

**Doctoral Dissertation Research:  
Advocating for Themselves:  
Security and Rights Through Women's Organizations in West Africa**

**A. Introduction**

Do women activists in post-conflict societies prioritize their security and empowerment goals the same way they have been defined by the international community? More specifically, how do women respond to the sometimes-conflicting goals and priorities of the international community, their national governments, and powerful transnational nongovernmental organizations? In many post-conflict areas around the world, women see themselves as agents of change, playing a transformative role in rebuilding the formal structures and informal ties that fray during conflict. Yet to achieve their goals, they must also navigate the politics of United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding women's participation in post-conflict peacebuilding, national policies addressing women's security (including the National Action Plans mandated by these resolutions), and the politics and financial pressures of transnational NGOs. While conditions for women in the Global South have increasingly become a subject of concern for both scholars and the international community as critical component of global security, there has been little examination of exactly how women themselves in post-conflict societies conceptualize security and act to secure it. In West Africa in particular, local women's activism has, at times, gained considerable publicity as a model of women's ability to secure peace. For example, Leymah Gbowee won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her peace organizing in Liberia, yet there is almost no awareness of other cases in the region, and, paradoxically, depictions of women as victims continue to dominate accounts of conflict in these societies. Exploring a) how women themselves conceptualize security in post-conflict societies, and b) how they navigate competing pressures on the national and international levels, therefore, is critical for designing security policies that actually respond to women's needs and concerns.

My dissertation analyzes the activism of women in three critical West African post-conflict countries to understand how they interact with national politics and international priorities in assuring their security. I am applying to the National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant to support field research in Guinea and Mali—complementing previously conducted dissertation field research in Cote d'Ivoire in 2014–2015—to focus on how international resolutions impact local actions and also whether and how local priorities can shape international policies. This requires analyzing policies on women's security and the discourses that sustain them through macro- (international), meso- (national), and micro- (community and local organization) level lenses (Milliken 1999). In doing so, my project seeks to understand how local and regional women's community organizations define their security goals and priorities, translate and localize the international agendas of the UN Security Council and transnational NGOs as well as the national agendas of governments, and work with local women to achieve peace and security.

Through an analysis of the discourses of women's security locally and internationally gathered through participant observation and interviews, I examine the degree to which the prioritization of security and empowerment goals by women's organizations depends on the support, particularly financial, from national governments and the international community. Additionally, based on my in-progress research in Cote d'Ivoire, it appears that gender-based security policies that are premised on a linear international-to-national-to-local implementation model (e.g., Cortell and Davis 2000; Gray et al. 2006; Simmons 2009) are not accurate. Rather, international governmental actors and transnational nongovernmental organizations often directly influence community organizations that have been tasked to implement these policies. Ultimately, I explore how individual and organizational activism forms a part of or potentially subverts international norms and challenges national policies on women's representation and roles in peacebuilding. The remainder of this proposal elaborates on the significance of my research question and details my plan for answering it.

***Intellectual merits:*** The intellectual merits of this study concern its contributions to two bodies of political science and international relations (IR) research. First, this study contributes to our general understanding of security theory; it examines the validity of conventional IR, feminist IR, and postcolonial IR theories, given African women’s own understandings of their own security. Second, this study contributes to our understanding of how and to what extent international gender norms affect national policies and local implementation strategies. In contrast to much existing research that prioritizes international-to-local policy implementation through the state, this project develops a theory of how to approach the intersection of gender and politics in the security of postcolonial states. It thus has the potential to transform our understanding of how international policy-making in gender mainstreaming<sup>1</sup> is fundamentally different from other types of security policy efforts.

***Broader impacts:*** The broader impacts of my study are threefold. First, by prioritizing women’s knowledge of their own security needs, this study contributes to efforts to improve U.S. foreign policy goals of women “as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace, ... critical to our national and global security,” according to the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2011). Second, by examining the conflicts in Guinea (rebuilding after a military coup, subsequent deadly protests, and last year’s Ebola epidemic), Mali (which hosts a UN peacekeeping mission and faces sporadic terrorist attacks, though a peace accord has been signed), and Cote d’Ivoire (still home to UN peacekeepers despite the civil war’s end over four years ago), this project will highlight how historical, political, and cultural contexts are important in developing successful, appropriate security policies. Finally, in their practical application, this study’s findings will aid policymakers and policy advocates in their global efforts to promote peace and security for women, particularly in regions that have been understudied. More precisely, by distilling the specific areas in which women’s organizations, national plans, and international priorities connect or disconnect, this study’s findings will aid organizations in building strategic plans for advocacy and reform. Given that the co-PI has already worked on projects with NGOs in West Africa for two years and has established relationships with members of UN missions in Cote d’Ivoire and Mali, the results of the project will be disseminated throughout the UN and among NGOs working on women’s peace and security.

## **B. Review of the literature**

### *1. How does feminism contribute to security studies?*

Traditionally, the primary referent for security studies is “the phenomenon of war” (Walt 1991, 212), with a conceptualization of security as chiefly concerned with the stability or instability of the state, as well as possible threats to that stability. This narrowly defined approach to security obscures other forms of violence (Smith 2004). Though the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, emerged out of World War II in order to mitigate state conflict, the introduction of the concept of human security in the late 1980s shifted the focus of security away from states (UNDP 1994). In particular, within the UN, human security paradigms reoriented security toward individual and communal levels of analysis (Thomas and Tow 2002; Bellamy and McDonald 2002; Paris 2001). Human security norms then began to be taken up by the United Nations at large (MacFarlane and Khong 2006).

Feminism extends many of the concerns of human security and expresses a stated commitment to emancipatory projects and normative convictions (Tickner 2004). Feminist scholarship is not merely interested in academic scholarship and theorizing, but also on the everyday experiences women encounter (Enloe 2000). Feminism brings to light many of the omissions, manipulations, and silences of women in the study of international security (see Sjoberg and Martin 2010; Shepherd 2011; Wibben 2010) because,

<sup>1</sup> Gender mainstreaming is “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels” (ECOSOC 1997). It is a set of specific, strategic approaches to achieve the goal of gender equality.

historically, women's lives and their contributions tended to be excluded from dominant narratives (Peterson 1992). Feminist scholars have echoed the need to broaden the narrow definitions of security and human rights, arguing that the public/private and political/social rights distinctions that mark debates of security and human rights exclude women's experiences, both during war and everyday lived violence (Caprioli 2004; Enloe 2000; Peterson 1992; Tickner 2001).

While feminism is increasingly becoming accepted in IR security analyses, it is often approached in ways that address only physical and sexual violence against women. Women activists pressured the UN Security Council to set international priorities by developing resolutions regarding Women, Peace, and Security, and these priorities, in turn, are designed to determine national responses to violence around the world. However, these resolutions have been criticized by a number of feminist scholars and activists for their conventional assumption of what constitutes security and their essentialized, gendered vision of women in post-conflict as simultaneously victims and peacemakers, reinforcing the biological and reproductive functions of women (Hudson 2010; Shepherd 2008). In post-conflict states—my substantive focus in this study—research has shown that while women experience security and insecurity differently (Jacoby 2006), sexualized violence is but one of a host of inequalities that women encounter, and it has been over-emphasized in scholarship and hyper-politicized in policy (Charlesworth 2008; Harrington 2010; Meger 2011; Cohen et al. 2013; Baaz and Stern 2013; Henry 2014). Even feminist analyses of security in conflict and post-conflict do not fully take into account the systematic structural inequalities that confront women, and violence against women is not contextualized within the broader political economy and economic inequality that women generally face (True 2012). Nevertheless, many feminist international relations scholars agree that women's security and economic status can each be improved by addressing both simultaneously (see Prügl 2011; Hudson 2015; True 2015). My study seeks to advance knowledge of the interrelationships between gender-based physical and economic security.

## 2. *How is African post-colonial feminism important to security studies?*

Governance on women's issues, illustrated by the UN Security Council's Women, Peace, and Security agenda, while being institutionalized at the international level, is still regularly shifted to civil society at the national and local levels, particularly in the Global South (True 2003). The hard work of both advocacy and implementation is done by local NGOs and community organizations (Bernal and Grewal 2014). While international discourses praise women's activism in the Global South, they still put forth a particular perspective of "women's needs" in post-conflict as recovery and reparations from sexualized violence (Ní Aoláin et al. 2011; Pratt 2013). These resolutions, along with international governance in general, produce discourses of victimization about women that are made to seem universal (Grewal 2005) and that justify the imposition of particular modes of governance (Abrahamsen 2000; Grovogui 2009; Gallagher 2014).

Examining the international discourses of victimization and sexualization through feminist postcolonial theories underscores the need to incorporate non-dominant discourses in international security studies (Stern 2006). Postcolonial feminists find fault with knowledge solely based on the experiences of privileged Western women; culture, class, race, and geography experienced by individual women changes their perceptions of the world (Mohanty 1988; Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2000). International discourses on women, peace, and security are often premised on assumptions of "women" and "humanity," principally the experiences of threat and insecurity that women encounter and the conflation of "civilian" and "women" (Orford 2002; Charusheela 2009; Kinsella 2011). Gayatri Spivak (1988) has famously characterized such postcolonial relations as "white men saving brown women from brown men" (92).

In mainstream scholarship on international security, Africa remains marginal,<sup>2</sup> although the continent has become central to human security issues, including women's security (Dunn and Shaw

<sup>2</sup> An emerging exception might be a focus on Islamic or anti-Western terrorism across the Sahara and Sahel.

2001; Grovogui 2009). However, a number of African feminists have argued that the situation of women in Africa cannot be addressed by prioritizing gender parity alone (Oyewumi 1997; Nnaemeka 1998). Duplicating the Western or “developed world” model for achievement in gender parity is insufficient (Arnfred 2011); rather, it is necessary for African women to shape traditions of their own, often through group effort, based in communal forms of social transformation (Tamale 2006; Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim 2010). My study will examine West African women’s relationships to their communities, the state, and the international community in a post-conflict context. Modern gender relations are a product of prior, “traditional” arrangements, religious conversion into both Islam and Christianity, French colonization, and pan-African decolonization, all mapped onto the current practices of governance and peacebuilding that have been pushed by the international community and embraced by the national government. The gender mainstreaming policies and the assumptions that create those policies should be mediated through these aspects of social life.

## **C. Research questions and expectations**

### *1. Main research questions*

As women navigate politics, peacebuilding, and reconstruction, do they prioritize their security and empowerment goals the same way as have been defined by the international community? More specifically, how do women respond to the sometimes-conflicting goals priorities of the international community, their national governments, and powerful transnational NGOs, and how do they reconcile them with local women’s security needs in conflict and post-conflict?

In order to address these questions, I examine the UN Security Council Women, Peace, and Security resolutions as they are implemented in Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, and Mali. The first of these resolutions, 1325, was passed in the year 2000. The key provisions of this wide-reaching resolution are a) increased participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making; b) attention to specific protection needs of women and girls in conflict; c) a gender perspective in post-conflict processes; d) a gender perspective in UN programming, reporting, and Security Council missions; and e) a gender perspective and training in UN peace support operations (Cohn et al. 2004). Since Resolution 1325, the Security Council has passed six complementary resolutions, collectively known as Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).<sup>3</sup> The WPS resolutions mandate that countries establish National Action Plans (NAPs) to detail how national governments would incorporate the resolution into national policies; however, adoption of a National Action Plan does not necessarily mean more than a rhetorical commitment to the implementation of the WPS resolutions (Fuijo 2008; Hudson 2010). Without governmental adherence to their own NAPs, women’s organizations often shoulder the burden of ensuring women’s rights and security without the promised national support.

Transnational NGOs played a key role in setting the agenda for the WPS resolutions. The National Action Plans, however, were shaped by both transnational and local NGOs, depending on the country, while local and regional NGOs are vital to the plans’ implementation (El-Bushra 2007). Through navigating international, national, and local politics, NGOs interpret, transform, implement, and realize human rights laws at the local level (Merry 2006). Women’s NGOs must contend with both the human rights and human security discourses in this process, and which discourse they take up affects the way they address their local communities. In West Africa, women’s NGOs and community organizations, many founded in the 1990s and early 2000s, have taken the lead in both internationally advocating for peacebuilding and reconstruction initiatives for women and implementing them locally. These organizations also act as intermediaries between people in conflict and post-conflict situations, states, and international organizations.

<sup>3</sup> The six subsequent WPS resolutions are Resolution 1820, passed in 2008; Resolution 1888, passed in 2009; Resolution 1889, passed in 2009; Resolution 1960, passed in 2010; Resolution 2106, passed in 2013; and Resolution 2122, passed in 2013.

My previous research in Cote d'Ivoire has revealed that peacebuilding initiatives have been internationally driven. While individual women and women in particular communities have sought a voice in the peacebuilding process in a number of ways (officially in the national dialogue as well as very locally), the lack of national political will to do so and the lack of local and national funding for these efforts mean that women's organizations must turn to international governmental and non-governmental donors. Women have collectively organized and requested sensitization trainings in their communities, but the trainings and the funding for them are external. The agendas seem to echo the agendas of the UN Security Council; in fact, the UN has trained NGOs and then relied on them to guide government leaders in the WPS implementation. In essence, whereas the impetus for the implementation of the WPS resolutions (or at least for women's peace efforts in the country) does appear to come from local women or local organizations, the actual agenda is directed by those parties that facilitate and pay for the programs.

In Guinea and Mali, while I expect to find similar patterns, I anticipate there will be differences as well. Guinea's NAP, adopted in 2009, while not prominent in its national peace and reconciliation efforts, does include a budget, in contrast to Cote d'Ivoire. Otherwise, Guinea's NAP is short and undetailed, appearing more development-focused than other NAPs from the region. Whether this is because of the absence of a UN-recognized conflict or because of strategic decisions by the NAP drafters is a question I will pursue in my research. By contrast, Mali does not currently have a NAP, though creation of one is reportedly underway. Women's peace and security organizations there have been outspoken in criticizing the roles of both domestic and international actors in the peace process. Including analysis of Malian women's ongoing efforts to influence the peace process and to push for the development of a NAP will show the in-progress activism necessary to effect change at local, national, and international levels.

By including the case studies of Guinea and Mali, my research will generate a more comprehensive account of how women organize around peace and security. The knowledge generated by this project will not simply rest on essentialized assumptions of victimization and pacifism but will instead be founded on women's organized efforts and the demonstrated effects that historical and political context makes.

## 2. *Levels of analysis*

Prior studies on the WPS resolutions and the NAPs have not fully assessed sub-national-level implementation to examine the efforts that the local actors are making. Central to my project is an analysis of how international peace and security policy is assumed to be mediated through the national level and trickle down to the implementing organizations at a local level (see, for example, on human rights, Cortell and Davis 2000; Gray et al. 2006; Simmons 2009). Research has shown that local groups pressure the state to enact and enforce international norms (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Krook and True 2010; Zwingel 2012); however, in Cote d'Ivoire and, I expect, in Guinea and Mali, despite attempts by local women's organizations, the national government appears to have little interest in adopting gender security policies. Because the UN WPS resolutions are still premised on a state-centric notion of security that assumes gender security will be achieved through the state (Whitworth 2004), achieving security for women through the UN necessitates the state's active participation in the policy's implementation.

To understand the varying agendas that are localized by the NAPs, it is necessary to analyze the policies on women's security and the discourses that sustain them through macro- (international), meso- (national), and micro- (community and local organization) level lenses (Milliken 1999). Additionally, while conventional international relations literature does not sufficiently address gender security on any level, feminist and postcolonial international security literatures have not been able to adequately specify how the three levels of analysis intersect and whether they influence each other. Reconciling these literatures is important, given the complex interplay between actors, policies, and discourses that I have uncovered in Cote d'Ivoire. This knowledge is critical for understanding both international and national

security policies and norms concerning women to know whether these patterns are replicated in other cases of paramount importance to conventional and human security such as Guinea and Mali.

If women's security goals are similar to those defined in the UN Security Council resolutions, women's organizations on the ground in West Africa might still run into specific implementation problems vis-à-vis quickly changing security conditions that need to be studied, while if women's security goals are not the same as international priorities, it is imperative to analyze why and how they are different. In either scenario, factors such as the relative importance placed on sexualized forms of violence, government oppression or corruption, the influx of different forms of extremism, economic insecurities, and environmental hazards may play a role. Without an adequate understanding of current practices of national and international governance and peacebuilding and these practices' effects on women's lives and communities, women's roles in peace and security efforts are poorly defined and undervalued, resulting in badly designed security policies on the part of not only West African states themselves but also dominant actors in West African security, such as the United States and France.

#### **D. Research in progress and preliminary studies**

From October 2014 through July 2015 and from September through November 2015, I conducted dissertation field research in Cote d'Ivoire, my first of the three case studies, supported by a Fulbright research fellowship. Here, I collected data from interviews, participant observation, and archival research to understand why Cote d'Ivoire was the first African country and the first developing country to establish a National Action Plan for the WPS resolutions and how implementation efforts by both NGOs and the national government after the civil war of 2010–2011 have echoed or diverged from international priorities and discourses about security for women. This research entailed meeting a number of government and UN officials, as well as NGO program officers, and proved successful in several ways. First, I gathered case study data from participant observation, interviews, and archival research that allowed me to systematically observe the ways that Ivorian women advocate for peace and security, both formally and informally. Second, the success and techniques learned in this case study demonstrated that expanding my research to other post-conflict countries in francophone West Africa would be fruitful to give greater depth to my theories of women's security activism. Third, my research in Cote d'Ivoire allowed me to understand not only the national political and cultural context but also the regional West African context and the policies of *Françafrique*, the economic approach of France toward its former African colonies. I will present preliminary findings from this research at the 2015 annual meeting of the African Studies Association in San Diego and at the 2016 annual convention of the International Studies Association in Atlanta.

In summer 2013, I conducted field research in Dakar, Senegal, at the West and Central Africa Regional Office of UN Women, where I worked with the Fund for Gender Equality on rural women's empowerment initiatives across Africa as well as interviewed regional NGO leaders and UN officials. Prior to this, in March 2013, I attended the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women at UN Headquarters to observe NGO interaction with the UN on the subject of violence against women. Both of these research experiences prepared me both practically and conceptually for my research in Cote d'Ivoire, shaping my research questions, developing relationships with women's organizations, and understanding the regional and international contexts that these organizations must work within.

In sum, the prior research I have conducted demonstrates the feasibility and promise of my larger project, as well as my competence to carry it out.

#### **E. Research plan**

This project will entail six months of field research, three each in Guinea and Mali, carrying out participant observation with women's local and national NGOs and conducting interviews with the NGOs and with UN and government officials.

## 1. *Case selection*

Guinea and Mali are ideal countries to conduct case studies because each have similarities and dissimilarities to Cote d'Ivoire, where I have already conducted significant field research for my dissertation. Cote d'Ivoire was the first African country and one of the first in the world to develop a National Action Plan<sup>4</sup> and is also unique in experiencing civil war both before (2002–2007) and after (2010–2011) the country adopted the NAP. Because of this, Cote d'Ivoire has been an ideal site to learn how women's organizations advocated domestically and internationally for their security, to study whether gender integration mechanisms were spurred by the NAP, and to analyze women's security and development in the context of the country's economic growth since the end of the war.

While my research is not intended to directly compare Guinea and Mali to Cote d'Ivoire or other West African countries that have been the focus of policy-oriented studies (e.g., Caesar et al. 2010; Swaine 2011), there is a necessity to provide a well-rounded perspective on the phenomenon of women's organizing around security. In particular, many of the studies about women's organizing around conflict and peace, including but not limited to the WPS resolutions, were conducted in only a few countries, most notably Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.<sup>5</sup> Because the political, social, and historical contexts of these countries are different, the implementation efforts through the National Action Plans are also not generalizable. Though direct comparison is not goal of this study, commensurability in translating concepts, ideas, and understandings to make meaning of women's experiences and activities that foster security is the aim (Johnson 2014).

All three countries are former French colonies in West Africa and have shared cultural, historical, and political contexts because of colonial and postcolonial experiences, as well as ethnic, social, and linguistic ties. Each of the three countries has also experienced some form of political and social disruption in the past decade. Cote d'Ivoire is firmly in the post-civil war stage after a decade of unrest. Mali is experiencing occasional clashes in the north of the country and has an ongoing UN peacekeeping mission to address the conflict. Guinea is not generally considered post-conflict and has never hosted a UN peacekeeping mission, but the country has faced low-level domestic conflict and military coups in the past decade; the Ebola outbreak also fractured the social order in a number of communities.<sup>6</sup>

While the three countries are all former French colonies, only Mali and Cote d'Ivoire have retained many of the close economic and security ties through *Françafrique*, the postcolonial policies that France put in place for many of its former African colonies. Mali and Cote d'Ivoire are members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, using a shared currency pegged to the euro (and, previously, the French franc). These two countries also accepted French-led intervention in their conflicts, and opponents often accuse governmental leaders of being propped up by France. Guinea, on the other hand, rejected France post-independence, establishing its own currency and adopting socialist policies; the slogan of Sékou Touré, the Guinean independence leader, was “We prefer freedom in poverty to opulence in slavery.” Understanding the postcolonial context and how ties to France might have influenced domestic activism as well as gender relations is essential to my study of the localization of international policies about women's security, whether this localization travels by way of national governments, transnational NGOs, international donors and quasi-governmental bodies, or primarily through the efforts of local organizations.

Finally, as detailed previously, Guinea has established a National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325, developed two years after Cote d'Ivoire's. Mali, on the other hand, is

<sup>4</sup> Worldwide, 50 countries have developed National Action Plans, as of August 2015.

<sup>5</sup> These three countries are obvious choices for a number of reasons, including decade-long civil wars, national women's peace movements, widespread reports of sexual violence, and, in the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone, English as an official language, which affects case selection for many researchers.

<sup>6</sup> The World Health Organization projects that the Ebola outbreak will have ended by the time my research commences in March 2016. I have also been educated on appropriate precautions during my time in Cote d'Ivoire.



security. This organization also engages in capacity-building projects, focusing not just on security and legal structures but also on improving governance and social infrastructure.

Watching these NGOs at work will illuminate how they mediate international and national concepts of security with the needs that local communities are communicating. The NGOs' various activities, including organizational meetings, training workshops, and donor evaluations, can illustrate how even one NGO must balance varying priorities and understandings of the same concept in order to implement international policy. To the extent possible, in keeping with IRB requirements, these activities will be audio-recorded so that I can capture participants' descriptions of their work and their understandings of security in their own words. Additionally, I will write extensive field notes to document a thick description of formal and informal language, actions, and interactions.

### 3. *Interviews*

What people and organizations do is often at odds with the narratives they tell about themselves, so I will also conduct semi-structured elite interviews to help reveal consistencies and contradictions with the data collected during participant observation. Approximately 15 to 20 interviews will be conducted in each country: government leaders in key ministries, UN Development Programme and UN Women representatives in both countries, UN officials at the peacekeeping mission in Mali, and leaders of women's community organizations. I have already been in contact with many of my potential interview participants, meeting them through my previous work in Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal or having been introduced to them through my connections there; additional interviewees will be identified and solicited through chain referral sampling in the field as my research progresses. The interviews will be audio-recorded, and notes will be taken during and immediately after the interview. The aim of these interviews is to understand whether and how the WPS resolutions and the NAPs have influenced their work with local women and communities.

Some of the questions I will be asking will relate directly to the organization's work on the WPS resolutions and the country's NAP, particularly to what extent the policy affects their work and which specific aspects of the agenda they focus on. I will also ask the NGOs about their funding sources and whether donor preferences affect program focus. I will ask all of my interview participants how individual women and community groups are involved in peacebuilding and reconstruction in the country, as well as whether the interviewee believes women's efforts are successful and whether they perceive women believe that their own activism is successful and recognized by the government. I expect that my interviewees' understandings of security and rights are likely to be close to the "party line" of the organization that they represent, but it will be fruitful to directly compare their words to their actions as well as to see if these leaders are willing to vocalize dissent and in what ways.

### 4. *Analysis*

In this study, I will be making qualitative comparisons with the data I collected from the three countries, as well as within the macro, meso, and micro levels of analysis, to compare the different interpretations of security. I will ask "what's different here?" of my data to explore and explain the differences among my cases and between my data and the extant literature (Ackerly and True 2010). My data gathering and analysis are linked, and I will approach the research process with open-ended questions and subject-generated concepts that are important to this particular study, but I do not wish to foreclose interpretive possibilities in my fieldwork that might guide me to unexplored issues (Lynch 2013).

Each interview and public meeting or workshop will be recorded and transcribed. I will also record extensive field notes after each recorded interview and meeting, during archival research, and throughout my field research to capture the various and potentially varying discourses that arise. I will conduct analysis both during the fieldwork and after the completion of fieldwork in order to identify key patterns and themes related to my research questions. Analysis will also happen during the writing process so that categories are not pre-established and so that more comprehensive meanings can unfold

(Richardson 2000). I will then compare patterns both within the same level of analysis (local, national, international) and across levels of analysis to reveal like and disparate discourses. I anticipate that competing narratives and discourses and tensions within them will likely become evident. For example, some interviewees may adopt unquestioningly the UN Security Council language and terms (such as peace and security, peacebuilding and reconstruction, violence, protection, etc.), and others may challenge, contest, or even reject such terms.

## **F. Research schedule**

Though this project entails a great deal of field research, I have already completed a substantial portion of it. So far, I have: collected about 85% of the field research in Cote d'Ivoire and 95% of the UN and other international data; begun transcription and data analysis of this research; conducted preliminary research into the country contexts of Guinea and Mali; established contacts with organizations and individuals in Guinea and Mali to interview and join for participant observation; and filed for IRB approval for research with proposed subjects. I plan to complete the dissertation as follows:

**September–November 2015:** Return to Cote d'Ivoire to finish up field research.

**December 2015:** Continue analysis of interviews and participant observation from Cote d'Ivoire; begin drafting empirical dissertation chapter based on data from Cote d'Ivoire.

**January–February 2016:** Continue to establish contacts in Guinea and Mali in preparation for field research there; begin drafting introduction chapter of dissertation.

**March–May 2016:** Travel to Guinea to conduct interviews and participant observation with local NGOs.  
*NSF funds required at this point.*

**June–August 2016:** Travel to Mali to conduct interviews and participant observation with local NGOs.

**Late Summer 2016:** Transcribe and analyze interviews from Guinea and Mali; analyze participant observation data.

**Fall 2016:** Continue to analyze data; begin drafting Guinea and Mali case study chapters.

**Winter 2017:** Complete drafts of individual case study chapters; begin comprehensive analysis chapter

**Spring 2017:** Complete dissertation and submit draft to committee members.

**Summer 2017:** Revise and defend complete dissertation.