the sub-group. Women's councils acted as agents of social control to uphold moral principles in the communities. As a rule, women did not go to the markets or farm when there was a death in the patrilineage (Amadiume, 1987). The wives' council also worked to keep the markets and the village clean (Achebe, 2011; Okonjo, 1976). They settled disputes, made rules regarding the conduct of all married women (Achebe, 2011), deliberated on abusive spouses' issues brought to them by women, and placed sanctions on offenders (Van Allen, 1976). The latter could include women going on strike, or when all other strategies failed, they could 'sit-on' men. The 'sit-on'

involved assembling at the man's residence, singing songs of ridicule and dancing; through the songs, women pronounced their complaints and anger; this also involved “banging on his hut with the pestles used for pounding yams, and, in extreme cases, tearing up his hut” (Van Allen, 1976, p. 61).

Similarly, the *Umuada* was another effective organization for resolving conflict. The *Umuada* is the association of daughters of a lineage (Nwapa, 1998), this group had political power and could influence decisions to advance their goals, and the group's leader was usually the eldest woman in the lineage (Amadiume, 1987; Okonjo, 1976). The group could perform many ritual ceremonies (Okonjo, 1976), and they also settled disputes between lineages and villages (Van Allen, 1976). Igbo women were also very active in their market associations, and this was another way through which they resolved conflict (Van Allen, 1976).

Igbo women worked effectively as a collaborative unit to protect their interests. In some Igbo communities, women were revered because they exemplified peace and power, and as a collective unit, women had some level of social immunity that men did not have (Chuku, 2005). Hence, women's collective power provided ways of resolving various conflicts and addressing issues of patriarchal domination (Ezeigbo, 1990). In this regard, African feminists have iterated how the notions of gender and gender relations in Africa could be easily misunderstood when examined through a Western lens (Achebe, 2011; Nnaemeka, 2004; Oyewumi, 1997). Granting that pre-colonial Igbo societies were gendered (Chuku, 2005), this structure was not based on a rigid gender and status classification (Korieh, 2011). This means that individual men and women could work hard to achieve social recognition and prestige, and they could also substitute gender roles and positions (Achebe, 2011). Chuku (2005) explains this flexible gender system through the dual-sex structure wherein:

The flexibility of gender relations allowed women to play male roles and vice versa...Igbo society was in most cases a dual-sex symmetrical system where individuals were valued for their social duties and responsibilities, and where though roles were gendered, females were not defined in antithesis to males. A male could assume the role and status of a female and vice versa a female. In each circumstance, the individual usually enjoyed certain privileges, power and authority over others by virtue of playing

that particular gender role. The gender position(s) an individual assumed determined his or her function not only in the kin group but also within the mode of production. (p. 7)

This flexible gender system enabled females to take up masculinized roles, such as kings (Achebe, 2011) or as husbands and sons (Amadiume, 1987). In becoming female husbands, women gained influence in their communities (Ezeigbo, 1990; Mbah, 2017). Women who married other women did so in part for socio-cultural and economic reasons, as the nature of gender relations in Igboland afforded social change through female-to-female marital partnership (Achebe, 2011). Also, because most traditional Igbo societies were patrilineal, it follows that inheritance was through male descent (Nwoye, 2011). However, the flexible gender system in Igboland afforded women some level of influence and independence, such as inheriting properties as male daughters (Amadiume, 1987). These are examples through which Igbo men and women influenced their societies and related to their cultural landscape.

The gendered division of labor in traditional Igbo society was also non-rigid (Amadiume, 1987; Chuku, 1995). Since food production and trading were generally considered women's domain (Amadiume, 1987), most women participated in subsistence trading at village markets. Men dominated profit trading through buying and selling at different locations (Northrup, 1972). Men, as well as women, were involved in farming. In particular, yam was considered the king of crops and was mainly cultivated by men (Korieh, 2007). The significance of yam in the Igbo culture was exemplified in the number of rituals and celebrations surrounding yam production and harvesting (Amadiume, 1987; Korieh, 2007). Successful yam cultivation increased a man's status in his community (Korieh, 2007). In some areas of Igboland, only women cultivated cassava, and although yam was regarded as a male crop, some women also grew it (Amadiume, 1987).

Apart from agriculture, marketing and the marketplace have been essential aspects of the Igbo people. In traditional Igbo societies, markets were the domain of Igbo women (Chuku, 2005) and functioned as socio-economic, political, and religious centers (Chuku, 2005; Northrup, 1972). The market for the Igbos has always been a revered space (Achebe, 2010). Importantly, colonial administrators overlooked this understanding of the functions of marketplaces for women by appointing only men to manage and control the markets (Chuku, 2005). And in agriculture, the modern systems of production that were introduced gave men, not women,

access and control of such new technologies and other economic resources; thus, men took control of local and transnational trade while many women were left with petty trading (Chuku, 2005).

In response to colonial change and challenges in their environment, women in Southeastern Nigeria often resorted to collective action using their traditional conflict resolution strategies, with one example being the 1914 Ogidi market women's protest in Southeastern Nigeria: in this instance, market women protested against the relocation of their local market from its original site (Achebe, 2011). The women's first attempt at resolving this conflict was negotiating with their ruler (Achebe, 2011). When negotiation failed, the women resorted to aggressive and non-violent strategies, including songs and dance marches (Achebe, 2011). Another example of collective action in this region during the colonial period is the Onitsha market women's protest in 1916, caused by the imposition of a stall fee by an all-male market administration in the relocated *Otu Nkwo* market (Chuku, 2005). Many poor women who were petty traders were left trading in open spaces under poor conditions because they could not afford the fees (Chuku, 2005). The protest was also against what women considered constant male harassment and their isolation from market administration (Chuku, 2005). Although these demonstrations did not lead to any government reforms, women made their grievances public through these actions (Chuku, 2005).

Likewise, during the 1929 Women's War in Southeastern Nigeria, women used their market associations strategically to send information to other women traders, and they also used their traditional practice of mediating relations with their male counterparts (Van Allen, 1972). The 1929 Women's War, also known as the Aba Riots, started because of women's perception that the British colonial administration planned to impose a tax on women (Korieh, 2011; Van Allen, 1972), as they did to their male counterparts in 1928 (Korieh, 2011). This strain was also heightened by the general mistrust women had of colonial officials (Van Allen, 1976). The immediate cause of the Women's War was an incident on November 23, 1929, involving a woman called Nwanyeruwa, who was approached by a colonial official and asked to count her livestock (Van Allen, 1976). This event convinced other women of the impending taxation, and messages about this were quickly spread to other women in neighboring areas through market women's networks (Van Allen, 1976). According to Korieh (2011), "The movement was an expression of the tensions that had been brewing since the introduction of the colonial

administration in the region” (p. 55). In their rebellion against colonial socio-economic policies that reformed prior gender relations in present-day Southeastern Nigeria, the women utilized the customary strategies they had used in reprimanding offending males (Korieh, 2011; Van Allen, 1972). The strategies include making war or 'sitting on' a man that has committed an injustice against a woman. (Van Allen, 1972, 1976, p. 61). These actions by women both in the diminutive family level and those utilized against the British were derivative of the gender system in their communities. And as Korieh (2011) noted, the women’s protests drew from their socio-cultural context, which traditionally provided them with some advantages and based on “their femininity and roles as subsistence producers and providers” (p. 55).

Decades later, during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), Igbo women used such traditional strategies to mitigate the effect of the war (Achebe, 2010). Women also challenged colonial patriarchal and gender ideologies by creating new gender roles and taking up spheres and professions that were reserved for men (Achebe, 2011; Mbah, 2017). Women’s actions were facilitated by the aforementioned cultural patterns that had already been established. Notwithstanding the new colonial gender structure that alienated many women, some Igbo women seized the new opportunities in the colonial economy and became wealthy merchants through their economic activities in local and international trade (Chuku, 2005).

The infusion of colonial and capitalist ideologies into Africa created a hybridized social order that subordinates women through societal expectations driven by Western and indigenous patriarchal ideologies (Okeke-Ihejirika, 2004). Generally, the British colonialists undermined Nigerian women's influence within their societies as most colonialists' policies had gendered effects that were unfavorable to women (Chuku, 1995; Okonjo, 1976; Van Allen, 1976). For example, marketplaces in traditional Igboland were the domain of women (Achebe, 2011; Okonjo, 1976; Van Allen, 1976), but because of colonial gender ideology, men replaced women as market administrators during colonial rule (Chuku, 2005). Even with this setback, market women in many parts of West Africa have remained active in their economic activities. However, the constraints many women encountered and still come across in Africa are complex, with gender intersecting with inequality, poverty, and other structures to cause injustice for many women working in the informal sector.

From this overview, we understand the ways colonialism contributed to gender inequality in light of the participatory roles women had played traditionally. This overview also sheds light

on women's collective activism in private (family level) and public spaces. Also highlighted in this section is how women have collectively responded to challenges in their context, as wives, daughters and traders. The section also sheds light on how women have sought to address issues that conflict with their sustenance. From this summary, we understand that family sustenance and economic security are important to women. The next section examines the informal sector where many women in developing regions seek economic security for themselves and their families.

1.3 The Informal Sector in Perspective

This section discusses relevant literature on the informal sector; it explores the concept and emergence of the informal sector and the gendered nature of the informal sector. Keith Hart coined the term informal sector in the 1970s during his study in Ghana (Hendriks, 2017). The term was used to denote the varied livelihood opportunities individuals outside of the formal workforce are engaged in (Hendriks, 2017). The informal sector noted here describes employment that is not formally controlled by labor regulations (Delaney & Macdonald, 2018) when compared to the formal sector industries that are registered, regulated, and taxed (Amaral & Quintin, 2006; Spring, 2009). The informal sector is also known as the 'shadow' and 'black' economy (Alderslade et al., 2006; Medina et al., 2017). Compared to workers in the formal sector, those in the informal sector lack social benefits, such as paid time off for holidays, sick pay and other employment benefits (Coles et al., 2018). Additionally, informal employment consists mainly of workers with low levels of education and low literacy levels (Amaral & Quintin, 2006) who work under poor conditions (Joshi et al., 2014). The nature of the informal sector exposes workers, particularly women, to exploitation and abuse (ILO, 2018).

The informal sector plays a vital part in many countries' economies (Atesagaoglu et al., 2017). Not only does the sector account for more than half of non-farming occupations, but it also provides livelihood resourcefulness for many through which disparity can be reduced (Chen, 2016). According to the International Labour Organization (2018), the informal sector accounts for more than 80% of all jobs in Africa, with more than 700 million women working in the sector globally.

Formal and informal organizations differ in many ways. Registration, business size, and assets differentiate formal sectors from informal sectors (Mead & Morrison, 2006). In this sense,

the informal sector is always seen within the formal/informal binary (Banks et al., 2019; Josh et al., 2014). The general understanding is that the nature of informality makes taxation difficult and reduces the government's income (Medina et al., 2017). However, these perspectives are vague because many small and medium-sized enterprises classified as informal are still subject to different forms of levies and rules where they operate (Joshi et al., 2014; Meagher, 2016). And although informal sector workplaces are generally viewed as unorganized, studies have shown that informal workplaces are hierarchically structured with rules that guide their everyday operations (Hendriks, 2017). Meagher (2016) examined the impact of oppressive taxation structures on informal actors, observing that informal sector workers are subject to unlawful taxation by state security personnel, even in instances where they pay formal levies. For example, unlawful levies through road closures and varied other levies may be imposed on them, including those from unlawful tax collectors (Meagher, 2016). Thus, the view that informal work/organizations are not subject to levies and regulation is ambiguous.

Different reasons have been given for why the informal sector exists. The emergence and importance of informality have been examined in some scholarship (Bureau & Fendt, 2011; Saitta, 2017; Williams, 2017; Williams & Nada, 2010). In this regard, Williams and Nadin (2010) highlight four perspectives (modernization, structural, neoliberal and post-structural) on the emergence of the informal sector:

- The modernization school of thought views informality as an old sector that is phasing out with the formal sector's rise.
- The structurally focused group views informality as the only viable means of employment for people who have been excluded from formal employment.
- The neoliberal perspective sees informal workers as those who willingly exit formal employment due to strict regulations.
- The post-structuralist group sees informal livelihoods as a reflection of the social struggles of agentic individuals against a global neoliberalist unfair structure (Williams & Nadin, 2010).

Despite the different perspectives of informality, the common perception is that informality is a consequence of rising formal rules and monetary regulations (Bureau & Fendt, 2011), a view describes as the principal neoliberalist perspective because it explains that the increasing rate of informal sector jobs is a consequence of increasing regulatory policies and that a decrease in

these regulations will decrease the size of the sector (Williams, 2017). It is no surprise then that other scholars have viewed increasing informal work employment as a reaction to neoliberalist principles (Saitta, 2017), where informality also reflects the 'resilience' and 'resistance' of individuals pushed to the margins but carving out new norms in opposition to dominant notions of legitimacy and validity (Saitta, 2017).

According to some scholars, the separation of both sectors (formal and informal) in some regions might be difficult because both sectors are interrelated economies in Africa, and actors in both economies have a pattern of conducting businesses across these sectors (Spring, 2009). Also, when informality is viewed within the dichotomy of formality versus informality, it fails to acknowledge that informality varies by context; this may lead to general assumptions about informal workers that do not reflect the reality in some contexts (Williams & Nadin, 2010). Viewing informality as a concept only in comparison with formality also fails to recognize how workers in this sector contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities because their resourcefulness does not meet the dominant ideas of formal productive work (Tucker & Anantharaman, 2020).

Emerging scholarship has called for a look beyond the informal/formal binary (Banks et al., 2019; Tucker & Anantharaman, 2020). Informality, some argue, should be seen as a location deserving of 'critical' examination (Banks et al., 2019). Others have iterated that a critical reexamination would benefit from using a gender lens in analyzing the social environment of informality that also influences the gendering and feminization of informal sector work and relations (Delaney & Macdonald, 2018). This would also enable a more complex understanding of informality as comprising various work that crosses both formal and informal engagements.

1.4 Gender, Informality and Inequality

This section discusses gender and the informal sector. The livelihood activities comprising the informal sector are varied and include domestic workers (such as house help in private residences), self-employed individuals, cab drivers, farm workers, street and market traders (WIEGO, n.d). According to Chen (2016), women are usually found at the low level of the informal sector and are exposed to different health hazards:

Further, women informal workers tend to face greater health challenges than men informal workers because they are concentrated in certain statuses of employment and places of work. Women are more likely to be outworkers and unpaid contributing family workers and less likely to be employers. They are more likely to work at home or on the streets, rather than in workshops or factories. They are more likely to be assigned the most menial tasks: e.g., in the waste recycling sector, women and children tend to be overrepresented among those who do the primary collection and sorting of waste. They are conditioned to assume the primary responsibility for caring for the young, elderly, and ill members of the household. (p. 161)

Using a feminist curious lens (Enloe, 2014) allows one to see that women largely dominate the lower realm of the informal sector. Asking how they got there (Enloe, 2014) emphasizes the different structural factors that enabled this, including education and location. For example, global statistics indicate that more women are employed in the informal sector in various low-level employment, such as household/domestic jobs, exposing them to varied forms of exploitation and abuse.¹ Many factors have been given for this phenomenon, including cultural norms and expectations, low literacy level, early marriage, and motherhood (Malta et al., 2019). Further, an evaluation of the informal sector in Nigeria in 2018 reveals that the sector accounts for 93 percent of all jobs in Nigeria, with 90 percent of men and 95 percent of women workers in this sector (ILO, 2018). According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, women comprise almost 50 percent of the Nigerian population, yet they are underrepresented in the formal sector, including civil service occupations (NBS, 2019).

A feminist intersectional lens helps to understand how social categories and positions influence women's experiences of informality and the nature of women's work (Delaney & Macdonald, 2018). Using a feminist lens advances our understanding of structural impediments that define women's work and how stereotypical gender roles impact how women's work is perceived and reproduced in formal and informal sectors (Delaney & Macdonald, 2018). In the

¹ See OECD/ILO. Tackling vulnerability in the informal economy: Chapter 5, addressing the gender dimension of informality. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/cfd32100-en.pdf?expires=1606789447&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=6AA2E8A4307F83675B6E15FAAD0AAAF2>

same regard, Heap et al. (2018) argue that patriarchal gender subjugation impacts power dynamics even in formal workplaces governed by regulations.

Further, ideas about gender responsibilities, such as childcare, affect women's work and profit. Studies have found that care work and other household-related work are generally presumed to be women's duties; these affect their job outcomes and increase their risks of poverty (Rogan & Alfery, 2019). In some African countries and other regions of the world, women who work in the informal sector find it challenging to balance childcare with work, thus, reducing the number of hours they work and subsequently the money they make (Rogan & Alfery, 2019). This also means that in the absence of childcare arrangements, some women take their children to work in often dangerous environments (Ene-Obong et al., 2000; Rogan & Alfery, 2019).

Other environmental factors or place-specific challenges affect women's work and profit in the informal sector. The informal sector plays a crucial role in food access for many households (Battersby & Watson, 2019; Crush & Frayne, 2011; Skinner, 2019), and women play important roles as the majority in food trading in the informal sector. Yet, women are exposed to different forms of exploitation in this sector, including income reduction due to poor infrastructures. For example, income for women food vendors may be reduced due to inadequate water supply because the search for water to prepare meals for sale is time-consuming, leading to customer/income loss (Rogan & Alfery, 2019). These varied experiences of vulnerabilities that women are exposed to, in addition to lack of social benefits, lead to a situation of "diminished voice and agency" (Heap et al., 2018, p. 115).

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges for informal sector workers in different contexts. Globally, the informal sector employs more men than women, but in developing countries, there are more women (92 percent) employed in the informal sector than men (87 percent); also, 72 percent of the total workforce in developing nations are self-employed (Bonnet et al., 2019). The ongoing pandemic and the lockdown measures have limited the livelihood activities and financial capacity of informal workers², who are self-employed, such as market women. Further, within informal local markets, there are multiple insecurities that market

² See for example, ILO, A Rapid Diagnostics Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on enterprises and workers in the informal Economy in Nigeria

women encounter. Notwithstanding these complex challenges, women's resilience and agency in the informal sector in Nigeria will be highlighted in this present study.

1.5 Informal Local Markets in Africa

This section contextualizes informal local marketplaces in Africa and the varied purposes they serve. Informal local markets in West Africa denote marketplaces, where people primarily engage in commerce. These markets play more than just commercial roles; for many, they are the essence of their societies. They serve both economic and social functions (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018; Northrup, 1972; Omobowale, 2020) and are points of convergence for many communities and individuals with varied ethno-religious affiliations (Nezic & Kerr, 1996). Most marketplaces are patronized by many people living around the market areas and those living outside of the areas where they are located; they also serve as a conduit from which other traders from far and near buy and sell goods (Clark, 1994; Cornwall, 2007). As essential institutions in many West African countries, marketplaces serve the needs of both formal and informal workers and workplaces (Spring, 2009). While some markets are situated around commercial areas, others are within residential areas in cities and close to other vital services and amenities (Ene-Obong et al., 2000).

Apart from their economic symbolism, local markets serve the socio-cultural needs of the communities where they are situated (Balogun, 2020). In this regard, Abigo et al. (2015) describe marketplaces as holding "deep cultural significance" for people in Africa (p. 503). Likewise, local markets in West Africa have also been described as a 'community' and not just a business site (Nezic & Kerr 2006). As a community, local markets are assumed to embody some spiritual attributes, thus reflecting the philosophy and spiritual norms that guide the communities in which they are located (Omobowale, 2020).

Marketplaces also serve other functions. Markets are places where information is exchanged; they also provide a foundation for developing long-lasting, respectful relations (Bonkat, 2014). Market spaces have also been used for political agendas and other awareness programs as they provide a space for public education and political outreach (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018). Further, marketplaces are sites for understanding gender relations, power dynamics, and how these shape trading relations (Porter et al., 2007; Clark, 1994). In many markets, women's role as leaders, such as the 'market queens' in Ghana, situate them in a place of

power (Clark, 1994; Hendriks, 2017). As traders and leaders in the markets, women become part of a more extensive social system with other organizations outside of the markets through which they collectively organize to protect their interests (Hendriks, 2017).

Additionally, bargaining, disputes, competition, and varied interactions are important aspects of marketplaces (Balogun, 2020; Omobowale, 2020). Marketplaces contribute to the functioning of the communities they inhabit through the levies that they pay to the local government (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018). Marketplaces also have their challenges.

The challenges of marketplaces in Africa range from infrastructural to relational. For example, markets have the potential to positively impact community development, and issues, including conflict between market management and local authorities, can derail this advancement (Nezic & Kerr, 1996). Also, the growing number of urban areas has increased marketplaces (Oben & Ndi, 2014), which are mostly unplanned and remain derelict, with inadequate public facilities, inaccessible roads and lack of safety measures (Uzuegbunam, 2012). Many markets have waste management issues (Abigo et al., 2015; Balogun, n.d; Uzuegbunam, 2012) and inadequate water supply (Balogun, n.d).

Informal local markets are viable places for examining challenges and survival strategies. For example, competition over customers and structural challenges can breed conflict between traders on the one hand, and between traders and state and market officials, on the other hand. The struggle for power within market spaces can also lead to conflict. Also, as traders may have diverse ethno-religious affiliations (Balogun, 2020), their different values may affect their perspectives and interactions (Bonkat, 2014). However, the marketplace thrives on cooperation rather than on conflict. As Porter et al. (2005) remind us, “Despite the potential for trade to become a locus of conflict, market interactions and trading relationships may also facilitate reconciliation because disputing groups need to work together to secure their individual livelihoods” (p. 3). This statement highlights why local marketplaces are important sites for examining peace and conflict relations.

1.6 Women in Informal Local Markets in Africa: Challenges and Survival Strategies

Reflecting on a number of studies relating to African market women, this section explores the challenges that women traders encounter in their everyday market trading activities and their survival strategies. Informal local markets provide livelihood opportunities for women.

Female traders dominate many West African markets (Sowatey et, 2018; Asante & Helbrecht, 2018; Clark, 1994), selling various food and non-food items. Roles in many of these informal local markets are quite gendered, and as Spring (2009) notes:

In most places, women sell their own and others' produce, food, cloth, crafts, and pottery. Men control the making of metal and wood products. Commodities that require capital and direct connections to international markets are usually male controlled; items that concern daily subsistence and local markets are usually female controlled because of women's limited cash resources. In general, the large-scale female vendors are involved in the cloth trade and household goods. (p. 19)

Gender also intersects with livelihoods and socio-cultural norms. Women spend hours in these markets daily, many working to contribute to the family income (Baah-Ennumh & Adom-Asamoah, 2012). Apart from family sustenance, women traders also put their earnings towards educating their children (Cruz, 2015; Madichie & Nkamnebe, 2010). Women's economic and social roles in West Africa are often interwoven. In her study of market women in Ghana, Clark (1994) observed that women's economic and social identities are intertwined, arguing that, “A woman's gender identity depends on her financial independence as well as her fertility, just as a man's does. A woman without an income is not a real woman, but like a child or, more precisely, an idiot” (p. 107). Connecting the ability to earn income with fertility is indicative of the value some societies place on women's economic productivity. And as the significant sellers of food items in West Africa, women's roles as food security agents are undisputable (Baah-Ennumh & Adom-Asamoah, 2012; Cruz, 2015; Porter et al., 2007; Skinner, 2019), highlighting how their reproductive and productive roles as nurturers and traders in food are connected. Similarly, Porter et al. (2007) note that “Despite women's seeming lack of power in many African contexts, the central role of women in the food trade, as the foundation of urbanization in West Africa, has to be acknowledged” (p. 119). This statement reflects women’s key role in food security, even in challenging times.

Challenges

Unfortunately, the poor conditions of market structures also impact the economic and familial activities of women in the foodstuff business, particularly when it rains (Baah-Ennumh & Adom-Asamoah, 2012). Many women in informal local markets as well as in other sectors of the informal economy spend hours working to earn an income as well as caring for their children whom they sometimes bring to their workplaces because they lack adequate childcare options (Ene-Obong et al., 1998; Iroegbu et al., 2000; Nezc & Kerr, 2006; Rogan & Alfes, 2019). This practice can expose children to various health hazards (Ene-Obong et al., 1998; Iroegbu et al., 2000). In their study conducted in Techiman market Ghana, Nezc and Kerr (1996) observed that the market as a microcosm of the society reflects the challenges of the mostly women traders in the market; these include problems of safety, childcare, accommodation, hygiene, all impacted by poor infrastructures. Studies have also shown that women traders are often worried about their security and their children's safety, and these concerns affect their mental health (Wrigley-Asante, 2013).

Similarly, other authors have noted further challenges for women traders, such as inadequate access to loans, which is a constraint to women's expansion (Baah-Ennumh & Adom-Asamoah, 2012). It is important, however, to state that women in informal trading are diverse. While some, like the petty traders, may need credit facilities, others may not (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018) because they have adequate resources. The majority of poor working women in Nigeria are small-scale traders who engage in petty trading to support their families. As with women in other sectors of the informal economy, market women's conditions are also severely hindered by systemic failures and structures such as insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to essential health and social services.

Age and health are intersecting factors that affect market women. Using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, Nsibirano et al. (2020) examined the resilience strategies of aging market women and the shifting notions of aging in Kampala, Uganda. Their findings show that aging market women are active in social and economic engagements despite negative social conceptions of aging. The study demonstrates the challenges associated with aging, including how gender and cultural norms about women, including widowhood, may intersect to impact the economic activities of market women. The authors stated that through their livelihood activities market, women were able to gain some level of power and autonomy. According to the authors, "Findings revealed that it was through market vending that the women were able to

claim power, entitlement, and privilege, which they had not previously had” (p. 106). Emerging studies, as discussed in the next section, have examined women’s challenges in the informal sector and their resilience and survival strategies in peaceful times and during conflict situations.

There are advantages to working in the informal sector as well as challenges. Through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions with women traders in the informal sector in the Kumasi metropolis of Ghana, Peprah et al. (2019) found that the ease of entry and flexibility of the informal sector enable women to find a good balance between work and life. One participant in this study stated that she started her petty trading business after losing her job in the formal sector, and her business has expanded enough to hire others and also have enough time to help her daughter with childcare. Another food trader stated that her food trading business gives her “a great sense of worth” (p. 9). This study by Peprah et al. (2019) found that the general challenges women encounter in their businesses include low capital, high taxation, inadequate customer base, and inadequate space. Location and space availability impact the business of some women in this study and their expansion capacity as one participant who is a food vendor noted, “I must say business is good at this location, but I cannot expand my commercial activity because of the limited available space to me. I am more or less a squatter” (p. 17). The study findings by Peprah et al. support scholars that argue that inadequate credit facilities are one of the significant challenges that limit small and medium enterprises (Ozioma-Eleodinmuo, 2015); these are complex matters.

Madichie and Nkamnebe (2010), in their examination of the constraints female petty traders in Southeastern Nigeria face when seeking micro-credit to expand their businesses, found that often participants do not proactively contemplate seeking loans from licensed microfinance institutions as their initial option; they instead seek financial help from their social networks including family and friends. One of the many reasons some participants provided for their unwillingness to seek credit from microfinance institutions is that their domestic responsibilities, including childcare, deny them the time to seek micro-credit to expand their businesses. The study also finds that socio-cultural norms impact how women perceive loans and expansion. According to some traders, business expansion is more in the domain of men than women. This supports other scholars that have argued that women engage in informal trading to supplement household income (Cornwall, 2007). The study findings by Madichie and Nkamnebe (2010) also highlight women's reliance and trust on their social networks. One participant stated that with her

little business and without needing loans, she has been able to pay her children's school fees (Madichie & Nkamnebe, 2010).

Violent conflict disrupts trading and affects market women's income. Bonkat (2014) explored the survival strategies of market women and violent conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, using interviews and focus group discussions. Jos has witnessed repeated conflict, which has threatened many livelihoods and forced many market women to relocate. Findings from the study revealed that as a result of these violent conflicts, many women had become widows and the only wage earners in their households. The study findings show that market women had to relocate numerous times, which cost them their customers. The new markets were often situated too far that participants had challenges getting there, resulting in loss of income.

Survival Strategies

Market women in Jos, Plateau state, have had to develop different survival strategies due to the incessant violent eruptions in their context. As part of their survival strategies, traders exchange information through their networks about impending conflict so that they can depart the markets in good time. In addition to trading, some women took up farming to supplement their income. The study findings reveal that through market women's daily, weekly, and monthly contributions from their different associations, market women can meet their families' needs by collecting these savings in times of need. They also practice rotational food sharing- where each woman bought food items and give them to one woman until they are shared with everybody in the group. One participant in the study noted that:

There is a new type of contribution we just started recently. We contribute 1 thousand naira (5 Euros) after every 2 weeks. The money contributed will be used to buy food stuff which is given in turns to every woman in the group. This has helped us at home, because we don't have to depend on our income to buy all that we need at home. And so the income helps in buying clothes, drugs and in paying school fees. (p. 294)

Women's survival strategies in Bonkat's (2014) study, such as group contributions and reliance on social networks, reflect those of other studies (Cruz, 2015).

Market women in Liberia navigate similar challenges. To understand how women reframe what it means to engage in 'dirty work' and its intersection with gender, class, and nation in post-conflict Liberia, Cruz's (2015) study used in-depth interviews and participant observation in a food market in Monrovia, Liberia. The study focused on market women because, according to the author, market work is undervalued in Liberia, and market women are a 'marginalized group' in their context. The findings show that women interpret their work as a necessary struggle and physically demanding because it entails braving harsh climatic conditions to buy food items so that people can have access to these foods. One participant in Cruz's study stated that:

We can fight hard. When it is raining, we get under it, we go look for food, and we bring it for other people who are not able to look for it, for them to be able to get it because everybody is not able to go and sell. (p. 429)

Cruz (2015) noted that this new framing of their work centers market women as key food security actors in post-conflict Liberia in contrast to labeling market work as 'dirty work.' Women also defined their work in connection to empowerment because, as some of the participants stated, in pre-war Liberia, some women did not work; only the men worked. Still, the war destabilized many families, as also noted in the study by Bonkat (2014), and this placed many women as breadwinners. A participant in the study by Cruz (2015), who was a widow, shared that her work and her membership in three susu³ groups had afforded her the resources needed to pay her children's tuition and other bills. This finding supports those of Madichie and Nkamnebe (2010) about women emphasizing how their livelihood empowered them and provided them with the financial resources needed to pay tuition for their children. Most importantly, Cruz's (2015) study emphasized women's ability to equally contribute to household income through their trading. Also, where they had suffered physical abuse from their spouses in the past, market women's livelihood engagements now afforded them the power to negotiate marital and gender relations (Cruz, 2015). The notion of livelihood empowerment also

³ Susu groups are savings groups or "informal credit associations" created by market women (Cruz, 2015) in many markets in West Africa. They are also known by other names and sometimes referred to as savings or contribution group.

supports the findings of Sowatey et al. (2018); in the study, market women saw their jobs as empowering, particularly in the context of economic hardships.

Market women have used different strategies to strengthen and to remain productive in their trading businesses. Sowatey et al. (2018) explored the approaches market women use to remain and be productive in their trading businesses in Accra, Ghana, using participant observation and in-depth interviews. The findings from that study showed that gaining access to trading spaces in the markets was lengthy, expensive and challenging for participants. To gain access to trading spaces, participants had to rely on people in their networks, such as friends and family members. Findings also showed that through their marketplace interactions, market women were able to cultivate productive relations among themselves even though they were ‘rivals’; market women sold for each other when the need arose as one participant in the study stated:

You see that this woman just left her wares right now? I will sell on her behalf should someone come to buy and she will do the same for me even when I don’t inform her of my short absence. We are all one. No quarrels. No unnecessary rivalry or competition. This is not to say that there is no competition, but overall, we co-operate. You realised we just shifted so this woman will have her space. (Sowatey et al., 2018, p. 333)

The study by Sowatey et al. (2018) highlights how women’s income from their trading helps to sustain their families and pay for their children’s education; the study also emphasized challenges as articulated by market women in their context; this includes stealing and fire outbreaks in the markets.

All the studies examined in this section show the different ways women traders are reframing, negotiating and responding to challenges in their different contexts, including the unique strategies they have developed to address the challenges they encounter. These findings echo African feminist thoughts on women's ability to negotiate difficult terrains while collaborating and compromising (Nnaemeka, 2004) to ensure their basic needs and those of their households are met. However, very few studies have considered how market women’s survival strategies contribute to social justice in the ‘local’ context. Also, studies of market women have emphasized their resilience, but not many have viewed their challenges through the lens of

structural and direct violence (Galtung, 1969). Further, few studies have analyzed how the structures in informal local markets can reproduce both direct and indirect violence. When these structures that impede women's economic activities in informal local markets are overlooked, there is a possibility that women's capacities as breadwinners and agents of social change will be hindered. Therefore, examining how women articulate and experience peace and peacebuilding and the obstacles they encounter in their context is an important aspect of the peacebuilding process because it reveals problems and points to possible solutions. This study integrates a PACS and feminist lens to explore the experiences of market women and, in so doing, contribute richly to the field of gender and peacebuilding in Africa. The insights from this study will also create a new understanding of peace and conflict in the informal sector and add to the varied conceptualization of peace and peacebuilding in local contexts.

1.7 Study Location in Context

This study was conducted in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. Nigeria is a West African country bordered by Cameroon in the east, Benin in the West, and Niger in the north. Nigeria is ethnically diverse, with a population of over 200 million people spread across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja (World Bank, 2019). Aba is a commercial city in Abia State, Nigeria, and a much more popular city than the state capital of Umuahia. Although Aba is known for the Aba Women's War (or riots), its fame also lies in the myriad economic opportunities it provides for many people in and outside of Southeastern Nigeria. The city is usually described as the 'Japan' of Africa because of its central role in commerce and the affordable prices of goods sold in the markets (Ezinwa et al., 2017; Umunnakwe et al., 2018). Aba is also known for its diverse Nigerian produced commodities such as clothing, leather, shoes, and bags.

The Emergence of Aba as a Commercial Center

This section provides a historical background of the city of Aba and its growth as a commercial center in Southeastern Nigeria. The Ngwa people of Aba constitute one of the largest Igbo sub-groups in Abia State. The pre-colonial economy of the Ngwa people was built on agriculture and trade (Orij, 1983). During colonialism, Ngwa farmers contributed to their region's economic development through their economic activities in producing and exporting palm produce (Martin, 1984). As with the men, Ngwa women also played significant roles in the

production of cash crops. Highlighting this argument, Martin (1984) states that, "Between 1900 and 1930 women did most of the work in food farming and cash crop production in the Ngwa region" (p. 413). From its rural beginning, the city developed into an urban center during colonialism (Korieh, 2010). In the early twentieth century, the construction of railways by the colonial administration connected southeastern towns such as Aba, Port Harcourt, and Owerri; this enabled the transportation of resources from this region to other locations (Korieh, 2010). The construction of railways and roads maximized local production and marketing (Korieh, 2010; Okali et al., 2001). The ease in mobility also saw the increasing presence and domination of women in the retail food trade, mainly established along rail routes (Korieh, 2010). And as trade expanded, so did the city's population (Korieh, 2010). Although this economic development was weakened due to the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the rise of the informal sector in Aba aided its emergence as a commercial center. According to Okali et al. (2001):

After the war, people started returning to Aba and economic activities built up again. Industrial enterprises developed, but the main economic activity remains commerce in all its forms, much of it driven by vibrant informal sector activity, including manufacture of textiles, clothing, shoes, polyethylene products, beverages and so on. Aba's growth as a commercial centre was greatly boosted by the relocation of many Igbos from Port Harcourt and Calabar, where many Igbos owned thriving import-export trading businesses before the war. (p. 16)

The informal sector in Aba has remained an important aspect of the economic growth in this region.

Informal Local Markets in Aba

This section provides some details about the markets in this study, the markets' structure and the context-specific challenges of traders. Aba has many markets, but the major ones are Ariaria International Market, Ekeoha Shopping Center, Cemetery Market (also known as Eziukwu market), and New Market, also called Ahia Ohuru (Umunnakwe et al., 2018). Some of the markets in Aba, like Ariaria International Market, are open-air markets that are separated into sections based on the trade items (Umunnakwe et al., 2018). Ariaria International Market is one

of the biggest markets in West Africa (Awuchi et al., 2020; Umunnakwe, 2018). There are numerous entrepreneurs in the shoe and leather making business in this market (Umunnakwe et al., 2018). Ahia Ohuru is also a major market, and traders in this market engage in different trading activities, including food and non-food items such as second new clothing (Umunnakwe et al., 2018). Ekeoha Shopping center is one of the largest fabric markets in Nigeria, and Eziukwu market comprises traders selling both food items and non-food items (Umunnakwe et al., 2018). There are other markets in Aba that are not as big as the ones mentioned above; they include Afo Ule, Amo Ogbonna, Umungazi, and Salad Market.⁴ Apart from these markets, there are many roadside markets in Aba, which the government considers as unlawful; some of the roadside vendors have stall/shops in the markets but choose to sell on the roadside; but others who trade on the roadside do so because they lack other options (Ogbonna, 2015).

One common feature of many markets in Aba is the noisiness (Awuchi et al., 2020; Umunnakwe et al., 2018), and the hustling sights of traders haggling or negotiating with customers and calling out potential customers; Olawoyin (2020) conjures up this image in one of the markets in Aba when he noted that: “Chika, a 34-year-old trader, moved around to call on passers-by for patronage. Beside him stood other traders and customers, all haggling prices among themselves” (para. 1). This observation emphasizes the bargaining atmosphere that is the hallmark of informal local markets in Aba. Unlike formal markets where prices are not flexible, buyers and sellers engage in price negotiation during any sale in informal local markets.

Men and women have leadership roles in the markets in Aba, and although women are the majority in the food item trade, they are also visible in the non-food item trade. According to participants in this study, no particular gender holds exclusive market leadership rights as both men and women can become market leaders. One participant confirmed this assertion by stating that she has held a leadership position in her market. Although there are women in other business trade sectors in Aba, such as in the leather production sector (Onwumere & Ukpebor, 2011), these markets, as with others in West Africa, are gendered, with women being the majority in the food items sector. In their study of the marketing of tropical vegetables⁵ in Aba, Thomson and

⁴ The participants in this study were drawn from all except one market mentioned in this section.

⁵ Vegetables here refers to those grown in the tropic and indigenous to the people these includes “Telfairia (ugu), Talinum (water leaf), Amaranthus (green), Vernonia (bitter leaf), Gnetum (ukazi) and Abelmoschus (okra)”. For more information, see Thomson & Agbugba, 2013, p. 272

Agbugba (2013) noted this gendered nature of the market/trade, stating that most of the vegetable traders were females both in the wholesale and retail sectors of the vegetable business.

Further, the markets in Aba are beset by varied infrastructural challenges, from poor roads to an inadequate supply of electricity (Ndiomewese, 2018). Insufficient electricity supply in these major markets derails many businesses in Aba, with many traders relying on other electricity sources such as generators (O'Neil, 2020). Similarly, due to poor waste management in the city, there are usually heaps of garbage lying around the markets and streets (Olawayin, 2020). Drainage problems whenever it rains are also common (Nwanne, 2015). Market traders in Aba are always bemoaning these challenges while also decrying the many levies they pay (Nwanne, 2015) in their markets. Within the last couple of years, traders (many of whom are women) have taken to the streets to protest against these high levies (Agwu, 2017; Alaribe, 2018; Ikokwu, 2019). Apart from decrying unlawful imposition of levies, traders have also protested against state and market officials' corruption and harassment (Alaribe & Ugbor, 2020; Ndukwe, 2020).

With laws in place banning street or roadside markets, many informal retail traders, particularly those selling cooked meals, vegetables, and hawkers in many developing regions, face different direct and indirect violence, including harassment, physical injury, bribery, arrest, and goods seizure (Resnick, 2016). Following this, Chen (2016) advocates for formal and informal economies to be hybridized so that informal sector workers can benefit from social benefits and mitigate the threats they encounter in their workplaces. This study examines these varied insecurities and how women traders are responding to them.

1.8 Thesis Format and Overview of the Chapters

This section describes the thesis format and presents an overview of the seven chapters that make up the thesis. The study's findings are in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. Chapter Two, which follows this introductory chapter, discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study, focusing primarily on theories from both feminist and peace and conflict studies. Chapter Three discusses the feminist methodological principles that guided the research approach.

The three finding chapters that make up this thesis have different, additional literature review sections that are more specifically connected to the findings, and each of these chapters addresses market women's challenges and survival strategies. The findings begin with Chapter

Four, which examines the types and causes of conflict in the study location and the nature of conflict resolution, including the influence of workplace culture on conflict resolution. Chapter Five explores the insecurity challenges women experience and how they respond to meet their needs. Chapter Six examines the effect of the ongoing pandemic on women and their trading business and how market women's contributions as food security actors are being hampered by the pandemic, including the challenges they encountered in making food accessible to many households during the pandemic lockdown. It is estimated that continued measures to mitigate the coronavirus disease, which has affected livelihood securities globally, would lead to loss of income, and an increase in poverty and inequality, amongst other negative impacts (ILO, 2020). Finally, Chapter Seven sums up the key insights from this study, the study contributions, and recommendations for future research.

The overall findings emphasize market women's notions of peace and belonging in the most experiential sense and based on their local context. My central arguments are that the market is an important site for examining the notions of peace and causes of conflict. I also argue that market women's peacebuilding strategies are intricately intertwined with their livelihood engagements and reflect African feminist thoughts on balance and compromise. Some of the challenges women encounter are rooted in structures, and this reflects PACS theories of indirect violence, which can also lead to direct violence. Market women's strategies are developed to meet basic needs and avoid conflict detrimental to their economic relations with other traders. Thus, this study contributes to the understanding of gender and peacebuilding in local contexts. As Chapter Three will further explore, the dominant approach to peace and peacebuilding tends to be too prescriptive and too formalized, leaving out other notions of peacebuilding, including how relationships and networks can strengthen peaceful relations, as demonstrated in Chapter Five. Throughout this thesis, I refer to the works of feminists in general, emphasizing the works of African feminists where necessary to draw attention to the challenges specific to market women's context in Southeastern Nigeria. I utilize the works of African feminists to emphasize the many contributions of women and their contextually enabled strategies for survival.

1.9 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has presented the overview and background of the study and location. The chapter examined gender relations in Southeastern Nigeria and conceptualized

informal marketplaces in Africa. I argue that although markets in West Africa may differ in size and shape, they play essential roles in the communities where they are situated. In addition, informal local markets are outlets through which women gain the needed resources to care for themselves and their loved ones. The markets also provide women with opportunities to form networks needed for their survival, including meeting some of their social or belonging needs. As a microcosm of the broader society, informal local markets are also sites for studying everyday relations of peace and conflict.

The literature examined in this chapter shows that informal sector workers in general, and women in particular, experience different forms of direct and indirect violence⁶ amidst these challenges, women also seek and implement strategies for their survival. Market women's experiences as traders in the informal sector are not uniform as education, location, class, and age can intersect with gender to produce divergent experiences of dislocation, subjugation and even privileges. For example, in most contexts, the experiences of market women in the position of power will be different from those who do not hold any leadership roles. Also, most of the women who work in the informal sector, particularly petty traders, do so because of low literacy and other cultural factors. This means that those with some level of formal education may have other employment options, so their perceptions and experiences may differ from their less educated sisters.

Similarly, the experiences of market women who have children and are burdened with childcare responsibilities will not be the same as those without childcare tasks. Also, context matters; where for example, the study by Peprah et al. (2019) highlighted how some women had found the informal sector flexible enough to allow for childcare, other studies have found that some women bring their children to work because of a lack of other childcare options. Also noteworthy is that some women in the informal sector have expanded their businesses enough to employ others, but there are other women who are engaged in small scale trading and lack the financial means to expand their trading businesses; the informal sector work experience for these women will be different from those with adequate financial means. As this introductory chapter argues, few studies have examined how women make meaning of peace amid their varied

⁶ Chapter Two examines the theories of indirect and direct violence

challenges from a feminist and peace and conflict studies lens. With these insights, the next chapter explores the theories that underpin this study.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

2.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the theoretical framework that guided this study. The concepts discussed in this chapter are drawn primarily from Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) and feminist scholarship. In the discipline of PACS, peace is understood as a complex concept, and the causes and consequences of conflict are manifold. Similarly, the concept of violence is not limited to physical brutality alone but to structures that impede people's equal access to basic human needs and other opportunities; and the cultural norms that validate all these forms of violence (Galtung, 1969). The chapter is divided into six sections: the first section briefly describes the causes of conflict and the concepts of direct and indirect violence; the second section describes the concept of intersectionality; the third section conceptualizes peacebuilding; the fourth discusses the dominant peacebuilding frameworks and why it has become necessary to localize the concept of peacebuilding to accommodate people's everyday realities in specific contexts. The fifth section examines the human security approach to peacebuilding as expounded by feminist and peace scholars. The sixth section is the conclusion.

2.1 Causes of Conflict, Direct and Indirect Violence

This section discusses the causes of conflict and examines the concept of direct and indirect violence and the gendered implications. There are different causes of conflict in many contexts. However, broadly analyzed, differing worldviews and concepts can lead to conflict (Augsburger, 1992); conflict can also arise due to inequality, and as Richmond (2014) states, inequality creates different forms of conflicts and has also been connected to the rise of crime and aggression in different contexts. Inequality leads to the impoverishment of some communities, and as Reardon (2019) argues, "Imposed poverty produces social imbalances and disturbances that often lead to armed conflict and multiple forms of social violence" (p. 19). In essence, the outcomes of inequality are various and can be a motivation for aggrieved individuals and groups to resort to violence. Likewise, competition over scarce resources between groups, together with power disparity and exclusion, can also lead to violent conflict (Ide, 2015).

Relatedly, greed and grievance can influence conflict (Collier, 1999), as can unmet basic needs (Burton, 1990). Conflict can also be caused or exacerbated by a variety of connecting factors such as history, economics, politics, religious and cultural factors (Byrne et al., 2001).

Violence has different dimensions. Galtung's (1969) theories on violence describe both direct and indirect forms of violence. Direct violence entails the intentional use of physical violence against people, while indirect (non-physical) violence manifests in society's structures that enforce discrimination and marginalization of groups (Galtung, 1969). The invisibility of indirect violence enables and sustains inequality and discrimination through the undue use of power and influence over others. In this vein, indirect or structural oppression limits people's abilities and violates human dignity (Rylko-Bauer & Farmer, 2016). Another form of indirect violence that Galtung examined is cultural violence, which refers to belief systems and norms that legitimize all forms of violence against people (Galtung, 1990). Violence is also said to be gendered because men and women experience violence in different ways.

The Gendered Nature of Violence

Feminist scholars draw attention to the gendered dimensions of violence, highlighting how patriarchy influences gender-based violence. Feminist scholars argue that patriarchal gender norms and gender inequality influence the subjugation of women, as demonstrated in both direct violence and indirect violence situations in which men are the main perpetrators and/or benefactors, and women comprise the majority of the victims (Enloe, 2014; Leatherman, 2011; Reardon, 2019). In her definitions of patriarchy, Wilmer (2015) emphasizes the deep rootedness and destructive structure of patriarchy in all spheres of life by stating that:

Patriarchy is the ideological foundation of a social system that naturalizes domination, control, and fear and socializes men to carry out and sustain that system through force, violence, and intimidation, and women to enable and reproduced men to do so. Our present world order-economically, politically, and socially-including relations between states as well as the structure of the state itself, is grounded in patriarchal norms. (p. 342)

Hence, both structural and cultural violence are emphasized in the social systems that embed gender inequality and the cultural norms that legitimize them. For many women, their discrimination is built into social norms that exclude them from various opportunities.

Some feminists have argued that women encounter different types of violence that are strengthened by patriarchal norms and policies (Enloe, 2014; Leatherman, 2011). For example, apart from the fact that armed conflict is often gendered as women experience violence associated with war differently than men, who are often the instigators (Leatherman, 2011), in times of violence, women are burdened with the responsibility of caring for children and the injured; they also become widows when their spouses are killed in armed violence (Ali, 2019). In the same way, sexual violence is pervasive during wars, and women are the majority of the victims (Leatherman, 2011, Price, 2019). In examining the role of sexual violence in the Darfur genocide, Price (2019) states that sexual exploitation was a common tactic against women and girls, which included torture, rape, sexual enslavement and forced pregnancy. Females were assaulted in their homes and outside of their homes and were more exposed when they went out in search of basic necessities such as food and water (Price, 2019).

The consequences of violence of all forms are multifaceted. Feminist scholars argue that the gendered impacts of war are complex and hinder the security of human lives, particularly for women and other vulnerable groups, and these vulnerabilities are enabled by the patriarchal norms that discriminate and subjugate women (Ali, 2019; Leatherman, 2011). Moreover, even without wars, women still experience different forms of domestic violence (Ali, 2019). Galtung's direct and indirect violence are emphasized in the experiences of women and other susceptible groups during armed conflict and in their everyday lives where structures limit equal opportunities and enable various types of insecurities. Further, Reardon (2019) argues that the dominant security and peace structures meant to protect individuals from violence and insecurities are militarized and patriarchal and, as such, do not consider these varied challenges women encounter before, during and after an armed conflict.

Correspondingly, gender stereotypes and globalized masculine relationships have maintained unequal relations between men and women (Enloe, 2014; Leatherman, 2011; Reardon, 1996), and the productive monetized economy is often seen as the domain of men, while the reproductive economy, particularly in the unpaid informal sector is reserved for women (Enloe, 2014). In the context of Nigeria and elsewhere, structural and cultural violence manifests

in the form of socio-cultural norms and the patriarchal construction of gender in many societies, which place women in lower positions than men. These socio-cultural norms also undermine women's education and place them poorly on the economic scale⁷. Many women also perform more than their fair share of housework, limiting their ability to engage in more productive activities (Oyekanmi, 2005). These inequalities are often supported by cultural beliefs such as the oppressive widowhood rites in some communities in Nigeria that place women at a disadvantage (Aguwa, 1997; Ayodele, 2014; Eweluka, 2002; Ude & Njoku, 2017), although these discriminatory practices are no longer as widespread currently (Aguwa, 1997; Ayodele, 2014). However, women in the informal sector and elsewhere are exposed to many other forms of abuse.

From the perspective of direct and indirect violence, the informal sector is a structure that embeds inequality. More than 700 million women work in the informal sector in developing nations, and they are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (ILO, 2018). Research shows that informal vendors face different direct and indirect violence (Adejumo & Azuh, 2013), including harassment, physical injury, bribery, arrest, and goods seizure (Resnick, 2016), rape and other forms of physical exploitation, and, along with other manifestations; these experiences do impact their income (Rogan & Alfors, 2019). Studies reveal that women are largely in the informal sector in developing regions because of inequality, low literacy and sociocultural norms (Malta et al., 2019). In Nigeria, gender inequality is widespread in many sectors of the economy (IMF, 2018; Oyekanmi, 2005), and even in some formal organizations, women's advancement is negatively hampered by discriminatory notions of gender (Fagbemi & Hassan, 2009). The concept of feminist intersectionality highlights the varied interwoven factors that can cause women's subjugation and social exclusion.

2.2 Gender and Intersectionality

This section examines how different factors intersect with gender to oppress and marginalize women in varied contexts and affect their experiences of peace. Feminist intersectionality focuses on gender and its intersection with other identities such as class and race

⁷ See for example: Nigeria's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals report:
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26308VNR_2020_Nigeria_Report.pdf

and how this intersection manifests in oppression and inequality (Crenshaw, 2012). The underlying argument on intersectionality is that oppression against women should be studied as a complex phenomenon (Carastathis, 2014; Collins, 1993; Gill, 2014; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008) because many women are vulnerable to interconnected forms of exploitation (Collins, 1986). Thus, feminists have analyzed these different forms of intersectional oppression, including the intersection of gender, disability and other factors (Flaherty & Hansen, 2015; Hirschmann, 2012). Crenshaw (1991) analyzed three of these interconnections; structural, political and representational intersectionality, arguing that the interaction of these factors can further marginalize women of color based on their location and in how they are (mis)represented in the literature

Intersectionality, as theorized by African feminist scholars, emphasizes the contextual challenges of women. For example, Azodo (2019) argues that indigenous feminism situates women's challenges and responses at the intersection of gender, colonization and other factors such as "economic considerations, class, race, regional location, experiences, cultures and so on" (p. 27). Similarly, Kolawole (2002) alluded to the evaluation of history and cultural frameworks in the literature on feminism and gender in Africa, stating that:

The nature and condition of gender and gender theorising in Africa continues to draw the attention of theorists, activists and policy-makers; it is imperative for sound scholarship to understand the plurality of values of which Africa consists, and to be located in history. The number of national, tribal and ethnic groups is as important as race, colonial experience, post-colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, military rule, culture, tradition, religion, modernity and more recently, globalisation. All these factors impact on African women's reality in particular ways, and have to be dealt with in any investigation of the interdependent relations of feminism, gender theory, gender relations and power constructs in Africa. The diverse historical experiences of Africa continue to shape the perception of social realities, including gender - and thus the many ways gender and feminism is understood by African scholars. (p. 92)

Thus, from the perspectives of African feminists, analyzing women's intersectional experiences of peace and conflict means understanding how the past and the present intersect to shape

women's experiences. Thus context, culture, and history matter, including the history and legacies of colonialism (Azodo, 2019; Kolawole, 2002; Ogundipe, 1987) and militarism (Mama, 1998). Other scholars have argued that African feminism is a feminism rooted in recognition of these intersections and the collective power of women in addressing the challenges they encounter in their context (Chukukere, 1998).

My study seeks to shed light on women's organizing to address challenges utilizing a feminist and a PACS lens as well as understanding their intersectional experience. I deploy an intersectional lens to consider the intersectionality of social identities or factors that influence participants' varied experiences of peace and conflict, such as education, location, age, culture/religion, and marital status. Through this lens, one is better able to understand women's experiences of peace and challenges in the informal sector. For example, in their study of patterns of workplace gender violence in Southwest Nigeria, Adejumo and Azuh (2013) stated that women's reported experience of violence varies with age and education, as younger workers reported experiencing greater incidents of workplace violence compared to the older ones and women with a higher level of education reported less violence against them. Intersectionality theory demonstrates that any approach to evaluating women's experiences must consider their context and the different factors that intersect with their gender to produce varied outcomes that shape their peace experiences.

2.3 Conceptualizing Peacebuilding

The section explores the complex conceptualization of peacebuilding. The concept of peacebuilding is a multifaceted and evolving one. Peacebuilding has different meanings and utilizations in different contexts (de la Rey & McKay, 2002; Schirch, 2004). It is as distant to some people as it is tangible to others (Schirch, 2004). Peace has been described as a 'process' that is "deeply gendered" because it centers on the relational interaction between men and women (de la Rey & McKay, 2002, p. 94). Relatedly, peacebuilding is a process that can be strategic when it addresses all forms of violence. In *The little book of strategic peacebuilding*, Lisa Schirch (2004) describes peacebuilding as an approach that not only prevents violence but seeks to transform structures, 'empower' individuals and communities and also build relations. Schirch (2004) argues that "Relationships are a form of power or *social capital*. When people connect and form relationships, they are more likely to cooperate together to constructively

address conflict” (p. 9). This definition of peacebuilding echoes the many dimensions of peacebuilding, highlighting the importance of relationships and collaboration in addressing conflict.

Peacebuilding should be comprised of human connections, the prevention of armed conflicts and the presence of empowering structures in any given context. These perspectives of peace accentuate Galtung's (1969) theories of negative and positive peace. While negative peace is the absence of wars or armed conflict, positive peace is the presence of social justice and conditions that ensure that individuals have equal access to opportunities for their advancement (Galtung, 1969). Correspondingly, Christie et al. (2008) describe positive peace as an approach that seeks to decrease all forms of inequalities and “create a more equitable social order that meets the basic needs and rights of all people” (p. 543). Positive peace also means the eradication of conditions that promote inequality and gender-based violence, such as heteronormativity, sexism, patriarchy, and systems of domination that limit the life chances of vulnerable groups; this perspective is highlighted in feminist literature on human security, which emphasizes the wellbeing and safety of individuals as against the conventional peacebuilding and state security approach (Reardon, 2019).

2.4 Peacebuilding Approaches: From the Liberal to Local

This section examines the prevalence of liberal peacebuilding and its many challenges of implementation in local contexts. Western liberal ideologies and assumptions guide the much deliberated liberal peace framework that free markets and democratization are crucial to peacebuilding strategies (Cooper et al., 2011; Joshi et al., 2014; Paris, 1997). The philosophy underpinning the liberal peacebuilding paradigm is said to have originated from the theories of Immanuel Kant, who opined that democratic states are less likely to fight each other (Bliss & Russett, 1998; Doyle, 1983) because it is assumed that liberal/democratic political institutions facilitate conditions for mutual respect and stability (Doyle, 1983). Liberalism is founded on the principle of liberty and the right to egalitarian representation (Doyle, 1983). Yet, according to some scholars, the rights often emphasized in the liberal peacebuilding approach are civil and political rights; hence cultural and socio-economic rights, although important, are often ignored (Cahill-Ripley, 2016).

Liberal peacebuilding is state-centric because it centers on strengthening state institutions through varied means. Since the 1990s, international organizations have adopted different approaches to peacebuilding, leading to the recruitment of peace and conflict experts (Goetschel & Hagman, 2009). Consequently, liberal peace missions have involved the UN's intervention, funding agencies, donor states, and other external actors (Muvingi, 2016). These entities take part in peacebuilding initiatives in post-conflict and transitional countries by providing funding and other forms of support, including monitoring elections and influencing the State's politics and policies (Paris, 1997). Although liberal peacebuilding seeks to strengthen the state's capacity, this framework often has negative impacts on communities because it negates utilizing a human security model that builds on the knowledge and power of the local people while striving to satisfy their needs (Cahill-Ripley, 2016).

The liberal peacebuilding approach is considered as a macro-level approach that marginalizes the people at the bottom level. Even in post-conflict and transitional countries, this dominant paradigm follows a top-down approach (Gready & Robins, 2017) and furthers the objectives of liberal peacebuilding by establishing neoliberal reforms with the belief that free markets would prevent violence and promote democracy (Loyle & Davenport, 2016; Muvingi, 2016; Waldorf, 2012). For example, some scholars have argued that many transitional justice (TJ) initiatives have donor-driven agendas in which the locals are not consulted (Bell, 2009; Muvingi, 2016), and the needs of victims are often not considered or are romanticized during the implementation of these programs (Robins, 2009, 2011). To contextualize, findings from a study on Nepal show that structural inequality and discrimination based on class are some of the root causes of violent conflict; however, national and international bodies favored legal justice as a focus, even when the victims have demanded justice in the form of social and economic reparations (Robins, 2009). In some instances, these TJ mechanisms hardly address structural injustices and the root causes of violence since their focus is usually on direct violence and restorative actions (Mani, 2008; McGill, 2017; Muvingi, 2016; Taylor, 2014; Waldorf, 2012). They equally do not provide resources for countries to develop sustainably, and most often, war economies are not addressed (Mani 2008).

Given the aforementioned context, the liberal peacebuilding paradigm and its features have been widely critiqued. For one, the central assumptions about what constitutes peace have been challenged. For example, the concept of democracy broadly employed in

prescriptive peacebuilding rhetoric is ambiguous because democracy at the top level does not guarantee egalitarianism for those at the lower level of societal stratification (Sorensen, 2008). In other words, if peace through democracy happens at the top, it does not necessarily trickle down to those at the bottom because socio-economic factors and structural inequality can hinder democratic processes (Sorensen, 2008). Scholars have also contended that there are not enough facts to back the claim that democracy negates violence (Spiro, 1994).

Other peace scholars have also argued that, in reality, shared interests alone cannot prevent democracies from *not* going to war. For example, Rosato (2003) disputed the logic behind democratic peace theory, arguing that liberal norms have often been dishonored by democracies. Citing examples of the United States' past intervention in some democracies as evidence of the faulty logic of democratic peace theory, Rosato (2003) argues that "First, all the regimes that the United States sought to undermine were democratic. In the cases of Guatemala, British Guyana, Brazil, and Chile democratic processes were fairly well established" (p. 591). The argument here is that if peace exists among democratic states, it is not necessarily because they are technically democratic. Rather, the bond democracies share might be as a result of their capitalist agenda; for example, wealthy nations with shared economic interests may not go to war, not due to their shared democratic practice, but because of their intertwined economic interests (Gartzke, 2007).

Although liberal peacebuilding has been adopted widely in different contexts, even in nations that are not at war as an intervention strategy to address poverty and introduce reforms that can promote good governance (Mac Ginty, 2010); notwithstanding this, the liberal peacebuilding paradigm and all its facets have been critiqued for its inconsistencies and its inability to address inequalities (Belloni, 2012; Burke, 2012; Cooper et al., 2011; Gartzke, 2007; Goetschel & Hagmann, 2009; Pugh, 2005; Richmond, 2014; Sorensen, 2008). In some contexts, with pre-existing social strife and characterized by varied forms of state fragility, the neoliberal framework could widen inequality (Richmond, 2014). Additionally, such a prescriptive approach to peacebuilding is not collaborative because it does not consider the local people's culture, their existing peacebuilding strategies, and their capacity to effect change (Lederach, 1995; Young, 1998). From this understanding, peace scholars have called for an inclusive approach to peacebuilding, a change in how peacebuilding has been approached globally and implemented in local contexts (Mac, Ginty, 2015; Richmond, 2014; Visoka & Richmond, 2016).

The 'local' as it relates to peacebuilding is understood as a bottom-up approach in contrast to the prescriptive top-down approach of liberal peacebuilding, and this concept has been used in varied peacebuilding literature. Some studies have analyzed the challenges in the local (De Coning, 2016), while others address government reforms in the local context (Hasselskog & Schierenbeck, 2015; Leonardson & Rudd, 2015). Richmond (2014) emphasizes how the prescriptive and dominant approaches to peacebuilding destabilize “existing peace and conflict systems in any society, and fail to enable local actors to develop their own representative processes whereby power, legitimate authority, material resources and identity can be managed in a way that is appropriate for context” (p. 460). Other scholars have called for peacebuilders working in local contexts to create more impactful strategies and practices to benefit the local people (Cahill-Ripley, 2016).

Equally, other arguments highlight how international organizations have promoted the idea of local ownership by utilizing local actors in their initiatives, trusting that collaborations with local actors and institutions would be credible and sustainable (Chandler, 2017). But, in this case, implementing the ‘local’ idea of peacebuilding is fraught with many challenges, and this has been criticized (Paffenholz, 2015) because, in many cases, international actors still control such projects, which may appear local but are primarily controlled by donors and other outside agencies from the Global North (Mac Ginty, 2015).

The ‘local’ in peace literature is complex but has been used to describe a bottom-up approach in peacebuilding efforts in which local practices, strategies, and the local people are included in peacebuilding projects in their communities. The local also extends to a more in-depth understanding of how people make meaning of home and how they experience everyday in their location. Home is connected to an individual feeling of ontological security, as it relates to personal continuity and identity (Mitzen, 2018); home for others may represent belonging (Watson, 2019); for some, home may symbolize places where they experience ontological insecurities (Mac Ginty, 2019). Ontological insecurity arises when self-identity and stability are threatened; as personal identity motivates people to exercise agency (Mitzen, 2006). Ontological insecurity is sometimes perceived as anxiety and, at other times, as the presence of disputes or contestations (Gustafsson & Krickel-Choi, 2020) in local places and between individuals. While this is in no way close to an exhaustive review of the various uses of the local concept, it sheds light, even if minimally, on the debate around the *local*, which emphasizes the importance of

context and the challenges of peacebuilding projects in different locations. Most importantly, the local concept considers the culture, location, existing conflict resolution strategies of the people, and the people themselves as capable agents or leaders of such projects in their contexts (Lederach, 1995).

These considerations of the local and its connections to home, place, people, peace and insecurity emphasize that the social and physical environs, material and non-material structures impact how individuals and groups may experience relative peace and security in local places, and also suggest that the process of building and sustaining peace is complex as it simultaneously involves people, places, and structures and norms. Significantly, this also shows that place insecurities may ultimately impact people's livelihoods. These reflections are important to this study because they provide insights into place realities and how they impact peace, livelihood and place attachment.

Challenges of liberal peacebuilding in the local context have led to hybridity in peacebuilding. Thus, the peacebuilding literature has considered hybrid peace processes to bring the locals back into the peacebuilding approaches in which they have been neglected (Paffenholz, 2015). Hybridity in the peacebuilding context describes the interrelation between top-down and bottom-up approaches involving local and external actors; the interactions between local institutions and international principles and practices (Belloni, 2012; Mac Ginty, 2010). It is common to find practices and institutions that are a hybrid of local and Western methods in post-conflict contexts, given that even when international actors incorporate local principles, their ideologies remain dominant. That said, local actors have, in some cases, challenged these international models, labeling them as foreign and inappropriate in their contexts (Belloni, 2012). The hybridization process is not an easy one because it is multifaceted (Mac Ginty, 2010). An example of the complexities in hybridity is depicted in hybrid governance, a fusion of liberal principles with cultural and religious establishments (Jarstad & Belloni, 2012). Hybrid governance, which may occur in times of war and peace, emerges from the situation of managing the hybrid interactions of local and international actors who try to impose their ideologies and practices in the local context (Jarstad & Belloni, 2012). Through the disaggregated hybridity theory, we understand that there are varying hybridity levels; the approach shows how local and international actors interact within these levels (Millar, 2014).

Hybridity literature demonstrates that some of the features that produce hybrid peace situations include liberal aids and local actors' capacity to challenge this dominant idea of peace and produce other peacebuilding options in local contexts (Mac Ginty, 2010)). At the same time, some peacebuilding scholars suggest that hybrid peace might be constructive in situations where such initiatives are grounded in the local to address all forms of inequality (Richmond, 2015). Others argue that such projects might become futile in contexts where local worldviews may conflict with those of other actors (Millar, 2014), in the same way, that the formal or "standardized" liberal peacebuilding structures instituted in post-conflict contexts make it challenging to integrate indigenous and traditional conflict resolution strategies (Mac Ginty, 2008, p. 144).

Additionally, hybridity can be seen as a rejection or deviation from the dominant prescriptive idea of peacebuilding as it highlights the capacity and agency of the locals to challenge liberal norms (Belloni, 2012; Wallis et al., 2016). Hybridity, as a complex framework (Mac Ginty, 2010), can also be manipulated and can undermine sustainable peace (Belloni, 2012). Also, hybridity can be a negative phenomenon that sustains violence (Richmond, 2015) because a hybrid peace approach in some conflict environments can lead to further marginalization of locals, primarily when a few elites control such projects; peacebuilding processes that seek to address injustices must be inclusive and not have the potential of being hijacked by external actors or local elites (Visoka & Richmond, 2016). Lederach's (1995) elicitive approach to conflict resolution addresses how the 'local' can be contextually engaged in peacebuilding and conflict resolution practices; it emphasizes the significance of context, culture, knowledge and local people as key resources in peacebuilding in contrast to the dominant prescriptive approach to peacebuilding.

In general, as the literature has highlighted, hybrid peacebuilding efforts can have both disadvantages and advantages in the contexts where they emerge. Hybridity in peacebuilding connects to the challenges of liberal peacebuilding in local contexts and speaks to the ability and agency of local actors to challenge alien frameworks that do not address their needs. Additionally, the liberal approach to peacebuilding reinforces negative peacebuilding because it is focused on building the state at the expense of the unique needs of individuals and communities. It thus lacks a human-centered approach to peacebuilding that considers injustice of all forms and the wellbeing of people.

2.5 Human Security, Gender and Contextual Peacebuilding

This section examines the human security approach to peacebuilding and how women contextually experience it. Feminist scholars have argued that the dominant approach to peace and national security is built on a culture of aggression, and women are the primary victims of this destructive framework; they call for a non-aggressive human security approach to replace the culture of violence as the prevalent framework promotes violence against women in armed conflict and in ordinary times (Hans, 2019; Muthien, 2019; Reardon, 2019). A human security approach to peace and security from a feminist perspective should be multifaceted and grounded in the wellbeing of people; such an approach considers the importance of environmental security, access to basic needs, respect for the dignity and identity of others and the protection of individuals from all forms of violence (Reardon, 2019). From a feminist perspective, healthy environments, access to food and shelter and livelihoods are important aspects of human security (Hans, 2019). Human security is thus about ensuring the total wellbeing of people, and it recognizes the different ways that people's safety and rights to exist can be threatened by economic and environmental factors, including threats from public health crises (Korhonen, 2011). In this light, the human security approach to peace and security speaks to the absence of armed conflict and the conditions that can support equal access to the basic necessities that individuals and communities need to thrive. This approach emphasizes the theory of positive peace (Muthien, 2019).

Further, a human security approach to peacebuilding evaluates the underlying factors of conflict (i.e., injustice of all forms) and seeks resolution and strategies for future prevention (Futamura et al., 2011). This approach considers the local population and their context in peacebuilding rather than utilizing a standardized format that is adapted to the local context (Futamura et al., 2011; Lederach, 1995). Human rights and human security are interwoven (Price, 2019; Reardon, 2019), and from feminist perspectives, there are many threats to women's security and human rights in the dominant militarized patriarchal state-centric approach to peace and security. This conventional approach to security and peace excludes non-state actors, lacks a gender perspective, and marginalizes women's contextual experiences and their fundamental needs (Muthien, 2019; Reardon, 2019). Hence feminist scholars argue that for human security to

be attainable, there must be gender equality, and patriarchy and militarized concepts for security must be eradicated (Reardon, 2019).

Peacebuilding, through the human security approach, recognizes the varied practices and structures that enable individuals to meet their fundamental needs and attend to their wellbeing. Expanding the concept of peace and security means recognizing often ignored practices, “a variety of rich activities” employed to ensure social justice and build peace (Tuso, 2015, p. 102), in different contexts. Broadening this concept of peacebuilding also means recognizing the different and unique ways in which women respond to conflict traditionally and historically, and as Boulding (2000) argues, to create change, it is important to create awareness about non-violent practices and hidden peace cultures that have existed alongside war cultures. The human security framework is an example of an approach to peacebuilding that recognizes the conditions that can make positive peace possible in different contexts and the practices that individuals engage to ensure their survival needs are met.

Feminist and peace scholars have shed light on how peace and security are experienced contextually. Neme (2019) highlights how women in Jordan emphasize that education and employment add to their feelings of empowerment and security. Similarly, Alm (2011) argues that the availability of clean and safe water adds to the security of many women and children who are burdened with the responsibility of making household water available in their context. In Senegal, Rosenlew (2011) highlights how women’s informal networks are used to provide social support; one of these networks is the women’s informal saving circles where many women have depended on for the capital they need to start a new business and or to seek accommodation. Rosenlew (2011) states that most of these women are fish traders and being members of these savings groups has provided them with a sense of belonging and the means to meet their basic needs. Thus, for many women, security and belonging come from the relationships developed to meet basic needs. Peacebuilding, as constituting the ability to meet basic needs, is further exemplified in the study by de la Rey and McKay (2006); this study explored peacebuilding with women to understand how gender and culture may impact the experience of peace in South Africa. The study findings by de la Rey and McKay (2006) show that participants describe peacebuilding as the process of meeting “basic needs such as food, water, and shelter” (p. 147). These insights reflect the concept of positive peacebuilding as one

that creates opportunities for people to be livelihood secure so that they can meet their basic needs.

By the same token, engaging in positive peacebuilding is reflected in the ability to provide support and care for people in challenging times. Peacebuilding as encompassing caring activities exist during and after crises, even when there are no wars (Vaaitinen et al., 2019). Meeting these care needs can improve the quality of people's experience at their most difficult times. Building on this care concept, one recognizes the positive impact and dimensions of care needs that family members provide for their loved ones, including those that are terminally ill (Funk et al., 2009). Although cultural differences and values may intersect with other factors to impact caregiving experiences, the stress of caring for loved ones taken as part of one's filial obligations can impact the health of caregivers (Funk et al., 2011), and women often bear this burden of care responsibilities in their families, and in some instances, women have woven these care activities with peacebuilding initiatives in their families. In their study of women organizations and post-conflict peacebuilding in South Sudan, Adeogun and Muthuki (2018) found that women's organizations used a bottom-up approach by engaging their immediate relations as a first step to addressing peace and conflict. These notions reflect peace as a process that embeds activities and practices and highlights the importance of care, support and security as important variables in peacebuilding processes and outcomes.

Additionally, some scholars have highlighted the importance of adopting a contextual understanding of peacebuilding that would recognize the contributions of collaboration, positive practices and the building of relationships that ensure human needs are met in different contexts (de la Rey & McKay, 2002, 2006; Howell, 2020; Soderstrom, 2020). A contextual understanding of peacebuilding, therefore, considers the many benefits of women's networks and the resourcefulness of the relationships that they establish in their everyday engagements.

Theoretically, this study examines women's perceptions and experiences of peacebuilding through the lens of feminist and PACS theories. African feminist theories of negotiation, compromise and 'balance' (Ezeigbo, 2019; Nnaemeka, 2004, 2019), and 'relatedness' and cooperation (Chukukere, 1998; Sofola, 1998), speak to the essence of relationships and collaboration as reflected in the concept of relational peace (Howell, 2020; Soderstrom et al., 2020). According to Howell (2020):

Relational peace is studied through analysis of relationships. It considers behavioural interactions, subjective attitudes, and how the relationship is perceived by the involved parties. A peaceful relation should feature behavioural interactions of non-dominance, deliberation and cooperation. (p. 4)

Theorizing peace as relational also helps to contextualize the challenges women experience and the need for the strategies women adopt to address their challenges. PACS and feminist theories provide insights into how injustice can be embedded in systems and practices and the structures needed for justice and equity. Likewise, they emphasize the significance of human connections and relationships in alleviating some of life's challenges.

Feminist peacebuilding in Africa, situated within the context of women's experience (Collier et al., 2016; Cruz, 2015), is grounded in relationships. It is a relational and 'complementary' strategy that is used in addressing structures of inequality (Aina, 1998; Chukukere, 1998; Nnaemeka, 2004). Being more context-specific, Chukukere (1998) points out that Nigerian feminism prioritizes women's collaborative potentials in creating "maximum results through cooperative endeavors" (p. 139). Advancing this concept of collaboration, Nnaemeka (2019) argues that "Power-sharing, complementarity, accommodation, compromise, negotiation, and inclusiveness form the foundation of African feminisms...The language of compromise, collaboration, and negotiation pervade African feminism; in its practice..." (p. 190). Furthermore, African feminists and other African scholars writing from the Nigerian context have examined women's collective activism (Achebe, 2011; Korieh, 2011; Van Allen, 1972) and how they *maximize* their traditional activism in addressing oppression and marginalization in their environment (Salami-Agunloye, 2019). As Sackefyio (2019) states, "Women's collective responses to these forms of injustice and economic violence represent the basic tenets of feminism" (p. 243). This argument emphasizes the collaborative essence of feminist peacebuilding in Africa and the importance of women's voices in seeking a contextual transformation of their marginalization (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994).

Scholars have also examined the benefits of women's social networks and how their collective organizing has addressed oppressive norms, ensured peace and sustenance and promoted their interests in different contexts (Achebe, 2011; Adams et al., 2002; Asogwa, 2015; Bonkat, 2014; Ekiyor & Gbowee, 2005; Gopinath & DasGupta, 2005; Odoemena, 2011;

Ramnarain, 2015a; Ramnarain, 2015b; Schirch & Sewak, 2005; Tongeren et al., 2005; Tuso, 2015). Through their activism, women's informal networks and creative strategies employed in war and peace have raised awareness of their challenges and marginalization, saved lives, built broken communities, and restored relationships. As shown in some contexts, relationship building and collaboration are effective tools of feminist peacebuilding in Africa through which women have challenged oppression (Collier et al., 2016) and created avenues to meet their basic human needs. These varied aspects of peacebuilding emphasize the power in relationships and highlight the notion of human security as a core aspect of positive peacebuilding. These insights from PACS and feminist scholars are important because they emphasize the connections between livelihood, basic needs relationships and positive peace. Based on this theoretical understanding, in this study, I will examine how women organize (negotiate and collaborate) to meet their basic needs and how they cultivate positive relationships that lead to peacebuilding in their context. I will also examine women's experiences of interpersonal conflict and structural inequities and how these affect their experiences of peace.

Overarching Framework: Local and Situated Experiences

My overarching framework for this study is grounded in the local and situated experiences. I conceptualize the 'local' in this study as embedded in the process women follow to actualize their goals based on their unique needs in their context. This conceptualization is informed by feminist and PACS theories as it promotes local knowledge and highlights how agency is exercised (Lederach, 1995; Leonardson and Rudd, 2015; Mac Ginty, 2015) by people through their everyday activities (Mac Ginty, 2014). The feminist human security approach to peacebuilding challenges the dominant state-centric approach and supports all individuals' protection. It also highlights how women's care ethics have been used to meet their needs and influence harmonious relations (Reardon, 2019). African feminists emphasize how women's organizing in pre-colonial and colonial times and in public and private spheres have addressed issues of socio-economic importance in their contexts (Achebe, 2011; Amadiume, 1987; Azodo, 2019; Chuku, 2005; Okonjo, 1976). Women's organizing tends to focus on actualizing set goals while challenging objectives that conflict with their interests (Nnaemeka, 2004). Further, this conceptual lens makes visible market women's experiences of security and insecurity and their

everyday exercise of agency built on the foundation of relatedness (Sofola, 1998), cooperation, and balance (Acholonu, 1994; Chukukere, 1998; Nnaemeka, 2004, 2019; Nzegwu, 1994).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the academic debate on peacebuilding, which has largely focused on the dominant liberal and state-centered approach to peacebuilding. The chapter also has considered the many benefits of women's social networks and feminist community organizing in the Nigerian context. Further, the chapter argues that emerging scholarship from PACS and feminist scholars have analyzed the shortcomings of the conventional peacebuilding frameworks and called for a human-centered approach to peacebuilding. Human-centered frameworks emphasize the notions of peace as relational and contextually experienced, and this approach has not been exhaustively explored in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) scholarship. The application of this conceptual framework served as a guide in answering the central research question: How do market women build peace and resolve challenges? The next chapter examines the methodological principles that guided the study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological principles that guided the study process and how I used them. In doing this, I present my reflections on the challenges that I experienced while implementing these principles. I also discuss the study limitations and other challenges related to the process of gathering data remotely. Further, I reflect on how my position and identity may have impacted the study process and outcomes. This chapter is outlined as follows: I begin with my positionality, followed by the methodological approach. The next section after the methodological approach is the data collection process, including the research instruments, participant recruitment and the participant demography; this is followed by a section on language and related challenges in data gathering, the data analysis section, ethical considerations, study limitations and the concluding sections.

3.1 Researcher's Standpoint

In this section, I discuss how my identities may or may not have influenced the research process and outcomes. I have always wanted to write stories about hardworking and perseverant women who have done and are doing extraordinary things in their ways, to survive and to meet the needs of their families. I saw this category of women growing up, women who have minimal or no formal education, women who are often the sole breadwinners and working to provide for their families and educate their children. Growing up, my mother's income from her trading business contributed to the sustenance of our family, even though my father was the primary breadwinner. I knew of other women with little or no formal education but worked hard as traders to ensure their children went to college. I also wanted to write about the challenges these women encounter in their daily lives, which obstruct their everyday survival activities. I wanted to know how they deal with these challenges in peaceful ways, so I decided to explore a thesis that examines market women through a peace and conflict lens.

Some feminists suggest that there is a clarity of purpose and interests when the researcher's 'standpoint' is clearly stated to show how their identities and connections to the

participants may influence the research process (Wilkinson & Morton, 2007). I am conscious of how my identities and interests influence my choice of topic, questions and study location. My interests also impact how I analyzed, interpreted, and wrote women's experiences, including the responses that I chose to emphasize, the specific quotes I used, and the themes that I developed. I am an Igbo woman from Abia State, the same state as the study location and this, together with other reasons such as the history of the region, influenced my choice of study location. Although I am culturally from this region, I grew up in Lagos State, Western Nigeria, where I worked as a banker for over five years after my undergraduate education before moving to the United States and then to Canada for my graduate education.

The rich history of Aba influenced my choice of study location. As I developed my context, I was unsure of the exact location in Southeastern Nigeria, where I wanted to situate the study. Aba was one of the cities I considered and finally decided on because of its rich history and economic importance to the region. As I reflect on this choice, I believe Aba to be the best location for this study because it provided an in-depth context and better situates the opportunities and challenges women encounter in their everyday livelihood activities. This choice is made more meaningful when one participant who, in responding to a question about living in Aba, compared the city of Aba and its inhabitants to another part of the country where she lived and concluding that:

I like Aba because it provides work opportunities for people, and the businesses in Aba bring different people here, and this is also why they call Aba the Japan of Africa. Aba is also a place that motivates other people because if you see other people hustling, you will be tempted to join them, even if you are a lazy person. (P8 Nonfood S)

As she points to the unique opportunities for sustenance that Aba has, other participants also pointed to the not so unique challenges in the city while hypothesizing a better scenario. These insights from the study participants show how Aba is a viable location for studying women's peacebuilding practices and the challenges they encounter in this endeavor.

Apart from the history of the study location, ease of access to participants and familiarity with the context influenced the choice of study location. Abia State (the study region) is my cultural home, and I identify with this region and its people. I feel a sense of pride in the

economic history of Igbo women, as highlighted by Chuku (2005) and the work market women are doing to sustain their families and themselves in this region. I celebrate their successes with them and found myself cringing at some of their challenges. This study provided an opportunity for me to further develop a kinship with participants through conversations before and after our interviews, an affinity that I believe made one participant suggest that I take one of her kids with me when I ‘finish schooling.’ I am also not unaware that her *offer* may have been made partly in jest and partly due to the economic hardships emanating from poor sales due to the ongoing pandemic. As I reflect on the rapport with participants, I am reminded of the words of Mama (2011), who encourages those conducting feminist research in Africa “to be both globally informed and locally grounded, and able to work across multiple institutional sites if they are to be effective” (p. 18). In other words, researchers are urged to consider the challenges of participants' everyday realities as this can help to develop appropriate methodological approaches and strengthen the participant/researcher bond.

I am a Christian who identified with some of the participants as they openly discussed their faith. The majority of the participants described themselves as women of deep Christian faith and emphasized how their belief in God impacts their experiences of peace and conflict. As an Igbo woman from this region, I share the same gender and cultural identity with my participants, and these shared identities allowed us to converse in the Igbo language as much as I was able to. This identity seemed to have ‘broken the ice’ and created a comfortable, conversational environment and made me feel like an insider. When one participant told me: “You are my sister, thank God, you understand Igbo, ” this strengthened my insider feelings. I was also reminded that I was an insider; when responding to participants' questions of where I was from, I said I am from *there*, i.e., Abia State. This exchange usually led to laughter and, in a few instances, to responses such as “I am from Abia State too, so we are sisters.” However, I did not presume to have the same experience that participants have had in their context, nor did I respond to their narratives saying ‘I understand what you are going through or what you are saying’ as I am likely to say when conversing with peers and relatives. On other occasions, I was also reminded that I was an outsider; for example, during our informal conversations about COVID-19, one participant mentioned that the situation here is not the same as “where you are.” These examples emphasize my insider/outsider burdens. The insider and outsider challenges are not uncommon, and as Mama (2011) notes:

Furthermore, those we research will have their own perceptions of us, as we are ‘read’ and responded to accordingly, in ways that will never be fully apparent to us. When we are conducting research in our local contexts, we are situated with epistemic advantages, as well as challenges and demands. (p. 14)

Despite the insider-outsider dilemma, my focus during the data gathering phase was using my insider status to create a comfortable and respectful environment for our conversations. I understood that being from the same cultural background as my participants has some advantages in that I understand the context and language. According to Valentine (2008): “Sharing the same background or a similar identity to your informant can have a positive effect, facilitating the development of a rapport between interviewer and interviewee and thus producing a rich, detailed conversation based on empathy and mutual respect and understanding” (p. 113). In other words, building relationships with participants matters; being an insider-sharing the same culture and means of communication can reduce tensions.

Relatedly, some scholars have highlighted some challenges associated with the insider status. It has been noted that insider researchers may ignore issues that outsiders may consider as significant in their analysis and interpretation of the data (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016). There is also the possibility that participants may think that insider researchers know as much as they do about their context and thus provide fewer details about their experiences (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016). During my interviews with participants, it was not uncommon for some participants to make a statement about the market or Aba and assume that I know the challenges they were highlighting. However, throughout the data collection phase, I encouraged participants to provide more context to the point they were making to avoid hasty conclusions or generalizations on my part.

3.2 Methodological Approach

In this section, I discuss the feminist methodological principles that guided the study. This is a feminist qualitative study that utilized semi-structured interviewing as a data-gathering technique and was guided by feminist methodological principles. Feminist methodology has to do with practices and processes employed in conducting research (Fonow & Cook, 1991). It also encompasses the process of assembling and construing facts (Sprague, 2015), including the

principles and theories that guide research practices (DeVault, 1996; Landman, 2006). Landman (2006) describes feminist methodology as follows:

Feminist methodology is specifically concerned with how, or whether, knowledge produced about social life can be connected with the social realities of women in the context of any methodology that is dominated by men and that neglects consideration of the gendered nature of social life. Feminists are concerned with the implications of the exclusion of women's knowledge and experience of the traditional male constructions of knowledge. (p. 430)

Thus, in feminist research, knowledge is acknowledged as situated, and women's experiences are the focus (Harding, 1987; Landman, 2006). Feminist scholarship also draws attention to the notion of power, ethics, reflexivity (Gringeri et al., 2010), and reciprocity. Reciprocity, as a feminist methodological principle, entails the building of respectful and voluntary collaboration with participants (Limerick & O'Leary, 2006), and it is also a process of exchange, of giving something back to participants; this exchange process can be done through the feedback/member check process (Harrison et al., 2001), a process of knowledge sharing where researchers seek clarifications and feedback from participants (Smith, 1999).

The notion of reciprocity as a core value in feminist research guided the data gathering phase. In this study, I intended to create a reciprocity strategy akin to member reflections or member checking (Tracy, 2010). Member reflections go beyond ascertaining the accuracy of participants' input in interviews. As Potts and Brown (2005) suggest, researchers should work with participants to make meaning of the findings by seeking their ideas about emerging concepts. In this vein, I wanted to use the reciprocity principle by sharing emerging themes and research findings with participants and to solicit and incorporate their feedback into the final study reports. To ensure reciprocity, after the interviews, I offered to share the transcribed interviews with participants for corrections and feedback, but only one participant accepted the offer. While I also offered to share emerging themes and the summary of findings with participants so that their feedback could be incorporated into the study, all but one participant was not interested. One participant provided clarifications and feedback after her interview, and I incorporated this into the study. I also offered to provide lunch for participants as a token and

appreciation of their time, and this was for me a reciprocal gesture in return for their contribution. Three of the participants did not accept the offer of lunch, although they thanked me for offering it.

My methodological approach seeks to privilege the knowledge that develops from local experiences. Feminists have argued that the traditional positivist, objective approaches to research privileges men and has sidelined women's experiences (Harding & Norberg, 2005). The idea of women's situated experiences (Landman, 2006) informs this study's epistemological approach and ultimately the selection of the study participants. Further, African feminists emphasize the importance of context when analyzing women's experiences (Kolawole, 2002; Nnaemeka, 2004). To contextualize these experiences and privilege the knowledge and reality of women traders, fifteen market women were selected from the target population, with the understanding also that gender may influence how men and women perceive and experience peace (de la Rey & McKay, 2006) in their social contexts. However, I acknowledge that the participants' experiences are not indicative of all women's experiences in this sector.

3.3 Data Collection Process

This section discusses the data collection process, including the study location, research instruments, and the participant recruitment process.

3.4 Research Instrument

The primary data collection source that I used was in-depth semi-structured individual interviews. Qualitative research approaches provide opportunities for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon that is under investigation (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2007) because they make participants' accounts of their experiences easy to capture and interpret (Berg, 2007). Qualitative inquiries acknowledge that realities are subjective (Creswell, 2007), and they enable researchers to describe and analyze complex, naturalistic, everyday experiences that cannot be defined numerically (Berg, 2007).

In-depth interviewing is one of the many data collection instruments in qualitative research, and it provides feminist researchers an avenue to explore the experiences of women and other marginalized groups; because these experiences are often concealed, interviewing empowers feminist researchers and participants to work together in constructing new knowledge

from participants' stories (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Feminist researchers oppose the idea that knowledge is objective (Haraway, 1988), and semi-structured interview is advantageous because it allows researchers to document women's subjective knowledge. As O'Shaughnessy and Krogman (2012) argue, "Since the early 1980s, feminist standpoint epistemologies have deeply influenced feminist research and have been strongly aligned with feminist qualitative methods, particularly semi-structured interviews and ethnography" (p. 494). In this study, semi-structured individual interviews enabled me to explore and document market women's subjective peacebuilding experiences.

The semi-structured interviewing format that I utilized in this study has many benefits. Unlike the structured or guided interview format, the semi-structured interview is designed to elicit and learn about participants' specific subjective experiences; this format is flexible because it allows researchers to ask the same open-ended questions to all participants and for the participants to provide a variety of responses based on their individual experiences (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). In this study, I utilized semi-structured interviews, which enabled me to ask all the participants open-ended questions using follow-up questions to learn about their experiences (please see Appendix B for the question guide). The flexibility in the semi-structured interviewing gave participants room to express their thoughts in their own ways. This technique also enabled a conducive atmosphere that allowed for reciprocity during the interview process, where participants had the opportunity to ask personal and clarifying questions. For example, several participants asked me personal questions before, during and after our interviews.

The participants indicated the location for the interviews, and before the start of each interview session, I told participants only to share the experiences they were comfortable with sharing. As participants answered questions, I took notes and sought clarifications from them through follow-up questions. At the end of each session, I went over participants' responses summarily and offered to share their transcripts and emerging themes with them after transcription. Almost all the interviews were conducted within 60 minutes, apart from three interviews that went over 60 minutes because of poor network connections. The shortest interview was 29 minutes, and the longest was 90 minutes. The interviews were conducted from the beginning of June to the end of July of 2020. Lastly, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent social distancing regulations that were in place during the data collection period, all the interviews were conducted remotely and recorded via Zoom video conferencing,

and I transcribed them verbatim. As mentioned earlier, one challenge that I had was poor network connections, which meant that sometimes I had to call the participants several times in order to complete the interview.

3.5 Participants’ Recruitment

Participants were selected purposively for this study from the target population of market women living in Aba. Purposeful sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants who fit the study outline and can provide in-depth information on the study (Suri, 2011). In this sense, participants were selected because they “embody and represent meaningful experience–structure links” (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006, p. 493). Before starting this study, I contacted individuals who already had an existing relationship with market women in the study location. Prospective participants were identified through the distribution of the study information and my contact details by community contacts and my research assistant residing in the study area. After interested participants were identified, my research assistant and I reached out to them to provide more details about the study, reconfirm their interest, and schedule the interviews. Fifteen participants were selected to enable a meaningful exploration of the research question(s); this sample size was appropriate because, according to Crouch and McKenzie (2006), a sample size of fewer than 20 participants provides the breadth needed to bond with participants and explore the subject of inquiry comprehensively.

3.6 Participants’ Demography

The fifteen participants in this study are Igbo women from Southeastern Nigeria residing in the study location in Aba, Abia State. But not all of them are Abia natives.

Participants’ Profile

Table 1: Interview participant demography

Participant ID	Marital Status/Children	Trade Item
P1 Food S	Single with children	Food
P2 Nonfood S	Widow with children	Nonfood
P3 Nonfood S	Married with children	Nonfood

P4 Food S	Married with children	Food
P5 Food S	Single, no children	Food
P6 Food S	Single with children	Food
P7 Food S	Married with children	Food
P8 Nonfood S	Married with children	Nonfood
P9 Food S	Single with children	Food
P10 Food S	Married with children	Food
P11 Food S	Married with children	Food
P12 Food S	Single, no children	Food
P13 Food S	Married with children	Food
P14 Food S	Single with children	Food
P15 Nonfood S	Married with children	Nonfood

As the table above shows, most of the participants (eleven) sold food items, and a few others (four) sold nonfood items. The food items were rice, beans, stockfish, egusi, noodles, eggs, milk, soft drinks, snacks, vegetables, fruits, tomatoes, pepper and cooked meals. And the nonfood traders sold shoes, bags, fabric and second new clothes. Only one participant stated that she had another income source (a civil occupation) aside from her trading enterprise. Participants were recruited from seven markets in Aba, and these markets vary in size, from the biggest well-known markets to the relatively unknown ones. Participants ranged in age, from their twenties to their late fifties. Participants had different levels of formal education, from elementary to secondary education. Two participants had post-secondary education, and two said they had no formal education. Of the fifteen participants, eight were married with children, two were unmarried and had no children, four were single parents, and one was a widow with children.

3.7 Study Location

The study was conducted in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. Aba is a commercial city in Abia State, created in 1991; Abia State is one of the five predominantly Igbo speaking states in

Southeastern Nigeria, with a population of over 4 million.⁸ As a major manufacturing city, Aba brings together people from all over Nigeria and beyond. Participants in this study who sell non-food items told me that before the pandemic, they had customers from all of Nigeria and Africa who patronize them. The majority of the population in Aba are Christians (Ejike et al., 2018; Odoemene & Ofodu, 2016), and trading and agriculture are the primary occupation of the people, with a small number of the population employed in the civil service (Ejike et al., 2018). According to participants, women dominate the food commodity trade in almost all the markets in Aba. The majority of the study participants were drawn primarily from the food items trading sector. Apart from providing many people with livelihood opportunities, informal local markets in Aba and elsewhere in Nigeria are outlets where many people purchase basic necessities such as food and clothing.

3.8 Language

All my participants were Igbo women, and before the interviews, I expected that all of them might choose to speak in Igbo, which I also speak. As I spent time talking to participants before the interviews began, I realized that almost all of them could speak Pidgin⁹ English and converse to a varied extent in the English language. I told the participants that they could respond in any language of their choice. The first three interviews I conducted were with participants who spoke a mix of pidgin English and the English language. I sometimes started the interviews in Igbo but realized that I quickly went back to English or Pidgin English when participants spoke all three languages. I want to acknowledge that my conversing in the English language during the initial interview process may have influenced some participants to respond in Pidgin English instead of Igbo. However, two participants who spoke fairly well in English and Pidgin English during our introductory process told me they could only interview in Igbo, although they sometimes communicated in Pidgin English during the interview process. At that point, I interpreted this to mean that the participant felt more comfortable speaking in Igbo even though they spoke much better English than I had anticipated. In hindsight, I think of these incidents as ways in which participants negotiate power in the interview process.

⁸ See for example Abia State Government: <https://abiastate.gov.ng/about/>

⁹ Pidgin English is a 'broken' version of the English language and spoken across Nigeria and some West African countries

Language is a complex phenomenon in research, and it has advantages and disadvantages-particularly for researchers who do not speak the same language as their participants. As Polkinghorne (2005, p. 139) notes, language gives depth to experience because it allows for the use of “figurative expressions such as metaphors and narratives.” And this is more advantageous for those who can communicate in the same language as their participants. Communicating in Igbo improved my rapport with the participants and also improved my insider status. However, I am drawn to the caution of Polkinghorne (2005), who stressed the importance of considering the place of language and clarity in qualitative research so as not to distort meanings. Thus, there were times when I sought clarification from participants who spoke in Igbo, but this was only on very few occasions where they used proverbs, because proverbs and metaphors, when translated literally, may lose their original meaning. There were also times when participants needed clarifications when I spoke in English, for example, when I asked participants to tell me about themselves, some described their physical attributes, such as their heights. I realized that the questions were not clear to them and changed how I asked the questions; instead, I asked how long they had been in the business and how they started. Questions seeking to understand how participants resolve conflict were altered to *how una dey take manage quarrel* or how do you resolve disagreements?

Additionally, it has been suggested that to ensure clarity of data in interviews, interviewers need to ask “questions in effective ways to elicit the data required to respond to research questions, and both speakers adequately understood one another's intended meanings” (Roulston, 2010, p. 202). The majority of the participants spoke Pidgin English and English fairly well. And I was able to seize this advantage to verify and clarify meanings in these languages as the interviews progressed. These efforts were geared towards ensuring that participants' experiences were adequately captured and not lost in translation, and in doing this, the quality of data gathered was safeguarded. Although I translated the interviews from Igbo and Pidgin English into the English language, I have left a few responses as they were originally in Igbo and Pidgin English to add to the study's richness.

3.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, I discuss the processes that I utilized in analyzing and interpreting the data. The data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed inductively and iteratively while new

data was still being collected. I started my analysis by reading the transcripts multiple times to be familiar with the data and to ensure that I looked at the data with a new set of eyes each time to gain new insights (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). I also read the transcripts repeatedly to be familiar with the women's accounts of their experiences. To make meaning as I analyzed and interpreted my data, I wrote down my thoughts and reflections. After this initially broad approach, I moved forward to thematically code/index the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Through coding, I developed and grouped my themes into meaningful segments (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

The next process involved indexing the identified links and ideas and arranging them under themes (Doody et al., 2013). The coding followed an inductive and deductive approach because although I developed codes from participants' responses, the process was influenced by my different conceptual lens. The codes were used to identify meanings and topics related to the research focus. I identified similar ideas and grouped them into themes, and these were modified as new ideas emerged from my reflections on the texts and existing literature. For example, I used interpersonal conflict as a label to depict the behaviours that caused disagreements between sellers as described by participants. This label is also used to differentiate the other challenges related to the market management and the market structure, which was coded as structural conflict. I used these codes because when I asked participants about the kinds of conflict they experience and how they manage them (See Appendix B), these two types of conflict emerged from their responses. Quotes from participants were then pasted under these labels in a word document.

The findings chapters were organized based on the emerging themes and informed by the central research question(s) and focus of the study. In this regard, different strategies for managing challenges were discussed in all three findings chapters. In developing the findings chapters, I engaged with the materials inductively; as themes began to emerge, I brought different analytical lenses to the process. The conceptual lens that I brought to the analysis in the different chapters includes intersectionality, African feminism, and local and positive peacebuilding. The conceptual lens that I used in Chapter Four includes African feminist perspectives of negotiation, balance and collaboration. PACS and feminist perspectives on human security and local peacebuilding guided my analysis in Chapter Five. And because the data were collected during COVID-19, there was an emergent need to focus on this additional

challenge, which I did in Chapter Six. Then I brought a different focus in this chapter which I grounded in positive peacebuilding. The approaches are all grounded in my overarching framework, which highlights situatedness, contextual experiences and grassroots organizing.

The final process in my data analysis was to map and interpret the data (Doody et al., 2013). Interpretation involved making sense of the data findings and considering the broader significance of the findings.

Challenges Related to Data Collection

Some interviews conducted in the marketplace were scheduled when participants felt they would have fewer customers. However, some participants had and attended to customers while their interviews were ongoing. This means that in some instances, we did not have a smooth conversation/interview session because of the breaks and interruptions as participants carried on their work. Also, because of the pandemic-related restrictions and lockdown in and outside of some markets, both sellers and buyers had to work within a specific time frame, so it was sometimes impossible to reschedule as participants could not predict a better time; this happened with two participants. In hindsight, I wondered if these breaks may have impacted participants' responses. Other challenges I experienced were poor call quality on a few occasions. For example, I could not hear two participants clearly when they answered questions; in these instances, I had to cut the call and call them back. One other participant told me she could not hear me clearly and asked me to call her at another time, which I did. Although the women spoke about their experiences before COVID-19, as this study was conducted during COVID-19, it is possible that the pandemic may have affected women's responses, as presented in the findings chapters.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The University of Manitoba's Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) approved this study before the commencement. All the participants were consenting adults over the age of 18 who voluntarily agreed to be part of the study and to be interviewed about their experiences and perceptions of peace and conflict in their markets. Informed consent was obtained verbally by me before the interviews commenced. I also made sure that the participants understood the

purpose and process of the study before the interviews began. In this vein, I provided details about the study objectives and my lunch offer to appreciate their time. The participants were also informed verbally by me that their participation is voluntary; this was emphasized repeatedly so that they do not feel coerced into participation.

To ensure a fair process and participant anonymity and privacy, I reminded participants that they should only share what they were comfortable sharing during the interviews. The audio recordings were made via the Zoom platform, which saved the recordings directly to my computer immediately after the interview ended. These audio recordings were permanently deleted after the data transcription. The transcripts were coded to ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity, and the computer where the audio recordings were saved was password-protected and only accessible to me. After the interviews, participants' names on the transcripts were changed to codes such as Participant 1 to avoid any direct connection to participants. The list that had participants' real names was permanently deleted after the interviews ended. Although my research assistant in Nigeria assisted in scheduling some of the interviews, I conducted all the interviews myself. My research assistant, who signed an oath of confidentiality to protect the identities and narratives of the participants, was close by during some of these interviews.

3.11 Study Limitations

As a feminist research, the study focuses on market women's experiences in Aba by giving voice to their subjective situated knowledge. The participants of this study are culturally and geographically located in Southeastern Nigeria. Thus, the findings speak to their specific contextual experience and may or may not apply to other contexts, even within Nigeria. Participants in this study were recruited based on their location, livelihood, interests, and commitment to the study. The participants, although diverse (i.e., from different markets across the city of Aba and different in their social positioning and identities with regards to age, education, and marital status), do not speak for all market women in Aba and Southeastern Nigeria. The norms and practices evident in women's responses are influenced by their workplace and geographical location. However, as other studies have shown, market women may have the same experiences based on the structure of informal local markets and their gender. The challenges described, although not unique to the participants' environment, may be

experienced and articulated differently by other women in other parts of Nigeria and Africa. The commercial environment of Aba may also have impacted how women experience peace and conflict. The study implications are that those seeking to improve the wellbeing of women must also consider their physical contexts, including addressing challenges specific to women's social and cultural contexts as these factors influence behaviors and outcomes.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed my methodological approach, the strategies I utilized, and the challenges and outcomes of this approach. I examined the method and process of data gathering and provided insights on how my interests and identities may have influenced the research process. As I reflect on my research plan and outcomes, I am reminded of the words of Mama (2011), who notes that research processes and outcomes in Africa can be influenced by many volatilities, including challenges of communicating and as my discussion in this chapter shows, such challenges are not only experienced when researchers are physically in the 'field.' Poor internet connections, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and its impact on participants and other unforeseen circumstances can also influence research progression even when done remotely. From this perspective, one understands that no doubt, researchers hope that their methodologies *define* their studies. However, most often, the realities in *the field* or study location define our research progression. Pillow (2003) states that reflexivity should be a continuous practice throughout the research process. Being reflexive throughout the process of this study involved being aware of how my social position and implicit as well as explicit bias as well as other unforeseen challenges may have influenced the research outcomes, as this chapter has demonstrated.

Finally, as this chapter shows, I grounded my study on feminist principles because feminist studies seek to amplify the voices and experiences of marginalized and vulnerable groups, particularly women. Hence, this study intends to deconstruct stereotypes about knowledge creation by exploring the experiences of women who may be side-lined in discussions on peace and conflict because of their gender, occupation and other social factors (i.e., traders with low levels of formal education). In doing this, the study validates the experiences of women and contributes to feminist epistemological perspectives on the credibility of women's situated and subjective knowledge. In this regard, Chapter Four discusses the types

and causes of conflict in informal local markets and the strategies that market women use to resolve them.

Chapter Four

Gender, Conflict and Conflict Management in Informal Local Markets: Global Perspectives and Local Insights

4.0 Introduction

This chapter draws from the literature on workplace conflict, Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), and feminist literature to explore conflict in informal local markets. I discuss two types of conflicts based on participants' narratives: interpersonal and structural conflicts. Interpersonal conflict arises in situations where traders disagree over the behaviors or practices of other traders. Structural conflict is caused by management issues and or other marketplace challenges. The chapter also discusses the influence of workplace culture on the conflict management styles that participants adopt. Participants' responses are discussed under the following themes: competition over customers; conflict over payment; conflict over the use of space; conflict with customers; conflict over perceived unethical practices; structural conflict; conflict management; the negotiation and non-formal processes of conflict resolution and informal workplace practices and norms. This chapter's outline is as follows: the section after this introduction presents the literature on workplace conflict, at the end of which, you will find the conceptual lens that guided my analysis in this chapter. This is followed by the research findings section and, lastly, the discussion and conclusion section.

4.1 Literature Review: Workplace Conflict and Conflict Management

This section reviews the academic literature on workplace conflict and its management. There are different causes and types of workplace conflict. Understanding conflict and its management in organizations have been an ongoing mission for researchers for over four decades (Rahim & Katz, 2019). Pondy (1967) identifies three types of conflict within formal organizations; bargaining, bureaucratic, and systems conflict (p. 296); the author notes that these conflicts must be understood as a process that is dynamic with different phases of conflict episodes. Pondy's (1967) review of organizational literature highlights the conditions that can trigger conflict in organizations as competition for limited resources, self-sufficiency, and

disagreements over work objectives. Other scholars have described workplace conflict as a process involving disagreements, interference, and negative emotions between interdependent people (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Other conditions that can trigger conflict include unaddressed workplace issues (Bacal, 2004; Stark, 2006), which can comprise poor management and insufficient communication networks (Stark, 2006).

The different types of interpersonal workplace conflict have mostly been grouped into task conflict and relationship conflict (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; Behfar et al., 2011; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Huang, 2010; Sonnentag et al., 2013). Task conflict occurs when there are different or competing views about how a task should be done or the process to follow (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Relationship conflict happens due to interpersonal opposing views about ideals and belief systems (Barki & Hartwick, 2004); it relates to negative feelings towards an individual's personality in a group (Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

Although the common causes of organizational conflict described in workplace literature are disagreement over how a work-related task should be carried out, and conflict over personal values and ethics, some scholars have also examined process conflict as different from task and relationship conflict (Behfar et al., 2011; DeChurch et al., 2013; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Le & Jarzabkowski, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2013). Process conflict is a disagreement over how work duties are defined, dispersed, and completed (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Also, scholars have analyzed non-task organizational (NTO) conflict as another type of work-related conflict; Bruk-Lee et al. (2013) describe the non-task organizational conflict as a disagreement about the structure of an organization, including "organizational culture, organizational leadership or power" (p. 340). Non-task organizational conflict is a type of workplace conflict that is not directly related to work tasks but to workplace rules that are considered unfair (Bruk-Lee et al., 2013). An example of NTO related conflict is disagreement over status; Bendersky and Hays (2012) define status conflict as the disagreement and competition of individuals in a group over social positioning. Conflict arising from social structure has also been explored by Anicich et al. (2016).

Whatever the type, scholars argue that workplace conflicts are not irregular, and they have varied impacts on employees, organizations, and productivity (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). According to Rahim (2011, 2015), workplace conflict can either be functional where they lead to productive outcomes or dysfunctional where the outcomes are "counterproductive" (cited in Van

Niekerk et al., 2017, p. 221). The consequences of dysfunctional conflict include frustration at work, poor communication, fatigue, poor work relations, unsatisfactory work performance (Rahim, 2015, cited in Van Niekerk et al., 2017). Dysfunctional conflict is attributed to poor workplace structures (Bacal, 2004).

Workplace conflicts can have both bad and good outcomes (Bacal, 2004), depending on how they are managed. When managed appropriately, the positive outcomes of conflict include better work relations and better work performance (Starks, 2006). Research also demonstrates that workplace conflict negatively impacts individuals' physical and mental wellbeing (Bruk-Lee et al., 2013; Meier et al., 2013; Sonnentag et al., 2013), particularly when they are poorly managed.

Subsequently, scholars have created different frameworks for understanding how individuals in organizations resolve conflict and how workplace culture can impact conflict management styles. The understanding here is that culture plays a part in how individuals make meaning and react to conflict situations (Avruch, 1998; Mazrui, 1990). It is generally assumed that organizational culture impacts conflict experience and outcomes for workers (Di Pietro & Di Virgilio, 2013; Guerra et al., 2007) in the way that "they set parameters for what we believe is possible when we are in conflict and define what we can reasonably expect, both of ourselves and others" (Di Pietro & Di Virgilio, 2013, p. 912). Levin (2000) describes organizational cultures as "intriguing phenomena" that need to be studied meticulously; the author proposes a five-window framework that can provide clarity on workplace culture (p. 92). The five-window approach for evaluating organizational culture proposed by Levin (2000) emphasizes the significance and influence of leadership, norms and practices, organizational symbols, traditions and rituals, and stories and legends. Norms are important in workplaces, and they influence workplace behaviors, and this is why organizational studies scholars believe that while some workplace cultures may encourage conflict withdrawal norms, others may promote conflict behaviors that are more cooperative (Di Pietro & Di Virgilio, 2013).

Similarly, studies have examined the relationship between personality, values, and conflict resolution strategies (Antonioni, 1998; Gunkel et al., 2016). It has been suggested that individual traits, such as being emotionally intelligent, may produce productive conflict outcomes (Kaushal & Kwentes, 2006). The impacts of religion and religious values on interpersonal relations and conflict resolutions in organizations have been examined as well

(Helmy et al., 2014), so has the influence of spirituality on workplace productivity and relations (Aboobaker et al., 2019; Kolodinsky et al., 2007; Nicolaidis, 2018). Workplace individual spirituality is described as the integration of a worker's spiritual principles into the work environment: it reflects an understanding that these personal beliefs will impact interpersonal relations at work, influencing how workers behave, including how they perceive work situations and how they deal with them (Kolodinsky et al., 2007).

In addition to personal values and workplace culture, gender influences conflict management strategies. Some scholars have analyzed the impact of gender on the choice of individuals' conflict resolution styles (Brahnam et al., 2005; Rahim & Katz, 2019). In their study, Brahnam et al. (2005) argue that females are more disposed to adopting cooperative conflict resolution strategies because they are likely to yield positive results, where men tend to use the avoiding strategy. Thus, the avoiding and competing styles impact relationships negatively, but the collaborative and compromise strategies tend to improve the quality of relationships (Greeffe & De Bruyne, 2000). Similarly, using quantitative data collected over four decades (1980-2019), Rahim and Katz (2019) demonstrate that employed female students, in contrast to their male colleagues, effectively use cooperative strategies in resolving conflict. Others¹⁰ argue that expected gender roles may impact how people analyze the conflict roles women and men adopt.

Conflict styles or conflict resolution strategies refer to how individuals react or respond to conflict (Folger et al., 2013). For Follet (1940), these strategies include integrating, dominating, compromising, and avoiding (cited in Rahim & Katz, 2019). While Blake and Mouton (1964) categorized their conflict management styles into compromise, imposing, withdrawing or retreating, and smoothing (cited in Rahim & Katz, 2019). However, these strategies are not static, as there is a possibility that people can change how they respond to conflict depending on the situation (Folger et al., 2013).

Conflict management strategies are generally considered under two behaviors; cooperation, which is the willingness to consider the interests of others, and assertiveness, which refers to individuals placing their interests above others (Folger et al., 2013; Thomas, 1976, cited in Greeffe & De Bruyne, 2000). Further, Folger et al. (2013) describe the assertive and

¹⁰ For this argument, see Folger et al (2013) Working Through Conflict: Strategies for relationships, groups, and organizations.

cooperative levels of each of the five typical conflict styles - competing, compromising, avoiding, accommodating, and collaborating - as follows:

- Competing style is low in cooperation and has high assertiveness.
- Accommodating style is high in cooperation and has low assertiveness.
- Avoiding style has both low assertiveness and low cooperation.
- Compromising style has middle assertiveness and cooperation, and
- Collaborative style has high cooperation and assertiveness.

The avoiding strategy is a withdrawal strategy because it suggests that individuals who use this conflict management style do not address the causes of conflict or pursue their interests and concerns (Rahim & Katz, 2019).

Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) scholars have examined the causes of conflict, including considering how power disparity and inequality can lead to conflict and violence for many. From a peace and conflict lens, conflict "arises in different contexts, and occurs at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, organizational, and international levels" (Byrne & Senehi, 2009, p. 3). Economic inequality is one of the many causes of conflict (Richmond, 2014), and conflict can also arise because of two instigators, greed and grievance (Collier, 1999), where a group seeks dominance due to perceived injustice or inequality. For some groups, the greed-based instigator of conflict can be traced to economic gains whereby greed becomes the primary motivation for the insurgency, even though the group would attribute grievance as the cause of conflict (Collier, 1999). In some contexts, greed and misperceived grievance provide an avenue for insurgence (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

For Burton (1990), unmet human needs can lead to conflict, and tensions arising from unmet needs can also lead to feelings of deprivation, frustration, and anger, which may ultimately lead to violence (Gurr, 1971). Individuals can have relative or subjective experiences of inequality or deprivation (Crosby, 1976; Smith & Huo, 2014), and in this sense, people can feel that they are deprived or have been treated unfairly compared to others (Smith & Huo, 2014) or compared to a set of standards (Crosby, 1976). Studies demonstrate that workers' perception of how they are treated in their workplace can produce different outcomes: they could either protest their unfair outcomes or show their support for the organization (Osborne et al., 2014). Scholars have also argued that feelings of deprivation not only produce negative emotions and

influence behaviors but can negatively affect people's health and wellbeing (Smith & Huo, 2014).

In recognition of all these conflict causal influences, other PACS scholars have argued that intersecting factors can cause conflict; for example, Byrne et al. (2001) note that "demographics, economics, history, politics, religion, and psychocultural factors-work in unison to produce self-reinforcing patterns of conflict behavior" (p. 732). From this PACS lens, conflict in workplaces can arise from a perceived injustice, the struggle to meet basic needs, and disagreements over the approaches individuals utilize to meet their needs. Workplace conflict can also be caused by differing views and beliefs or a combination of varied factors.

Conceptual Lens: Negotiation Collaboration and Balance

Shifting from the popular notions of conflict management styles in organizational studies and related fields, I utilize an African feminist framework of negotiation and collaboration to examine market women's conflict management styles. Negotiation and collaboration position women's work and agency in their context (Achebe, 2011; Ezeigbo, 2019; Nnaemeka, 2004, 2019). It is a framework that highlights the ways women seek balance amid intersecting forms of violence in their context. Price haggling, negotiation, and compromise are the hallmarks of informal local markets in Nigeria. Thus, the negotiation and collaboration framework highlights how market women traders negotiate relationships and structures and the means through which they seek 'balance' in their everyday context. It is a framework built on feminist peacebuilding in the Nigerian context because it values "self-determination, and the ability of women to produce maximum results through cooperative endeavors" (Chukukere, p. 139). The negotiation framework is contextual and 'strategic' (Cruz, 2015); it accentuates how contexts and values influence conflict perception and resolution. It also makes clear the reasons for the conflict choices women make. This approach gives meaning to women's everyday organizing and their peacebuilding approach (Mac Ginty, 2014; Reardon, 2019) and frames market women as rational actors seeking workable solutions to everyday challenges in their environs.

4.2 Research Findings

This section presents the research findings—the types and causes of conflict and the participants' conflict management styles. I also discuss the workplace culture in this section. For the purpose

of the analysis here, conflict is defined as the challenges that sellers encounter that hinder them from actualizing their objectives. Conflict types in this study are divided into two categories: interpersonal conflict and structural conflict. In this context, interpersonal conflict varies and includes disagreements between traders concerning the process of sourcing for and maintaining customers, disagreements over personal beliefs and spiritual practices, conflict over shared spaces in the markets, and disputes between traders and customers. Structural conflict happens when traders and market leaders or government officials disagree over levies; this type of conflict also arises from poor structures in the market environs. The interpersonal conflict discussed here is between female traders as well as between both male and female traders. Food seller participants work in the sector and market section that have mostly women, others have both female and male neighbors.

Competition Over Customers

The study findings show that different forms of disagreements occur in the process of social and economic interactions in marketplaces. These findings accentuate how bargaining, competition, and interactions (Balogun, 2020; Omobowale, 2020) embedded in marketplace relations can cause dissonance between sellers. However, participants shared that they mainly experience verbal, interpersonal disagreements. One participant who sells in one of the major markets provided more context:

Competition over customers is one of the causes of conflict in our market. I can be attending to a customer in my shop, and other traders will distract that customer and sometimes convince them to come to their shop and buy from them instead. Customers can get confused when others call out to them. I quarrel with any trader who takes a customer away from my shop when I am still attending to them. (P 3 Nonfood S)

This narrative highlights the nature of informal local markets, where two or more traders can seek to gain one customer's attention simultaneously. This narrative reflects those of other participants and shows that rivalry over customers is a common feature of informal local markets in the study location. Another participant described why it is common for customers to be won easily by other traders:

It is common to see traders walking around the market looking for potential customers. Sometimes, when I start attending to customers, and these traders looking for customers see that they start coming closer to tell the customers that they can offer better prices. This behavior can be challenging for us and often disrupts the price negotiation process and relationship that one is trying to create with the customers, particularly when customers start thinking that they can get a better price elsewhere. (P10 Food S)

This response shows the competitive work environment of informal local markets and what other traders are willing to do to attract and retain customers. Another participant stated that customer rivalry is prevalent with traders who sell similar products:

You know that this is a market, and in the market, there must be conflict, which often occurs when your neighbor keeps disturbing you while your customer is in your shop. Sometimes others who sell the same items can let the customer know that they have the same products and for a reduced price. These traders are willing to reduce their selling price and even sell at the cost price without profit to pull customers away from you so that the customer will only buy from them in the future. Maturity in situations like this helps me to know what to do. (P5 Food S)

The narrative above shows a customer retention strategy that causes disputes between traders. It suggests that to win over a customer and ensure customer loyalty, traders are willing to make sacrifices that others consider unrealistic and potentially damaging to their economic security. The participant also emphasized that emotional intelligence is important in handling potential conflict situations. According to the participant, the mature way of handling a potential conflict situation, such as the one she narrated, is understanding the other party's actions and ignoring them. In this regard, being emotionally intelligent enables her to take decisive steps so that the conflict situation does not escalate.

Conflict over customers shows how the process of being economically secure can lead to disputes between colleagues. A micro-level analysis shows how the struggle over resources can generate tensions in a given context. In the present study, the customers are the resource needed

to earn an income, and the perceived or real scarcity of customers can result in disagreements. Rivalry over customers also demonstrates one of the causes of relationship conflict in local markets and reveals how relationships can be broken. There are other causes for broken relations in the markets. One reason for broken relations between traders is related to payment.

Conflict Over Payment

This type of interpersonal conflict that happens in the markets has to do with payment transfers. One participant provided more context regarding this type of conflict in her market:

Sometimes customers buy from two traders and transfer both payments into one person's account, but this can be an issue. I have experienced this problem. When a customer buys from me and another trader in my line and transfers to that trader after we have all agreed on this mode of payment, I sometimes find it difficult to get my share of the payment because the other trader who receives the money delays in sending my part of the payment, or sometimes they refuse to send it. This action causes conflict between us. (P2 Nonfood S)

This point of contention above is related to a particular payment mode, but this conflict type was not as widely articulated by participants as the rivalry over customers. However, the two causes of interpersonal conflict/rivalry over payment reflect the interdependent nature of trading and traders in informal local markets and some of the outcomes, as one trader's behavior ultimately affects another trader's income. In these two examples of interpersonal conflict, participants' responses demonstrate the inevitability of workplace interpersonal relations and skirmish.

Conflict Over the Use of Space

Disagreement over physical space and subsequently over workspace hygiene is another cause of interpersonal conflict in the market. Some participants have shops with clear demarcations in their markets, and others do not. Nonetheless, workspace hygiene or the lack of it is a cause of interpersonal conflict between traders with shops and between those who sell in open-air markets without shops, as illustrated by a food item seller who has a shop:

When my neighbors sweep the floor of their shops, they put the dirt in front of my shop. I used to tell those who do it to stop doing this, but when they do it, I still take the garbage out because there are some people that you will talk to about their destructive behaviors, and they still leave the trash in front of your shop. (P13 Food S)

Another participant described how dirt affects her during poor weather conditions:

When some of my neighbors sweep their shops, the dirt from their shops enters my shop. The bigger problem for me is when it rains, and my neighbors clean their shops, the water and the dirt they are trying to sweep away enter my shop too, making it filthy and unappealing, which causes me to exchange words with them. (P9 Food S)

Participants' responses show that they care about cleanliness in their environment and are conscious of how poorly managed waste and dirty environment can affect their income as it may drive customers away. The interpersonal conflict caused by boundary disagreements also happen in street/roadside markets, as illustrated by one participant who sells in one of the street markets:

Another cause of conflict is that my neighbors might tell me that my goods are crossing their boundaries, and we will start arguing. We are using umbrellas and tables to sell our goods in this market. Each person uses their umbrella to cover their table and goods, but my neighbor sometimes argues that the way I placed my umbrella and table is blocking her or that my umbrella is bent towards her space, and this causes problems for us. I know why umbrella placement is important for some people in the market. Some people sell perishable food items, and when it rains, and the umbrellas are crooked, the goods can be damaged if they are exposed to downpour. Before, our former market had a zinc roof, but we relocated, and now we sell by the roadside, not inside the market. (P12 Food S)

The response above demonstrates how boundaries can be a cause of interpersonal conflict. This section's responses show that space/boundary disputes happen as people struggle to protect their livelihood. The root causes of space/boundary conflict may be understood as part of the broader

issues of market congestion which some participants also mentioned as part of their structural challenges in the market. This speaks to the challenge of inadequate physical spaces in some markets; it is also a problem embedded in poor urban planning. Scholars have analyzed the challenges of poor urban development and how poor planning has given way to the construction of derelict marketplaces (Oben & Ndi, 2014; Uzuegbunam, 2012). These challenges are aspects of structural violence as they fail to meet sellers' physical space needs and have become a source of division between them. Boundary disputes are also symbolic of the feelings of deprivation, frustration, and anger (Gurr, 1971; Smith & Huo, 2014) that may arise when human needs are denied (Burton, 1990). Boundary dispute also speaks to the struggle for power, as some traders may perceive that some traders' behaviors may threaten their autonomy and control over their physical space.

Conflict with customers

Participants also shared that in addition to some conflicts with other sellers, specifically, they have disagreements with customers, and this happens when customers and traders disagree over price, as shared by two participants:

We have disagreements with some customers every now and then. For example, I buy something for N500, and the customers are negotiating for N200, but this is not what it should be because it is below the cost price, and we quarrel over this. (P11 Food S)

Although the informal local market structure is such that price negotiation is very common and forms part of the customer/trader interactions, the response above shows that this can also cause conflict between customers and traders. Another participant stated that the nature of price bargaining can sometimes lead to negative feelings and reactions.

Customers can price the goods in a way that can provoke me to exchange words with them, mainly when the price they want to pay is below the cost price. I react by telling them to go away. Another issue with customers is that sometimes, customers can buy goods from you and return them and say that they changed their minds about the sale and want their money back, leading to arguments. (P15 Nonfood S)

This response shows that even though participants use different methods to win and retain customers, price negotiation differences can break the relationship. The loss of potential customers happens as a consequence of price negotiation. There is also an identity threat entailed in this conflict with customers. Participants may feel offended when customers price the goods below the cost price because their identities as fair and competent traders are being questioned.

Conflict over perceived unethical practices: Conflict and spirituality

Some participants shared their interpersonal conflict experiences based on perceived unethical practices by other traders in the marketplace. According to one participant:

Some traders make market medicine to sell more than others in the market. Some of my neighbors in my line used to spray water in front of their shops, so I told them that this is not a good practice that they should stop it because I suspected the water is connected to market profit. But they said it is just ordinary water, I know that it is not ordinary water. Telling those who engage in this practice can cause arguments. (P4 Food S)

This perception that people use black magic or market medicine to attract customers and increase sales is reflected in some studies. Findings from a study in Nigeria by Zivkovic (2017) found that entrepreneurs believe in protecting themselves from evil and preserving their businesses through varied spiritual practices such as the spray of 'holy water' and the use of charms or black magic. However, some participants in this study disagree with the assertion that having more customers than others is connected to black magic, as illustrated by one participant:

If you have more customers, people will be angry at you, saying, ha, this woman you are selling o! What are you using to sell and make a profit like this? That's the problem I have-other traders suspecting that having many customers means that one has to have done something unethical like using juju. (P10 Food S)

Another participant stated that the sprinkling of water is not always connected to black magic and that sometimes people accuse others of using black magic falsely:

Some people see how you sell and become envious, and anytime you have customers, they become angry that you have more customers. This is how the market is. Some will say you are using bad medicine to sell. If you go to church, they say you have gone to do bad medicine if you use holy water, they think it is connected to black magic, but they don't know that selling or not selling is connected to destiny; some people sell more than others. These people talking about black magic do not believe that God can help you to sell. Some traders do bad medicine to sell; they do this because of greed; some things are not enough for them; they want what you have and want to be the only ones selling what you have. We are all Christians here, but some add traditional practices to their Christianity. If the market authority finds out you have committed bad medicine, they will expel you from the market. (P6 Food S)

The participant's accounts suggest an awareness of traders who engage in black magic to make a profit despite their religious affiliations. This finding is also reflected in the study of Zivkovic (2017). The participant's analogy alludes to the hypocrisy in religion, where outwardly, people profess to be pious and morally upstanding Christians, but at the same time, they indulge in untoward practices to make a profit. Her views about spirituality and religion show how perceptions and interpretation of values can lead to conflict, suspicions, and distrust in marketplaces. Perceptions also lead to false accusations, according to one participant who sells food items and who stated that in her market, she was falsely accused of using black magic to attract patronage: "They said I do juju¹¹, that is why I have plenty of customers. Gossip causes fights, and sometimes you find out it is just gossiping, no truth in the story" (P10 Food S). As I reflected on these findings, I was reminded of how these perspectives produced from working together show how the factors responsible for peace and conflict in marketplaces are structural as well as relational, including – as Cornwall (2007) notes of the Yoruba women traders in her study "affective relations – love, friendship and care, as well as jealousy, resentment and destructiveness" (p. 43). Equally, the response of a food item seller suggests that negative perceptions would be less prevalent when everybody sells in the market:

¹¹ Juju is another term for charms or black magic; a term that participants used interchangeable with market medicine.

Suppose I am selling and my neighbor is also selling. In that case, I think everybody will be happy in the market, but whereby only one particular person is selling in their shop, and others are watching this happen, there will be suspicions that this person is using an additional source to sell their markets, and if this is the case, nobody will be happy. (P7 Food S)

The responses in this section show that the primary conflict between traders is the contention over customers. Some traders also perceive that some traders engage in questionable behaviors to attract and retain customers. However, other traders believe that allegations of unethical practices are merely accusations that may arise out of jealousy and poor sales. Scholars have noted that gossip emanating from jealousy and divergent beliefs has been a cause of conflict between traders (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018). Entrenched in this conflict over unethical practices is the perception that other traders seek to control profit and to gain power over others through the use of black magic

Structural Conflict

As discussed here, structural conflict refers to challenges in the study location that are not related to sellers' behaviors that affect other sellers. They are disputes between traders and market leaders or government officials over high levies, revenue payment, and inadequate public facilities. Structural inequality or violence happens when structures and policies affect people's abilities to achieve set goals and meet their basic needs (Galtung, 1969). This section describes the varied forms of structural inequality from the perspectives of market women. One participant describes the nature of structural conflict and how it affects her livelihood:

We protest if the market authority increases the money we pay for levies or does something that we do not like because it will affect us. This protest against high levies is important for us because, through our trading businesses, we get money to feed our families and train our children. Any increase also affects our capital. When we march in protests, sometimes they decrease the levy, sometimes they remove it completely. For example, the market authority told us to pay N500 from time to time just in case there is a

death in a trader's family to contribute to help the person. We told them this levy is wrong because we already have a way of doing it on our own in the market. They said 500 every week, and we said no because it reduces our capital; how can the whole market pay N500 for each person every week? They reduced it and said we should pay N200 every week, we also considered it too much. When they send people to collect the money, they will want to seize our goods if we don't have the money to pay. (P11 Food S)

The narrative above illustrates how an imposed levy can lead to conflict and negatively impact traders' livelihood. Traders in Aba always complain about the many levies they pay, including those imposed illegitimately (Nwanne, 2015). Market women in this region have organized several marches in protests of high levies (Alaribe, 2018; Ikokwu, 2019). In the past, the Abia State government had intervened over fraudulent levies imposed by market leaders. For example, in 2017, the government dissolved all the market executives in Aba and called for new elections in the markets over reports that the market leaders were extorting sellers (Okoli, 2017). Some market association leaders have inferred that corrupt officials were enabled in their bad practices in the first place because they were placed in their positions of power by some government officials (Okoli, 2017). The response above also suggests that the imposed levy can be perceived as a negative influence on an existing workplace norm where participants already have 'a way' of relating within the market even though this norm may be informal and unwritten.

One participant described how they have dealt with disagreements over levies imposed by her market management:

We used to be levied every day. They said it is daily, but sometimes we don't sell; they still make us pay, and we got tired, so we organized a march, and they stopped it and started doing it once a week. We have used protest, and we also had meetings with the market chairperson, and he said he would look into it, but things haven't changed.

(P6 Food S)

The participants' responses suggest that the conflict arising from levies is constant and that even protests and meetings with their market leaders have not fully addressed these issues.

From the women's responses, I understand that protest is one way to address issues. This is not a new approach for women in this context. Marches and demonstrations are some of the ways women traders in this region have sought to address the challenges that impact their economic productivity, as emphasized by other gender scholars (Achebe, 2011; Chuku, 2005). What is clear to me as I reflect on the women's narratives is that sellers typically go to the market management when they have issues. But where the market leaders cannot address these issues, such as levy reduction, women resort to other means such as protests. While these protests exemplify women's collective power and grassroots organizing (participants said some of the protests had yielded positive results), they also accentuate women's powerlessness when they cannot achieve their objectives. The articulation of these problems exemplifies the marketplace power dynamics between those in power and those without.

One participant who sells nonfood items in one of the relatively large markets reiterated this perspective on levies and why the government needs to come to their aid:

The government can assist the market in reducing the security levy they take from us because every year, we pay N3,000. For how many shops in the market? The money is too much, and this is in addition to renewing our shops. These are the things the State government can do for us. Because there is the revenue that this market pays to the State government. The government should reduce this cost and also give us water, anyway, let me not say much about that. And the way they are attacking shops in the market, the places that are supposed to be free, they are building new shops and are congesting the whole market. These are the problems we have. By reducing the security levy and the fee renewal of shops, we will have more peace. I don't know of any other markets, but I am talking of the issues at my market where I am selling.

(P8 Nonfood S).

This participant also pointed out another source of conflict with authorities: the construction of new structures in a market that is already congested. Market congestion may cause other safety issues that could cause traders to suffer physical harm, which Galtung (1969) refers to as direct violence.

While bad roads, high levies, and market congestions were some of the problems, participants faced, more direct personal health challenges were experienced daily in the poor hygiene facilities available. One participant said these are part of the issues they have been trying to get the market management to look into:

We don't always have good toilets, the ones we have are too far from us, and it's not supposed to be like that. And the roads inside the markets are bad: if it rains customers don't have roads to enter our shops, everywhere will be flooded and dirty.

(P3 Nonfood S)

One participant who sells food items added:

Some parts of the market don't have a toilet and the ones we have are not well kept. People have a way of easing themselves, such as peeing in a container in their shops, which can cause the shops to smell. (P13 Food S)

Few participants stated that they have working hygiene facilities; more than half of the participants spoke of inadequate hygiene facilities as one of their challenges. As the responses show, inadequate infrastructures are a major concern for participants in this study. Participants' responses demonstrate that the lack of basic amenities and increasing levies may ultimately impact their capability to meet their basic human needs and generate tensions between them and the market authorities and state government. Poor infrastructures and congested areas can also lead to direct harm where participants are physically hurt due to a fire outbreak. These responses of participants echo Galtung's (1969) theory of direct and indirect violence.

Conflict Management: Formal and Informal Processes

This section discusses participants' accounts of the formal rules and regulations and informal norms that govern their markets. In this study, I used market management, market union, and market authority to refer to the body of elected officials in charge of each market's daily running. Some participants referred to the market leaders as the market union, and others said market management or market task force. These market officials are in charge of market administrations

and are responsible for protecting traders' interests and resolving conflicts between traders. From participants' narratives, I understood that the market leaders in their markets serve as links between traders and other networks outside the markets, including state officials. Some participants shared that when they have issues related to high levies imposed from outside the market (sometimes from state security), they go to their market leaders to help them negotiate with the state officials.

Some of the participants who sell in the bigger markets told me that they have written constitutions, although I could not see this because I was not there physically; the participants told me that they know all the rules related to market relations in their markets. From participants' responses, I understood that the rules and regulations guiding market relations do not differ significantly from one market to the other. One participant described the rules and regulations that govern the market, including the conflict management structure:

You don't steal, you don't fight, and you do not call the police into the market if you dispute with anyone. If you have issues, you call the chairperson. You cannot bring in the police without letting them (market leaders) resolve the issues first. The regulations state that when you are found guilty of breaking any rule, you pay a fine of N5,000.

(P14 Food S)

Another participant stated a similar regulation in her market:

You must not fight or steal; if you quarrel, our market task force will seize your goods, and you will pay a fine. They don't fight in my market, and you cannot bring in police officers to arrest the person you are quarreling with without letting the union/market task force know. We have a chairman of the line, and the whole market has lines with a line chairperson who settles conflict; it is from the line chairman that we start settling any issues that we have. (P3 Nonfood S)

As noted above, participants in different markets shared that there are rules against fighting in their markets, but as one participant stated, not everyone adheres to these rules:

The law is that when we fight, we will be fined, so we hardly fight physically in this market. It is possible to see people fight once in a while because they think it is better to pay the fine and fight someone they have problems with; this is the market for you.

(P6 Food S)

Another participant suggested that the few people who defy the 'no physical altercation' rule do so because they know that they could get away with this. Other participants described other rules ensuring that traders maintain a clean environment:

There are security people in my market, and they go through the market every day to check if anyone left their shop dirty; because we are supposed to clean up at the end of each day and take out the trash. If they find that your shop is dirty, they will lock your shop up, and you will pay a fee. (P8 Nonfood S)

This response suggests that the market management uses punitive measures to ensure traders comply with regulations around cleanliness to reduce conflict that can result from unclean environments. As seen in the causes of interpersonal conflict, the unclean environment and the process of keeping one's surroundings clean have been causes of interpersonal conflict between traders.

All of the markets in this study have defined rules that govern the markets and established protocols in addressing workplace conflict. Some markets are divided by lines and or zones, and these lines or zones have other rules governing them in addition to general market rules, as stated by one food item seller participant: "Another thing is in my line. The leaders don't agree for someone else to sell the same thing I sell - this is one of our rules; you can go somewhere else but not where I sell." Another participant highlighted how not selling the same goods in the same line can reduce interpersonal conflict:

The truth is, in my line, we do not have conflict as such. My closest neighbor is someone who sells shoes, so we don't have issues. He sells shoes, and I sell food, so nothing can cause a shoe seller and a food seller to quarrel. (P1 Food S)

Another participant described the rules that govern her line, helping to stave off conflict in the market:

In my line, we have rules and regulations; if I am selling to a customer, my neighbor in the line cannot call the customer I am attending to because this might bring conflict. We are not supposed to call another person's customer in front of the person's shop. Some still do it because of envy, and they are fined. Another rule is that we do not go to the market and get other goods unless the days that the market authority has assigned for us to bring in our goods. (P4 Food S)

A similar response from a participant is also reflected below:

My line authority has a new rule. When we are with a customer in our shop, other traders have to wait for us to finish with the customer before they call them or make any attempt to engage the customer. So, as it is now when customers finish with me and don't like anything in my shop, they can go to other shops. (P3 Nonfood S)

While participants' responses show how the market authorities set rules that regulate their markets and relations, some participants are not satisfied with the way the rules are carried out, as one participant noted:

I reported the person to the chairperson in the market, but nothing was done. But the former chairperson used to take these issues seriously, but this current man (chairperson) is not serious. He is partial and only responds to those he likes. When I reported that I have an issue with another trader, he didn't do anything. He was just looking. (P6 Food S)

Although formal rules and regulations govern the markets, and there are formal processes to follow when resolving conflict, some participants' responses show that these processes are still managed by traders informally.

Equally, some participants' responses about how they resolve interpersonal conflict ranged from reporting to the market management to bringing it up in the meetings. From these

responses, I was able to deduce two formal approaches to conflict resolution in the markets. In the first approach, issues are reported directly to the market management when they happen. In the second approach, disagreements between sellers are brought to the monthly or weekly meetings for resolution. One participant provided more context for this second approach:

We have regular meetings in our line. In these meetings, the issues that traders have are also discussed that day. If any trader has an event and wants us to attend, it is the day of the meeting that they will tell us, and we will decide on the money we need to contribute in support of the celebrant. In the meeting, anybody can speak their mind. If traders have quarrels, this is the day that they will talk about the problems. Those traders that were present when the issues happen also come to give their accounts. At the end of the meeting, the line chairman will decide on the case, and the guilty person will pay a fine. (P10 Food S)

After listening to the participant's description of the meetings/form of conflict resolution process, my first thoughts were that this process is symbolic of the Igbo culture and akin to the decision-making village assemblies that were common in many traditional Igbo societies (Korieh, 2006; Nwoye, 2011). However, I didn't want to make any generalization or infer that this was a general conflict resolution process because fewer participants gave as much context as this participant did.

The Negational and Non-Formal Processes of Conflict Resolution

Very few participants stated that their first option for resolving conflict was to go to market management. The section below illustrates how conflict resolution approaches are often connected to relationships, which are in turn impacted by gender and age, among other variables. According to one participant:

To resolve conflict, in my market, we have the market authority or task force. It's the task force people that come in to resolve our conflict. My market is divided into zones, so it is the zonal chairman people go to make a report to before anything. But, when I have issues with my neighbors, I talk to them first to let them know that I am angry.

(P8 Nonfood S)

Another participant shared that she resolves conflict with her neighbor in two ways; however, she too usually begins by speaking directly to her neighbor:

I will settle it by calling my neighbor to tell her that what she did was wrong. And she will tell me that she is sorry and I will accept her apology. Or I will go and report to the chairman that is the person in charge of the market they will call her and give her a warning after that she will apologize to me. I usually talk to my neighbor first before going to the market chairman. (P12 Food S)

Some participants mentioned that if the argument becomes too long, they go to the line chairman or the market union to settle the disagreement. A participant who sells nonfood items in a male-dominated line stated how she gets conflict resolved with her neighbors:

I tell my neighbors what they did was wrong, and they will say sorry; And if they are younger than me, like my neighbors around me who are young boys, they will say mummy sorry, and I will say okay and let that pass; this is how I resolve the issues with my neighbors. (P7 Food S)

Another participant noted that she does not approach her neighbors immediately after an incident happens so as not to trigger another conflict:

I don't tell them immediately it happens. I go to them and tell them later, and some will understand my viewpoints, but some disagree with me, which will turn to the exchange of words, and I leave them; sometimes, when they calm down, they come back and apologize. (P3 Nonfood S)

Similarly, one participant who sells food items stated that she talks to her neighbors when they take her customers from her: "I say this is not good, what you did is not good this causes

conflict" (P11 Food S). And another participant who sells food items recalled how her neighbor reacted when she approached her after a conflict:

I now asked, why are you doing this to me? Is this good? Let us stop this thing. It will not help us. She started carrying a long face, so I told her, I am not here to make trouble with you, but you have to stop this nonsense; it will not help us. She stopped talking to me, and after some days, she came back and said that she was no longer doing those things that she has stopped them. (P5 Food S)

Participant responses suggest that non-formal conflict resolution processes, such as described in this section, are the first options they use to resolve interpersonal conflict, and this is done primarily by approaching the other party. This section highlights how the principles of relatedness (Sofola, 1998), collaboration, compromise, and balance are negotiated (Nnaemeka, 2004) and practicalized within marketspaces for maximum benefits (Chukukere, 1998). This is symbolic of how workplace conflict can be functional and productive as against being counterproductive, as suggested in the workplace conflict literature (Rahim, 2011, 2015 cited in Van Niekerk et al., 2017).

Conflict Avoidance and Peace

As responses show, participants used more of the non-formal than formal approaches when resolving conflict. However, some participants' responses also show that they would rather avoid conflict to ensure peace reigns in their markets, as one participant stated:

In this market, it is not everything that one sees that one talks about. *Ndi Igbo na ati ilu asi na owughi mmiri nile n'ezo ka a na echeputara ite mmiri.*¹² Because there are things that will happen, and you just need to overlook them for peace to reign. It is not that we don't know what to do when they happen or don't know what to say; for me, I overlook these things so that there will be peace. (P7 Food S)

¹² There is a saying in Igbo that is not all the rain that falls that you put pot to fetch

This participant's response demonstrates her willingness to let go of some potential conflict situations. This is also reflected in another participant's response:

I don't have a problem with anyone. If there are issues that can turn into problems between me and others in the market, I tell myself to hold it so that peace will reign between us. When I get angry because someone in the market did something to me, I ignore them; I don't talk to them. If I ignore them like this, I always have peace of mind. Anything that allows me to exchange words with anyone steals my peace, but I have peace when I go my way. We also sell for each other if I go out, my neighbor sells for me and gives me the money when I return, and this is what I do for her too. This is important for us. (P9 Food S)

Her response also shows that the intention behind the avoidance strategy is to have a peaceful mind and a constructive work environment that will foster positive interpersonal work relations. Another participant described what peace is to her:

For me, peace in my line is not taking peoples, customers, from other people's shops; it is avoiding what will cause people to quarrel; when you and your neighbor have the same goods, and the neighbor calls your customers into their shop, there will not be peace, I avoid this by praying. *Uto madu abuo ofu onye ji ya*¹³I am a woman of God and people know that, so I look at these things and I say to God, please give me my customers so that there will be peace here. Because if I look at what other people do around me and react to these things, there will be conflict every day between us. But one shouldn't quarrel with their neighbors because our neighbors are the nearest people we can turn to when we have challenges in the market. The lines and task force authority have laws that we must abide by; this is how we build peace in the market. And when we break them, they will investigate and fine the offenders. Instead of me paying this fine, I hold myself and avoid conflict. (P14 Food S)

¹³ One person can either damage a relationship or make it work

The participant's response demonstrates how she maintains peace with her neighbors by avoiding any cause for unhealthy conflict. Her response also demonstrates an awareness that her neighbors are an important resource for peace amid a competitive environment. This idea is further strengthened in her Igbo proverb, emphasizing the critical role humans play as both peace and conflict agents. According to another participant:

In the market, when two people are selling, they must have conflict. When I have issues with others in the market, I let go immediately. I don't keep malice; it doesn't stop me from greeting them. When someone buys things from me, and I don't have a change to give them, I ask my neighbor if she has, she gives me. Sometimes they do things to you, and you pretend and overlook those things so that life will continue and peace will reign.
(P13 Food S)

The literature on workplace conflict may classify participants' responses as avoidance or withdrawal (Folger et al., 2013; Rahim & Katz, 2019), which is seen as a counterproductive conflict resolution style; however, participants' reasons for utilizing the avoidance or withdrawal and accommodating conflict styles demonstrate their understanding of the markets where collaboration is more beneficial. Participants' responses also show that they understand that goodwill and harmony between neighbors have more positive benefits than engaging in conflict that will strain their relationships and mutual benefits.

Informal Workplace Practices and Norms

Participants' responses also show that other informal norms and practices within these markets govern relations. According to one participant:

Sometimes, if I see my neighbor is not selling and I have many customers in my shop, I refer them to my neighbor who hasn't sold. Sometimes when we notice that there is a neighbor in the market that is unable to buy more goods to sell because of lack of finance, we lend them the money so that when they sell, they return it to us; this is how we help ourselves financially. Some traders cook and share with their neighbors, and we eat together, particularly those who did not bring food from their homes. If one person did

not show up in the market and his/her goods arrive, neighbors can pay and or receive the goods on their behalf. And if someone is unwell and hasn't been to the market in 2 to 3 days, some neighbors will visit the trader to find out what the issue is. (P11 Food S)

This response suggests that supportive and collaborative practices and norms in the markets are built on reciprocal relations. One participant described the advantages of sharing items with her neighbors:

If I have enough goods and my neighbor doesn't have, I can tell her to come and collect some from my shop, and when hers comes, she gives me back or sometimes I can give her at a cheaper rate so that she can sell and make a profit and feed her family. This is one way that we show support. Even if that person does not have money and wants to buy something, I can equally assist that person, and once the person starts selling after buying, they give back the money I gave them. (P8 Nonfood S)

The majority of the participants' responses show that sharing items or borrowing an item from one's neighbor and returning that item later is a practice that has helped them in the past. Participants' responses also reflect a supportive workplace culture that does not encourage prolonged interpersonal conflict, as one participant noted:

If you have problems with other traders, you don't have that peace because you can't interact with them, and you can't chat with them. For instance, if I buy goods that my neighbor likes and wants to buy the same, but because I am not in good terms with that person, the person can't come to me to ask me where I bought my goods.
(P 2 Nonfood S)

Participants' responses demonstrate a workplace culture built on positive relations, concern, and encouragement, thus reflecting the idea of peace as a relational concept (Soderstrom et al., 2020). One participant narrates how other market traders encouraged her to not give up during a challenging time:

It wasn't easy when I started selling in the market; I was catering before I started the trading business, but the beginning wasn't easy, and I wanted to stop, but people around me in the market kept encouraging me not to stop. (P12 Food S)

Participants also shared personal stories of how individuals outside and inside their markets helped them start their businesses. This reflects the idea of peacebuilding as encompassing care (Vaittinen et al., 2019). According to one participant:

When I was married, my husband was very good to me, taking care of me and my children, but he died. And my friend told me about this business and said it would help me fend for my children, and she took me to where I paid and learned how to do the business. Now my kids and I survive on this; we eat, pay our rent, and buy clothes from this my business. (P2 Nonfood S)

Participants' responses demonstrate that relationship and collaboration matter in their line of business. This finding is reflected in other studies demonstrating how market women have established networks that have significantly aided their economic activities and sustenance (Bonkat, 2014; Cruz, 2015; Sowatey et al., 2019). Participants' responses also reflect the challenges that come with other roles and their livelihoods.

4.3 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that studying informal workplace conflict and its management will add a nuanced understanding to workplace conflict and its management as this is often underexplored. First, the findings from this study show that interpersonal and structural conflict impact women's livelihood significantly. The interpersonal conflict mainly arises over customer rivalry, which sometimes leads some participants to believe that other traders engage in questionable practices to attract and maintain customers. This perception has also been a cause of interpersonal conflict between traders. The study findings also show that participants also have disputes with their market leaders; conflict with leaders and the government is described as a structural conflict in this chapter to differentiate this conflict from those interpersonal conflicts strictly caused by other individuals' behaviors. Structural conflict arises from increased levies

and tensions over poor and inadequate market structures, such as poor hygiene facilities in some markets and congested market structures.

Second, findings also show that local marketplaces have a collaborative culture that promotes harmonious interpersonal relations while discouraging negative and damaging behaviors. Participants' responses emphasize workplace cultures that are caring and considerate. The workplace culture has made it possible for people to address each other directly when there are issues without utilizing the formal process in place, and in some instances, they overlook some wrongs so that there will be peace. Thus, the workplace culture and individual understanding of conflict made it possible for some traders to avoid confrontation and use informal strategies in resolving conflict and, in the process, mitigate complex conflict situations that can hinder market cooperation and relations. The findings show that market women utilize both formal and non-formal processes to resolve their conflict, but that most often they adopt informal conflict resolution processes, and this behavior one can argue is influenced by their workplace culture as well as their values which include, religion, avoidance of conflict, and positive thoughts about self and others as reflected in some of their sayings and narratives. This finding is reflected in Di Pietro and Di Virgilio's (2013) study, which shows that both workplace culture and personal values influence their participants' informal conflict management systems.

Third, the findings show that marketplaces are governed by formality despite the informal nature of these markets, and the leadership relies on due processes in managing the markets. The formal rules and regulations, including the formal processes of resolving conflict, reflect a workplace ethic built on the awareness that conflict in public markets is inevitable, and as such, there is a need to create clear instructions about space and boundaries as well as acceptable behaviors and practices. However, responses also show that participants believe that some market management does not strictly enforce these rules.

The market task force, rules, and market authority are symbols that speak to how the marketplace is structured and managed; they represent structure and power. This is also symbolic of a workplace culture that values formality in the midst of what often appears informal. Participants' responses promote this perspective by describing the actions the market task force or market authority will take if anyone breaks the rule. Boundaries and demarcations between traders and between shops also represent control and regulations. In essence, knowing not to cross over your boundary in the market is understanding that doing so can cause conflict. These

rules and regulations help market traders to understand their place in the market and the place of authority and help define their relationship with others in the market.

Fourth, seeing informal local markets as a microcosm of the society provides a viable site for understanding conflict, conflict management, peace, and peacebuilding, particularly using the lens of negative and positive peace (Galtung, 1969). There is a high level of contention in informal local markets because of the competition over customers. This competition reflects a workplace climate where income is dependent on customer retention. Lack of customer base is synonymous with poor sales and decreased profit. Interpersonal conflict occurs in the race to attract and keep customers, and the resultant consequences and effects of this battle are manifold. Traders could lose their existing or potential customers to others; negative feelings towards others and perceptions of unethical practices and gossips may increase. However, responses also show that within this climate of competition, the workplace culture and individual values influence positive behaviors that moderate the negative outcomes of customer competition. From the lens of negative peace, a competitive and negative peace environment exists where there is anger but no direct or physical altercation between traders on the one hand and between market leaders or the government and traders on the other hand.

While there are formal rules and regulations to decrease physical altercation (direct violence), we learn from participants' responses that unwritten norms hold the fabric of markets together and ensure harmony. These are values embedded in practices and reflected in some of their conflict management styles. Concern for others reinforces women's connections; their avoidance of issues that may cause conflict demonstrates their willingness to seek avenues to maintain good relations. Their responses show them to be women who value fairness, as demonstrated in some of their responses that it is wrong to take another trader's customers. Participants' penchant for fairness and relatedness (Sofola, 1998) is reflected in their tendencies to approach the other party they conflict with directly, apologizing when they are wrong, and advising others against instigating conflict. These behaviors provide a sense of belonging and community (which will be further explored in Chapter 5) and demonstrate positive peacebuilding practices. Women's methods of negotiating their disputes informally also represent their attitude towards balance and compromise (Nnaemeka, 2004).

The findings make visible how the interdependent relationships developed in the markets can result in interpersonal conflict if not managed productively. These relationships are also

sources of strength and empowerment for women. Reciprocity, relationships, and fairness as the foundations for building peace were highlighted in the participants' narratives. These are also ways that market women maximize their efforts to produce mutual benefits (Chukukere, 1998). As this chapter has shown, collaborative activities and practices sustain a cooperative workplace, provide market women with a sense of belonging and ensure an equitable and beneficial relationship, reflecting positive peacebuilding. The responses also reflect a workplace culture that is compassionate and conscientious and celebrates successes and accomplishments, thus establishing and strengthening a sense of belonging for women.

The findings also highlight the intersecting structural patterns of power relations. The use of power is manifested in the struggle to maintain economic power over others, such as the perception of unethical methods to control profit. Some participants' narratives also alluded to the misuse of power by market management, such as in playing favorites and ignoring complaints brought to them. Interestingly, I found that the formal conflict resolution that participants described seemed to have some democratic elements, but the final decision lies with the market leaders as they have the power to decide whether or not someone is guilty. It will be interesting to further explore peace and conflict from the perspectives of market leaders; this, I believe, will create a more nuanced understanding of the power dynamics in the market.

This chapter's findings address a gap in workplace conflict literature and contribute to our understanding of contextual peacebuilding as it has highlighted the nuanced everyday peace strategies and challenges of market women. Research on informal workplace conflict is underexplored in PACS. As I reflect on the findings also, I think of them as practical examples of peacebuilding being a process (de la Rey & McKay, 2002). In this regard, peacebuilding is a process that simultaneously involves positive activities, challenges, and approaches adopted to manage them. In Chapter Five, I explore further the challenges within Aba that can disrupt women's sense of safety and peace and the process they adopt to manage some of these challenges.

Chapter 5

Market Women's Experiences of Place and Insecurities in Aba, Southeastern Nigeria

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the insecurity challenges that women shared. Issues of insecurity affect participants' experiences of peace in the study location. The measures women adopt in addressing their needs are discussed here. The insecurity challenges that women shared are related to the broader issues of urbanization. Participants' experiences are discussed under the following themes: place strength and place security; establishing and nurturing relations in the market; group savings and contributions; workplace norms and practices and; livelihood and place insecurities. The chapter is divided into four sections: the literature review section follows this introduction, followed by the findings and the discussion and conclusion sections.

5.1 Literature Review: Home, Place, and Belonging

This section examines selected literature on home, place, and belonging and their connections to peace and insecurities. This literature on home, place, and belonging highlights the different ways people can feel at home and feel (dis)connected to a place due to insecurities within that location. This body of work was explored because one of the questions I asked participants was how they experience living in Aba. This question elicited varied responses related to home and place. As I thought about their experiences living or relocating to Aba, I connected them to place connections and strengths and place disempowerment.

Home has been described as a concept that is not fixed (Cieraad, 2010; Douglas 1991). Home denotes a kind of space, but not in the sense of fixed space; however, it symbolizes the regulation and management of space (Douglas, 1991). For many people, the idea of home varies and can symbolize different meanings, even for different generations in a family (Alhuzail, 2018); it all depends on how the home is experienced individually. In this vein, the concept of home is sometimes associated with subjugation and marginalization and, at other times, connected to the feelings of safety, care, and familiarity (Mallet, 2004). To understand what home means to people, it is necessary to understand people's realities because as places, homes

"hold considerable social, psychological, and emotive meaning for individuals and for groups" (Easthope, 2004, p. 135). Following this same line of argument, Mallet's (2004) literature review shows how through the concept of home, we can better understand social and economic relations as well as how power relations and government policies shape the actions and behaviors of people.

Home and place-making involve processes with different facets and connotations. As a complex concept, home not only denotes social and place relations, feelings, practices, ideology, but it also relates to the construction of houses and cities (Mallet, 2004). Therefore, for many, the art of homemaking involves the intersection of social environments and material structures to create comfort (Woods & Korsnes, 2019). For some people, using building materials that reflect their own identities when constructing their homes (Cox, 2016) is a significant aspect of home and place-making. In the same vein, homemaking involves people's reconstruction of homes based on memories and experiences of their past ones; this is done by projecting memories of home into the present and future thoughts of home (Cieraad, 2010). Therefore, the notions of homes not only express identities (Cox, 2016; Mallet, 2004), and they can also symbolize the relationships between people and places. Home has also been described as a place type (Easthope, 2004), in the sense that there are other types of places that people occupy, such as marketplaces.

As with the concept of home, a place is a multifaceted concept, sometimes referred to as a location constituting communities where people experience everyday socio-economic activities (Martin, 2003). Place is also sometimes described as a "complex relations of culture and power that go well beyond local bounds" (Escobar, 2001, p. 146). According to Friedmann (2007), "Places are also sites of resistance, contestation, and actions that are often thought to be illegal by the (local) state." (p. 257). In this regard, places are shaped through being inhabited and through everyday activities (Friedmann, 2007). People are also influenced by the history of a place and the general situations in any given place. Thus, people can develop a positive attachment to a place based on their lived experiences, as some places symbolize people's past, and others stimulate special memories (Gieryn, 2000).

A sense of place describes how people experience and make meaning of their locations. Having a sense of place consists of a "three-component view that weaves together the physical environment, human behaviors, and social and or psychological processes" (Steadman, 2003, p.

671). Sense of place embodies people's perceptions and experiences of connections with a particular place; thus, place identity and place attachment are connected. Place identity is a person's construction of who they are in relation to a place (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). As a social category, place identification connects individuals and groups within the same location (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Although an important basis for place attachment, the geographical location (Stedman, 2003) is not the only dimension to people-place interactions. Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) found that although physical factors are an important source of place attachment for some people, the degree of social attachment is higher, nonetheless.

It has been suggested that place-based social interactions are a strong component of place attachment and influence the activities within a place. For example, studies have revealed that for tourists, the level of emotional attachment to tourist places increases with the social interactions that they have with others in the places they visit (Woosnam et al., 2018). Hence, when people have an attachment to a place, it suggests that they not only identify with the physical dimensions of that place, but they also identify with the "bonds developed in relationships with other people" (Loureiro, 2014, p. 7), supporting the view that the physical and social aspects of a place influence people's place experiences. Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) also noted that this attachment could influence place-making practices within a place.

Place-making is such an expansive concept that it includes conscious engagements and verbal expressions and poignant connections to place (Waite, 2018). This means that apart from the physical place-making practices, people also 'make' a place through the stories they tell about the place (Waite, 2018). It is from these stories that one hears their physical and emotional connections to *that* place. Place-making is connected to place attachment because it emanates from people's activities created to improve their community wellbeing (Elwood et al., 2015). Further, some studies have shown how people create a sense of belonging through place-making practices (Castillo, 2014; De Wilde, 2016); these studies emphasize that people can form a place bond through emotions, national identities and that a sense of home and belonging can be created and reenacted in different spaces irrespective of geographical boundaries. Also noteworthy are the paradoxical experiences of home and place attachment. Castillo (2014), for example, suggests that people can have place attachment but still struggle to feel at home in places where they have an attachment. This uneasiness may demonstrate that belongingness and a sense of home are open to personal experiences and can be influenced by allegiance to national

identity and challenges within the environment people inhabit. Place-making also refers to the process of familiarizing oneself within an environment, including the relations that one cultivates as part of the familiarization process (Friedmann, 2007; Elwood et al., 2015), which can also reinforce place bonds.

Attachment to a place can also be a consequence of what Gieryn (2000) refers to as a "better quality housing stock" (p. 481). Better housing standards can be extended to include the availability of adequate infrastructures such as better roads, availability of running water, and constant power supply, plus all the necessities that people need to function in their daily lives. Better living conditions and the availability of basic necessities are important to people's place attachment, sense of home, and security. When an environment lacks the necessities people consider important, they may find it hard to feel connected to that place and with other people (Trigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). It is also important to understand that individual or personal experience matters when it comes to what can constitute a place bond in addition to the physical and social dimensions of a place (Raymond et al., 2010), particularly when one considers the argument that attachment to place can be emotive (Debenedetti et al., 2014). Individual place bond influences belongingness (Trigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Hence, a place bond is a personal emotional experience (Yuval-Davis, 2006) which can unite people in their effort to work for the collective good of their community (Plunkett et al., 2018). In this sense, people's reactions to place modifications (Elwood et al., 2015) form part of their place-making process.

Consequently, place-related attachment informs how people understand and respond to place related disruptions (Anton & Lawrence, 2016). Understanding place attachment and place protective activities informed Devine-Wright's (2009) framework for examining psychological response to place disruption. Devine-Wright's (2009) model of analysis is made more salient in studies that consider place attachment as a multifaceted structure encompassing place, social connections, place identity, place dependence and place effect, and how they influence place satisfaction and pro-environmental activities (Ramkissoon et al., 2013). As argued, place bond is about emotional connections, in addition to material comfort and landscapes; these dimensions can impact the sense of place and or sense of home, but individual experiences vary. Further, the (in)securities within contexts significantly impact these experiences.

Studies have demonstrated how the challenges of a place can impact people's sense of home despite their place-making efforts. For example, in his study on African communities in

Guangzhou, China, Castillo (2014) notes that through their place-making efforts, African immigrants have acted to positively position their community, by maintaining order and building relationships between Africans and their host communities, and these placemaking practices have created a sense of belonging for the African community, but the challenges they face within their place have made it difficult for them to feel at home. This analogy of home and belonging demonstrate that sense of home differs for many people as individual realities, challenges in the physical locations, the social and cultural environments can intersect and impact how people make meaning of home and place. Thus, one may paradoxically find connections to a place and still *not feel that they belong to that place*.

Recreation of homes and roles in different places can add to one's sense of belonging and strengthen place connections. To feel a sense of home and belonging, people have recreated homes through memories and symbolic artifacts from past homes (Cieraad, 2010). Findings from De Wilde's (2016) study suggest that physical and public spaces can be reconstructed, gendered, and domesticized through activities often associated with private spaces. This public-private binary is one way through which one can understand the place-making and peacebuilding practices of participants in the present study.

Additionally, place and people exploration span different academic fields, including geography and feminism. Geography and feminism both explore people's lived experiences within their contexts; while exploring the cultural context is limited in geography, feminist scholars emphasize understanding the cultural context, as women's subjective experiences emerge from a situated socio-cultural position (Hanson, 1992). This study builds on this understanding because socio-cultural norms, existing economic and political systems, history, and other factors combine to shape behaviors in any given context.

Conceptual Lens

In this chapter, I utilized feminist and PACS perspectives as a conceptual lens to explore women's grassroots experiences. This framework is grounded in the local. I conceptualize the 'local' in this study as the process women follow to actualize their goals based on their unique needs in their context. African feminist perspectives highlight women's grassroots organizing in private and public spaces (Azodo, 2019; Achebe, 2011; Chuku, 2005) before and during colonialism. These perspectives provide insights into how these pre-colonial and colonial

organizing may have shaped their present-day collaborative activities in different contexts (Cruz, 2012). My conceptual lens also recognizes the varied contextual everyday issues of insecurity (Mac Ginty, 2019; Reardon, 2019) that individuals experience in their workplaces and residence. It further speaks to how agency is articulated and exercised in the drive to actualize needs amid challenges.

5.2 Research Findings

This section centers on issues of needs, safety, and security. In this section, I discuss women's responses related to economic and locational (in)security. I also discuss the process women undertake to fulfill some of their needs.

Place Strengths and Place Security

Some participants shared that they had relatives who were traders and spent some part of their early lives helping their relatives with their trading businesses; this is also highlighted in other studies (Sowatey et al., 2018). Some women shared that the experience of helping a relative such as a mother or a sister initiated them into the business and motivated them to start their own trading business. Others shared that they became traders to support the education of their siblings, support their spouses and take care of their families. Those who had limited or no formal education said that the informal sector was their only option to secure a livelihood.

In discussing their sense of rootedness in Aba, participants referred to what I call place strengths as why they feel connected to the city. The place strengths that participants identified include economic opportunities, relationships, affordable housing, and cheap food. For the market women in this study, Aba has unique advantages; it is a trading hub and serves as a point of connection between buyers and sellers of varied commodities in and outside of Southeastern Nigeria. Thus, Aba has the fundamentals needed for their business success. Place strengths are also demonstrated in some participants' accounts of why they relocated to Aba, and the reasons why they like living in the city, as illustrated by one participant who sells perishable and nonperishable food items:

My husband and I are from Imo state, but we relocated to Aba because of our business. I see Aba as my township because it is where I sell my goods. The profit that I make from

this business provides food for my family. Aba is a good place for any business because everything you bring here, you will sell. As long as you are hardworking, you can afford to eat and feed your family; and you will not suffer in Aba. These are the reasons why I like the place. (P10 Food S)

This narrative suggests that some sellers feel connected to places because they consider those places as economically enabling and empowering. When participants articulate place strengths, they also indicate that bonds can be developed with places that provide or fulfill specific needs. In other words, by identifying the opportunities or strengths that Aba has, participants express what is most important to them (economic security, financial opportunity) in a place and what can keep them attached to a place and be successful. The participant also emphasized the importance of place accessibility and profitability. According to her, the economic accessibility of Aba is the reason she and her husband relocated to the city, and the profit that comes from her economic activities in Aba sustains her family. Also emphasized in her narrative is the affordability of Aba; this means that the attributes required for some women to feel a sense of connectedness to a place include affordable food and housing. Therefore, these characteristics (accessibility, affordability, profitability) can foster a sense of belonging for women when they are present in a given place. The narrative also accentuates the various ways in which place identity is connected to or comes from the opportunities inherent in that place. In other words, women's place identity comes from the ability and capacity of that place to fulfill their needs. In this regard, several women identified with Aba and claim it to be their home or *township* whether or not they were born there because Aba fulfills their needs and, in doing so, gives them a sense of belonging.

Market women have different notions of place and belonging. As I listened to their varied responses, I get that Aba provides some women with a sense of connection irrespective of whether they are originally from there or not. Through their trading businesses, women have developed connections with Aba and with other people, and this is evident in their narratives, but the meanings they ascribe to a place or its significance in their lives are varied depending on their individual experience. While some women (particularly the married ones) hope to remain in Aba permanently, some others indicate that Aba may be a temporary place, as illustrated by one participant:

I was born in Aba, but I didn't grow up in Aba; for now, Aba is my home, for now, because I am doing my business here, but apart from my business, there is nothing else that is keeping me here in Aba. If I find a better opportunity for this business in another place, I wouldn't mind relocating. (P12 Food S)

This participant's statement shows that people may not be attached to their places of birth or origin; thus, a sense of belonging or attachment to a place may not necessarily be based on where one was born or where one grew up. The participant also stated that Aba is her home, *for now*, indicating that this could change at any time. Therefore, some participants may remain in Aba because of the promise or hope that Aba can fulfill their needs, and they may also decide to leave Aba if their economic needs are no longer being met. In this regard, economic factors and individual experience influence how participants identify with or lay claim to a place.

For some participants, the process of making a place permanent hinges on a mixture of social and economic factors. For example, a participant who is a single mother and sells food items stated as follows:

I am from Anambra State, but I have lived in Aba for three years; I have family here, my sister and other relatives live here. Things can be very difficult for a single parent. My family told me to come here so that I can live closer to them. They wanted me to be near them rather than just being alone as a single mother and not having anything (job) significant to do in the place where I lived before. And I like it here because it is easier for me. (P6 Food S)

This participant's response demonstrates that having family in a particular place can motivate people to relocate or remain rooted in that place. This narrative also shows that relationships are important to how people make meaning of place and belonging. According to the participant's narrative, her family believes that being closer to them would reduce the risks associated with loneliness and improve her mental and economic wellbeing. Further, the participant identified her connections to different places, and as Easthope (2004) notes, "people also identify against places, establishing their sense of place by contrasting themselves with different places and the

people in them" (p. 130). The participant's place perception and comparison are highlighted in why she relocated; while she had no family and livelihood security where she was before, her new residence (Aba) has both of these things.

Place comparison in this present study emphasizes the varied reasons people chose to live in a place. The capacity to earn income and relationships are two of these reasons. Economic opportunities are important to women's sense of rootedness because, through their livelihoods, they are better able to take care of themselves and those who depend on them. Relationships are also vital to people's place attachment, and for the participants in this study, these relationships also influence them to remain in Aba. Additionally, several participants compared Aba to other places they have lived to make the point that their present location has more opportunities and advantages, including being close to loved ones and being able to afford housing and buy cheap food. This demonstrates that place comparisons can deepen people's place bond and their sense of belonging-particularly when they appreciate the strengths or opportunities of that place as reflected in participants' narratives. Some women had no choice but to remain in Aba, as described by one participant:

I moved to Aba when I got married because my husband lived here, but he died 15 years after I relocated to join him in Aba. So, I stayed back in Aba because Aba is affordable for the poor. I became the sole breadwinner when my husband died, and this business has supported my family since then, so I remained in Aba. Where else would I have gone after his death? Nowhere. After Aba, I will retire to the village. (P2 Nonfood S)

This participant's story demonstrates that attachment to a place or profession can be due to varied personal experiences. The response reveals the many vulnerabilities that women experience as widows. The loss resulting from death and place loss as an emotional feeling is manifest in the narrative. For this participant, the sense of place that she may have had while living in Aba with her husband has been disrupted by his sudden demise; in this vein, her narrative also highlights the sense of physical displacement that comes from having limited choices regarding where to live. This participant's response demonstrates that women may remain in Aba because it is affordable and provides the resources they need to survive, particularly in dire situations, as reflected in her response. We also learn from her narrative that one's sense of belonging and

attachment to a place may be disrupted or strengthened by varied social and economic factors. Additionally, a few participants suggested that place attachment, place strengths, and culture are connected. The Igbo culture was described as one that inspires diligence and Aba as a place that pushes people to thrive economically as one participant stated:

Aba is a hustling area; people in Aba, married women, young girls, young boys, and men are actively engaged in different business ventures. People do not fold their hands and stay idle in Aba. Everybody is a hustler, and they work for what they eat. For instance, I lived in another location for almost 11 years before relocating to Aba, and I noticed that some of my female neighbors have jobs, but others are housewives who depend on their husbands for the money needed to sustain their families. But this is different in Aba because everybody works, wives, husbands, and grown-up children. Everybody is on the road, looking for a business because there is something for everyone to do. I like Aba because it provides work opportunities for people, and the businesses in Aba bring different people here, and this is also why they call Aba the Japan of Africa. Aba is also a place that motivates other people because if you see other people hustling, you will be tempted to join them, even if you are a lazy person. Igbo people are hustlers; we work hard to succeed and not beg or ask somebody else for food; that's how God created Igbo people. (P8 Nonfood S)

This assertion demonstrates that how people make meaning of a place can be due to their cultural or ethnic affiliations. The positive attributes people assign to a place can cause them to remain in that place for a long time. By attributing hard work to one's membership to a particular cultural group and within a defined cultural space, this participant suggests that cultural values may be linked to the motivation for economic ingenuity and success. The response above also reflects other participants' responses that Aba influences livelihood independence. Some participants stated that what they like most about their jobs and Aba is the power both have given them to *put food on the table* and make their families comfortable.

Establishing and Nurturing Relationships in the Markets

It has been argued that the familiar everyday interactions that happen in commercial places cement people-place bonds and strengthen belongingness (Debenedetti et al., 2014); this means that places are also shaped by those inhabiting them and made more meaningful through the relationships that are developed in these places. As part of their daily activities, traders are constantly engaged in interactions with customers and other traders, and the relationships developed sometimes extend beyond marketplaces. However, for this relationship to evolve, it first has to be established and nurtured, and for market women, developing their customer base can be quite challenging when they are new in the business. I would like to clarify that the relationship concept as used here occurs more when there are repeated transactions with the same/repeat customers over time.

Participants in this study said that to build economic relationships, they actively call individuals as they pass by their shops/markets; this is akin to what is known as cold calling in formal service/sales organizations. As a former sales/service advisor for a non-profit organization that sold educational programs, I made numerous cold calls to individuals who had never patronized our organization. Sometimes these individuals were referred by others, and for the most part, the calls did not lead to many customer conversions, but a few of them did, and I remember that I was always overjoyed each time I sold our products to newcomers. My happiness was not only because there was an economic reward for each sale but also because of the bonding experience that developed with the customer due to the sales interactions and the feeling of accomplishment that always followed. In the same vein, participants' description of how they establish relationships with potential customers resonates with me and also reminded me of this cold-call concept, including the process and outcomes as illustrated in a participant's description:

I sell vegetables. My neighbor, another market woman, introduced the business to me. The first day I went to the market to start the business, it was not easy, but now it is getting better. At the earlier stage, I didn't have customers, and it was hard. I was new to the business, and no one was patronizing me, but now I have started building customers; I call people to buy from me as they pass by, and sometimes they buy—also, my neighbors from my street where I live come to patronize me. Sometimes people introduce new

customers to me and tell them this is my neighbor buy from her. Sometimes food vendors like hotels and restaurants come and buy from me too. (P14 Food S)

This account demonstrates that relationships and productivity are connected in market trading; because building relationships are important for economic success. The process of relationship-building in the market involves making conscious efforts to establish connections. Even calling out to individuals as they pass by is an important part of building economic relationships, although there is the possibility of rejection, as my own experience shows, however, this may also result in a sale as participants in this study shared. This participant's narrative also demonstrates helpful, caring, or supportive behaviors from social networks, a manifestation of the people-place attachment (Debenedetti et al., 2014).

From women's accounts, we see how markets as places connect buyers and sellers, as well as sellers themselves. I think of belongingness as derived from these relationships developed in market spaces and from the activities and processes women follow to actualize their set goals. Studies have highlighted how a sense of belonging is developed from activities established in places, considered as place-making practices (Castillo, 2014; De Wilde, 2016). The next section further discusses how different practices and activities reinforce connections

Group Organizing for Sustenance

Women's group savings and contributions in the markets strengthen their personal and professional success and relationships. As emphasized in other studies, market women's savings groups are avenues developed to fulfill their personal and livelihood needs (Bonkat, 2014; Cruz, 2015; Rosenlew, 2011). In some contexts, group savings are established because some women may not be financially literate, and this may limit their access and financial service options. Women rely on these informal savings groups to meet their varied needs (Bonkat, 2014; Cruz, 2015). In this study, some participants revealed that they belong to different savings groups, as a response below demonstrates:

We have different contribution groups, we have *Akawo* savings where we contribute N200 every day, and anytime we want, we can take our money back. We have another contribution where one woman takes home all the money contributed each

month; this goes around to each woman. The money I collect from the contribution group helps me to pay my monthly store rent; I also use it to buy more goods to sell in my shop. Sometimes I take the money home to solve other family issues. (P11 Food S)

As the response shows, group contributions help market women be livelihood secure, particularly for those who may lack other means of obtaining the capital they need to expand their businesses. Also, group savings help some market women to remain in the trading business by helping them to pay their shop rents and also meet other personal needs. The group savings build the financial resilience of market women providing them with alternate revenue and have helped them to recover from financial challenges. Most importantly, the group savings provide an opportunity for women to learn financial planning and management. Women also pay fewer interest compared to the interests charged by financial institutions. According to participants, having these savings groups in the market means having financial services closer to them, as the market women solely control the savings groups. Having this service in the market also means reduced movement, which lessens the stress associated with going over to the banks to carry out transactions as the process of transporting money to the banks is time-consuming and can also affect their productivity for the day.

Market women described their membership in savings groups as supporting themselves. This description shows that they understand the advantages of support systems and the awareness that poor economic activities can negatively impact their personal lives and vice versa. Thus, many women are members of several savings groups, as illustrated by one participant:

In the market, apart from what we sell, as women, we have other means of supporting ourselves, such as contributions. Every week money is contributed, and one person takes the whole money. I organize these contributions, and I also make contributions. Some women have joined up to three or four different contributions, and when we have our meetings, you will hear them say, oh, I just collected my contributions from this group, and I am also collecting another one from a different group next month. (P13 Food S)

This narrative shows the extent to which many market women depend on their savings groups to help them meet their needs. Women seek membership in these groups to protect themselves from financial distress. One should also consider that women in this study have different life trajectories and unique financial needs. Some market women are single parents with no other means of financial support; managing their roles and responsibilities as mothers and workers in a competitive market environment can be challenging and financially stressful. Thus, the money from the different savings and contributions groups they belong to helps them address their financial needs and helps them achieve their economic goals. From some participants responses, we are also reminded that women's experiences and relationship with savings and contribution groups differ considerably, two participants with a post-secondary education shared that they do not belong to any savings group as reflected in the statement below:

Some women join these contribution groups to support themselves when they don't have enough capital. So, the contribution is a way to raise capital. But it is a matter of choice. I have enough capital, so I do not join the contributions. (P5 Food S)

This participant highlights the potentials in women's contributions, such as the benefit of helping market women to raise capital to support their businesses. But her response also indicates class differences. Options for financial assistance for some women – the majority of whom are petty traders - may be limited to group savings, but a few others may have other choices and opportunities. Relatedly, three participants mentioned that they have employed staff working for them. Other participants shared that they do not have paid employees but have relatives coming to help them once in a while.

Another collaborative practice among women in one of the markets in this study is what they called the *kitchen unit* - a group comprising women traders who regularly contribute towards the wholesale purchase of food and other necessities that may become expensive during the Christmas festivities. The kitchen unit symbolizes nourishment and reflects the homemaking activities generally associated with women; it also reflects women's place-making and peacebuilding practices and shows how bonds are made through activities in the marketplace.

I asked one of the participants if male traders had any organization similar to women's savings and group contributions in her market, and she said “yes”, but it was unclear to me

whether her response meant that men have the same exact group savings. However, her response reminded me of African feminists' theory of gender complementarity and the dual-sex system (Acholonu, 1994; Azodo, 2019; Sofola, 1998; Chuku, 2005; Okonjo, 1976). African feminists have argued that both men and women play complementary roles, with comparable organizations that have allowed men and women to manage their affairs and protect their interests. However, I did not ask other women if men have similar organizations in their markets. While the savings and contribution groups may not be unique to women alone, the group organizing for food is solely female. This food group highlights how public spaces can be gendered and how women domesticate public spaces through activities associated with the private (de Wilde, 2016).

Workplace activities and groups like the kitchen unit are not only relational, but they have also allowed women to work collectively in protecting their families from hunger, thus ensuring food security at the household level (this theme is further explored in Chapter Six). In addition, women's relational activities have reinforced their collective bonds; their workplace norms and values, including reciprocal positive behaviors, caring and respectful relations, have forged their collective identity.

Workplace Norms and Practices

Participants' narratives suggest a workplace culture built on supportive relationships and practices, thus demonstrating women's shared sense of duty and support towards each other. Some participants also discussed the culture of lending and caring that they have benefitted from in their markets, as illustrated by one participant:

We help ourselves by borrowing, and later we pay back after we have sold. As traders, we often need change to give to customers when they buy from us, and we go to our neighbors if we do not have and they help us split the money. We also sell for ourselves when one of us has to go out. For example, I go to church every Wednesday for my ministry, and I tell my neighbor to look out for me and sell my market while I am gone, and sometimes they sell more than I ever did. I sell for my neighbors too when they need to go somewhere. (P4 Food S)

This response reflects women's caring behaviors and how they strengthen each other. These supportive practices help women to become better at their jobs and also create a caring environment. Participants' responses also demonstrate a contextual and practical understanding of relational peacebuilding and the human security approach to peacebuilding, where basic needs are met through supportive practices and relations.

Livelihood and Place (In)securities

Some participants' responses emphasized how gender, livelihood security, education, and marital status are connected. This is evidenced in the ways that they described how a combination of factors keep them rooted in Aba and influenced their decisions to become traders, as illustrated by a participant who is a single mother:

I am from Imo State, but I have lived in Aba for more than 20 years. I first came to Aba as a maid to assist somebody in his restaurant business. I am not educated, this is why I am doing this petty trading, and you know that without an education, we are nobody unless one gets married; in that case, the husband can support your business.

(P9 Food S)

The participant's response shows that she came to Aba to seek livelihood security; she also stated that education would have provided her with more options at being economically secure. Findings from the study by Neme (2019) reveal that women in Jordan stated that education and employment are two attributes that can make them feel secure in their context; this means that women perceive education and livelihood as two important aspects of personal security, and this together with marital status is reflected in the narrative of the participant above. Opportunities for financial support can strengthen women's livelihood and their connectedness to a place. When people have the support that they need to achieve set goals, they do not have to think of relocating in search of better life chances. The account above also shows how gender, marital status, and education intersect and how these factors can produce multiple disadvantages for women; lack of education limits women's career choices, as with limited financial resources, particularly when one is without a supportive spouse or partner. The participant's reference to supportive spouses is reflected in another participant's response:

When I got married in 2015, I had no job, but after a while, God had mercy on us, and my husband got some money, and he opened a store for me; this is how I started selling foodstuff. And I also sold for my mother when I was growing up, and I told myself that this business (trading) would favor me; this gave me the confidence to start my own trading business. (P7 Food S)

The participant's response emphasizes the importance of spousal support and how this can contribute to women's economic security, where one lacks adequate resources or other options to be financially secure. This response also shows how women's economic challenges can vary; a market woman whose spouse contributes to her economic activities would have fewer financial challenges than a market woman who has no spouse or partner and lacks other financial sources. Another participant stated that she had her trading business before she got married, and in her case, she is the spouse who provides more financial support:

I had this business before I got married last year. My husband comes in to help me in the shop before going to his own business. But he does not have much money because his business is new, so I use this business to support him and our family because things are not very easy. (P11 Food S)

The participant's response demonstrates that she viewed the relationship she has with her husband as supportive even though, compared to her husband, she is the more successful entrepreneur. Framing the relationship as supportive does not discount the fact that her husband (and family) is economically dependent on her; it, however, highlights the advantages of having a supportive spouse who helps with work-related chores. Also, the participant's response reveals that trading has enabled women to be livelihood secure even while unmarried. For married women, apart from their other personal roles and responsibilities, working to ensure the financial stability of their husbands and households is a primary obligation.

Livelihood and marketplace challenges can impact women's overall wellbeing. Some participants shared that there are certain days when they are anxious because of poor sales, and this feeling of anxiety does not decrease when they get home. According to one food item seller,

"when there are no sales, I don't feel happy, and I will be angry even when I get home, and because of this, I find it difficult to fall asleep." For other women, the disagreement over price with customers adds to their distress as this disagreement could lead to non-sale and the loss of a potential customer. The process and consequence of economic interactions within the marketplace can impact sales and affect participants' mental wellbeing.

Aba is recognized as a vibrant commercial city in Southeastern Nigeria, patronized by people from all over the country as well as those from outside Nigeria, as shared by one participant when describing how the COVID-19 pandemic affected businesses in Aba:

In Nigeria, the lockdown affected travels and businesses because people from the Northern part of the country and those from Lagos that used to come to the markets in Aba frequently do not come as they used to. Even we used to have customers from Cameroon who come here to the market before COVID-19.

(P3 Nonfood S)

The participant's response reveals the economic importance of Aba and shows how challenges such as public health crises can disrupt these economic activities. In this vein, a place comes with many challenges that may disrupt people's place bonds and negatively impact their sense of home and livelihoods. The history of a place, or the historical events that frame a place, is also symbolic and can be part of why people feel connected to a place; it can also be why others may feel disconnected. One participant referred to the history of the place (Aba), describing the area as a *troubled* place because of Biafra related issues, despite the positive attributes she already associated with Aba:

I like Aba because if you work hard, you will succeed here. But Aba is a troubled city; this is why you sometimes hear people say that Aba is Biafra land. They think this place has many problems because of the history. (P7 Food S)

Biafra is the defunct Republic of Biafra, which proclaimed its independence from Nigeria, leading to the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970. The Nigerian Civil War, in which over two million people died, and numerous others suffered from varying degrees of mental and physical

injury (Azodo 2019), has led to continued agitations in the Southeastern region of Nigeria, and this is *the trouble* in the area which the participant referred to. Other Biafra related troubles presently emerging from the area include tensions between security forces and members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Abia State (Aluko & Ikokwu, 2017). This analogy shows how past traumatic events can influence the perception of place and impact how people make meaning; this also shows that the physical location and history, including how others outside of Aba perceive the place, is a concern for some women.

Participants also talked about other everyday challenges that disrupt their comfort in the marketplace; these challenges include leaking roofs and flooding from a torrential downpour, poor waste management, bad roads, high levies, the lack of running water, poor sanitary facilities, and poor electricity supply. One participant discussed how these challenges affect her:

As I am talking to you, we do not have electricity. I am waiting for it to come on, but when it does, it goes off after 4 hours. We need electricity to do so many things; I need it to relax, but it never stays on for long. Another challenge is the bad roads, we are in the rainy season now, so when it rains, the whole place is flooded, which should not be. When it rains, people become scared, and people would not want to come to the market to buy in this condition. So, the government should repair the roads and provide electricity; this is my advice to the government. (P15 Nonfood S)

Market women shared their insecurity concerns in the marketplaces and the broader society, with one participant describing the fear and uncertainty one feels when it is time to pay for some levies:

When you don't have the money, and the security people come to collect the security levy, it will not give you joy. If you don't have the money to pay for the levy, they will lock up your shop. If you don't renew your shop, they will lock it up, so these two things bring concern, and when you don't have the money, you run helter-skelter looking for money to pay them to avoid embarrassment. This does not give peace of mind. (P8 Nonfood S)

Some participants shared that despite paying for security levies to safeguard their goods from theft, they do not feel protected:

We don't feel secure even if we pay a security levy. There are many traders without shops, and they leave their things outside, and they pay for security, but when they come, the next day, their goods are gone. So, what is the security levy for? (P4 Food S)

These security concerns are not experienced by only a few but are widely shared among this study's participants as expressed by another participant:

Aba needs good roads and reliable transportation to allow people to come to the markets to do their businesses and go home in good time and safely. But when there is no transport, and people don't come to our shop due to bad roads, we do not sell. Also, there are other challenges; people engage in armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom; these situations do not make us happy. If the government does not intervene, I will be looking for how to relocate and do my business somewhere else, but if all these good things I mentioned are in place and the bad ones are not, nothing will make me leave Aba. (P1 Food S)

Participants' relationship with their physical environment was expressed in how they described what they like, what inspires, and what bothers them in their contexts. Despite the socio-economic opportunities of their environs, participants stated that other local challenges they experience impact their socio-economic and emotional wellbeing, which many of them described as *peace of mind*. Market women's concerns around (in)securities at marketplaces raise questions about the situation in the broader society they live and work in and how this may impact their place attachment, sense of home, and individual peace of mind. Since the last decade, there has been a rise in reported fatal incidents due to violence eruptions in Abia State, including abductions for ransom (BBC, 2010; Vanguard, 2020), fatalities caused by security personnel operating in the State (Ofurum, 2020), and those resulting from farmer-herder conflict (Nseyen, 2020). Businesses in Aba are also impacted by the irregular power supply (Eleanya, 2019; Moses, 2017) in the state. These security challenges are not peculiar to the state alone but extend

to other regions in the country. The Abia state government has articulated its concerns over these security issues and its interests in partnering with the Nigerian military and local leaders to ensure security and peace in the state (Nseyen, 2020). But some participants still feel a sense of loss and helplessness at the perceived government's inaction. This awareness of mutually influencing factors necessitates their call for the government to do much to make life at home and work more comfortable.

Market women's economic wellbeing is connected to their emotional wellbeing, as many women state that when they can provide for their families, they have *peace of mind*, and when they feel insecure due to the challenges at work, they do not have peace of mind. This understanding of peace as connected to their economic, physical and emotional security reflects the human security peacebuilding concept. Participants also shared that when they have an interpersonal conflict with fellow traders, it makes them uncomfortable because their business depends on collaboration (relational peacebuilding), and unresolved conflict undermines this cooperation and makes them feel miserable.

While participants described Aba as a place with many economic opportunities, they also considered how the insecurity challenges influence that experience. For example, economic wellbeing and peaceful relations with colleagues and family members bring peace of mind, and at the same time, the structural insecurities they experience within the market hinder this experience. Market women, however, have sought to address some of the insecurities within their control through their place-making cum peacebuilding practices, such as the kitchen unit and the collective savings, while calling on the government to address those they are unable to handle.

5.3 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has examined market women's experiences of insecurities and their impact on their socio-economic wellbeing. This chapter reviewed selected literature on home, place, and belonging, highlighting the different ways people can feel at home, be connected to a place, and experience insecurities within their location. This literature review shows that the concepts of home and place have many meanings for people. As the literature review indicates, a place is many-sided, comprising other related aspects such as place identity, place-making practices, and

place challenges. In what follows, I highlight the key findings based on participants' contextual experiences in Aba.

First, the study reveals how women's understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and socio-cultural contexts shape their sense of home and place. Physical and socio-economic factors influence participants' sense of place. Socio-economic attachment to place is greater for women in this study, as they are not just attached to the people who live in the place but also to the economic continuity that the place has to offer. One should also consider that the participants' experiences are not the same; for example, the many married women in this study were not as quick to express moving away to seek better opportunities as did the single/unmarried participants. It is noteworthy that some of the married participants said that their husbands also contribute financially to their family's wellbeing. Thus, the possibility of seeking other economic ventures in a different place will be slimmer for these married women because, for some of the participants whose husbands have established and thriving businesses in the area, their connections to their location are stronger than those without spouses or children.

Second, market women in this study are constructing homes and making places in different geographical locations depending on their life trajectories. Some women in Aba relocated to join their husbands after marriage while still making and keeping connections in their natal homes. Also, as a widow, a woman may or may not move out of her marital home, searching for better life chances. Some of the unmarried participants and the others who are single parents stated that they are on the lookout for places with better livelihood opportunities. In these cases, their sense of home and place attachment will depend on what is familiar to them, including their economic stability and family.

Third, for some participants, a place is transient and is only a home if they can actualize their livelihood potentials in an environment free from uncertainties and fears. Women who identified as single parents or single women indicated that they did not intend to remain in Aba for long but would move when they find better opportunities and safer environments. This stand reveals their perception of home and place in that the sense of place is impermanent, and place dependency and home feeling depend on what one can achieve in that place. Interestingly, some other women said that even if they move out of Aba, they will start the same business in their new location as they cannot imagine themselves pursuing any other career.

Fourth, market women are fostering and practicalizing connections or relatedness (Chukukere, 1998; Sofola, 1998). Relationships are intrinsic to market women's economic security and their sense of home and belonging. Relationships in marketplaces are built through everyday interactions and activities. Established as well as potential relationships are negotiated through positive interactions. Buying and selling in the market are about negotiation and compromise as well as cultivating and nurturing connections. Women's group savings and other relational and caring activities and practices provide momentum for women's businesses and strengthen their harmonious relations. These activities also help women and their families to be food secure and to meet other human needs.

The emergence of Aba as a commercial city has enabled countless individuals to be livelihood secure. Many have moved to Aba to search for better opportunities, which has added to the city's growing population. Participants in this study shared that they relocated to Aba or chose to remain in Aba due to these economic opportunities and housing and food affordability. From participants' narratives, we understand that inadequate urban development and infrastructures, congestion, poor waste management, high crime rate, and poor road networks have created feelings of insecurity.

The chapter highlights the ways women are working to meet their everyday needs against the backdrop of insecurity in the markets and in Aba. I also learned from women's narratives in this study that they are multi-taskers, focused, and adept at setting goals and working towards accomplishing their objectives. Lastly, livelihood and economic opportunities are vital to all the participants' sustenance, including their peace and place attachment experiences. Further, home is a place and a feeling; the homeplace is a dynamic place with history and cultural values. The physical location and material substance of Aba may not matter for some women seeking to provide for their families, or those whose businesses together with those of their spouses' are firmly rooted in Aba, but for some, it impacts the feelings of home as reflected in participants' articulation of physical insecurities, livelihood importance and anxieties emanating from physical and livelihood insecurities.

This chapter has added to the understanding of the contextual meaning of place, security, and peace; it also discusses how women organize to meet their needs. The chapter reflects relational and human security peacebuilding concepts because it demonstrates that market women's understanding of their contexts motivates their collective caring and supportive

approach towards one another. It also shows how connections have been built through economic relations; the implication of this is that relations built around economic relations are fragile and may collapse when these economic interactions are discontinued.

In doing this, they ensure their economic and personal sustainability. The findings also show that place insecurities impede women's peace experiences because these challenges impact their ability to fend for themselves and support their families, and the ongoing pandemic has added to this dynamic.

Considering my overarching framework that emphasizes the importance of safety and security of lives, there is a need for adequate public infrastructures, to ensure social justice and security for not just women alone but for the men in the informal sector as well. Sellers also need social support from the government. Without these supports, market women will remain vulnerable to livelihood insecurities and other safety issues that may arise in their context. There are already tensions arising from what women can do within these markets to support themselves and the structures that limit their ability to make profits and meet their needs.

Chapter 6

Market Women, Livelihood and Food Security: Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 and Women's Responses

6.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses how COVID-19 impacted women's work and how they responded. The discussions in this chapter emerged because the data were collected during COVID-19. However, some of the participants talked about their practices pre-COVID-19. The chapter focuses on the challenges food sellers encountered during the ongoing pandemic. The participants' accounts are discussed under the following themes: the essentiality of trading to survival; women traders as essential workers; COVID-19 concerns; the impact of COVID-19 and market women's responses; transportation; food and peace of mind; collective action; and structural responses. As with the preceding chapter findings, this chapter seeks to accentuate how market women exercise agency and manage challenges in their local context. The chapter is outlined as follows: the first section is the introduction, followed by the literature review section. This is followed by the research findings and, finally, the discussion and conclusion sections.

6.1 Introduction

The World Bank reports that food insecurity is on the rise globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and countries that are already experiencing varied forms of instability are at a higher risk of being food insecure.¹⁴ In Nigeria, it is estimated that the ongoing pandemic will impact millions of people and may likely drive about 5 million more into poverty (World Bank, 2020). The scarcity and increasing cost of food in some contexts diminish the ability of people to take care of their basic needs, including food, and this can lead to further unrest (FAO, 2016). In other words, poverty leads to insecurity for individuals and nations as it topples the relative peace people experience and affects the development of countries.

¹⁴ See the World Bank, Food Security and COVID-19
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-and-covid-19>

Food insecurity and violence are connected. As a multilayered concept, violence can affect people differently and in various ways. Galtung (1969) describes two categories of violence, direct and indirect violence, where direct violence happens as a consequence of physical harm done intentionally to people. Indirect violence comes from structures that limit people's capacities and abilities to meet their most basic needs. Food is a basic human need that people require to survive, but when people are poor (even amid surplus), they are unable to access and afford healthy food. In this vein, food insecurity is a type of structural violence, particularly when people lack adequate resources and opportunities to meet their food needs.

Ensuring food security requires important resources, including structures and people. Although food security is said to be a multilayered concept, not all its related aspects are examined in equal proportion (FAO, 2008); hence it is common for the analysis on food security to focus on some food security components and actors and leave out others who make the food available and accessible to others such as small-scale traders in the informal sector. Apart from agriculture, the informal economy also plays an important role in food security in Africa. In many communities in Africa, the informal sector is synonymous with food security because many depend on this sector for their food needs (Fraser et al., 2014; Skinner & Haysom, 2017).

Food vendors and local markets play important roles in ensuring people's nutritional needs are met. For example, informal local markets in Africa are places where people buy food items and other necessities they need for their sustenance. Female traders play significant roles in many of these local markets in Africa (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018; Clark, 1994; Sowatey et, 2018), granting that the roles within some local markets are gendered, with men largely in charge of macro-level businesses, while women dominate the sustenance related businesses (Spring, 2009). In this regard, women largely control the food trade sector in many local markets in Africa, and they work to ensure that households have access to food. Relatedly, there is a link between gender equality and sustainable food security. The United Nations agencies have emphasized that food security is central to many women's work, and gender equality will empower women globally to contribute significantly to sustaining global food systems (WFP, 2020).

The travel restrictions put in place by the federal and state governments in Nigeria to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease (Daily Trust, 2020; Ofurum, 2020) impacted food sellers' work. Interstate travel bans, increase in fuel cost, and public transportation fares (Ofurum, 2020)

coupled with pre-COVID existing poor urban public transportation systems and bad road networks aggravated the challenges encountered by food sellers in this study. Also, poor road networks and a lack of subsidized urban public transportation systems were some of the challenges that food sellers had to grapple with during this period.

6.2 Literature Review: Food Security, Gender and Livelihood

This section discusses selected literature on food security and gender. The ongoing pandemic has destabilized and weakened many countries' economies and made food insecurity in some contexts extremely dire. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2008), to be food insecure means that the following four components of food security are missing: availability of food; access to food; food utilization (of healthy and nutritious food); and food stability (the presence of food at all times). Thus, food security happens when food is present and available and when people have the financial means to obtain and satisfy their food needs (FAO, 2008).

Arguably, varied environmental, social, and economical hazards impact how people experience poverty and hunger. The academic literature on food security has examined these factors and their interconnections to people's health and general wellbeing. For example, studies have analyzed the impact of drought on income and food security (Enenkel & Anderson, 2015; Kogan et al., 2019; Webb, 1993), including the connection between drought, food security, and mental health (Friel et al., 2014). Other scholars have examined the relationship between violence and food security (Adelaja & George, 2019; Arias et al., 2019; Kah, 2017). The understanding is that during the protracted conflict, communities are impacted economically, socially, and politically, which makes the distribution and supply of food challenging even when they are not scarce. Hunger has been weaponized during violent conflict, as seen in situations where livelihood and the different ways people access food such as farmlands, markets, and transport systems were intentionally damaged (Cohen et al., 1999).

Equally, some scholars have examined the effects of globalization on food and its management (Phillips, 2006). Discussions have also centered around the dangers inherent in the neoliberalist concept of food security in which liberal ideals of globalization and free markets undermine local food processes while increasing the adoption of foreign food culture and diets (Law, 2019; Menezes, 2001). Scholars have also evaluated how the globalization of food alters

some traditional methods of food preparation (Soleri et al., 2008). Others have made the case that the concepts of food and hunger in neoliberal ideology ignores the inherent structures of inequality that is the bane of food insecurity in different contexts (Friesen, 2017); the argument is that what happens in most cases is the implementation of often generalized responses to food insecurity that are unfamiliar in local contexts (Flores et al., 2005). In this vein, food security is sometimes contrasted with food sovereignty. Unlike the concept of food security, food sovereignty advocates argue that food sovereignty is more attuned to local needs and promotes and protects people's food production systems as well as their food culture and their diets (Menezes, 2001). Food sovereignty also encourages local resilience and reactions against global food management (Ayres & Bosia, 2011) and gives people the power to define their food processes (Patel, 2012).

There are varied ways to ensure that people have access to food at all times. Scholars have argued that food security can be attained through food sovereignty (Menezes, 2001), which supports people's control of their food systems and entails building and strengthening food support systems in these contexts. Others have argued for the use of information technology to evaluate and support sustainable food security (Enekel & Anderson, 2015; Gareau, 2004), as data is important to understand food insecurity in dire situations and to develop appropriate policies (Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2019). More importantly, there is a need to assess how power over food has led to hunger in many contexts (Patel, 2012). Another way to assess and improve food security would be to expand food security in urban settings, not just in rural areas (Bowden et al., 2018; Crush & Frayne, 2011). It is also important to examine how local market workers contribute to food availability and accessibility so that adequate support mechanisms can be developed to aid their work. Through local markets, one can be better able to analyze and address food challenges in local communities (Companion, 2008).

One of the many themes emerging from food security literature is the connections between livelihood, gender, food (in)security, and general wellbeing (Bawadi et al., 2012; Kennedy & Peters, 1992; McIntyre et al., 2011). In this vein, scholars have analyzed the unhealthy and risky measures that people utilize in times of food shortage (Ivers & Cullen, 2011). Food security and gender are connected. Studies show that female-headed households are more likely to be food secure than households headed by males (Dzanku, 2019); there are also suggestions that despite their low-income, female-headed households tend to eat healthier meals

than male-headed households (Kennedy& Peters, 1992). The important roles women play in maintaining household food security in challenging times, including their food procurement approaches, have also been highlighted (Bowden et al., 2018; McIntyre et al., 2011). Further, studies have demonstrated market women's resilience and active food security roles even in challenging times (Cruz, 2015).

Despite the significant roles women play in ensuring household food security, they are severely constrained both in their capacity to earn income and be food secure (Kiptot et al., 2014; Patel, 2012). More often than not, low-income women combine their roles as homemakers and vital actors in all the four dimensions of food security to ensure household meals are available, healthy, and sustainable. Yet, unequal power structures illustrate the nature of food systems where women are deprived of equal participation in food security processes at all levels (Patel, 2012). To the same degree, many women still lack the resources needed to strengthen their livelihood security, and the additional burden of housework sometimes impacts their health and reduces their income-earning capacity.¹⁵ Poverty and food insecurity are some of the many socio-economic challenges that women face resulting from structural violence, such as gender inequality (McIntyre et al., 2011).

Regrettably, the ongoing pandemic has created different challenges that impact women's livelihoods, purchasing power, and their roles in making food available in their community. These are intersecting challenges that impacted women differently. Using an intersectional framework (Crenshaw, 2012, 1991; Kolawole, 2002) allows for an in-depth exploration of how the pandemic and its lockdown measures affected market women. Intersectionality also allows one to understand how structural violence is manifested in hunger. An intersectional lens allows one to understand how individuals experience the pandemic unequally, with poor and vulnerable groups becoming more food insecure during these times and responding in ways that could further jeopardize their health and wellbeing.

Food security is part of positive peace. Positive peace is the presence of social justice (Galtung, 1969) and the opportunities and resources people need to strengthen their resilience

¹⁵ See for example: The three United Nations' Rome-based agencies dedicated to food and agriculture called today for bolder action to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls in the agricultural sector and beyond.
<https://www.wfp.org/news/securing-sustainable-food-systems-hinges-gender-equality>

and meet their most basic needs, such as food needs. However, positive peace is most often impeded by structural violence: inequality, protracted crises, economic hardships, and other poor conditions that emanate from the ongoing pandemic.

Conceptual Lens

Situated experiences and grassroots responses are central in some feminist and PACS literature. In this chapter, I explore market women's survival strategies through the lens of positive peacebuilding (Galtung, 1969). This framework is supported by African feminist perspectives, which focus on collaboration and relatedness (Chukukere, 1998; Nnaemeka, 2004, 2019; Sofola, 1998). My conceptual lens frames market women's practices as positive peacebuilding in light of how they sought to ensure household food needs were met. This framework situates market women's collaborative methods in their context, highlights their agency, and presents practical examples of feminist, positive, and local peacebuilding.

6.3 Research Findings

This section discusses women's essential roles as food traders in informal local markets and how COVID-19 affected their services. Starting with women's narratives about the benefits of their jobs and the connections between their job and subsistence, the section also discusses the ways in which the pandemic impacted their trading and income and how they responded in support of their colleagues and others in the community.

The Essentiality of Trading to Survival

Participants stated that they became traders for varied reasons, but the primary reason was to be able to support themselves and their families financially. Participants also spoke about the importance of their jobs. The trading business for women in this study fulfills many needs and plays many roles in their survival. Firstly, for the participants who sell food items, they are able to fulfill their food needs and those of their families. This is because, as food traders, participants shared that they often consume from the food that they sell. Secondly, as food traders, they also fulfill the food need of other households who buy from them. In becoming food traders, women prioritize the essentiality of food to human survival. In addition to fulfilling this essential need, trading also provides women with the means to address other basic needs such as housing,

paying the rent for their shops in the market, and supporting their immediate and extended families. Further, some participants stated that they like their jobs in the local markets because, unlike those who work in the formal sector, they do not have to wait for a monthly salary as one participant who sells food items noted:

Selling in the market gives me my money immediately. I cannot work where I will be paid monthly. I like buying and selling because it is easy to sell and collect one's money after selling; besides, my family has many needs that can't wait for a monthly income. (P13 Food S)

Participants said that they like living and working in Aba because it is affordable, and as traders, they do not have to beg to survive. Several participants who are small-scale traders in this study reminisced on how they started their businesses, stating that Aba made it possible for them to start small, as illustrated by one participant:

You can start a petty trading business with any amount. For example, you can start small by selling corn. If you start the corn business now, I am telling you that you will make a profit that you and your family can rely on. Poor people in Aba can survive no matter how small their trading businesses are. For example, I can use N1000¹⁶ or N500 to make a pot of soup, and this will be enough to feed my family. (P4 Food S)

Food and its affordability were frequent themes in women's narratives about their jobs and the city where they live. The essentiality of food (even for those who do not sell food items) and its connections to their choice of occupation and their city were interwoven in their stories.

However, the ongoing pandemic significantly impacted women's power to access and afford basic necessities; it also made it difficult for others to patronize them due to reduced or loss of income due to the lockdown measures. Several women said that COVID-19 affected people's spending power, including those of market women, and caused hunger for many people, as illustrated by one participant:

¹⁶ At the time of writing this chapter, \$1 Canadian Dollar was equivalent to N295 Nigerian Naira

If not for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, nobody can say that they are hungry in Aba. If someone is here in Aba and they say that they are hungry, they are lazy, but for now, everything is blocked; nothing is going on here, businesses are moving slowly, and making a profit has become too difficult. This was not how it was before the coronavirus disease. (P14 Food S)

The participant above emphasized how the ongoing pandemic affected people's ability to purchase food, even though food seller participants said that they made efforts to make sure food is available for others to buy. The availability of food is not synonymous with food being accessible and affordable to people. This narrative shows how public health crises or epidemics, as with armed conflict and droughts, can affect food access and affordability and lead to hunger for many people, particularly those who are already financially challenged. In this sense, the pandemic led to the rise of food insecurity as even for those who can afford food, inadequate options for food purchase caused by restricted market hours in many markets in Aba may also affect their ability to access food when they need it.

Women Traders as Essential Workers

The food item trade occupation is a female-gendered one. Participants noted that there are more women than men in the food selling sector. Several participants stated that being in the food selling sector during the pandemic is a big advantage for food traders because it allows women to earn income and at the same time feed their families from the food they sell. Participants who sell nonfood emphasized that they feel disadvantaged. As I reflect on their stories, I thought that the pandemic has reduced and made obsolete any contrary notions that some people may have had about small-scale female food traders. From these participants' narratives, I thought that it was possible that before the pandemic, some nonfood item sellers may not have viewed petty traders in the food item sector as having more benefits than their trade. However, the popular opinion was that these women are making it, and they are also helping others remain food secure.

Nonfood item sellers stated that women who sell food items are essential service providers; this opinion was also shared by the participants in the food items sector. Food sellers are valued for the service they provide as they are the conduit through which others secure food

for their households, particularly in challenging times such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. One nonfood item seller noted that:

I have not been going to the market for some time because there are not many people who come to buy from us in our market. But the women who sell food items go to the market because they sell food things, and there are people who come to buy from them.
(P15 Nonfood S)

From the participant's perspective, she had clearly drawn a line between her type of trade and those of food sellers, indicating her awareness that she does not provide the same services that food sellers do. Her own perception about her job and its importance during COVID-19 has led her to make some career decisions, taking some days off of work knowing that her goods may not be what people are looking for during this pandemic. In contrast, when I asked a participant how she feels about her food trade business during this period, she stated that:

if person no chop how you think say the person go survive?

If I wasn't selling foodstuff, how will I eat this period? And what about other people who need the food I sell to feed their families? There are people with money to buy food and looking for where to buy without finding it. Without a place to buy food, people may die from hunger, especially if they don't have farms to plant food to eat. Without farming and having nowhere to buy foodstuff, they will die of hunger. (P6 Food S)

Her rhetorical question and subsequent response reflect a deep understanding of food insecurity caused by lack of food availability. The narrative also shows that the participant understood the important role that she plays in the food security chain. As mentioned, this view on the essentiality of her trade is also shared by participants who are not in the food items trade. Market women's comparison between their sectors (i.e., foodstuffs vs. non-foodstuffs) was common during my interviews. Women usually compared their sectors when responding to how the COVID-19 impacted their livelihood. As one participant who sells nonfood items in one of the big markets in Aba stated:

We only come three times a week, so tomorrow and the days we do not come to the market, the foodstuff sellers take their foodstuff outside the market to sell. They sell more because everyone tries to look for food to eat. If they don't sell, we can die of hunger (laughs). Foodstuff sellers in our market move their trade items outside the market to continue selling when we close the market at 3 pm. I buy vegetables and other food items from them; if not, my children will go hungry. Because we cannot allow this, we struggle to get the money to buy from them. (P3 Nonfood S)

There are several lessons and key points that can be drawn from this statement above. First, women play many roles in household food security and the general wellbeing of their families, particularly in ensuring that their children's food needs are met. This participant compares how COVID-19 and the market lockdown have impacted women traders differently. She also highlights the importance of income availability to sustenance and working mothers, thus, making connections between gender, livelihood, and food security. The participant also pointed out the efforts food item sellers make to ensure food is made available such as selling outside of the allocated time and days.

COVID-19 Concerns

Participants stated that they follow all the pandemic related social distancing guidelines as laid down by the State government. Women also provided disinfecting products for customers. Some participants were uncertain about the disease and the possibility that the virus, its risks, and the numbers of those infected might be exaggerated by the government, as illustrated by one participant:

In Nigeria, even here in Abia State, they give numbers about the number of people with the disease, but I have never seen anybody who said their relation or someone they know has COVID-19. The majority of the people here in Aba don't see the sickness as real, it as eh, they see it as politics; people are not that scared, we freely buy our food, and we eat without fear. (P8 Nonfood S)

One might also argue that this response could be more connected to people working in informal ways during the pandemic than those in more formal settings where information and regulation can sometimes clarify issues. Anxiety about the virus might lead to the fear of working, which may ultimately impact their income. Some participants are uncertain about the deadly nature of the disease, and others are worried about the ambiguous information being passed. Others call for the government to be sincere about the pandemic, the risks, and the treatment process for those who have the virus, as illustrated by a participant:

This virus, they should bring the treatment so that it will go away. I heard that they (government) are using it to play us *wayo*.¹⁷ We have also heard that Okezie¹⁸ has COVID-19. We do not know what is true or false. We are saying that if this is not true, then they should be truthful. What we want is for peace to reign. (P9 Food S)

The participant's response indicates that the ambiguity surrounding COVID-19 has led to a situation where there is no peace. Participants understood that the uncertainties about the epidemic and its threats impact their income negatively, staying away from markets. Ambiguity about the pandemic might become even more harmful. People may take the pandemic and its related risks too lightly, thereby jeopardizing their health and those of others by flouting measures to curb the disease.

Although there were reported deaths from COVID-19 in Nigeria when I was collecting the data for this study, participants' responses show that they were still in doubt about the severity or the existence of COVID-19. It has been suggested that this indifference is due to the less deadly nature of the virus in Africa compared to the United States and Europe; the unconcerned disposition of public figures, including some religious leaders who have been dismissive about COVID-19; and the declining trust in government which has shaped the risk perceptions of the public (Opara, 2021).

The Impact of COVID-19 and Market Women's Responses

¹⁷ In Nigerian pidgin English, *wayo* means something fraudulent

¹⁸ Okezie Ikpeazu is the current Governor of Abia State

When the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions began in Aba, Abia State, in April 2020¹⁹, some of the participants stated that they did not go to work for some time, as their markets were closed. Some of the foodstuff trade participants who sell in small markets said they stayed at home for a couple of weeks while their markets were being fumigated; however, most of the foodstuff sellers said they never stopped working. When the bigger markets²⁰ on lockdown opened, traders were only allowed to work from 9 am to 3 pm in many markets, but some participants stated that smaller markets and street markets that sell mainly food items remained opened. The restrictions affected participants differently. Participants who sell food items said that during the lockdown, they took some of their food items home for household consumption, and those in the nonfood items trade said the pandemic and the lockdown limited their ability to secure food for their families. One participant who sells shoes and used to travel to Lagos to buy her goods stated that she has been unable to do so because of the lockdown and the lack of customers; and that as a result of the lockdown, it has been challenging for her and her husband who also sells shoes to afford food for their household:

I like this trade because it helps me take care of my family, but due to the coronavirus and the lockdown measures, we were told to limit the hours and days we come to the market, and this has been difficult because of loss of income. Now we eat 1-0-1, and sometimes we also do 0-0-1. As adults, my husband and I can cope with this, but children can't sleep hungry, so we make sure that we look for food for them to eat. Before COVID-19, I felt good about this job because people were buying and wearing the shoes that I sell. Now when I call customers to come and buy shoes, the customers will respond that: is it not when we eat that we will look for shoes to wear? We are looking for how to eat, and you are asking us to buy shoes. (P3 Nonfood S)

The connections between food and shoes in the conversation between the participant and her customer(s) or potential customers emphasize how the pandemic may have made buyers to prioritize their needs or differentiate between what they consider as immediate needs and what

¹⁹ The Nation, COVID-19: Abia begins fumigation of markets, public facilities
<https://thenationonlineng.net/covid-19-abia-begins-fumigation-of-markets-public-facilities/>

²⁰ Items sold in the bigger markets consist of both food products and non-food products

can wait for a more appropriate time. In other words, it made plain that the need for food comes first before the need for shoes. This is probably a conversation that may never have happened before the pandemic. As echoed by other participants, COVID-19 has led many people to change how they buy and consume products. Food is a priority, especially in times of crisis. Not only is food necessary for survival, selling food can be a tool for meeting other essential needs. Many participants agreed that selling food items is a more profitable and valuable business because everybody needs food to *survive*. Hence, it was not a surprise when this participant also shared that she would like to diversify her business when she gets the opportunity by selling food items such as fruits as this is more profitable as the pandemic continues.

Also, as the participant's response shows, the pandemic has also altered many household eating habits, including those of female traders. The pandemic has led people to adopt eating strategies that may not satisfy their hunger or need for food but keep them functional. The participant's family's survival strategies include skipping a meal or two, which she describes as 1-0-1, which means having breakfast and dinner without lunch, and in very bad cases, 0-0-1, which translates to skipping breakfast and lunch and eating only dinner. This response also shows how the pandemic has limited the purchasing power of many women traders who sell nonfood items, which has led to hunger and unhealthy eating habits such as meal skipping. From the participant's response, we understand that this was a calculated measure to save food for another day: a food saving method that could negatively impact their health.

The response also reflects the devastating effect of food insecurity during challenging times - this is not an unusual finding. Scholars have analyzed how hunger and food insecurity arise from inequality (Adelaja, 2012) as well as crises of varied proportions (Arias et & George, 2019; Cohen & Pinstrup-Andersen, 1999; Kah, 2017), and how this has led to many unhealthy eating strategies that are injurious to people's health and wellbeing (Ivers & Cullen, 2011). Working as a trader amid the restrictions put in place to combat the spread of the pandemic is affecting many traders who are striving to generate income as one participant who sells food items outside of the allocated market days stated:

As a result of the virus, they give us three days to sell in the market, but what can we sell for those three days? Not much. They tell us to sell Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 9 am to 3 pm. So, I lock my shop and put some goods outside on the days and hours

we are not allowed to sell, and if the police come chasing after us, I pack the little goods I brought outside and run away so that they don't catch me and force me to pay a fine. Some people fall down or get injured as they try to run away because if we are caught, we will pay a fee. (P6 Food S)

This participant above sells in one of the bigger markets in Aba and is thus subject to restricted market days and hours, unlike other women who stated that they sell in smaller markets with little or no restrictions²¹. When I asked this participant how she felt about the risks she takes, she stated that:

I am okay but just imagine if I and others do not come out to sell our food items during this time, some people wouldn't be able to buy food, which will make me feel bad knowing that I have what they need to eat.

This response suggests that even though the need to make ends meet is pivotal and influences her survival technique, the thoughts of others who depend on her to be food secure also take precedence and fuel her actions. Another participant who sells vegetable salad and fruit items noted the constraint the pandemic has placed on her and the importance of making healthy food available to people during the pandemic:

I checked how people would function without these vegetables that we sell here; there are some people with health issues that depend on the nutrients in the vegetables we sell, so we are also fighting to help those people get what they need from us. If it is transport fare that is needed to make this happen, we rally around to look for the transportation fare so that we can have goods even if little to supply to our customers. (P4 Food S)

²¹ However, a statement from the Abia State government in April 2020 showed that the government expected all markets regardless of the size to abide by the restrictions. The data for this study was gathered from June-July, 2020. See for example: COVID-19: Abia govt threatens to arrest traders for defying lockdown. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/04/covid-19-abia-govt-threatens-to-arrest-traders-for-defying-lockdown/>

As the response shows, women are concerned about the wellbeing of others and are willing to seek available options in making food available to those who need them. Women traders in the food items business are essential workers not only because many people in their communities get access to daily food and nutrients from them, but because of the extra mile these women go to make sure that food is available and that they earn an income in doing this; they also work hard to ensure that their households are fed - a finding that is also reflected in other studies (Cruz, 2015). As reflected in Cruz's study, market women in Liberia narrated their experiences of braving challenging weather conditions to source food so that others can have access to this food.

Relatedly, a participant who is a widow and sells nonfood items stated that because COVID-19 has restricted her work hours and reduced her income, she has had to diversify her trade to earn extra income and to ensure that food is available in her household:

I have been farming a lot on the land that I bought, and just last week, I sold the corn that I planted, and it was a lot. I sold the corn and made money because the second-hand clothes business that I am into is not as profitable as it was. I plant ugu, okra and cassava. I also fry groundnuts, put them in bottles, and sell them to shops to earn extra income. I have children to take care of, and my husband is dead; as the only breadwinner, I need to do extra work since this pandemic. I have been eating okra almost every day now (laughs) because I have a lot. I just buy crayfish N50 naira and esam N50 naira and use them to prepare a pot of soup for me and my children. Most times, we finish the soup that day, and the next day I make another one because we eat fresh okra and vegetables. We don't lack blood. (P2 Nonfood S)

The versatility of this participant above is well demonstrated in her statement, and this story was told to me enthusiastically and optimistically with what I detected to be a sense of achievement. The participant's ability to adapt to change while seeking sustenance for her family is reflected in other women's experiences in this study. Also, her response shows how the pandemic has led her to make choices that she may not have made if not for the situation that the pandemic has put her in. For example, she stated that she has been farming a lot lately and that she sold the corn she harvested, actions that she may not have taken were it not for the effect of the pandemic that

limited her income. The participant has also had to make food choices for her household based on what is available to them. Her food procurement approach reflects a proclivity towards a particular food that she can easily access through her farming. Further, by stating that she and her children do not lack food, she was only sharing that they are healthy because they eat fresh vegetables; this shows that she understood the importance of a nutritious and healthy diet even during this challenging period.

Some participants' narratives show that as buyers' purchasing power decreases, they lean towards familiar and affordable food, and in this case, foods that are filling and last longer. This is reflected in the response of one participant who sells eggs, cake ingredients, soft drinks, and snacks:

There are some people I supply eggs to, and during the lockdown and market closure, we thought that because the big markets like Ariaria will be closed, we will be able to sell more in the street markets. However, some people couldn't come to the market to buy as much, so this has affected my profit. I asked some of my customers why they are not patronizing me, and they said that instead of buying snacks and soft drinks, they would rather buy rice and beans because these will last longer. (P7 Food S)

This response demonstrates that rice and beans are important food staples preferred by people during these challenging times because they are more filling. As this participant spoke about her customers' preference for rice and beans, I did not find this preference surprising because growing up, I never considered snacks as real food. Although studies show that the fondness for particular meals is related to food insecurity (Ham, 2020), but as this participant and I discussed further, it was clear to me that rice and beans were considered as 'real' food compared to snacks because they are satisfying and can avert hunger better than snacks.

Other COVID-19 related hindrances impact women's services and their livelihood; public transportation was one of these.

Transportation

There is a variation in how women use public transportation to and from work. A few participants shared that they live close to the markets where they sell and they do not need

transportation to go to work; what I did not discuss with these participants is whether they chose to live close to where they work, or they chose to sell in these markets because of the proximity to their homes.

One common theme that emerged was that the increase in public transportation cost was a significant hindrance to women's essential work; it impacts their profit and affects their personal duties. Participants make use of public transportation to get them to and from the markets. Two large-scale food sellers shared that they rely on interstate buses to get to and from other parts of Nigeria, where they buy their goods. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there was increased reliance on third parties to deliver goods because of the interstate travel ban that was introduced in Nigeria by the government as a measure to combat the spread of COVID-19.²² Following the lifting of the interstate travel ban, commercial transport operators increased transportation fares to keep some of the seats vacant in line with social distancing guidelines in place (Daily Trust, 2020). The increase in fuel cost by the federal government during this period (Ofurum, 2020) saw an increase in intracity and intercity public transportation fares. Aba's residents bemoaned this increase in fuel price as many have been out of work (Ofurum, 2020).

Further, the inaccessibility of affordable public transportations for food sellers made it difficult for them to buy and supply food. Several women stated that they take public transportation to their workplace and back home and shared how the pandemic has impacted fares as described by one participant:

Transportation cost is too much for us to go from our houses to the market. For instance, Keke²³ has increased their fares. Even the cost of transportation to go and buy our goods in the market is too much, and it will cost more to transport the goods to the market where we sell. (P12 Food S)

Participants stated that transportation limitations during this pandemic affect their trading activities substantially. For food vendors, the lack of reliable public transportation and increased

²² See, FG decides on interstate travel ban, others next week
<https://punchng.com/fg-decides-on-interstate-travel-ban-others-next-week/>

²³ Keke is a tricycle and a common form of transportation in many parts of Nigeria

transportation fares affected their ability to carry out their essential everyday activities efficiently and impacted their income. Participants also shared that they find the increased fare problematic, as illustrated by one participant:

The transportation is high currently; before the pandemic started, I used to spend N100 to go to the market from my house and another N100 to return home, but now it's N200 to go to the market and another N200 to return home, making it N400 daily. I think this is too expensive for me. (P2 Nonfood S)

This narrative emphasizes the worry about high transportation fares as this may impact their income. The economic impact of increased fare on women is significant as it reduces their income and productivity - particularly when they spend more time on their way to work because of bad roads, as one participant stated:

During this COVID-19, transportation has become scarce and expensive, and you know our roads are not too good. Sometimes the traffic is too much, and we sometimes trek long distances if there is traffic, we sometimes get to the market late, and we will not have the time to accomplish what we had planned for the day before we close up at 3 pm. (P5 Food S)

High transportation fares and poor road conditions make women more vulnerable to financial hardships, particularly during the pandemic with its own health and security challenges. Market women transporting their goods at an expensive rate means they may end up selling these goods without making a profit. One participant who sells vegetable salad items and fruits and used to travel to the Northern part of Nigeria to buy her goods shared how the pandemic has reduced her travels and challenged her economically:

The problem we are facing is mainly transportation which involves how to bring the goods from the North to the East. I don't travel anymore; I use agents to get the goods. And sometimes, before these goods get to us, they are already damaged; we just throw them away. (P4 Food S)

The economic consequence of using third parties to bring her goods is profit loss because the goods get to her late and damaged. Another economic impact of the pandemic for women is that it made them to make choices that they ordinarily would not have made, such as relying on others to transport their goods. Moreover, their options for transportation are limited. The need to earn an income and feed families, combined with inadequate transportation and expensive fares, can negatively impact the market's wellbeing as they are anxious about these connecting challenges and what it may mean for them and their family sustenance. The effects of inaccessible public transportation fares on market women's trade show how transportation/mobility and livelihood are connected to sustenance. A lack of accessible and affordable public transportation and increasing fares negatively impact livelihood security which is needed for people to be food secure.

Unfortunately, as the pandemic continues, food sellers may continue to depend on others to deliver their goods to them, which means that they could suffer more economic loss due to this. Increasing public transportation cost also means an increase in the price of food products. Women food traders noted that the items they buy to sell have also increased considerably. While increased public transportation fares may have impacted the cost of some items, one food item seller also stated that an increase in demand for some items also led to an increase in the cost of those items:

When COVID-19 started, a lot of people started rushing and buying up items like lemon, ginger, garlic, and turmeric, because it is believed that they help the body to fight diseases. And because of the COVID-19, lemon farmers increased the price of lemons; you will get it, but the price increased. (P4 Nonfood S)

I asked clarifying questions about why people were buying these specific items, and I learned that rather than feeling vulnerable, anxious, and scared about the virus, individuals might resort to homebased protective measures. Also, because of the rise in demand for some food items, the prices increased, and some market women also had to increase the price of the food items they sell.

From participants' accounts, we understand that transportation can be a source of food insecurity because it can limit people's access to food. In a situation where there is a lack of effective transportation to transport food from the producers to the markets, food availability becomes inadequate. We also learn that transportation associated costs can lead to an increase in food cost and also make food become unaffordable for many, leading also to food insecurity.

Food and Peace of Mind

Even though participants mentioned that they are recipients of other traders' compassionate actions in bigger markets where traders allowed them to buy and pay later, the increased burden of livelihood and food security on women during this time certainly affected their general wellbeing, as one participant stated:

If I sell my market, I feel very happy, and if I see food to eat, it will give me peace of mind, but when I don't have money to eat, solve my problems or take care of my family's needs, I will be troubled. (P14 Food S)

From the response above, we understand the conditions that must be present for women to have peace of mind - food to eat. Income is a requirement to procure food and also to attend to other basic necessities. The absence of these basic necessities negatively impacts the wellbeing of the participants. The connection of food and peace resonates in this study: several participants voiced the connection of livelihood stability to food affordability and harmonious relations, which ultimately lead to their *peace of mind*, as illustrated by another participant:

If you don't have food on the table, you can't be comfortable, but with food first, you are comfortable; at least you will eat. If you don't have food, you can't be happy or comfortable. When you don't have the food on the table to give your family, you can't be comfortable. After food, every other thing is extra; but if you have other things in the house without food, there will be no peace, and that house will be on fire. Our struggle in life is to have food on the table. It is from this business we earn the money to put food on the table. (P8 Nonfood S)

The participant's narrative depicts that contentment emanates from being able to meet the food needs of her family. The response denotes that meeting survival needs is a process that requires hard work and economic security (struggle).

Collective Action

To ensure they meet their basic needs, market women stated that they work together. Their collaborative activities have sustained their livelihoods and also helped them to be food secure, as illustrated by one participant:

I belong to some groups in my market; in one of our groups, we save towards food and other kitchen needs. In preparation for the Christmas holidays, we buy food and other household needs in wholesale, and these include bags of rice, groundnut oil, stockfish, milk, milo, indomie noodles, and we divide them equally. We start saving from January, one woman collects and takes the money to the bank. When we start saving early, we hardly notice how much we have saved individually; it is always a pleasant surprise when we notice that our everyday minimal contributions have amounted to N30,000 each. By October or November, we chose some women that will go and purchase the things on our list. I am always happy, and I think everyone else is when we share our purchases and take them home. (P3 Nonfood S)

When I asked the importance of this venture to women, this participant stated that:

To help us, because food and other things we need may become scarce and more expensive, during the holidays. With this bulk purchase of food, we have enough for our families. Some of us also have enough to travel to the village for the Christmas festivities as some of us usually do. Buying in wholesale/bulk is less expensive and helps us save money. We call the savings group the kitchen unit; to show what we need in the kitchen.

As this response demonstrates, collaboration among women in the market is one of the ways that female traders ensured food security for their households. The above practice is echoed in other

studies showing how through bulk buying and food barter, women have met their families' food needs (Bowden et al., 2018).

Market women's practices and activities such as group savings and group buying are geared towards meeting their survival needs, and at the same time, meeting those needs and building relations are not mutually exclusive for participants. Galtung's (1969) concept of positive peace is multilayered but simply put, it is the presence of social justice and conditions that can ensure people's safety; when expanded, it will also include actions, practices, and relationships that ensure that people's needs are met, including food needs. In this regard, women's practices and actions within their networks and towards others during this pandemic are all aspects of positive peacebuilding.

As mentioned earlier, some participants noted how they are less or more impacted by the pandemic than other traders. This comparison helped those who are less impacted by the pandemic to empathize with others. For example, one participant who is a single mother and sells food items stated:

The virus affected many businesses, but I am a bit lucky. If I were selling cooked food, it would have been worse because the market opens Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Imagine cooking on Monday and not being able to sell on Tuesday because the market won't be open. You know the food will go bad. We are supposed to sell in the evenings, but they tell us to close up. This will be hard for those who sell already cooked meals. (P6 Food S)

By comparing her economic standing in light of the pandemic with those of her colleagues who sell cooked meals, the participant's response denotes a sense of gratitude, a feeling that reinforces concern for others and also an appreciation of her own position even as the pandemic is ongoing. The situation that this participant painted above is exactly how a participant who is also a single parent and sells cooked food at another market described her condition:

I sell cooked food-*akpu*²⁴, rice, garri plantain, and yam porridge. Before the Coronavirus, I used to start my day early; I get inside the market around 6 am or 6:30 am, but now the market opens at 9 am, and sometimes they open the market around 10 am. Because of this new time, I bring food to sell but take it back without selling much. The market closes early; this means that most times, I won't sell most of the food I brought. I owe a lot of money to those I buy from because of poor sales. (P1 Food S)

This shows that even when nonfood item sellers perceive that food sellers are at an advantage, not all food sellers fall into this 'lucky' category. In other words, when we compare and contrast the stories of these two women who are in the same food sector occupation, we notice the ways in which their experiences differ and how they are also alike. One of the similarities is that they are both working mothers and sole earners whose families depend on them financially. Even though it may seem that one of them is slightly at an advantage, the pandemic has placed a strain on both their income capacity and a limit to their spending power. Nevertheless, the economic situations of some married women in this study are not better than those who are single parents, as illustrated by one participant:

Since this coronavirus, I have been the only one supporting my family financially. We, the traders, are selling every day, but other workers are not working since the virus started. Traders that sell foodstuff like me come to the market every day. My husband is a civil servant and has not been working; it's my own money that I am using to support my family for the past two months. Civil servants sometimes are owed for two to three months. (P10 Food S)

This participant's account brings another dimension to the evaluation of the impact of the pandemic on women's occupation and household food security. For participants who may have had some financial support from their spouses before the pandemic, the reality of becoming sole earners when a spouse loses his job may cause them to feel anxious. Also, some households may become food insecure where a market woman's spouse who was the primary earner loses his job,

²⁴ Akpu and garri are made from cassava

and the woman's income (from her petty trading) is very minimal; her ability to pay the bills (even if temporarily) and provide for food for her family will be limited. One can argue that across the board, market women were impacted by the pandemic in varying degrees. The pandemic decreased the purchasing power of female traders, and it also increased the burden of food security on them – more for some than others.

Compassion towards others is also demonstrated in the actions of market traders. Some participants stated that the pandemic affected their capital. As a result, they relied on the goodwill from their suppliers, who allowed them to buy and pay later. These participants are paying this kindness forward by selling to others on credit whose income was affected by the pandemic, as one participant stated:

The price of goods increased, and transportation increased, but we are still working. Another thing is that many people are coming to buy on credit during this pandemic, particularly government workers; I know that the pandemic affected the salary of some of my customers, like teachers. (P9 Food S)

Similarly, a participant who sells wholesale food items stated that:

I have many customers selling in other markets, and because of the COVID-19, they are not paying cash as they used to. So, when they come, they take what they need, and when they have finished selling, they pay me. (P11 Food S)

Participants shared that buying and selling on credit was not a new practice, only that the number of customers buying on credit increased due to the pandemic. Also, food item sellers were largely empathetic towards their customers as well as their colleagues, as one participant who sells food items illustrated:

People come to buy on credit, so you have to sell to them; you have to so that they and their children don't go hungry...and we have to wait for COVID-19 to end before we get paid by people like that. For instance, some of our other female traders who sell clothes are not selling as they used to because of COVID-19, but we are allowed to come and sell

because we sell food in the market, but for them, it is different, so how will they feed themselves and their families? We have mercy on them and sell to them. (P10 Food S)

Some market women's accounts show how empathy for others and their sense of community motivated them to act selflessly to meet others' food needs during these dire times. Food also seemed to be vital in market women's concept of peace.

Structural Responses

When I asked participants for recommendations and their hopes for a better market and living conditions, some of their responses centered on the need for financial assistance and improved infrastructures. One participant who is a single parent stated that:

Women need to be helped so that we can start buying and selling again. I need money to boost my business. Aba is good, but COVID-19 has dealt with us badly; if you call your sibling to ask for help, they will cry more than you and tell you that their situation is worse than yours. As a woman, I cannot ignore my children as a man would do. A man may go out for a drink or even get drunk this period without a care for food and other things for his children and family, but this same behavior is difficult for a woman to adopt. I need to help my business and my family, but I have taken too much loan during this period, and it is bringing me down. Women need assistance before we will start having high blood pressure because of too many credits. (P1 Food S)

The participant's response is a clear appeal to the government to come to women's aid. She made the case that helping women during this period is the right thing to do because of the many roles and responsibilities of working mothers who are also the breadwinners in their households. One can argue that by contrasting her perceived behaviors of men and those of women, she makes a strong case for women's empowerment as it relates to food security at this challenging time. To add some context here, I want to highlight a conversation that I had with this participant. Before our interview began, the participant jokingly asked me how she can benefit from the project (apart from the lunch offer). I told her that she would be taking part in knowledge creation which will benefit many people globally, and that this project is an opportunity for her to recommend

ways that women can be helped. I want to think that she took this to heart. I also asked some of the participants if they received any support or assistance from the government during this time, and they said no.

Another participant called on the government to work on the roads and to remove the pandemic-related restrictions in place so that their businesses can go back to normal:

What you can do for us is this; tell the government to come and repair the roads. Another recommendation is that they should let us sell in the markets from Monday to Saturday. This is a challenging period, and we need to be able to sell so that we can help our families. (P3 Nonfood S)

As the participant's response above demonstrates, the pandemic related restrictions and the bad roads impact their ability to be productive. Clearly, there is a need for more awareness about the coronavirus disease and some form of government intervention to help reduce the financial burden caused by the pandemic on women traders. Government support can come in the form of a reduction in food prices and other welfare packages that can target poor women, female household heads, and others who have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and at risk of going hungry. However, providing food alone will not be enough in this instance; businesses need to be restarted, and capital will be required to do this, as some of the participants articulated. Good roads and reduced fares are also needed as these issues impact traders' profits. Supporting these women will mean supporting the many lives that depend on them (apart from their households) for food.

6.4 Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

This section sums up the key findings. First, for many women in this study, *peace of mind* connects to the contentment emanating from livelihood security, food security, good health for their households, and the availability of resources to meet other pressing needs, but the pandemic is making this unattainable. This is made more lucid when participants referred to their situations before the pandemic when purchasing food was not as costly and transportation was accessible and affordable in Aba.

Second, for participants in this study, some aspects of positive peace are attainable if one works towards it—positive peace results from the process of cultivating and nurturing good relations with other traders that contribute to their sustenance. Supportive practices in their marketplaces ensure women's economic continuity, food security, and therefore the sustenance of their families; the combination of these factors has equally produced peace of mind for them. Relatedly, the ongoing pandemic has jeopardized this comfort and heightened women's awareness of each other's challenges, their different economic circumstances, and the heavy burden that economic and food insecurity and sustenance can have on women, particularly those who are primary breadwinners. The awareness of others' struggles and sufferings motivated some food seller participants to sell more than they used to on credit, thus enabling their customers and colleagues to feed their families.

Third, the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women traders varies, as some of the participants who sell nonfood commodities are substantially impacted compared to others who sell food items. In other words, the businesses of participants selling food items seem to have fared better than those who sell nonfood items. However, among those who sell food items, the impact also varies; as the participant who sells snacks and soft drinks states, her customers' food preferences have been impacted by the pandemic, which meant that the type of food that she sold was not as important to customers during the pandemic as it was before the pandemic. Another participant who sells cooked meals also shared that she is at an economic disadvantage compared to other women who sell uncooked food items as people's purchasing power has been impacted. The restricted market hours that were put in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease affected people's food choices. Rather than buying cooked meals, the preference for uncooked meals increased. Additionally, there was a general perception of participants that women who sell food items are at an advantage over those who sell nonfood items because people are aware of the need for food security, even more so at this time.

Fourth, the intersection of gender, livelihood, marital status, and motherhood place women in different disadvantaged positions. The participants with spouses whose jobs were impacted by the pandemic have more burden to bear as they have become sole breadwinners; their experiences are not the same as those with spousal support. Some of the married participants stated that they receive financial support from their husbands, so the impact of the pandemic may not be as strongly felt as those participants who are single parents. But there are

other married women whose food insecurity conditions are equally dire because their husbands, who are also traders, are equally impacted by the pandemic. Tangentially, and in a kind of vicious circle for one participant who is a single parent, the stress of taking too much credit impacts her general health, including a potential rise in blood pressure making it more difficult to work and earn a living to support her family. Some women looked to additional and different work for support: to secure food for her household, one nonfood item participant, who is a single parent, took up other sources of income such as farming and selling other items outside her primary trading business. Other participants are thinking of doing the same so that they can better provide food for their families. Women's agency and ingenuity - that is, their ability to act or seek solutions to better their circumstances irrespective of barriers - are also reflected in these examples.

Fifth, some of the participants are uncertain about what the COVID-19 pandemic is all about, and they call on the government to give clarity on guidelines. Participants also urged the government to be sincere and clear about plans, risks, and available treatment as this would dispel concerns about the government's handling of the pandemic. It is believed that the low rates of fatalities in Africa compared to other regions, indifferent attitudes of public figures, and a general distrust of the government's motives have led many Nigerians to ignore the threats and severity of COVID-19. As essential workers, these women were exposed to a greater risk to COVID-19, yet, their responses show that they did not have much fear about this threat. As I reflected on their responses, I found that this may be because some of them were already supporting relatives who stopped working as a result of the pandemic. Projecting indifference rather than fear might be their own way of managing the potential loss of income. While there is a strong need for more education and awareness about the disease at the local level, participant responses also reflect the informal ways in which participants sought to process and deal with the uncertainties, including being creative with their homemade health remedies.

Sixth, transportation challenges impact the livelihood of traders and impact women's capacity as active actors in the food security sector. Inadequate transportation systems also contribute to food insecurity as the lack of effective and affordable transportation means that the price of food increases and food may not get to people when they need it. The increase in fuel cost saw a hike in public transportation cost; the implication is that sellers who rely on public transportation to and from other parts of the state to buy their food products had to increase the

food items' cost because of this. Poor road networks and a lack of government-subsidized public transportation systems were some of the challenges that food sellers had to grapple with during this period. Food sellers who rely on public transportation to buy and deliver their goods felt challenged. Participants shared that the poor roads affect their productivity and income.

The purchase and distribution of food items to the public became difficult for participants who sell food with inter-state travel restrictions and other social distancing limitations that impact transport affordability and access. Participants who sell food items shared that transportation limits their ability to make food accessible to the people and also their economic gains. Transportation also affects time spent with families as some participants stated that they like spending some time with their families after work, sometimes preparing dinner before going to bed, but transportation challenges make this difficult, particularly where they have to walk long distances to get home after work.

Seventh, food, livelihood, and peace are connected. Women shared that they are comfortable and feel content when they are able to provide food for their families through their income. Hardships such as loss of income as a result of the pandemic hinder this contentment. Market women are also able to provide food for their families through collaboration and collective saving and buying practices. Empathy as a core component of positive peacebuilding is demonstrated in the compassion that some women traders showed for others, particularly towards women traders and customers who were worse off than themselves, and these thoughts emphasize common humanity and the connectedness that women and their customers share. It shows that the bonds developed through market interactions go beyond these marketplaces and reflect how peace is built through relationships. Also, by helping others be food secure, participants pass on the kindness they received from others. In a way, these acts of kindness ensure that everyone has some level of peace of mind.

This chapter demonstrates market women's survival techniques in light of the pandemic. Participants' responses demonstrate their adaptability skills and their ability to negotiate, compromise, and collaborate (Nnaemeka, 2004). The findings show that local markets are key sites for understanding 'local' positive peacebuilding as reflected in women's agency and resilience within this local context. As the findings demonstrate, even without severe economic crises like the ongoing pandemic, women have established networks and practices that ensured household food security and livelihood sustainability. This chapter has also highlighted how

socio-economic challenges impact women's general wellbeing and their peace of mind experience. Peace of mind for market women encompasses livelihood security, being food secure, and healthy, thus reflecting feminist and PACS perspectives on the human security approach to peacebuilding that centers on safeguarding the general wellbeing of people at all times (Futamura, 2011; Hans, 2019; Korhonen, 2011; Reardon, 2019). However, the COVID-19 disrupts this feeling of peace and has become a stressor for women traders who worry about their diminishing income and the potential food insecurity for their households.

In light of my conceptual framework, which highlights women's collaborative practices as essential aspects of positive peacebuilding, these practices can be strengthened through government initiatives. Without any forms of support, women themselves and the roles they play at this local level will be adversely affected. The negative effects of the ongoing pandemic are examples of how positive peacebuilding may be hindered. Finally, the important roles women traders play in food security can be strengthened through empowerment programs and financial support so that their livelihood, which is a critical aspect of food security, can be sustained at the local level. Food sovereignty and food security in the local can be strengthened to address the issues that impact local markets and local traders as reflected in this chapter so that food vendors can have a more meaningful experience as agents of positive peace. Chapter Seven sums up this study's research findings and provides key insights and further recommendations for future research.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and recommendations

7.0 Introduction

This study explored women's peacebuilding practices and the challenges they face in their workplaces. The study contributes to the literature on gender, workplace conflict, and its management in the informal sector. This is an underexplored area in the field of PACS and in workplace conflict literature. It also contributes to feminist scholarship on gender and peacebuilding as it highlights feminist performance in the Nigerian context, where women are constantly negotiating balance, combined with their varied personal responsibilities with being traders. The study also demonstrates the ingenuity of women's informal support networks and how these support systems address women and their families' fundamental needs, thus reflecting some aspects of feminist perspectives on the human security approach to peacebuilding (Reardon, 2019). Unfortunately, women's individual and collective efforts are not enough to address the structural inequities and insecurities they encounter. These vulnerabilities are experienced by traders generally and not women alone. In this vein, findings in this study also support feminist and PACS theorization of violence where on the one hand, inequality is embedded in social structures and limits individual potentials and equal access to opportunities (Galtung, 1969). On the other hand, the social construct of gender and the roles women play as unpaid primary 'carers' in addition to their livelihood engagements encumber them with many responsibilities that intersect with other challenges related to productive work, which may ultimately affect their income, health wellbeing, and their security as humans.

Further, the study shows the connections between feminism and PACS. Confortini (2005) argues that exploring violence through a feminist lens sheds light on the gendered impact of violence and enriches PACS and feminism. Confortini (2005) also calls for violence to be addressed as a "process" rather than seeing it only in terms of systems (p. 341). In considering the participants' challenges in this study, one notices the overlap between feminist perspectives and those of PACS scholars; in this regard, feminist and PACS theorization are inextricably intertwined as both fields emphasize the structures and processes that limit women's life chances.

Using a gender lens and being a curious feminist (Enloe, 2014) means asking where the women are in the labor force and how they got there in the first place. The literature on the informal sector that I reviewed in this study showed that women are the dominant demographic in unemployment, low literacy, and low-level jobs. Studies have shown that women are in the informal trade because of socio-cultural norms and low literacy levels, among other reasons (Malta et al., 2019). Data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS)²⁵ shows that while women are the majority in the informal sector, they are largely underrepresented in politics, in the formal sector, including in state and federal service employment; women are also less educated compared to men. As findings from this study show, a few market women have post-secondary education but chose to become traders. However, a majority of the participants stated that they became traders because they lacked formal education and needed a means of income to support their families.

The study findings add to the discussions on the meanings of peace and conflict. Specifically, women traders add their viewpoints to the meaning of peace and peacebuilding. Their voices build on the understanding of conflict and the structural challenges that women encounter at work. These findings also show the structures of inequality and the varied challenges associated with gender and livelihood, including how market women respond to these challenges; we have learned that the impact of structural injustice varies, and so are the ways market women have devised in responding to them. For example, the study findings highlight the strategies that market women use to meet their basic needs and, in the process, ensure security and comfort for themselves where state processes and structures fail.

The Research Process

When I initially planned this study, the idea was to be physically present and to spend a sufficient amount of time establishing rapport while studying participants in their environment, with their permission. However, this plan was revised as a result of the ongoing pandemic. Before I started the remote data collection, I was uncertain of what this virtual process would be. I was worried that I might not gain as many insights or establish a strong rapport with the

²⁵ See for example NBS (2019) and Nigeria's UN Sustainable development goals Report https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26308VNR_2020_Nigeria_Report.pdf <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/952>

participants remotely as I would have done physically. In hindsight, I believe that what aided the data collection process was my insider status. Sharing the same gender and cultural identities with the participants, communicating in the same language(s) (albeit not as fluently as the participants in the Igbo language) gave me some advantages that an outsider may not have. The English, Pidgin, and Igbo languages greatly aided our communications. On the other hand, as I reflect on the process, I think that being physically present may have strengthened my insider status, and perhaps more insights may have been gleaned as a result.

In light of reflexivity, I recognize the power that I utilized in the data analysis and interpretation process. I acknowledge the ways that I may have influenced this research process as the majority of the participants declined my offer of sending the transcript and study summary to them for their review and feedback. This was a bit challenging for me as I had hoped that more participants would take part in the knowledge creation process. During the data analysis phase, I wondered if I had correctly interpreted participants' experiences. I worried I might have over-emphasized ideas based on my own concepts and assumptions. At other times I felt reassured because of the process I followed during the interviews to clarify meanings repeatedly. The implication of this is that even if researchers are committed to using specific guidelines to ensure participants are part of the knowledge production process, participants may still not feel a sense of ownership or feel as deeply connected to this process.

7.1 Key Findings

This section discusses the findings in this study by summarily presenting the key findings as discussed in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. Recommendations for future research are also discussed in this section.

Markets in Present-day Southeastern Nigeria

Market women's accounts of their activities in the markets revealed that the marketplace still plays a significant socio-cultural and economic role in their lives. Additionally, apart from general market rules, within markets zones and lines, participants' narratives reflected collaborative norms that regulate marketplace relations, the day-to-day interactions, and the more

extra-ordinary. For instance, there are formalities related to celebrations and mourning, but these ceremonies may differ from market to market.

Until recently, market management was predominantly male. The colonial government appointed an all-male market administration in some places in Southeastern Nigeria (See Chuku, 2005). However, presently, women are part of the market leadership structure. Some participants in this study have held leadership positions in their markets. As leaders in these markets, women initiate and organize savings groups and other collaborative endeavors to support women traders. In present-day Southeastern Nigeria, women play mediating roles within their markets, and as with their counterparts in the early 20th century, they still resort to collective activism to protest against perceived oppressive norms, such as excessive levies, in their marketplaces. However, the findings show that some of these protests have not fully addressed the challenges traders encounter.

Intersectional Experience

I must highlight here that even as women work in similar conditions, their roles and experiences are not the same as other factors intersect with their gender to shape their experiences and outcomes. I utilized intersectionality to evaluate the experiences of market women. As with women elsewhere, Nigerian women suffer from patriarchal norms of subjugation, and there are cultural norms that strengthen this oppression; low literacy is a factor that further reduces their employment opportunities. The women in this study shared with me that they became traders for a variety of reasons. Some became traders because they had no other livelihood opportunities because they lacked the education to seek employment in the formal sector. Others became traders because their mothers, sisters, or friends introduced them to trading.

The participants shared how their jobs have enabled them to help their families financially, and there is no doubt that they feel a sense of pride in what they have been able to accomplish for themselves and their families through their income. While this reflects their ingenuity, hard work, and their nurturing abilities, structural violence (Galtung, 1969) and structural intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2012) theories situate the experiences of many of the women as a consequence of structural and cultural inequality in their context. In Africa, as with other developing regions, women are primarily in the informal sector due to social factors,

including but not limited to lack of education, patriarchal gender norms, and early marriage, which leads to early childbearing and childcare together with other gender roles ascribed to women can limit their life chances (Malta et al., 2018).

Gender and education intersect in women's livelihood experiences, and their experiences are not the same. Two participants with post-secondary education stated that they did not belong to any savings group because they did not need capital to expand their businesses, reflecting a class difference. These two participants and another participant who has a secondary level education shared that they had employees who worked for them; their narratives contrast those of other participants who have primary or no formal education and are petty traders who shared that they did not have paid employees. In other words, the intersection of education, gender and livelihood opportunities have different outcomes for women.

Relatedly, there are intersecting structural patterns of power relations that also influence women's experiences. This study made visible the dynamics of power relations in the markets, including the struggle of power over scarce resources. The use of power is manifested in the struggle to maintain economic power over others. Undue influence is inferred when participants shared that they believed some traders use unethical methods to control profit. Some participants narratives also alluded to the influence market management has over sellers. Some participants indicated that there are privileges bestowed on a few sellers by the market leaders. Playing favorites can be perceived as an undue use of power, particularly when some sellers believe that their market leaders only respond to the concerns of their favorites. Also, the formal process of conflict resolution seems egalitarian, but the power to determine guilt ultimately lies with the market leaders.

Human Security and Basic Needs in Context

Feminists and peace advocates have challenged the dominant notions of peace based on militarism; they advocate instead for a human security approach to peacebuilding that takes cognizance of varied socio-economic challenges and individuals' divergent needs. The concept of human security focuses on people and their safety, and it speaks to the divergent causes of insecurities that individuals and communities are exposed to (Reardon, 2019). The human security approach to peace is about ensuring people's total wellbeing, and it recognizes the different ways people's safety and rights can be endangered in their contexts.

Participants' narratives expose the multiple vulnerabilities they are exposed to; these include physical insecurities arising from bad roads, poor waste management, and poor supply of water and electricity, which often affect their livelihood and personal security. Participants' worries about potential threats were evident as these would ultimately affect their abilities to meet their needs and other family obligations, which seemed very important to them.

In light of my theoretical framework, which highlights the importance of a human security approach in addressing challenges and protecting individuals from all forms of harm, the study findings highlight the myriad insecurity issues in the study location. There are environmental hazards in the markets that may negatively impact the wellbeing and income of traders. For example, pollution from poor waste management and inadequate sanitation facilities may affect the health of traders and lead to low productivity, causing them to suffer from both direct and indirect forms of violence. In addition, physical harm can also arise from government actions to prevent roadside trade. In such cases, traders may be physically harmed in their bid to escape from being caught and penalized for selling on the streets. Through the human security approach, we understand the physical, economic and environmental hazards and threats to survival needs in localized settings and the processes women seek to address these problems. As the participants' narratives reveal, relationships are important aspects of their security because relationships support them in realizing their basic needs. Through everyday interactions in the market, new networks are formed. As these relationships develop, traders become aware of their customers' needs and proactively seek ways to meet those needs. From this perspective, broken relations in the market are also threats to livelihood security because as tensions arise from interpersonal conflict, the relationships and networks that help traders meet their basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter may be undermined.

Conflict and Conflict Management

Findings show that the types of workplace conflicts that are experienced in the marketplaces are interpersonal and structural. The primary cause of interpersonal conflict in the market is the contention over customers. Other interpersonal conflicts between traders include disagreements over market space and the perception of the black magic practice. This is the belief held by some participants that some traders engage in the use of *juju* to attract customers, including other traders' customers. I asked participants why they thought other traders were

engaging in the black magic practice, and their responses ranged from acknowledging it as common practice in the markets to witnessing someone spraying water. These notions are primarily unverified and unproven. The structural conflict relates to disputes with market management and government authorities over levies and inadequate infrastructures. Excessive levies, fear of defaulting, and the repercussion, which includes harassment and the potential economic loss that may arise, are some of the factors that drive structural conflict in the marketplace. These insecurities also impact market women's wellbeing.

The conflict management styles of market women were discussed under two themes. The first is the formal process, where all complaints about disagreements and other issues are taken to the market management for resolution. The formal conflict management process, as an approach, reduces market informality. This formality creates order and allows for the rules guiding the markets to be enforced. The formal rules and regulations also serve as a deterrent for potential conflict as some participants stated that they would prefer not to break the rules of engagement to avoid paying the penalty. In this way, the formal process is useful as a conflict prevention strategy. But the power and position of the market management to oversee the affairs of the markets can be abused, at least from the perspective of some participants who shared that they felt that their cases were not resolved to their satisfaction. Feelings of unfairness were mingled with mistrust towards market authorities who are seen as partial and practiced favoritism. Despite these unfavorable views about market management, some participants are satisfied with the formal procedures for conflict management that are in place in their markets, and they equally view the market management and their ability to maintain balance favorably. As I think back on these different perspectives that the participants had about their market management, I am inclined to think that it may be due to personal experiences with the market leaders over time. Also, the size of the market may have influenced these views. Market leaders in very large markets may have too many complaints to handle and there may be delays in responding to them. Those traders in smaller markets may have better relations with their leaders than those in much bigger markets. This is because the leaders in smaller markets may not have as much complaints to deal with and may have more time to address work issues better. I think it will be interesting to study further conflict and its management from market leaders' perspectives.

The workplace culture influences conflict management styles and the processes participants use to resolve conflict. The workplace culture of informality is influenced by the

open-air public space structures of these markets. The informal market spaces allow for flexibility in managing relations and have made it possible for women to directly address each other when there are issues without utilizing the formal conflict resolution process. The means most often adopted demonstrate a strong preference for harmony—reflecting African feminist thoughts on negotiation and compromise (Nnaemeka, 2004). Findings from this study show that the culture of collaboration and women's methods for resolving disagreements align with and reinforce some African feminist scholarship, particularly those who suggest that feminist/gender relations in the Nigerian context are grounded by balance and collaboration (Aina, 1998; Chukukere, 1998; Ekpo, 2011; Nnaemeka, 2004, 2019; Sackeyfio, 2019; Salami-Agunloye, 2019). This approach is also enabled by the nature of informality in the markets, rooted in social relations. The local markets are informally structured, that is, they are open-air public markets. Market women work together based on their social reality, with the understanding that there is a need to nurture positive relationships for their businesses to thrive.

I sensed that participants favored their informal conflict resolution processes partly because they are more beneficial and that sellers may feel that their market leaders may not solve their issues satisfactorily. So, the traders may feel that the best approach for them is to work out the conflict with the other traders. While I did not sense any antagonism towards this approach from the participants, the negotiation and compromise approach they adopt may be problematic for some sellers. Some people may argue that this approach is not helpful in the long run, as some sellers may hide their true feelings so that businesses can go on as usual. When traders negotiate and compromise how they truly feel, the idea is that they do not want to escalate a potential conflict situation. However, this may create disconnections between sellers rather than strengthen relations. There is a tendency that sellers may feel dissatisfied, bottle up their negative feelings, and refuse to collaborate with other sellers in the workplace.

Place and Insecurity

As presented in Chapter Five, key findings reveal that market women foster positive peacebuilding through relational activities. Participants felt connected to Aba because it provided the social and economic resources they needed to be livelihood secure; however, it lacked the needed support structures, leading to socio-economic insecurity. As with other informal sector workers, market women lack the social protection and benefits that formal sector employment

provides. Market women create their own benefits through relationships and other positive practices that generate an atmosphere of belongingness. The findings showed that market women in this study are constructing homes and making places in different geographical locations depending on their life trajectories. Some of the unmarried participants and single parents stated that they were on the lookout for places with better livelihood opportunities. In these cases, their sense of home and place attachment will be dependent on places that they can find economic stability. The narratives of participants showed the different insecurities they encounter in their locale. These are aspects of structural violence; structural violence is what hinders individuals from actualizing their potentials (Galtung, 1969). The findings showed that place-related insecurities such as infrastructural challenges affect the participants' *peace of mind* because it reduces their financial capacity to care for themselves and support their families, and these are responsibilities that they value. These insecurities are further heightened by a lack of social support from the government.

Market Women and COVID-19 Challenges

As discussed in Chapter Six, the study findings show that women play essential roles in food security as they dominate the food trading section, mostly as petty traders who sell in retail and wholesale. The ongoing pandemic affected the purchasing power of many people, including sellers. Market women were empathetic towards these people by allowing them to buy from them and pay when they can. The findings also demonstrate that the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women traders varied, as some of the participants who sold nonfood commodities are significantly impacted compared to others who sold food items. Responses showed that compassion and empathy for others empowered participants to sell on credit as they also bought on credit from their suppliers. However, participants stated that buying and selling on credit was not a new practice. Participants' accounts show that they were unclear about COVID-19, although they shared that they followed the state government guidelines to combat the disease's spread. Although there were reported fatalities from COVID-19 in Nigeria when I was collecting the data, participants were still in doubt about the severity or the existence of COVID-19. This attitude may have been due to how some leaders have been dismissive of the threats posed by the virus, Nigeria's low COVID-19 mortality rate, and a mistrust of the government's motives (Opara, 2021).

The measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 impacted many businesses considerably; COVID-19 also impacted public transportation accessibility and limited the working hours of many market women because of the new opening and closing hours. Poor road networks and a lack of government-subsidized public transportation systems were some of the challenges that sellers had to grapple with during this period. Food sellers who relied on public transportation to buy and deliver their goods felt challenged. As essential workers, these women were exposed to a greater risk of the coronavirus. As the responses showed, the women did not have much fear about COVID-19. The sense that I got from talking to some of the participants was that they were anxious about the implications of the prolonged lockdown measures in the market, which may affect their ability to cater to loved ones.

7.2 Five Notions of Peace

As this study is about how market women build peace and manage their challenges, I consider it important to highlight the different ways that I felt their experiences and perspectives add to the meaning of peace.

Conflict Avoidance

The strategies that women used to avoid conflict were inextricably tied to their notions of peace. Participants shared that avoiding conflict was more beneficial for them. When they avoided conflict with their neighbors in the market, communication and collaboration, which are an essential aspect of market relations, became more comfortable. This comfort allowed them to inquire about where their market neighbors got their goods; they could share goods and price information, and they could sell for each other when they had to go out. Women kept an eye on the stall of their neighbors when one needed to run an errand outside the market. However, unresolved disagreements hindered these positive relations.

Market women's strategies for handling conflict productively included letting go because maybe the offender didn't mean it; apologizing when someone was offended by their actions even when they may have felt that they didn't do anything wrong; accepting apologies when they offered; thinking of the positive sides of the relationship with other traders helped avoid destructive conflict. It was also beneficial to think that their neighbors were the closest person they could turn to when in need. These ideas that women shared are strengthened and reflected in

the Igbo proverbs that some participants used. Translated into the English language, one of such proverbs states: *One person can make or damage a relationship*; this underpins the idea of relationships as a key to succeeding as traders in marketplaces and peace as a relational concept. Several of the participants agreed that conflict with one's neighbors in the markets is detrimental to their economic objectives and the ways that they experience peace. But the most important insight into market women's conflict prevention approach is that relations needed to be productive and should be safeguarded.

Peace as Relational

The relational aspect of peace (Howell, 2020; Soderstrom et al., 2020) in the marketplace was exemplified in the interactions between market women and their customers and also between traders. The findings show that women relied on relationships to earn an income and to be food secure. Two participants who sold food-related items spoke about their challenges as newcomers in the trading business. For one participant, the encouragement from other traders around her in the market propelled her not to give up even while others expected her to *fail* in the business. For the other participant, as a new trader with no established networks, the fear of livelihood insecurity arising from lack of customers was an increasing prospect until neighbors, friends and referrals from other networks started patronizing her. In both cases, confidence was built, and livelihoods were secured because of social capital. Relationships or social capital (Schirch, 2004) development are avenues through which market women augment their livelihoods while strengthening mutually beneficial relations. These examples show that peace is relational and that peace is also connected to livelihood security. In this sense, peacebuilding is about building relationships and networks (Schirch, 2004).

Peace as a Process

Market women's activities, practices, and positive relations with other traders reflected the notion of peace being a process. As a process, peacebuilding is like a path with diverse people and challenges (de la Rey & McKay, 2002), whereas the dominant prescriptive peacebuilding approach focuses on outcomes (de la Rey & McKay, 2002). Peace as a process in this study was accentuated in how market women worked within their defined spaces, using their knowledge and practices to address the challenges they encountered in their context. Further, the

peace as a process concept was highlighted in women's conflict resolution processes where they engaged with the other party they were in conflict with and negotiated their conflict.

Thus, market relationships rely on a progression of constantly negotiating. Peacebuilding as a process also involves specific activities geared towards meeting specific needs, such as group savings and bulk buying. Considering the concept of peace as a process underscores the idea that peacebuilding is a continuous process.

Peace as a State of Mind

Participants shared that peace to them meant peace of mind. But as I asked further questions to seek clarifications of what peace of mind meant to them, it became clearer that peace of mind as it was being used was connected to making a profit so that their needs could be met. It also meant fostering a good relationship with others at their marketplaces and home. In this sense, peace of mind comes or came from their socio-economic security. In other words, peace was a state of mind for market women because it related to how they felt inside as well as outward feelings -the activities and events they organized to ensure their livelihoods were secure supported their *peace of mind*. Some of the components that constituted *peace of mind* for the market women were harmonious relations with neighbors, profit-making, and the ability to provide and care for families. These demonstrated that market women understood that *they* are also pivotal to the peacebuilding process.

Peace as Empowerment and Care

Market women's experiences in this study reinforce the notion of peace powers (Chinn & Falk-Rafael, 2015). Power comes from the ability to be able to act (Schirch, 2013), but more specifically, the power women's responses reflect are the peace powers, which are grounded in the ability to care, to support, to 'nurture' and to foster (Chinn & Falk-Rafael, 2015). Trading in informal local markets provides a viable and primary source of income for many women in Nigeria, particularly women with limited education and job opportunities. Market women also play a significant role in the food security chain by making food accessible to many households in their communities. And the pandemic highlights this essential role.

Most importantly, to our understanding of peacebuilding as empowerment and care, some participants spoke of what they had achieved for their families, even without formal education.

These achievements were centered around caring for others. This included the emphasis that their trading occupation has provided them with the financial ability to care for family members, to pay for children and siblings' education, and the capacity to *support* spouses, and this was reflected in other findings (Cruz, 2015). Empowerment is also depicted in the relationships developed in the market through interdependence, reciprocity and fairness. Through these relationships, market women have strengthened each other economically and socially. I draw these notions of peace from the perspectives and experiences of the participants. These findings show the many ways women articulate and build peace even amid intersecting challenges. Although the study reveals the strategies and processes women utilize to ensure their basic needs are met, it also made visible the constraints that hinder these efforts. For women's peacebuilding strategies to be sustainable, there is a need to address structures of violence.

7.3 Addressing Structures of Violence

No matter how successful women are at managing conflict in the marketplace, external forces can impede that success. Direct violence (physical harm) and indirect violence (structures and cultures of oppressions) exist in the informal sector in developing regions. Informal sector workers are exposed to these forms of violence in their everyday efforts at making a living. The gendered nature of women's experiences is reflected in their accounts of how their challenges affect their roles as sole breadwinners, carers-mothers, daughters, wives, and traders. As the findings show, female workers in this sector were also making efforts to address as many challenges as possible. Yet, these activities and practices by women geared towards meeting immediate needs are not enough to ensure lasting social and economic security for women and their families. Moreover, the ongoing pandemic demonstrates the vulnerable positions of many women in this sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted many hardships on market women, albeit in different ways and varying degrees. The experiences of market women who can continue in their trade and earn income to some extent and those of women whose spouses are working in another sector that is not adversely affected and can get financial support from their husbands are different from the realities of women who are breadwinners and are either single parents or widowed and sell items considered to be non-essential. Findings showed that even the market women whose markets were not on full lockdown and were thus able to go out each day to trade

also faced some levels of threats due to exposure to the pandemic, lack of adequate information about the disease and limited transportation. There was also harassment and potential physical harm from local authorities when women traders sold their wares on the streets instead of the markets during this period so that they could make a living and provide food for their families.

The current situation of workers and the informal sector itself demands that for social justice to be possible, even if minimally, the informal sector must be reformed. As the Nigerian government works towards rehabilitating and formalizing its informal sector through its commitment to the UN sustainable goals²⁶, this study recommends that the government takes a human security/social justice approach. The task will be to integrate the various perspectives of all individuals - men and women - who work in the informal sector. To do this, an intersectional approach will be needed to understand the needs of various individuals. This also means examining the different ways age and disability intersect with gender and other factors to impede livelihood outcomes.

To ensure that market women and other traders in marketplaces enjoy individual *peace of mind*, there is a need to address indirect violence and structures and practices that may lead to direct violence. First, physical market structures need to be planned and well developed (Uzuegbunam, 2012) to secure the lives and properties of traders. Further, reports of physical harassment by local authorities must be looked into so that such practices can be curtailed. The Nigerian government can also adopt a hybridized approach that extends social benefits to informal workers (Chen, 2016). Market women need the support of the government at all levels. In their local context, there is a need for adequate public infrastructures, and they also need economic support in the form of credits and loans, as participants' recommendations reflect. Without these supports, market women will remain vulnerable to livelihood insecurities that may arise in the form of local or global crises such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. There are already tensions arising from what women can do within these markets to support themselves and the structures that limit their ability to make profits and meet their needs.

7.4 Future Research

²⁶ See for example Nigeria's VNR 2020 Report
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26308VNR_2020_Nigeria_Report.pdf

The findings demonstrate that the informal sector, which is home to so many women and men, is a crucial site for studying peace and conflict engagements and that using a gender lens when studying this sector, as any other, is crucial. Their peace has a ripple effect. The study shows that the gendered structure of local markets ensures that women play an essential role in making key household items available for people in and outside the communities where the markets are located. Thus, the marketplaces serve as a site that connects buyers, sellers, and communities—also serving as a potential site for positive peacebuilding engagements. The scope of this study is limited because the study centers on the experiences of selected market women who are mostly petty traders and mainly in the food items selling sector. To expand this scope, future research can consider more in-depth the peace and conflict experiences of females in the manufacturing and wholesale sectors of informal local markets in Southeastern Nigeria. This is particularly important for the PACS field as fewer studies are grounded in PACS in the informal sector in this region and other regions.

Another finding is that women build peace through their various relational activities and practices that are created to lend support and meet basic needs. However, findings also show that structural challenges impede this process on the one hand, and on the other hand, how women experience these challenges vary. Future research can consider, through an intersectional approach, how structural violence impedes women's peacebuilding activities not as a collective group but based on individual factors, such as age, disability, education, culture, location etc.

Relatedly, women play an essential role as retail food traders making food accessible to diverse households. Future research in this region can seek to understand the other roles women play in the food security chain as manufacturers, wholesale distributors and the gendered challenges that they experience in this task. This will be a meaningful contribution to feminist scholarship and the field of peace and conflict studies because findings may highlight the gender dimensions of the food security sector, its connections to peace and livelihood and the hindrances to attaining a more justifiable food secure community, thus, highlighting the peacebuilding roles women play as food security agents in this region and how they can be supported in their roles.

Future research can explore peacebuilding from the perspectives of male and female market leaders. Future research can also seek to understand in-depth the various challenges that can hinder social justice initiatives in informal local markets and address how governments at all

levels can work with market management and authority, including market groups in making changes where necessary and outrightly altering other policies and structures that are cumbersome and can impact experiences of peace for market traders as a group and individually.

7.5 Conclusion

This concluding chapter has sought to: present the key findings, link the findings to the field of PACS, and show the contributions of the study to feminist scholarship. The findings show that informal marketplaces are a crucial site for studying and understanding how people experience conflict and make meaning of peace and peacebuilding in their contexts. The study shows that market women are key peacebuilding agents because, through their livelihood activities, women deliver basic needs items and services to their communities. They do this by working together, dealing with their differences, and advocating together for necessary changes. The findings also show that local informal markets are structures that make this possible. Through local markets, people can buy food items they eat, the clothes they wear, and other household necessities as reflected in the items that participants sell (food, clothing, bags and shoes). Market women and marketplaces thus contribute to the understanding of 'local' peacebuilding in its most basic, *realistic* contextual meaning. The findings, at the same time, reflect the contextual meaning of positive peace. This concluding chapter has also described key findings that symbolize structural violence in marketplaces and how women experience this. The chapter has also presented ways to address this-with contributions from market women. And finally, this chapter has suggested critical areas for future research to enrich our knowledge and the field of PACS understanding of peace and conflict as experienced in the local contexts.

References

- Abaronye, I. F. (2011). Gender relations in Ibibio traditional organizations. In O. Nnaemeka, & C. J. Korih (Eds.), *Shaping our struggles: Nigerian women in history, culture and social change* (pp. 163-173). Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Abigo, A., Gidado, K., & Gilchrist, P. (2015). Facilities management for African urban marketplaces: Attitudes toward waste management. In S. Laryea, & R. Leiringer (Eds.), *Procs 6th West Africa Built Environment Research (WABER) Conference 10-12 August* (pp. 503-516). Accra, Ghana. Retrieved from <https://cris.brighton.ac.uk/ws/files/372859/Facilities%20management%20for%20African%20urban%20marketplaces-%20attitudes%20toward%20waste%20management.pdf>
- Aboobaker, N., Edward, M., & K.A, Z. (2019). Workplace spirituality, employee wellbeing and intention to stay: A multi-group analysis of teachers' career choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 33(1), 28-44.
- Achebe, C. (2010). Igbo Women in the Nigerian-Biafran War 1967-1970: An interplay of control. *Journal of Black Studies*, 40(5), 785-811.
- Achebe, N. (2011). *Female king of colonial Nigeria : Ahebi Ugbabe*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Achebe, N. (2011). Ogidi Palaver: The 1914 Women's Market Protest. In O. Nnaemeka, & C. Korih (Eds.), *Shaping our struggles: Nigerian women in history, culture and social change* (pp. 23-51). Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Acholonu, C. (1995). *Motherism: The Afro-centril alternative to feminism*. Owerri: Afa Publications.
- Adams, A. M., Madhavan, S., & Simon, D. (2002). Women's social networks and child survival in Mali. *Social Science & Medicine*, 54(2), 165-178.
- Adejumo, G. O., Azuh, D. (2013). Patterns of workplace violence among women in informal sector in South west, Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, 4(1), 9-13.
- Adelaja, A., & George, J. (2019). Effects of conflict on agriculture: Evidence from the Boko Haram insurgency. *World Development*, 117, 184-195.
- Adeogun, T. J., & Muthuki, J. M. (2018). Feminist perspectives on peacebuilding: The case of women's organisations in South Sudan. *Agenda*, 32(2), 83-92.
- Agbasiere, J. T. (2000). *Women in Igbo life and thought*. London: Routledge.

- Aguwa, J. C. (1997). Widowhood practices in Uturu: Traditional values in a changing religious milieu. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 70(1), 20-30.
- Agwu, R. (2017, August 11). Aba market women protest alleged imposition of N3, 600 tax. *The Nigerian Voice*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/255848/aba-market-women-protest-alleged-imposition-of-n3600-tax.html>
- Aina, O. (1998). African women at the grassroots: The silent partners of the women's movement. In O. Nnaemeka (Ed.), *Sisterhood, feminisms and power: From Africa to the diaspora* (pp. 65-88). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Alaribe, U. (2018, October 5). Aba market women protest security levy. *Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/10/aba-market-women-protest-security-levy/>
- Alaribe, U. (2020, April 6). *COVID -19: Abia govt threatens to arrest traders for defying lockdown*. *Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/04/covid-19-abia-govt-threatens-to-arrest-traders-for-defying-lockdown/>
- Alaribe, U., & Ugbor, E. (2020, August 30). *Aba traders accuse commissioner, market chairman of extortion*. Retrieved from Vanguard: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/08/aba-traders-accuse-commissioner-market-chairman-of-extortion/>
- Alderslade, J., Talmage, J., & Freeman, Y. (2006). *Measuring the informal economy – one neighborhood at a time*. The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20060905_informaleconomy.pdf
- Alhuzail, N. A. (2018). A place of many names: How three generations of Bedouin women express the meaning of home. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 33(2), 247-262.
- Ali, F. A. (2019). War and armed conflict: Threat to African women's human security. In B. Reardon, & A. Hans (Eds.), *The Gender Imperative : Human security Vs state security* (2nd ed., pp. 108-133). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Alm, O. (2011). The meaning of water in security policy. In O. Alm, & T. Juntunen (Eds.), *Human security-Perspectives and practical examples* (pp. 126-131). The Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network KATU. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tapio_Juntunen/publication/283714409_Human_Security_-_Perspectives_and_Practical_Examples/links/5644589d08ae9f9c13e41e24.pdf
- Aluko, O., & Ikokwu, O. (2017, September 11). *Soldiers, IPOB members clash in Abia, two injured*. Retrieved from Punch: <https://punchng.com/soldiers-ipob-members-clash-in-abia-two-injured/>
- Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male daughters, female husbands gender and sex in an African society*. London: Zed Books.

- Amaral, P. S., & Quintin, E. (2006). A competitive model of the informal sector. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 53(7), 1541-1553.
- Anicich, E. M., Fast, N. J., Halevy, N., & Galinsky, A. D. (2016). When the bases of social hierarchy collide: Power without status drives interpersonal conflict. *Organization Science*, 27(1), 123-140.
- Anton, C. E., & Lawrence, C. (2016). The relationship between place attachment, the theory of planned behaviour and residents' response to place change. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 47, 145-154.
- Antonioni, D. (1998). Relationship between the big five personality factors and conflict management styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 9(4), 336-355.
- Arias, M. A., Ibáñez, A. M., & Zambrano, A. (2019). Agricultural production amid conflict: Separating the effects of conflict into shocks and uncertainty. *World Development*, 119, 165-184.
- Asante, L., & Helbrecht, I. (2018). Conceptualising marketplaces in Anglophone West Africa: A sexpartite framework. *GeoJournal*, 85, 221-236.
- Asogwa, F. C. (2015). Women's involvement in indigenous conflict management: An analysis of the role of Umuada in conflict management in traditional Igbo society of southeastern Nigeria. In A. G. Adebayo, B. D. Lundy, J. J. Benjamin, & J. K. Adjei (Eds.), *Indigenous conflict management strategies in West Africa: Beyond right and wrong* (pp. 135-144). Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Atesagaoglu, O. E., Bayram, D., & Elgin, C. (2017). Informality and structural transformation. *Central Bank Review*, 17(4), 117-126.
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 385-405.
- Augsburger, D. W. (1992). *Conflict mediation across cultures*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Avruch, K. (1998). *Culture and conflict resolution*. Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Awuchi, C. G., Uyo, C. N., Ukpe, A. E., Asoegwu, C. R., Anyahara, J. N., Peters, G. C., . . . Oragba, C. H. (2020). Comparative analysis of the noise level at Ariaria international market and Eziukwu market, Aba, Abia State. *European Academic Research*, VIII(4), 1900-1910.
- Ayodele, J. O. (2014). Gender victimization: A study of widowhood practices among Ogo people of Lagos. *SAGE open*, 4(3), 1-8.
- Ayres, J., & Bosia, M. J. (2011). Beyond global summitry: Food sovereignty as localized resistance to globalization. *Globalizations*, 8(1), 47-63.

- Azodo, A. U. (2019). Di-feminims: Valorizing the Igbo concept of 'Agunwany'i'. In A. U. Azodo (Ed.), *African feminisms in the global arena: Novel perspectives on gender, class, ethnicity, and race* (pp. 7-61). Glassboro, New Jersey: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing.
- Baah-Ennumh, & Adom-Asamoah, G. (2012). The role of market women in the informal urban economy in Kumasi. *Journal of Science and Technology*, 32(2), 56-67.
- Bacal, R. (2004). Organizational Conflict-The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 27(2), 21-22.
- Balogun, F. A. (2020). Anatomy of marketing in Oja'ba and Oje traditional markets, Ibadan Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Studies*, 23(1), 66-77.
- Balogun, F. A. (n.d.). Management of traditonal markets in Ibadan, Nigeria: A focus on Oja'ba and Oje markets. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Femi_Balogun2/publication/340566243_MANAGEMENT_OF_TRADITONAL_MARKETS_IN_IBADAN_NIGERIA_A_FOCUS_ON_OJAB_A'BA_AND_OJE_MARKETS/links/5e90ec02a6fdcca7890a3bfe/MANAGEMENT-OF-TRADITONAL-MARKETS-IN-IBADAN-NIGERIA-A-FOCUS-ON-OJAB
- Banks, N., Lombard, M., & Mitlin, D. (2019). Urban informality as a site of critical analysis. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 56(2), 223-238.
- Barki, H., & Hartwick, J. (2004). Conceptualizing the construct of interpersonal conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 15(3), 216-244.
- Battersby, J., & Watson, V. (2019). Introduction. In J. Battersby, & V. Watson (Eds.), *Urban food systems governance and poverty in African cities* (pp. 1-26). London: Routledge.
- Bawadi, H. A., Tayyem, R. F., Dwairy, A. N., & Akour, N. A. (2012). Prevalence of food insecurity among women in northern Jordan. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 30(1), 49-55.
- BBC. (2010, December 13). *Nigeria army kills 'kidnap gang leader' in Abia state*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-11982166>
- Behfar, K. J., Mannix, E. A., Peterson, R. S., & Trochim, W. M. (2011). Conflict in small groups: The meaning and consequences of process conflict. *Small Group Research*, 42(2), 127-176.
- Bell, C. (2009). Transitional justice, interdisciplinarity and the state of the 'field' or 'non-field'. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 3(1), 5-27.
- Belloni, R. (2012). Hybrid peace governance: Its emergence and significance. *Global Governance*, 18(1), 21-38.

- Bendersky, C., & Hays, N. A. (2012). Status Conflict in Groups. *Organization Science*, 23(2), 323-340.
- Beoku-Betts, J. (2005). Western perceptions of African women in the 19th & early 20th centuries. In A. Cornwall (Ed.), *Readings in gender in Africa* (pp. 20-24). London: The International African Institute.
- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Bliss, H., & Russett, B. (1998). Democratic trading partners: The liberal connection, 1962-1989. *The Journal of Politics*, 60(4), 1126-1147.
- Bonkat, L. (2014). Survival strategies of market women and violent conflicts in Jos, Nigeria . *Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, 3(3), 281-299.
- Bonnet, F., Vanek, J., & Chen, M. (2019). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical brief*. Manchester, UK: y Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_711798.pdf
- Bowden, R., Even-Zahav, E., & Kelly, C. (2018). Innovative food procurement strategies. *Urban Forum*, 29, 315–332.
- Brahnam, S. D., Margavio, T. M., Hignite, M. A., Barrier, T. B., & Chin, J. M. (2005). A gender-based categorization for conflict resolution. *The Journal of Management Development*, 24(3), 197-208.
- Bruk Lee, V., Nixon, A. E., & Spector, P. E. (2013). An expanded typology of conflict at work: Task, relationship and non-task organizational conflict as social stressors. *Work and Stress*, 27(4), 339-350.
- Bureau, S., & Fendt, J. (2011). Entrepreneurship in the informal economy: Why it matters. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 12(2), 85–94.
- Burke, A. (2012). Hollow words: Foreign aid and peacebuilding in peripheral conflicts. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 39(4), 181-201.
- Burton, J. (1990). *Conflict: Human needs theory*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Byfield, J. (2003). Taxation, women and the colonial state: Egba women's tax revolt. *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, 3(2), 250-277.
- Byrne, S., & Senehi, J. (2009). Conflict analysis and resolution as a multidiscipline: A work in progress. In D. J. Sandole, S. Byrne, I. Sandole-Staroste, & J. Senehi (Eds.), *Handbook of conflict analysis and resolution* (pp. 3-16). New York: Routledge.

- Byrne, S., Carter, N., & Senehi, J. (2001). Social cubism and social conflict: Analysis and resolution. *ILSA Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 8, 725-740. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1385&context=ilsajournal/>
- Cahill-Ripley, A. (2016). Reclaiming the peacebuilding agenda: Economic and social rights as a legal framework for building positive peace-A human security plus approach to peacebuilding. *Human Rights Law Review*, 16(2), 223-246.
- Carastathis, A. (2014). The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory. *Philosophy Compass*, 9(5), 304-314.
- Castillo, R. (2014). Feeling at home in the “Chocolate City”: an exploration of place-making practices and structures of belonging amongst Africans in Guangzhou. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 15(2), 235-257.
- Chandler, D. (2017). *Peacebuilding: The twenty years' crisis, 1997-2017*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Chant, S., & Pedwell, C. (2008). Women, gender and the informal economy: An assessment of ILO research and suggested ways forward. International Labour Organization (ILO). Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_091228.pdf
- Chen, M. A. (2016). The informal economy: Recent trends, future directions. *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, 26(2), 155-172.
- Chinn, P. L., & Falk-Rafael, A. (2015). Peace and power: A theory of emancipatory group process. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 47(1), 62-69.
- Christie, D. J., Tint, B. S., Wagner, R. V., & Winter, D. D. (2008). Peace psychology for a peaceful world. *The American Psychologist*, 63(6), 540-552.
- Chuku, G. (1995). Women in the economy of Igboland, 1900 to 1970: A survey. *African Economic History*, 23, 37-50.
- Chuku, G. (1999). From petty traders to international merchants: A historical account of three igbo women of nigeria in trade and commerce, 1886 to 1970. *African Economic History*, (27), 1-22.
- Chuku, G. (2005). *Igbo women and economic transformation in southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960 (African studies)*. New York: Routledge.
- Chuku, G. (2009). Igbo women and political participation in Nigeria, 1800s-2005. *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 42(1), 81-104.
- Chuku, G. (2018). Igbo historiography: Parts I, II, and III. *History Compass*, 16(10), 1-11.

- Chukukere, G. (1998). An appraisal of feminism in the socio-political development of Nigeria. In O. Nnaemeka (Ed.), *Sisterhood, feminisms and power: From Africa to the diaspora* (pp. 133-148). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Cieraad, I. (2010). Homes from home: Memories and projections. *Home Cultures*, 7(1), 85-102.
- Clark, G. (1994). *Onions are my husband : Survival and accumulation by West African market women*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). Concepts and coding. In A. Coffey, & P. Atkinson, *Making sense of qualitative data: Complimentary research strategies* (pp. 26-53). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cohen, M. J., & Pinstrup-Andersen, P. (1999). Food security and conflict. *Social Research*, 66(1), 375-416.
- Coles, A., Macdonald, F., & Delaney, A. (2018). Gender and informality at work – theoretical provocations: an introduction to the special issue on gender and informality. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work*, 28(2), 93-98.
- Collier, P. (1999). Doing well out of war. *Economic agendas in civil wars*. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.17.239&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56, 563-595. Retrieved from <https://www.econ.nyu.edu/user/debraj/Courses/Readings/CollierHoeffler.pdf>
- Collier, M. J., Lawless, B., & Ringera, K. (2016). Negotiating Contextually Contingent Agency: *Women Studies in Communication*, 39(4), 399-421.
- Collins, P. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, 33(6), 14-32.
- Collins, P. (1993). Toward a new vision: Race, class and gender as categories of analysis and connection. *Race, Sex and Class*, 1(1), 25-45.
- Companion, M. (2008). The underutilization of street markets as a source of food security indicators in Famine Early Warning Systems: A case study of Ethiopia. *Disasters*, 32(3), 399-415.
- Confortini, C. C. (2006). Galtung, violence, and gender: The case for a peace studies/feminism alliance. *Peace & Change*, 33(3), 333-367.
- Cooper, H. T. (2003). What is conflict?: How are conflicts resolved? *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, 3(1), 85-100.
- Cooper, N., Turner, M., & Pugh, M. (2011). The end of history and the last liberal peacebuilder: a reply to Roland Paris. *Review of International Studies*, 37(4), 1995-2007.

- Cornwall, A. (2005). Introduction: Perspectives on gender in Africa. In A. Cornwall (Ed.), *Readings in gender in Africa* (pp. 1-20). Bloomington & Indianapolis: The International African Institute.
- Cornwall, A. (2007). Of choice, chance and contingency: 'Career strategies' and tactics for survival among Yoruba women traders. *European Association of Social Anthropologists*, 15(1), 27-46.
- Cox, R. (2016). What are homes made of? Building materials, DIY and the homeyness of homes. *Home Cultures*, 13(1), 63-82.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (2012). From private violence to mass incarceration: Thinking intersectionally about women, race, and social control. *UCLA Law Review*, 59, 1418–1810.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative research inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crosby, F. (1976). A model of egoistical relative deprivation. *Psychological Review*, 83(2), 85-113.
- Crouch, M., & McKenzie, H. (2006). The logic of small samples in interview-based qualitative research. *Social Science Information*, 45(4), 483-499.
- Crush, J. S., & Frayne, G. B. (2011). Urban food insecurity and the new international food security agenda. *Development Southern Africa*, 28(4), 527-544.
- Cruz, J. (2012). *Food, peace and organizing: Liberian market women in peacetime*. [Doctoral dissertation. Texas A & M University]. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/147230297.pdf>
- Cruz, J. (2015). Dirty work at the intersections of gender, class, and nation: Liberian market women in postconflict times. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 38(4), 421-439.
- Cuba, L., & Hummon, D. M. (1993). Constructing a sense of home: Place affiliation and migration across the life cycle. *Sociological Forum*, 8(4), 547-572.
- Daily Trust. (2020, July 4). *Fare hikes bite as interstate travel resumes*. Retrieved from: <https://dailytrust.com/fare-hikes-bite-as-interstate-travel-resumes>
- De Coning, C. (2016). From peacebuilding to sustaining peace: Implications of complexity for resilience and sustainability. *Resilience*, 4(3), 166-181.

- De Dreu, C. K., & Weingart, L. R. (2003). Task versus relationship conflict, team performance, and team member satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(4), 741-749.
- de la Rey, C., & McKay, S. (2002). Peace as a gendered process: Perspectives of women doing peacebuilding in South Africa. *International Journal of Peace Studies, 7*(1), 91-101.
- de la Rey, C., & McKay, S. (2006). Peacebuilding as a gendered Process. *Journal of Social Issues, 62*(1), 141-153.
- Debenedetti, A., Oppewal, H., & Arsel, Z. (2014). Place attachment in commercial settings: A gift economy perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research, 40*(5), 904–923,.
- DeChurch, L. A., Mesmer-Magnus, J. R., & Doty, D. (2013). Moving beyond relationship and task conflict: Toward a process-state perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 98*(4), 559-578.
- Delaney, A., & Macdonald, F. (2018). Thinking about informality: gender (in)equality (in) decent work across geographic and economic boundaries. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work, 28*(2), 99-114.
- DeVault, M. L. (1996). Talking back to sociology: Distinctive contributions of feminist methodology. *Annual Review of Sociology, 22*, 29-50.
- Devine-Wright, P. (2009). Rethinking NIMBYism: The role of place attachment and place identity in explaining Explaining place-protective action. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 426–441*.
- Di Pietro, L., & Di Virgilio, F. (2013). The role of organizational culture on informal conflict management. *International Journal of Public Administration, 36*(13), 910-921.
- Doody, O., Slevin, E., & Taggart, L. (2013). Focus group interviews. part 3: Analysis. *British Journal of Nursing, 22*(5), 266-269.
- Doucet, A., & Mauthner, N. (2008). What can be known and how? Narrated subjects and the Listening Guide. *Qualitative Research, 8*(3), 399-409.
- Douglas, M. (1991). The idea of a home: A kind of space. *Social Research, 58*(1), 287-307 .
- Doyle, M. (1983). Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs. *Philosophy and Public Affairs, 12*(3), 205-235.
- Dzanku, F. M. (2019). Food security in rural sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the nexus between gender, geography and off-farm employment. *World Development, 113*, 26–43.
- Easthope, H. (2004). A place called home. *Housing, Theory and Society, 21*(3), 128-138.
- Ejike, B. U., Ejike, E. N., Ogbonna, C. R., & Onu, E. O. (2018). Geohelminth contamination of vegetables sold in some markets in Aba North, South East, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Parasitology, 39*(2), 194-198.

- Ekoyor, T. A., & Gbowee, L. R. (2005). Women's peace activism in West Africa: The WIPNET experience. In P. V. Tongeren, M. Brenk, M. Hellema, & J. Verhoeven (Eds.), *People building peace II: Successful stories of civil society* (pp. 133-140). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Ekpo, V. I. (2011). Colonialism and the social status of women in Southeastern Nigeria: The Ibibio women experience. In O. Nnaemeka, & C. J. Korieh (Eds.), *Shaping our struggles: Nigerian women in history, culture and social change* (pp. 89-99). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Eleanya, F. (2019, August 3). *Aba to get constant power as geometric activates plant Q1, 2020*. Retrieved from: <https://businessday.ng/energy/power/article/aba-to-get-constant-power-as-geometric-activates-plant-q1-2020/>
- Elwood, S., Lawson, V., & Nowak, S. (2015). Middle-class poverty politics: Making place, making people. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 105(1), 123-143.
- Enenkel, M., & Anderson, M. (2015). Drought and food security- Improving decision-support via new technologies and innovative collaboration. *Global Food Security*, 4, 51-55.
- Ene-Obong, H. N., Iroegbu, C. U., & Uwaegbute, A. C. (2000). Perceived causes and management of diarrhoea in young children by market women in Enugu state, Nigeria. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 18(2), 97-102.
- Ene-Obong, H. N., Uwaegbute, A. C., Iroegbu, C. U., Amazigo, U. V., & Ene-Obong, H. N. (1998). The effect of two child-care practices of market women on diarrhoea prevalence, feeding patterns and nutritional status of children aged 0-24 months. *Journal of Diarrhoeal Diseases Research*, 16(3), 173-179.
- Enloe, C. (2014). *Bananas, beaches and bases: Making feminist sense of international politics* (2nd ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Escobar, A. (2001). Culture sits in places: Reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization. *Political Geography*, 20(2), 139-174.
- Eweluka, U. U. (2002). Post-Colonialism, gender, customary injustice: Widows in African societies. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 24(2), 424-486 .
- Ezeigbo, A. (2019). Unity in diverse indigenous feminisms. In A. U. Azodo (Ed.), *African feminisms in the global arena: Novel perspectives on gender, class, ethnicity and race* (pp. 63-75). Glassboro, New Jersey: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing.
- Ezeigbo, T. A. (1990). Traditional women's institutions in Igbo society: Implications for the Igbo female writer. *African Languages and Cultures*, 3(2), 149-165.
- Fagbemi, O. A., & Hassan, A. R. (2009). Effectiveness of women managers in organizations: Challenges and prospects. *ASCON, Journal of Management*, 30(1-2), 22-42.

- Federal Government of Nigeria. (2020). *Nigeria, integrating of the SDGs into national development planning: A second voluntary national review*. Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26308VNR_2020_Nigeria_Report.pdf
- Flaherty, M. P., & Hansen, N. (2015). (Dis)ability, gender, and peacebuilding: Natural absences present but invisible. In M. P. Flaherty, T. G. Matyok, S. Byrne, & H. Tuso (Eds.), *Gender and peacebuilding: All hands required* (pp. 375-389). Lanham: Lexington.
- Flores, M., Khwaja, Y., & White, P. (2005). Food security in protracted crises: building more effective policy frameworks. *Disasters*, 29(S1), S25-S51.
- Folger, J. P., Poole, M. S., & Stutman, R. K. (2013). *Working through conflict: Strategies for relationships, groups, and organizations* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Fonow, M. M., & Cook, J. A. (1991). A look at the second wave of feminist epistemology and methodology. In M. M. Fonow, & J. A. Cook (Eds.), *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship as lived research*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2008). *An introduction to the basic concepts of food security*. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/a-al936e.pdf>
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2008). *Food security information for action*. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/elearning/Course/FC/en/pdf/trainerresources/learnernotes0411.pdf>
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2016). *Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations: A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council*. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/a-c0335e.pdf>
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (n.d.). *Nigeria at a glance*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/nigeria/fao-in-nigeria/nigeria-at-a-glance/en/>
- Friedmann, J. (2007). Reflections on place and place-making in the cities of China. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31(2), 257-279.
- Friel, S., Berry, H., Dinh, H., Lean, O., & Walls, H. L. (2014). The impact of drought on the association between food security and mental health in a nationally representative Australian sample. *BMC Public Health*, 14(1102), 1-11.
- Friesen, L. D. (2017). The failures of neoliberal food security and the food sovereignty alternative. *University of Saskatchewan Undergraduate Research Journal*, 4(1).
- Funk, L. M., Allan, D. E., & Stajduhar, K. I. (2009). Palliative family caregivers' accounts of health care experiences: The importance of "security". *Palliative and Supportive Care*, 7, 435-447.

- Funk, L., Chappell, N. L., & Liu, G. (2011). Associations between filial responsibility and caregiver well-being: Are there differences by cultural group? *Research on Aging*, 35(1), 78–95.
- Futamura, M., Newman, E., & Tadjbakhsh, S. (2011). Towards a human security approach to peacebuilding. In O. Alm, & T. Juntunen (Eds.), *Human security-perspectives and practical examples* (pp. 45-55). The Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network KATU. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tapio_Juntunen/publication/283714409_Human_Security_-_Perspectives_and_Practical_Examples/links/5644589d08ae9f9c13e41e24.pdf
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291-305.
- Gareau, S. E. (2004). The development of guidelines for implementing information technology to promote food security. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 21, 273–285.
- Gartzke, E. (2007). The capitalist peace. *American Journal of Political Science*, 5(1), 166-191.
- George, L. (2020, January 23). A growing problem: Nigerian rice farmers fall short after borders close. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-economy-rice-idUSKBN1ZM109>
- Gieryn, T. F. (2000). A space for place in sociology. *Annual review of sociology*, 26(1), 463-496.
- Goetschel, L., & Hagmann, T. (2009). Civilian peacebuilding: peace by bureaucratic. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 9(1), 55-73.
- Gopinath, M., & DasGupta, S. (2005). Women breaking the silence: The Athwaas initiative in Kashmir. In P. V. Tongeren, M. Brenk, M. Hellema, & J. Verhoeven (Eds.), *People building peace II: Successful stories of civil society* (pp. 111-116). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Government of Abia State. (n.d.). *About*. Retrieved from <https://abiastate.gov.ng/about/>
- Gready, P., & Robins, S. (2017). Rethinking civil society and transitional justice: lessons from social movements and ‘new’ civil society. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 21(7), 956-975.
- Greeff, A. P., & De Bruyne, T. (2000). Conflict management style and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 26(4), 321-334.
- Gringeri, C. E., Wahab, S., & Anderson-Nathe, B. (2010). What makes it feminist?: Mapping the landscape of feminist social work research. *Affilia*, 25(4), 390-405.

- Guerra, J. M., Martínez, I. M. L., & Medina, F. J. (2007). A contingency perspective on the study of the consequences of conflict types: The role of organizational culture. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 14(2), 157-176.
- Gunkel, M., Schlaegel, C., & Taras, V. (2016). Cultural values, emotional intelligence, and conflict handling styles: A global study. *Journal of World Business: JWB*, 51(4), 568-585.
- Gurr, T. (1971). *Why men rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gustafson, P. (2001). Meanings of place: Everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(1), 5-16.
- Gustafsson, K., & Krickel-Choi, N. C. (2020). Returning to the roots of ontological security: insights from the existentialist anxiety literature. *European Journal of International Relations*, 1-20. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1354066120927073>
- Hafkin, N. J., & Bay, E. G. (1976). Introduction. In N. J. Hafkin, & E. G. Bay (Eds.), *Women in Africa: Studies in social and economic change* (pp. 1-18). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hans, A. (2019). Human security: The militarized perception and space for gender . In B. Reardon, & A. Hans (Eds.), *The gender imperative: Human security vs state security* (2nd ed., pp. 366-391). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hanson, S. (1992). Geography and feminism: Worlds in collision? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82(4), 569-586.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledged: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 577-599.
- Harding, S. (1987). The method question. *Feminism & Science*, 2(3), 19-35.
- Harding, S., & Norberg, K. (2005). New feminist approaches to social science methodologies: An introduction. *Signs*, 30(4), 2009-2015.
- Harrison, J., MacGibbon, L., & Morton, M. (2001). Regimes of trustworthiness in qualitative research: The rigors of reciprocity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(3), 323-345.
- Hasselskog, M., & Schierenbeck, I. (2015). National policy in local practice: The case of Rwanda. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(5), 950-966.
- Heap, L., Tom, B., & Weller, S. (2018). De facto informality? Rethinking the experience of women in the formally regulated workplace. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work* , 28(2), 115-129.

- Helmy, S., Labib, A., & AbouKahf, A. (2014). The Impact of Islamic values on interpersonal relationship conflict management in Egyptian business organizations “an applied study”. *Procedia, Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 143, 1090-1110.
- Hendriks, T. D. (2017). Collaboration and competition: market queens, trade unions and collective action of informal workers in Ghana’s Makola Market. *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*, 9(2), 162 - 187.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2007). The practice of feminist in-depth interviewing. In S. N. Hesse-Biber, & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist research practice* (pp. 111-148). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Hidalgo, M. C., & Hernandez, B. (2001). Placement attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(3), 273-281.
- Hirschmann, N. (2012). Disability as a new frontier for feminist intersectionality research. *Politics & Gender*, 8(3), 396-405.
- Howell, G. (2020). Harmonious relations: A framework for studying varieties of peace in music-based peacebuilding. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 1-23. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gillian_Howell2/publication/343997944_Harmonious_Relations_A_Framework_for_Studying_Varieties_of_Peace_in_Music-Based_Peacebuilding/links/5f741d94299bf1b53effff1/Harmonious-Relations-A-Framework-for-Studying-Varieties
- Huang, J.-C. (2010). Unbundling task conflict and relationship conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 21(3), 334-355.
- Ide, T. (2015). Why do conflicts over scarce renewable resources turn violent? A qualitative comparative analysis. *Global Environmental Change*, 33, 61-70.
- Ikokwu, O. (2019, May 24). Abia market women protest N16,000 levy. *Punch*, Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/abia-market-women-protest-n16000-levy/>
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2020). *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy*. Retrieved from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743623.pdf
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2018). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf
- International Monetary Fund (IMF). (2018). *Good for women good for growth: Closing Nigeria’s gender gap. IMF Podcasts*. Retrieved from

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Podcasts/All-Podcasts/2018/03/08/nigeria-gender-inequality>

- Iroegbu, C. U., Ene-obong, H. N., Uwaegbute, A. C., & Amazigo, U. V. (2000). Bacteriological quality of weaning food and drinking water given to children of market women in Nigeria: Implications for control of diarrhoea. *Journal of health, population and nutrition, 18*(3), 157-162.
- Ivers, L. C., & Cullen, K. A. (2011). Food insecurity: Special considerations for women. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 94*(6), 1740S-1744S.
- Iweriebor, I. (1998). Carrying the baton: Personal perspectives on the modern women's movement in Nigeria. In O. Nnaemeka (Ed.), *Sisterhoods feminisms & power: From Africa to the diaspora* (pp. 297-305). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Landman, M. (2006). Getting quality in qualitative research: A short introduction to feminist methodology and methods. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society, 65*, 429-433.
- Limerick, B., & O'Leary, J. (2006). Re-inventing or recycling?: Examples of feminist qualitative research informing the management field. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, 1*(2), 98-112.
- Loureiro, S. M. (2014). The role of the rural tourism experience economy in place attachment and behavioral intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 40*, 1-9.
- Jarstad, A. K., & Belloni, R. (2012). Introducing hybrid peace governance: Impact and prospects of liberal peacebuilding. *Global Governance, 18*(1), 1-6.
- Jehn, K. A., & Mannix, E. A. (2001). The dynamic nature of conflict: A longitudinal study of intragroup conflict and group performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*(2), 238-251.
- Jell-Bahlsen, S. (1998). Female power: Water priestesses of the Oru-Igbo. In O. Nnaemeka (Ed.), *Sisterhood, feminisms and power: From Africa to the diaspora* (pp. 101-131). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Joshi, A., Prichard, W., & Heady, C. (2014). Taxing the informal economy: The current state of knowledge and Agenda for future research. *The Journal of Development Studies, 50*(10), 1325-1347.
- Joshi, M., Lee, Y. S., & Mac Ginty, R. (2014). Just how liberal is the liberal peace? *International Peacekeeping, 21*(3), 364-389.
- Kah, H. K. (2017). Boko Haram is losing, but so is food production: Conflict and food insecurity in Nigeria and Cameroon. *Africa Development, 42*(3), 177-196.

- Kappler, S., & Lemay-Hébert, N. (2019). From power-blind binaries to the intersectionality of peace: Connecting feminism and critical peace and conflict studies. *Peacebuilding*, 7(2), 160-177.
- Kaushal, R., & Kwantes, C. T. (2006). The role of culture and personality in choice of conflict management strategy. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30(5), 579-603.
- Kennedy, E., & Peters, P. (1992). Household food security and child nutrition: The interaction of income and gender of household head. *World Development*, 20(9), 1077-1085.
- Kiptot, E., Franzel, S., & Degrande, A. (2014). Gender, agroforestry and food security in Africa. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 6, 104-109.
- Kiteme, K. (1992). The socioeconomic impact of the African market women trade in rural Kenya. *Journal of Black Studies*, 23(1), 135-151.
- Kogan, F., Guo, W., & Yang, W. (2019). Drought and food security prediction from NOAA new generation of operational satellites. *Geomatics, Natural Hazards and Risk*, 10(1), 651-666.
- Kolawole, M. (2002). Transcending incongruities: Rethinking feminisms and the dynamics of identity in Africa. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 17(54), 92-98.
- Kolodinsky, R. W., Giacalone, R. A., & Jurkiewicz, C. L. (2007). Workplace Values and outcomes: Exploring personal, organizational, and interactive workplace spirituality. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 81(2), 465-480.
- Korhonen, S. (2011). A change of paradigm – Towards human security? In O. Alm, & T. Juntunen (Eds.), *Human security—perspectives and practical examples* (pp. 16-26). The Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network KATU. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tapio_Juntunen/publication/283714409_Human_Security_-_Perspectives_and_Practical_Examples/links/5644589d08ae9f9c13e41e24.pdf
- Korieh, C. (2006). Voices from within and without: Sources, methods, and problematics in the recovery of the agrarian history of the Igbo (southeastern Nigeria). *History in Africa*, 33, 231-253.
- Korieh, C. (2007). Yam is king! But cassava is the mother of all crops: Farming, culture, and identity in igbo agrarian economy. *Dialect Anthropol*, 31(1-3), 221–232.
- Korieh, C. (2010). *The land has changed: History, society and gender in colonial Eastern Nigeria*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. Retrieved from https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/48254/UofCPress_LandHasChanged_2010.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y

- Korieh, C. (2011). Women and peasant movement in colonial eastern Nigeria. In O. Nnaemeka, & C. J. Korieh (Eds.), *Shapping our struggles: Nigerian women in history culture and social change* (pp. 53-87). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Law, C. (2019). Unintended consequence of trade on regional dietary patterns in rural India. *World Development*, *113*, 277–293.
- Lê, J. K., & Jarzabkowski, P. A. (2015). The role of task and process conflict in strategizing. *British Journal of Management*, *26*(3), 439-462.
- Lederach, J. P. (1995). *Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Leonardsson, H., & Rudd, G. (2015). The ‘local turn’ in peacebuilding: A literature review of effective and emancipatory local peacebuilding. *Third World Quarterly*, *36*(5), 825-839.
- Levin, I. M. (2000). Five windows into organization culture: An assessment framework and approach. *Organization Development*, *18*(1), 83-94.
- Lewis, B. (1976). The limitations of group actions among entrepreneurs. In N. J. Hafkin, & E. G. Bay (Eds.), *Women in Africa: Studies in social and economic change* (pp. 135-156). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Loyle, C. E., & Davenport, C. (2016). Transitional injustice: Subverting justice in transition and postconflict societies. *Journal of Human Rights*, *15*(1), 126-149.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2008). Indigenous peace-making versus the liberal peace. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *43*(2), 139–163.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2010). Hybrid peace: The interaction between top-down and bottom-up peace. *Security Dialogue*, *41*(4), 391-412.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2015). Where is the local? Critical localism and peacebuilding. *Third World Quarterly*, *36*(5), 840-856.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2019). Circuits, the everyday and international relations: Connecting the home to the international and transnational. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *54*(2), 234–253.
- Madichie, N. O., & Nkamnebe, A. D. (2010). Micro-credit for microenterprises?: A study of women "petty" traders in Eastern Nigeria. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *25*(4), 301-319.
- Maiangwa, B. (2020). *The crisis of belonging and ethnographies of peacebuilding in Kaduna State, Nigeria*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Mallet, S. (2004). Understanding home: A critical review of the literature. *The Sociological Review*, *52*(1), .62-89.
- Malta, V., Kolovich, L., Leyva, A. M., & Tavares, M. M. (2019). *Informality and gender gaps going hand in hand*. International Monetary Fund (IMF). Retrieved from

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2019/05/23/Informality-and-Gender-Gaps-Going-Hand-in-Hand-46888>

- Mama, A. (2011). What does it mean to do feminist research in African contexts. *Feminist Review*, 98(1), 4-20.
- Mani, R. (2008). Dilemmas of expanding transitional justice, or forging the nexus between transitional justice and development. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 2(3), 253–265.
- Martin, D. G. (2003). “Place-framing” as place-making: Constituting a neighborhood for organizing and activism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93(3), 730-750.
- Martin-Shields, C. P., & Stojetz, W. (2019). Food security and conflict: Empirical challenges and future opportunities for research and policy making on food security and conflict. *World Development*, 119, 150-164.
- Martin, S. (1984). Gender and innovation: Farming, cooking and palm processing in the Ngwa region. *The Journal of African History*, 25(4), 411-427.
- Mazrui, A. A. (1990). *Cultural forces in world politics*. Portsmouth: Heineman.
- Mbah, N. L. (2017). Female masculinities, dissident sexuality, and the material politics of gender in early twentieth-century Igboland. *Journal of Women's History*, 29(4), 35-60.
- McGill, D. (2017). Different violence, different justice? Taking structural violence seriously in post conflict and transitional justice processes. *State Crime Journal*, 6(1), 79-101.
- McIntosh, M. J., & Morse, J. M. (2015). Situating and constructing diversity in semi-structured interviews. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 2, 1-12.
- McIntyre, L., Rondeau, K., Kirkpatrick, S., Hatfield, J., Islam, K. S., & Huda, S. N. (2011). Food provisioning experiences of ultra poor female heads of household living in Bangladesh. *Social Science & Medicine*, 72(6), 969-976.
- Mead, D., & Morrisson, C. (1996). The informal sector elephant. *World Development*, 24(10), 1611-1619.
- Meagher, K. (2016). Taxing Times: taxation, divided societies and the informal economy in Northern Nigeria. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 54(1), 1-17.
- Medina, L., Jonelis, A., & Cangul, M. (2017). The informal economy in sub-Saharan Africa: size and determinants. *IMF Working Paper WP/17/156*.
- Meier, L. L., Gross, S., Spector, P. E., & Semmer, N. K. (2013). Relationship and task conflict at work: Interactive short-term effects on angry mood and somatic complaints. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 18(2), 144-156.

- Menezes, F. (2001). Food Sovereignty: A vital requirement for food security in the context of globalization. *Development*, 44(4), 29-33.
- Millar, G. (2014). Disaggregating hybridity: Why hybrid institutions do not produce predictable experiences of peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(4), 501-514.
- Mitzen, J. (2006). Ontological security in world politics: State identity and the security dilemma. *European Journal of International Relations*, 12(3), 341-370.
- Mitzen, J. (2018). Feeling at home in Europe: Migration, ontological security, and political psychology of EU bordering. *Political Psychology*, 39(6), 1373-1387.
- Moses, J. C. (2017, April 13). How the power distribution gap in Aba is stifling the made in Nigeria dream. *Ventures*. Retrieved from <http://venturesafrica.com/how-the-power-distribution-gap-in-aba-is-stifling-the-made-in-nigeria-dream/>
- Muthien, B. (2019). Human security and intersectional oppressions: Women in South Africa. In B. Reardon, & A. Hans (Eds.), *The gender imperative: Human security vs state security* (2nd ed., pp. 59-82). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Mvingi, I. (2016). Donor-driven transitional justice and peacebuilding. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 11(1), 10-25.
- NBS. (2019). Statistical report on women and men in Nigeria. 2018. *National Bureau of Statistics, Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/952>
- Ndiomewese, I. (2018, January 16). Aba: The long, painful journey to restoring an entrepreneurial city to its former glory. *Techpoint*. Retrieved from <https://techpoint.africa/2018/01/16/restoring-aba-to-former-glory/>
- Ndukwe, O. (2020, September 9). Ekeoha Aba traders, market leaders bicker. *The Sun*. Retrieved from <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/ekeoha-aba-traders-market-leaders-bicker/>
- Nemeh, N. (2019). Jordanian women define security: A feminist approach to an age-old problem. In B. Reardon, & A. Hans (Eds.), *The gender imperative: Human security vs state security* (2nd ed., pp. 303-334). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Nezic, T., & Kerr, W. A. (1996). A market and community development in West Africa. *Community Development Journal*, 31(1), 1-12.
- Nicolaides, A. (2018). The role of spirituality in moderating hospitality industry conflict management and promoting sustainability. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 7(2), 1-18.
- Njoku, R. C., & Adams, T. A. (2011). Social change and gender relations in southeastern Nigeria c. 1650-1900. In N. Obioma, & K. J. Chima (Eds.), *Shaping our struggles: Nigerian*

- women in history culture and social change (pp. 102-127). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Nnaemeka, O. (2004). Nego-feminism: theorizing, practicing, and pruning Africa's way. *Signs*, 29(2), 357-385.
- Nnaemeka, O. (2019). Theorizing African feminisms: Rethinking epistemologies and pedagogies. In A. U. Azodo (Ed.), *In African feminisms in the global arena: Novel perspectives on gender, class, ethnicity, and race* (pp. 185-197). Glassboro, New Jersey: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing.
- Northrup, D. (1972). The growth of trade among the Igbo before 18801. *The Journal of African History*, 13(2), 217-236.
- Nseyen, N. (2020, July 1). Abia State seeks Army's partnership over security. *Daily Post*. Retrieved from <https://dailypost.ng/2020/07/01/abia-state-seeks-armys-partnership-over-security/>
- Nsibirano, R., Kabonesa, C., Lutwama-Rukundo, E., & Mugisha Baine. (2020). Economic struggles, resilience and agency: Ageing market women redefining 'old' in Kampala, Uganda. *Gender a výzkum / Gender and Research*, 21(1), 90-115.
- Nwanne, C. (2015, October 4). ABA... untapped economy bedeviled by poor infrastructure. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/aba-untapped-economy-bedeviled-by-poor-infrastructure/>
- Nwapa, F. (1998). Women and creative writing in Africa. In O. Nnaemeka (Ed.), *Sisterhood, feminisms and power: From Africa to the diaspora* (pp. 89-99). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Nwoye, C. M. (2011). Igbo cultural and religious worldview: An insider's perspective. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 3(9), 304-317.
- Nzegwu, N. (1994). Gender equality in a dual-sex system: The case of Onitsha. *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*, 7(1), 73-95.
- O'Shaughnessy, S., & Krogman, N. (2012). A Revolution reconsidered? Examining the practice of qualitative research in feminist scholarship. *Signs*, 37(2), 493-520.
- Odoemena, U. D., & Ofodu, J. C. (2016). Solid wastes management in Aba metropolis. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research Sciences, Technology & Engineering*, 2(12). Retrieved from <https://www.ijaar.org/articles/Volume2-Number12/Sciences-Technology-Engineering/ijaar-ste-v2n12-dec16-p6.pdf>
- Odoemene, A. (2011). (Re)venturing into the public sphere: Historical sociology of 'august meeting' among Igbo women in Nigeria. *Africa Development*, 36(2), 219-247.
- OECD/ILO. (n.d.). Chapter 5, addressing the gender dimension of informality. In *Tackling Vulnerability in the informal economy*. Organization for Economic Co-Operation and

- Development/International Labour Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/cfd32100-en.pdf?expires=1606789447&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=6AA2E8A4307F83675B6E15FAAD0AAAF2>
- Ofurum, G. (2020, April 20). Abia condemns shooting of Abians by security operatives. *Business Day*. Retrieved from <https://businessday.ng/news/article/abia-condemns-shooting-of-abians-by-security-operatives/>
- Ofurum, G. (2020, July 5). *Aba residents decry increase in pump price of fuel from N123 to N143.80 per litre*. Retrieved from Business Day: <https://businessday.ng/news/article/aba-residents-decry-increase-in-pump-price-of-fuel-from-n123-to-n143-80-per-litre/>
- Ogbonna, F. (2015, April 15). More roadside markets springing up in Aba. *Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/more-roadside-markets-springing-up-in-aba/>
- Ogbu, O. G. (2020). Gender, peacebuilding and entrepreneurship: Insights from a community skills-building project in Nigeira. *Conflict Trends*, 2020(2), 46-53.
- Ogundipe, O. L. (1987). African women, culture and another development. *Présence africaine*, 1(141), 123-139.
- Ogundipe-Leslie, M. (1994). *Re-creating ourselves: African women & critical transformations*. Trenton: African Word Press, Inc.
- Okali, D., Okpara, E., & Olawoye, J. (2001). *The Case of Aba and its region, Southeastern Nigeria* (Vols. Rural-Urban Interactions and Livelihood Strategies Working Paper 4). London: International Institute for Environment and Development.
- Okeke-Ihejirika, P. E. (2004). *Negotiating power and privilege: Igbo career women in contemporary Nigeria*. Athens: Ohio University Research in International Studies.
- Okonjo, K. (1976). The dual-sex political system in operation: Igbo women and community politics in midwestern Nigeria. In N. J. Hafkin, & E. G. Bay (Eds.), *Women in Africa: Studies in social and economic change* (pp. 45-58). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Olawoyin, O. (2020, February 6). Despite thriving businesses, Aba remains a pigsty. *Premium Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/375805-despite-thriving-businesses-aba-remains-a-pigsty.html>.
- Omobowale, M. O. (2020). “You will not mourn your children”: Spirituality and child health in Ibadan urban markets. *Journal of Religion and Health*. Retrieved from https://idp.springer.com/authorize/casa?redirect_uri=https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10943-020-01032-5.pdf&casa_token=mqSy7rwTuwEAAAAA:DkJQnX9-

mYdaadiOreyoiFVeFychXSZt3276znzgdEZxye-Yz-
jJ1B16Y8VRabu9KuFLA1IHbRHWOONbA

- O'Neil, S. (2020, October 19). The trouble with Ariaria Market IPP. *The Nation* Retrieved from <https://thenationonlineng.net/the-trouble-with-ariaria-market-ipp/>
- O'Neill, T. A., Allen, N. J., & Hastings, S. E. (2013). Examining the "pros" and "cons" of team conflict: A team-level meta-analysis of task, relationship, and process conflict. *Human Performance*, 26(3), 236-260.
- Onwumere, J., & Ukpebor, P. O. (2011). Evaluation of earning performance of female owned leather-based enterprises in Aba metropolis, Abia state, Nigeria. *Journal of Agriculture and Social Research (JASR)*, 11(2), 120-127.
- Oparah, E. (2021, January 12). *Why most Nigerians don't believe COVID-19 is real*. Retrieved from: <https://punchng.com/why-most-nigerians-dont-believe-covid-19-is-real/>
- Oriji, J. N. (1983). A Study of the slave and palm produce trade amongst the Ngwa-Igbo of Southeastern. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 23(91), 311-328.
- Osborne, D., Huo, Y. J., & Smith, H. J. (2014). Organizational respect dampens the impact of group-based relative deprivation on willingness to protest pay cuts. *British journal of social psychology*, 54(1), 159-175.
- Oyekanmi, F. D. (2005). Institutionalization of gender inequality in Nigeria: Implications for the advancement of women. *Population Review*, 44(1), 56-71.
- Oyewumi, O. (1997). *The invention of woman: Making an African sense of western gender discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Oyewumi, O. (2003). Introduction: Feminisms, sisterhood and other foreign relations. In O. Oyewumi (Ed.), *African women and feminism: Reflecting on the politics of sisterhood* (pp. 1-24). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Ozioma-Eleodinmuo, P. (2018). Analysis of entrepreneurship policy for small and medium scale enterprise in Aba, Abia state Nigeria. *Journal of Economic Development, Management, IT, Finance and Marketing*, 7(1), 47-60.
- Paffenholz, T. (2015). Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding: A critical assessment towards. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(5), 857-874.
- Paris, R. (1997). Peacebuilding and the limits of liberal internationalism. *International Security*, 22(2), International Security.
- Patel, R. C. (2012). Food sovereignty: Power, gender, and the right to food. *PLoS Medicine*, 9(6), e1001223.

- Peprah, V., Buor, D., Forkuor, D., & Sánchez-Moral, S. (2019). Characteristics of informal sector activities and challenges faced by women in Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1-23. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/23311886.2019.1656383?needAccess=true>
- Phillips, L. (2006). Food and globalization. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35, 37-57.
- Plunkett, D., Phillips, R., & Kocaoglu, B. U. (2018). Place attachment and community development. *Journal of Community Practice*, 26(4), 471-482.
- Polkinghorne, D. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 137-145.
- Pondy, L. R. (1967). Organizational conflict: concepts and models. *Administrative science quarterly*, 12(2), 296-320.
- Porter, G., Lyon, F., Adamu, F., Obafemi, L., & Blench, R. (2005, March). Trade and markets in conflict development and conflict resolution in Nigeria. Scoping study report to the UK Department for International Development. Fatima Adamu and Lanre Obafemi. Retrieved from <https://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/3809/1/>
- Porter, G., Lyon, F., & Potts, D. (2007). Market institutions and urban food supply in West and Southern Africa: A review. *Progress in Development Studies*, 7(2), 115-34.
- Potts, K., & Brown, L. (2005). Becoming an anti-oppressive researcher. In S. S., & B. Leslie (Eds.), *Research as resistance: Revisiting critical, Indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches* (pp. 255-286). Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.
- Price, L. (2019). Sexual violence and genocide, the greatest violation of human security: Responses to the case of Darfur. In B. Reardon, & A. Hans (Eds.), *The gender imperative: Human security vs state security* (2nd ed., pp. 134-166). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Pugh, M. (2005). The political economy of peacebuilding: a critical theory perspective. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 10(2), 23-42.
- Punch. (2019, July 27). *ICYMI: As queen, I can only marry a woman –Dunkwu, Omu of Anioma*. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/as-queen-i-can-only-marry-a-woman-dunkwu-omu-of-anioma/>
- Rahim, M. A., & Katz, J. P. (2019). Forty years of conflict: The effects of gender and generation on conflict-management strategies. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 31(1), 1-16.
- Ramazanoglu, C., & Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist methodology challenges and choices*. London: SAGE.
- Ramkissoon, H., Smith, L. D., & Weiler, B. (2013). Testing the dimensionality of place attachment and its relationships with place satisfaction and pro-environmental

- behaviours: A structural equation modelling approach. *Tourism Management*, 36, 552-566.
- Ramnarain, S. (2015a). Local peacebuilding by women's savings and credit cooperatives in Nepal. In I. MacPherson, & P. Yehudah, *Concern for community: The relevance of co-operatives to peace* (pp. 179-188). Joy Emmanuel-Turning Times Research and Consulting.
- Ramnarain, S. (2015b). SEWA's co-operatives and peacebuilding in Gujarat, India. In I. MacPherson, P. Yehudah, & J. Emmanuel (Ed.), *Concern for community: The relevance of co-operatives to peace* (pp. 205-212). Joy Emmanuel – Turning Times Research and Consulting.
- Reardon, B. (1996). *Sexism and the war system*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Reardon, B. A. (2019). Women and human security: A feminist framework and critique of the prevailing patriarchal security system. In B. Reardon, & A. Hans (Eds.), *The gender imperative: Human security vs state security* (2nd ed., pp. 7-36). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Resnick, D. (2019). The politics of crackdowns on Africa's informal vendors. *Comparative Politics*, 52(1), 21-51.
- Richmond, O. P. (2014). The impact of socio-economic inequality on peacebuilding and statebuilding. *Civil Wars*, 16(4), 449-467.
- Robins, S. (2009). Whose voices? Understanding victims' needs in transition. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 1(2), 320-331.
- Robins, S. (2011). Towards victim-centred transitional justice: Understanding the needs of families of the disappeared in Nepal. *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 5, 75-98.
- Rogan, M., & Alfars, L. (2019). Gendered inequalities in the South African informal economy. *Agenda*, 33(4), 91-102.
- Rosato, S. (2003). The flawed logic of democratic peace theory. *The American Political Science Review*, 97(4), 585-602.
- Rosenlew, A. (2011). Women's money saving groups improve everyday life in Senegal. In O. Alm, & T. Juntunen (Eds.), *Human security-Perspectives and practical examples* (pp. 96-100). The Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network KATU. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tapio_Juntunen/publication/283714409_Human_Security_-_Perspectives_and_Practical_Examples/links/5644589d08ae9f9c13e41e24.pdf
- Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 10(2), 199-228.
- Rylko-Bauer, B., & Farmer, P. (2016). Structural violence, poverty, and social suffering. In D. Burton (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the social science of poverty*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from

- <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199914050.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199914050-e-4#oxfordhb-9780199914050-e-4-bibItem-33>
- Sackeyfio, R. A. (2019). Interrogating African feminism from theory to praxis. In A. U. Azodo (Ed.), *African feminisms in the global arena: Novel perspectives on gender, class, ethnicity, and race* (pp. 233-246). Glassboro, New Jersey: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing.
- Saidin, K., & Yaacob, A. (2016). Insider researchers: Challenges & opportunities. *International Seminar on Generating Knowledge Through Research, UUM-UMSIDA* (pp. 849-854). Universiti Utara Malaysia. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/154353144.pdf>
- Saitta, P. (2017). Practices of subjectivity: The informal economies and the subaltern rebellion. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 37(6/8), 400-416.
- Salami-Agunloye, I. (2019). Conceptualizing African feminism in women's dramatic texts. In A. U. Azodo (Ed.), *African feminisms in the global arena: Novel perspectives on gender, class, ethnicity, and race* (pp. 111-136). Glassbor, New Jersey: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing.
- Samuels, G. M., & Ross-Sheriff. (2008). Identity, Oppression, and Power: Feminisms and Intersectionality Theory. *Journal of Women and Social Work*, 23(1), 5-9.
- Schirch, L. (2004). *The little book of strategic peacebuilding*. Intercourse, PA: Good books.
- Schirch, L. (2013). *Conflict assessment & peacebuilding planning: Towards a participatory approach to human security*. Boulder: Kumarian press.
- Schirch, L., & Sewak, M. (2005). Women: Using the gender lens. In P. V. Tongeren, M. Brenk, M. Hellema, & J. Verhoeven (Eds.), *People building peace II: Successful stories of civil society* (pp. 97-106). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Skinner, C. (2019). Contributing yet excluded? Informal food retail in African cities. In J. Battersby, & V. Watson (Eds.), *Urban food systems governance and poverty in African cities* (pp. 104-115). London: Routledge.
- Skinner, C., & Haysom, G. (2017). The informal sector's role in food security: A missing link in policy debates. *Hungry Cities Partnership Discussion Paper No. 6*, pp. 1-17.
- Smith, H. J., & Huo, Y. J. (2014). Relative deprivation: How subjective experiences of inequality influence social behavior and health. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1(1), 231–238.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

- Sofola, Z. (1998). Feminism and African womanhood. In O. Nnaemeka (Ed.), *Sisterhood, feminisms and power: From Africa to the diaspora* (pp. 51-64). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Soleri, D., Cleveland, D. A., & Cuevas, F. A. (2008). Food globalization and local diversity: The case of Tejate. *Current Anthropology*, 49(2), 281-290.
- Sonnentag, S., Unger, D., & Nägel, I. J. (2013). Workplace conflict and employee well-being: The moderating role of detachment from work during off-job time. *The International journal of conflict management*, 24(2), 166-183.
- Sorensen, G. (2008). *Democracy and democratization: Processes and prospects in a changing world* (3rd ed.). Boulder, Colorado: Routledge.
- Sowatey, E., Nyantakyi-Frimpong, H., Mkandawire, P., Arku, G., Hussey, L., & Amasaba, A. (2018). Spaces of resilience, ingenuity, and entrepreneurship in informal work in Ghana. *International Planning Studies*, 23(4), 327-339.
- Spiro, D. (1994). The insignificance of the liberal peace. *International Security*, 19(2), 50-86.
- Sprague, J. (2015). Getting it right: Some advice for feminist methodologists. In M. P. Flaherty, S. Byrne, H. Tusso, & T. G. Matyok (Eds.), *Gender and peacebuilding: All hands required* (pp. 391-407). Lanham: Lexington.
- Spring, A. (2009). African women in the entrepreneurial landscape: Reconsidering the formal and informal sectors. *Journal of African Business*, 10(1), 11-30.
- Starks, G. L. (2006). Managing conflict in public organizations. *Public Manager*, 35(4), 55-60.
- Steadman, R. (2003). Is it really just a social construction?: The contribution of the physical environment to sense of place. *Society & Natural Resources*, 16(8), 671-685.
- Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 11(2), 63-75.
- Taylor, D. (2014). Transitional justice and the TRC in Burundi: avoiding inconsequential chatter? *Contemporary Justice Review*.
- The Guardian. (2017, September 3). *Omu: Queen mother with immense appeal, authority – Her Royal Majesty Obi Martha Dunkwu*. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/omu-queen-mother-with-immense-appeal-authority-her-royal-majesty-obi-martha-dunkwu/>
- The World Bank. (2020, August 7). *Food security and COVID-19*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-and-covid-19>
- Thompson, D., & Agbugba, I. K. (2013). Marketing of tropical vegetable in Aba area of Abia State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Economics and Development*, 2(7), 272-279.

- Tongeren, P. V., Brenk, M., Hellema, M., & Verhoeven, J. (2005). Women weaving Bougainville together: Leitana nehan women's development agency in Papua New Guinea. In P. V. Tongeren, M. Brenk, M. Hellema, & J. Verhoeven (Eds.), *People building peace II: Successful stories of civil society* (pp. 122-126). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837-851.
- Tucker, J. L., & Anantharaman, M. (2020). Informal work and sustainable cities: From formalization to reparation. *One Earth, 3*(3), 290-299.
- Tuso, H. (2015). The role of oromo women in peacemaking: perspectives from an indigenous system. In M. Flaherty, S. Byrne, H. Tuso, & T. Matyok, *Gender and peacebuilding: All hands required* (pp. 99-120). Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Twigger-Ross, C. L., & Uzzell, D. L. (1996). Place and identity processes. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 16*(3), 205-220.
- Ude, P. U., & Njoku, O. C. (2017). Widowhood practices and impacts on women in Sub-Saharan Africa: An empowerment perspective. *International Social Work, 60*(6), 1512-1522.
- Ugobude, F. (2019, August 18). Of women chiefs and their wives. *The Guardian* Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/life/of-women-chiefs-and-their-wives/>
- Umunnakwe, J. E., Ezirim, K. T., & Njoku, P. C. (2018). Noise levels at major markets in Aba, Nigeria and its effects on humans. *International Journal of Modern Research in Engineering and Technology (IJMRET), 3*(6), 5-16.
- United Nations Women Watch. (n.d.). *Overview: Food security*. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/ruralwomen/overview-food-security.html>
- United Nations Women. (n.d.). *Women in informal economy*. Retrieved from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy>
- Uzuegbunam, F. O. (2012). Sustainable development for traditional market places in South-Eastern Nigeria: A case study of Nkwo-Ozuluogu market Oraifite, Anambra State. *Journal of Environmental Management and Safety, 3*(1), 139-158.
- Vaaitinen, T., Donahoe, A., Kunz, R., Ómarsdóttir, Bára, S., & Roohi, S. (2019). Care as everyday peacebuilding. *Peacebuilding, 7*(2), 194-209.
- Valentine, G. (2008). Tell me about ...: Using interviews as a research methodology. In D. Martin, & R. Flowerdew (Ed.), *Methods in human geography: A guide for students doing a research project* (2nd ed., pp. 110-127). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Van Allen, J. (1972). "Sitting on a man": Colonialism and the lost political institutions of Igbo women. *Canadian Journal of African Studies, 6*(2), 168-181.

- Van Allen, J. (1976). 'Aba riots' or Igbo 'women's war'? In N. J. Hafkin, & E. G. Bay (Eds.), *Women in Africa: Studies in social and economic change* (pp. 59-85). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Vangaurd. (2020, May 9). *Abia police rescue 2 abducted persons in Aba*. Retrieved from: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/05/abia-police-rescue-2-abducted-persons-in-aba/>
- Visoka, G., & Richmond, O. (2016). After liberal peace? From failed state-building to an emancipatory peace in Kosovo. *International Studies Perspectives*, 18(1), 110-129.
- Waite, C. (2018). Young people's place-making in a regional Australian town. *Sociologia ruralis*, 58(2), 276-292.
- Waldorf, L. (2012). Anticipating the past: Transitional justice and socio-economic wrongs. *Social & Legal Studies*, 2(2), 171-186.
- Watson, A. (2019). "Home" in peace and conflict studies: A site of resistance and of reform. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 26(1). Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1463&context=pcs>
- Watts, S. (1984). Rural women as food processors and traders: Eko making in the Ilorin area of Nigeria. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 19(1), 71-82.
- Webb, P. (1993). Coping with drought and food insecurity in Ethiopia. *Disasters*, 17(1), 33-47.
- Wilkinson, S. J., & Morton, P. (2007). The emerging importance of feminist research paradigms in built environment research. *Structural Survey*, 25(5), 408-417. Retrieved from <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30022145/wilkinson-emergingimportance-post-2007.pdf>
- Williams, C. (2017). Tackling employment in the informal economy: A critical evaluation of the neoliberal policy approach. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 38(1), 145-169.
- Williams, C., & Nadin, S. (2010). Entrepreneurship and the informal economy: An overview. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 15(4), 361-378., 15(4), 361-378.
- Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). (n.d.). *Occupational groups in the informal economy*. Retrieved from <https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/occupational-groups>
- Woods, R., & Korsnes, M. (2019). Homemaking in a living laboratory: Interpretations of a zero emission housing solution. *Home Cultures*, 16(2), 135-155.
- Woosnam, K. M., Aleshinloye, K. D., Ribeiro, M. A., Styliadis, D., Jiang, J., & Erul, E. (2018). Social determinants of place attachment at a World Heritage Site. *Tourism Management*, 67, 139-146.
- World Food Program (WFP) (2020). *Securing sustainable food systems hinges on gender equality*. World Food Program. Retrieved from <https://www.wfp.org/news/securing-sustainable-food-systems-hinges-gender-equality>

- Wrigley-Asante, C. (2013). Unraveling the health-related challenges of women in the informal economy: accounts of women in cross-border trading in Accra, Ghana. *Geo Journal*, 78(3), 525–537.
- Young, D. W. (1998). Prescriptive and elicitive approaches to conflict resolution: Examples from Papua New Guinea. *Negotiation Journal*, 14(3), 211-220.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), 197-214.
- Zivkovic, I. (2017). Entrepreneurship and juju (black magic). *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 19(3), 118-112.

Appendix A
Interview consent form



Peace and Conflict Studies

Graduate Programs

252 St. Paul's College

70 Dysart Road, University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2 Canada

Appendix A: Consent Form for Participants

Research Project Title:

Exploring Market Women's Everyday Peacebuilding Practices in Southeastern Nigeria

Principal Investigator and contact information:

Oluchi Gloria Ogbu ogbuo@myumanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Maureen Flaherty Maureen.flaherty@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research study is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, feel free to ask me. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This research is being conducted to explore how women resolve conflict and address challenges in the marketplace, it also seeks to understand women's peace building practices in their market

space. A total of 15 participants will participate in this study. The participants will be women traders in Aba, who are 18 years and older, are interested and available for the duration of the study.

If you take part in this study, you are agreeing to an interview about your experiences and thoughts on peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the market. It is anticipated the interview will last no more than 60 minutes. The interview questions will be semi-structured to allow you to share your experiences of peacebuilding and the constraints you encounter in resolving conflict in the marketplace. I will take notes and audio record the interview sessions. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, you will be free to pick any time and venue that works best for you for the interview.

The benefit of this study to you is that through your participation you will be contributing to knowledge creation in peacebuilding. You may also experience some emotional distress as a result of your participation in this study, such as recalling past experiences of conflict. Although no questions are intended to make you feel uncomfortable in any way, should you find yourself uncomfortable with a question that is asked, you do not need to answer the question. You may also refuse to answer questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. You will be encouraged to use community supports to help you, if you need further support after the interview.

By participating in this study, you are agreeing that my supervisor will have access to your identity and the information you share, that the study findings can be published in journals, MSpace, and presented at academic conferences. The information gathered in the course of these interviews will be presented as direct quotes and themes. In addition, you are agreeing that I can write my PhD dissertation based on the information you provide. To ensure confidentiality, your identity will be protected with the use of pseudonyms, and during the audio recordings, you are not expected to say your real name. Your contact details will be stored separately in a password-protected laptop accessible only to me. The file containing your recorded voice will be deleted permanently from all electronic devices after the completion of the study, in 12/2021, but the transcripts of the interview without any identifiers may be stored up to 2025.

Participation in this study is voluntary with no cost to you and no remuneration, you will be provided with light refreshment in appreciation of your time. Please feel free to ask questions throughout your participation and note that you can change your answers or refine them during the period of data gathering. Please note that you are free to withdraw your participation from this study before the deadline on 08/31/2020. The consent form will be read to you and you can ask questions before the start of the interview. If they want a copy, and those who indicate that they want a copy will be given one.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this research. I will be glad to answer them before we begin the interview. After the researcher has analyzed all of the information from all interviews, you will be provided with a summary of the results which will include emerging themes by 01/2021 and you will have an opportunity for written or oral feedback at this time as well.

Would you like a copy of the final research report?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If yes, how would you like to receive the report? Please provide your address (email or postal) so that I can send you the report.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to be a participant. In no way does this waive your legal rights or release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal or professional responsibilities. You are also free to refrain from answering any questions without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as to your initial consent, so feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have concerns about the study, please contact the Human Ethics Coordinator who can be reached at +1 204.474.7122 and humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature Date

Researcher's Signature Date

Appendix B

Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
2. How did you come to be a trader?
3. What, if any, other means of livelihood or profession would you have preferred?
4. What do you like about being a trader?
5. What do you find challenging about being a trader?
6. What kind of conflicts do you experience in the marketplace?
Can you please provide specific examples? Please only give general answer, with no reference to specific people
How do you build peace and resolve interpersonal conflicts within the market?
7. What are the constraints you encounter when resolving conflicts and how do you deal with them?
8. What other challenges do you encounter as a market woman?
9. How do you deal with these challenges?
10. How has COVID-19 Impacted your work as a market woman?
11. How have you responded to this?
12. What, if any resources do you use or would like to use when dealing with challenges?
13. What are your recommendations on how to deal with these challenges?
14. How do you think your culture and belief systems impact or influence your peacebuilding approach, challenges and opportunities as a woman and as a trader?
15. What is it like living in this city?
16. How do you nurture and replenish yourself after a hard day's work?
What gets you through hard times?
17. What kinds of supports do you have?
18. What are your wishes for a more peaceful market environment/ society?
19. Is there anything else you would like me to know to better understand the conflicts you encounter and how you deal with them? Anything else about your work?

20. Can I reach out to you if I have additional questions to ask?