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1 In November 1977, approximately 20,000 people gathered in Houston, Texas for the National Women’s Conference (NWC), the first and only federally-funded convening charged with developing a national agenda of women’s issues (American Women on the Move; Leader and Hyatt; National Commission; Spruill). Inspired by the 1975 United Nations Conference on the Status of Women that was held in Mexico City as part of the International Women’s Year (IWY), the NWC represented an opportunity to reflect on the history, contemporary status, and future of women in the United States. Among the attendees were 2,000 delegates, elected from 56 pre-conferences held in each of the states and six territories. Just as the NWC made visible the persistent challenges for gender justice, the existence of US territories reveals the ossified status of colonies within a self-proclaimed democratic nation (Wu, 2020).

2 What was the significance of the National Women’s Conference for women living in US territories in the Pacific? The pre-conferences that were held in American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories were the first such gatherings of this scope for women to come together and define their common interests. Also, the 1970s were a time of transition in the midst of the Cold War and the era of decolonization. All three Pacific territories were in the process of renegotiating their colonial relationships with the US nation and cultivating as well as deepening ties with other countries and islands around the world. To define their own political agenda, women from these Pacific locales had to carefully navigate nation state–territorial relations, male–female as well as inter-generational relationships within the islands, and tensions among women of Indigenous and immigrant settler backgrounds, particularly those of Asian descent. What emerged from these Pacific territorial meetings reveals the conflicted politics of
women’s empowerment, as islanders challenged militarized patriarchy, reclaimed matrilineality, and called for island sovereignty. The 1977 IWY conferences offers a window into these complex politics as women from the Pacific envisioned new possibilities for their future.

Organizing across Islands

The National Women’s Conference pre-meetings were held in American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands from June to September in 1977. Authorized by Congress via Public Law 94-167, a National Commission for the Observance of International Women’s Year appointed state and territorial commissions to organize the pre-conferences. These local appointees were identified by various means, including personal connections, recommendations by recognized leaders, and nominations from activist organizations. The National Commission also presented a series of issues, inspired by the United Nations IWY women’s agenda, for consideration and deliberation at the local levels. This was not solely a top-down process, however. Those who participated in the commissions and conferences were expected to define and discuss the issues most relevant for them as well as elect representatives to attend the NWC. In other words, this was an opportunity for the grassroots to speak back to the nation. These unprecedented opportunities for women to gather, define collective issues, and elect representatives to travel to Houston generated political excitement and necessitated imaginative forms of organizing. For the territorial islands in the Pacific, three related processes occurred simultaneously.

First, organizers engaged in the challenge of planning and executing a women’s conference. They had to generate support for, and interest in, creating a forum to collectively craft a political agenda on women’s issues. In and of itself, this was a daunting task. Samoa News, the main newspaper in American Sāmoa, for instance, provided no coverage of the women’s conference there, even though organizers made arrangements with the paper to do so. The local television station only took pictures of the most prominent guest speakers, which featured men in positions of political leadership. The radio station, though, did tape the entire meeting. As the organizers noted, “it is ironic that the reporter for the WVUV Radio Station was a young woman” (Scanlan). In other words, the intervention of a female junior reporter allowed women’s involvement in the American Sāmoa conference to avoid a media blackout.

Second, in order to follow the guidelines of reaching diverse women, as mandated by the US legislation that authorized the conferences, the planners had to address infrastructural challenges on their islands (Mattingly and Nare). Guam, for example, had limited postal service and no public transportation. As the organizers commented, “The committee’s resourcefulness was put to a real test having to search for people in an island where most areas do not have names of streets or house numbers” (Baty 18). While Guam consists of a single island, the Trust Territories encompassed an area of the Pacific equivalent in size to the continental United States. The people throughout this vast sea resided on 100 islands, spoke nine different languages, and identified with diverse cultural and Indigenous communities. The challenges of communication and transportation had to be addressed by organizers, who convened six pre-meetings in order to reach the hard to reach.
Finally, the NWC occurred at a time when the political status of these islands was shifting. The 1970s were a transitional era following the aftermath of the US War in Vietnam and in the midst of the ongoing Cold War. Since the seventeenth century, islands in the Pacific have been subjected to conquest, initially by European empires and eventually by American and Asian colonial powers. For the United States, in particular, the route towards global ascendency during the mid-to-late nineteenth century relied upon naval power and access to islands across the Pacific. Hawai‘i, American Sāmoa, Guam, and others served as military bases, refueling stations, trading ports, and sites of rest and recreation (Gonzalez; Imada). During the long twentieth century, US wars in the Asia-Pacific—from the United States–Philippine War to World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War—relied on Pacific Islands to serve as strategic geopolitical and military bases (Espiritu). Yet, in the aftermath of World War II, the movements demanding decolonization created pressure towards lessening US and European control and fueled calls for political self-determination. By the late 1970s, American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories were all renegotiating their relationships to the US government and military. The navigation between the federal and the local, between gaining full recognition as Americans and demanding sovereignty would shape the contours and content of the National Women’s Conferences on Pacific Islands.

The interplay between these three intertwined processes of achieving gender visibility, overcoming infrastructural challenges, and seeking political self-determination were on display in how the conferences were organized, the issues that were debated, and the people selected to represent the territories of the Pacific. Conference publications, media coverage, and oral histories with past organizers and attendees reveal three sets of insights regarding the NWC in the Pacific Territories.

First, the US government and military in the Territories of the Pacific both granted authority and created political space for gendered critiques of these institutions. The NWC, its connection to the United Nations, and other local/global gatherings of Pacific Islander women offered the possibility of imagining alternative political relationships that transcended existing territorial hierarchies.

Second, although women in the Pacific territories tended to eschew the label of “feminist,” their collective deliberations and tensions reveal a matrilineal basis for a Pacific form of feminism for at least some Pacific Islander communities (Arvin et al.; George; Hall, 2008, 2009; Jolly; Karides; Marsh; Spark et al.). The call to rematriate or recenter the mother as a form of Indigenous restoration was complicated, however, by the impact of colonial institutions on Pacific Islander matriarchal figures (DeLisle, 2015, 2021; Diaz, 1993; Gaini and Nielsen; George; Lavell-Harvard and Anderson). In addition, the privileging of motherhood shaped power dynamics between different generations of women, particularly the daughters within Pacific Islander communities.

Third, the demands for Pacific Islander self-determination in the selection process of delegates revealed the limitations of a diversity approach towards political representation (Fujikane and Okamura; Trask). The Pacific territories were home not only to Indigenous communities but also to white, Asian, and other migrant-settlers, some of whom formed families and had children with one another and with Native islanders (Byrd; Flores). The charge of selecting diverse delegates to represent territorial islands fostered debates about whether migrant settlers should have the authority to speak on behalf of Indigenous communities (Arvin et al.).
The process of organizing the NWC in American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories reveal how women negotiated power hierarchies instituted by the state-military apparatus, the matrilineal formulation of Pacific feminism, and the politics of Indigeneity and settler colonialism. Together, these insights reveal what was at stake for women in the territorialized islands of the Pacific to represent themselves to the US nation.

Organizing with and beyond the State

Federal authorization to include territorial representation for the National Women's Conference made a fundamental difference for women in American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories. National legitimization was symbolically and financially important throughout the United States, but it held greater meaning for the territories. First, the territories—political designations for an ossified colonial status—tend to be forgotten in a state-centric conception of the nation. Being explicitly included and receiving allocated funding signaled that these territories had comparable status with states in addressing the nation. Second, the US government and military played outsized roles on the islands, which held geopolitical strategic significance and limited sovereignty. In these contexts, federal authorization bolstered the ability of women activists to organize conferences. This state-military infrastructure, or “settler militarism,” ironically enabled NWC participants to articulate gendered critiques of existing hierarchies and envision alternative forms of political belonging (Imada; Nebolon).

The government and military played integral roles in administering the US territories, where residents were granted limited forms of governance. American Sāmoa, a set of seven islands and atolls, is culturally and historically connected to, but politically distinct from, Sāmoa or Western Sāmoa due to divergent histories of colonization. As an unincorporated territory, American Sāmoa and its approximately 30,000 residents in the late 1970s followed the law of the United States, but did not have the full protection of the Constitution. Also as an unorganized territory, American Sāmoa did not have an authorized government established by the US Congress through an organic act. The islands did adopt their own constitution in July 1967 and had their own legislature. However, American Sāmoa was not authorized to elect a governor until the fall of 1977.

Guam, which had had an Organic Act since 1950, was an organized yet unincorporated territory of the United States. The island elected its first governor in 1970 following a constitutional convention that people on Guam organized on their own. In the spring of 1977, the island received authorization from the US Congress to conduct a second constitutional convention. Located at the westernmost point of the United States and home to three times the number of people as American Sāmoa, Guam possessed a more robust governmental infrastructure given its status as an organized territory.

A similar number of islanders as Guam, approximately 100,000, lived in the entire region of the Trust Territories of Pacific Islands (TTPI), a designation that the United Nations first authorized in 1947 and only discontinued in 1994. Initially, the government seat of the Trust Territories resided on Guam, the southernmost island of the Marianas. In 1951, the US Department of the Interior relocated the administrative center to Saipan, which was part of the Northern Mariana Islands. The entire region was divided into six districts (the Mariana, Palau, Yap, Truk, Ponape, and Marshall
Islands), an administrative mapping that mirrored the six NWC pre-conferences that were held in the Trust Territories. A Congress of Micronesia was established in 1965, but over the course of the next two decades the political relationship between the islands and the United States evolved. The Northern Marianas became a commonwealth of the United States; other districts (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Truk, and Yap) formed a federation; and the Marshall Islands and Palau became sovereign states. Nevertheless, the federation and the republics selected to “freely associate” with the United States through the Compact of Free Association, which gave the United States authority over their defense.4

In all three territories, the US military played a significant role. American Sāmoa was governed by the US Navy until 1951, but its influence persisted since the US government appointed the governor of American Sāmoa until 1977. In Guam, the US military still controls 30 percent of the island’s land. Similarly, in the former Trust Territories, the US military retains control over the islands’ defense, even under “free association.” In fact, from 1946 to 1962, US security interests led to the establishment of the Pacific Proving Grounds in the Marshall Islands, where the United States conducted 105 open air and underwater nuclear tests. The United States’ direct political control and close surveillance of these Pacific Islands stemmed from their military significance.

Given the dominance of the US state and military, as well as the relatively recent emergence of locally elected representatives, these governmental entities offered crucial support for territorial organizers of the International Women’s Year Conference. The significance of the military state was visibly displayed in the Northern Marianas Women’s Conference booklet (“International Women’s Year, Northern”). The first photograph to appear in the report featured Erwin Canham, the longest serving editor of the Christian Science Monitor and the last appointed resident commissioner of the Northern Mariana Islands. Behind Canham, visually captured as he declared August 7, 1977 to be Northern Marianas Women’s Day, were two other middle-aged white men. They were dressed in military regalia and festooned with leis (McPhetres). Women of the Northern Marianas were the honorees of the day and at the center of the NWC conference. However, white men from the states took center stage in the published memorabilia of the gathering. The display of leis on their bodies evoked the symbolism of Native female hospitality, which presumably welcomed US tourists and soldiers (Imada).

Men from the Northern Marianas were not absent from the occasion. The conference booklet begins with a greeting and a resolution of congratulations, offered by members of the Northern Mariana Islands Legislature social committee—all of them men. Even as they applauded the conference organizers and attendees, the signers felt compelled to state that they had to revise the resolution “after considerable debate,” in order to capture the “consensus of the Committee” (Villanueva). The revised version supported equal rights and acknowledged that the preexisting matrilineal system of the Northern Marianas had been supplanted by a patrilineal one following the “historical outside influence of the Spanish, German, Japanese, and American Administration” (“Resolution No. 5-176”). Yet, language denouncing suppression and discrimination against women was crossed-out but still discernable. The desire to make visible this archive of debate indicates disagreement and likely discomfort among the male political leaders about how to acknowledge women’s oppression.
The political theories of Carole Pateman and Christine Keating crystallize the gendered dimensions of decolonizing state formation. Pateman argues that men who engage in political contracts to form democratic states tend to reinforce a “hidden sexual contract” that affirms patriarchy. Keating incorporates the scholarship of Pateman as well as Charles Mills to illuminate that decolonizing states that transition political power from a white colonial elite to a non-white Native male population may nevertheless reinforce gender, religious, and ethnic/racial hierarchies as a form of “compensatory domination.” Men from the Northern Marianas, who assumed positions of political leadership in the territorial legislature, helped to supplant a matrilineal society. Their ascent at the expense of Northern Marianas women fits with both Pateman’s concept of the “hidden sexual contract” and Keating’s theory of “compensatory democracy.”

Pacific Islander male political authority did not always transform, but instead extended previous gender hierarchies. For example, in American Sāmoa, which practiced an ambilineal kinship system allowing for choice in affiliating with the maternal or paternal lineage, the matai or chiefly system still permeated the political culture of the 1970s (Shu). Women could achieve chiefly roles, and there were such titles that were designated for women. In fact, Chief Pulu T. Peneueta, a female matai who served as mayor of the capitol Pago Pago, was elected as a delegate to represent American Sāmoa. Overall, however, as one resolution that emerged from the NWC pre-meeting pointed out, “women are in the minority of prominent high ‘matai’ (chief) title holders in the Samoan Culture (fa’a-Samoan)” (“Resolutions on Political Concerns”). This gender imbalance was structurally significant in terms of political representation and voice. Territorial Senators were not elected by popular vote “but by rank of ‘matai’ (chief) title holders as set forth in the Constitution of American Samoa;” also, the same Constitution allowed “mostly ‘titled men’” to serve as convention delegates to write the rules of their emerging government (“Resolutions on Political Concerns”).

Despite the layering impacts of US and territorial male authority, men in political leadership could nevertheless empower and support women’s agency and resistance. In Guam, traditionally a matrilineal society, Governor Ricardo Bordallo and the military leadership on the island offered resources and support for the NWC. Bordallo had previously upended some existing hierarchies. Laura Souder—a conference organizer, elected delegate to represent Guam, and pioneering scholar of Chamorro women’s history—had been appointed by Governor Bordallo to work for the government of Guam. She was relatively young at the time, having just completed her MA degree. She recalled that he was willing to enlist the skills and talents of young people, which was contrary to the social order that respected the authority of elders (Souder, 2020). Bordallo also appointed Gregoria Baty, an immigrant from the Philippines who taught dance at the University of Guam, to serve as the head of the Women’s Commission for Guam, a state-appointed body that emerged throughout the United States after President Kennedy authorized the President’s Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. Baty became a key organizer for the NWC, having previously attended the United Nations IWY conference in Mexico City. Following the 1977 national conference, President Jimmy Carter also invited Baty to serve on the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women (Smith). Both Souder and Baty were relatively youthful, in their late twenties and mid-thirties, at the time of the conference. The governor offered political clout and resources to assist in the organizing effort. For example, to reach
women in more difficult to reach areas, Baty and others issued requests and enlisted the support of village-level administrators to identify women who could represent their districts.

The governor's office offered legitimization and support, but the initial impetus for the Guam Women’s Conference originated outside of the governor’s office. Priscilla Tuncap, an eventual delegate and the Guam conference accountant, explained in a newspaper article that she was the one who queried Congressional delegate A.B. Won Pat about whether Guam would qualify for funds allocated for the National Women’s Conference. She then led the efforts to apply for the federal monies and also secured local resources. Only after Tuncap received the funding did the governor inquire how “we got the grant without him knowing” (Leeke). In addition, Tuncap cultivated the support of Katherine Aguon, the first Chamorro woman to receive a PhD, the director of Education in Guam, and a senator in the territorial legislature. Tuncap explained: “I invited Katherine Aguon to come out to our meeting, and she pledged her support to our committee” (Baty 6). The connection to Representative Won Pat would be a valuable one, as his female staff hosted subsequent executive committee organizing meetings, offering “space, services, and other amenities” (Baty 6). This powerful and resourceful network of women organizers revealed that the matrilineal values of Indigenous Guam persisted despite the eras of European, Asian, and American colonization. They could mobilize the resources of the Guamanian government, and women in Guam also were assuming formal positions of leadership.

The US military in Guam also played a key role in promoting the women’s conference. Both the government and the military in Guam allowed employees and personnel to attend the conference with pay on Friday (the first full day of the conference and the day that attracted the highest attendance). In fact, the “top commanding officers of the Navy” gave permission to “merge the annual Federal Women’s Group meeting with the territorial meeting” (Baty 6). Also, following the Federal Advisory Act of 1965, which emphasizes the principle of open meetings and public involvement, all meetings related to the Guam Women’s Conferences were announced widely, including in “military newsletters” (Baty 7). The military’s attention towards women’s issues had precedent. The scholarship of Anne Hattori and Tina Taitano DeLisle reveal how the US navy, prior to World War II, focused on changing public health practices largely by targeting women as patients, mothers, and healthcare providers.

During 1977, though, the endorsement and involvement of the US military for the IWY Conference provided a platform for women to discuss their status in the armed forces and demand institutional and cultural changes. One of the workshops at the conference specifically focused on “women and the military” and was chaired by Katie Cutler, the Information Officer for Andersen Air Force Base. Attendees included those from Anderson as well as the Covington Naval Air Station, the Guam Naval Magazine, and the US Army. Together, they discussed topics related to career and workplace issues as well as the role of military wives and dependents (Baty 23). These discussions in turn led the conference to adopt 14 resolutions related to the military, which included the call to investigate and challenge gender-based discrimination in hiring practices and the naming of occupations as well as a culture that tolerated and enabled sexual harassment and violence against women (“Guam Women’s Conference”). The dominance of the military in Guam and the willingness of the armed forces to
collaborate with the territorial women’s conference enabled these women to articulate critiques and condemn militarized patriarchy.

Women on Guam and on other Pacific Islands literally used the master’s tools to critique the master’s house. In American Sāmoa, the territorial pre-NWC meeting included a set of resolutions that criticized male domination in political representation. Resolution number 1 demanded utilizing the popular vote, not just relying on the votes of the matais or chiefs, to elect Constitutional Convention delegates and territorial senators. Resolution number 2 advocated for appointments of American Sāmoan women as Associate Judges. No women had ever been appointed, even though the Associate Judge “does not require a formal law education” and hence could be more easily attainable (“Resolutions on Political Concerns”). And finally, Resolution number 3 argued for the need for proportionate gender representation on governmental boards and commissions, given how few women served in these roles (“Resolutions on Political Concerns”). The NWC, authorized by the federal government, led territorial male military and political leadership to support the initiative, some with ambivalence and others more substantially. This space of political recognition allowed American Sāmoan women to declare themselves ready for leadership.

The critiques of exclusion extended beyond seeking equal opportunity and recognition. Some women who participated in the NWC territorial and national conferences also spoke of political connections that transcended their island homes and of the US nation. Baty, for example, recalled attending the United Nations Women’s Conference in Mexico City in the summer of 1975 as well as the Pacific Women’s Conference, held later that year in Suva, Fiji. At the “Women Speak Out!” Pacific Women’s Conference, Baty served as the sole representative from Guam at a gathering of women from the islands of the Pacific and the countries that bordered the Pacific (Griffen). Pacific Islander women from other US territories also engaged in these conferences. Penelope A. Utu represented American Sāmoa (Griffen). For the 1975 conference in Fiji, the invited guest speaker from Jamaica reminded conference attendees of the connections between the Pacific and the Caribbean, and between Black and Pacific women’s internationalism (Griffen; Swan).

These forms of women’s oceanic internationalisms extended further back in time to decades well before the 1970s. At the American Sāmoa women’s conference, 82-year-old Pepe Haleck, the first American Sāmoan nurse to be trained in the continental United States, was honored for her founding role of the Pan Pacific Women’s Association in 1928. The organization was subsequently renamed the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women’s Association (PPSEAWA). The other three founding members came from New Zealand, Korea, and Hawai‘i. The organization met throughout the twentieth century and continues to this day (Scanlan). The PPSEAWA provided a forum for women across national and territorial boundaries to promote peace and cooperation, which included condemning nuclear testing in the Pacific that persisted into the 1970s (Sato; Shibahara).

These global and pan-oceanic women’s networks transcended and offered opportunities to critique US and western power. When Baty attended the United Nations conference in Mexico City, she could not be a member of the US governmental delegation due to Guam’s status as a territory. Instead, she attended the gathering for non-governmental organizations, a reminder of the unequal status of Guam. Furthermore, Baty received specific instructions from the Guamanian governor not to
speak about “peace,” one of the three main topics for the conference (Smith). Engaging in conversations about equality and development was acceptable, given the United States’ ideological investment in political liberalism and modernization. However, peace was a code word for being sympathetic to communism in the context of the Cold War (Goedde; Olcott). Also, given Guam’s strategic military significance, speaking about peace challenged US governmental investment in the island as the home for naval, air force, and army bases.

However, talking about peace resonated with Baty and the other island women as they called for a nuclear-free Pacific at international gatherings during the 1970s (Smith). For example, the 1977 Belau IWY Conference in the Trust Territories featured a “report on the 1975 Fiji Women’s Conference” by Salvadora Katosang, an advocate for a nuclear free Palau (Trust Territory International). Doing so challenged the belief that Pacific Islands should serve as military testing laboratories for the United States, France, and other nuclear powers. The presumed suitability of these experiments relied upon beliefs that these lands, waters, and people were ecologically distant and far removed from communities deemed worthy of protection. Instead, calling for a nuclear-free Pacific entailed a recognition of the lives of islanders, not isolated and disposable, but interconnected across archipelagos of islands and water (Wu, 2019).

The National Women’s Conference and its ties to the United Nations built upon these global webs of political intimacy that extended well beyond territorial and Cold War boundaries and the mid-to-late 1970s. Women in American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories articulated commonalities with women across Oceania, Austro-Asia, the Americas, and the Caribbean. Even as women in the territories were constrained by the US state and military, the opportunity to engage with one another in discussions about patriarchy and peace revealed alternative visions that encompassed their island homelands in a sea of political possibilities (Hall, 2009; Hau‘ofa).

Rematriation, Reproductive Rights, and Pacific Feminisms

The women who attended the NWC pre-conferences in the Pacific Islands did not necessarily define themselves as feminists. As various scholars have pointed out, the term resonated negatively because of its focus on white, middle-class women and their attainment of individual rights (George; Goeman and Denetdale; Hall, 2009; Jolly; Marsh; Spark et al.). Instead, women in the Pacific tended to foreground gender reciprocity, particularly as they engaged in decolonial efforts for all members of their society. For example, Gertrude Iuli Sala, who was in her late twenties when she attended the gathering on American Sāmoa, recalled that other women asked her with concern: “This isn’t a feminist group, is it?” (Sala). Their perceptions of feminists and feminism appeared to be shaped by negative publicity that circulated widely throughout the states and apparently the territories as well. At least some of the women also expressed concerns that their husbands would disapprove of a feminist gathering. Sala recalled a common viewpoint, articulated by a Sāmoan woman she knew: “My husband didn’t want me to come. He said it’s a feminist group, and I better not come home thinking that I’m better than him” (Sala). Sala herself denied that the NWC was a feminist initiative, although she subsequently formed the organization Political Organization of Women for Equal Rights (POWER) to recognize Sāmoan
women’s achievements and promote their political empowerment. The territorial NWC gatherings provide insight into how women in the Pacific understood their societal roles, articulated their vision for change, and advocated for women. One common thread centered on reclaiming the respect and authority of mothers, or rematriation, especially given the prevalence of matrilineal societies among Pacific Islander communities (George; Mothering Guahan). Yet, the valuing of mothers was complicated by the ongoing impact of colonization on Indigenous matriarchs and by age hierarchies that constrained the political agency of younger women (DeLisle, 2021).

The women who attended the NWC meetings in the territories, like those who attended the state and national conferences, expressed differences of opinion. These disagreements tended to emerge in the debates about resolutions, since they constituted official viewpoints that purported to represent the women in the territories. Some variations occurred, but the typical process of authoring and endorsing resolutions entailed a three-part process. First, conference organizers selected workshop topics for the conference. They considered the issues that the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year identified but did not import these wholesale into the territorial meetings. Instead, local planners relied on their own knowledge and the women whom they consulted to identify issues most relevant to islanders. Second, workshop attendees during the conference then discussed and formulated resolutions. Conferences typically featured an opening segment with guest speakers before transitioning to the workshop sessions. Workshops were facilitated by selected individuals with expertise or interest in the topics and at times featured guest speakers as well. Workshops were typically breakout sessions that allowed conference attendees to choose topics that most interested them. However, there were variations to this process based on local circumstances. For example, the conference organizers for the Yap District of the Trust Territories decided to divide the conference attendees based on language preference. The group that utilized Yapes e discussed all the workshop topics together rather than further subdividing (“International Women's Year, Minutes”). Finally, the resolutions proposed by the workshops were then voted upon collectively by all attendees. These resolutions represented the interests of women on these island territories and were forwarded to the National Commission for discussion in Houston. For the resolutions that held more local significance, the IWY organizers contacted the relevant territorial authorities.

The resolutions that emerged from the pre-meetings encompassed a range of issues and solutions related to gender discrimination in education, the workplace, governmental and military institutions, the media, and the family. One of the most controversial topics that emerged in these discussions focused on reproductive rights, which also was a hot button issue at the NWC in Houston. The disagreements revealed fault lines that reflected the legacies of colonization and the strength of Catholicism on the islands. In addition, concerns about reproduction revealed the centrality of motherhood and kinship in shaping Pacific Islander women’s identities and empowering their activism. The debates about abortion will be discussed in greater length after exploring the relationship between maternal identity and Indigenous Pacific feminisms.

Maternal identity served as a foundation for discussions of women’s empowerment throughout the Pacific territories but particularly for those islands with matrilineal traditions. For example, the planning committee for the Belau Women’s Convention,
The conference held on Palau of the Western Caroline Islands, declared that “women in Belau have power” (“Press Release”). Led by Katharine Kesolei, who created the Micronesian Girls Association in 1960 and eventually served as a senator in the Palau National Congress, the organizers sought to bring together “women’s organizations” and all women who “have traditional positions in the home, family, and clan” (“Highlights of Addresses”). The convention explicitly reminded attendees that “the core of the family is the mother. This mother will be an influence in the community. In Palau, our customs emphasize this power” (“Highlights of Addresses”). The power of motherhood resides in the family and also extends into the broader society, as “a peace woman will make a peaceful family; a peaceful family will make a peaceful community; a peaceful community will make a peaceful nation; peaceful nations will make a peaceful world” (“Highlights of Addresses”).

35 The centering of motherhood reflects the long-standing matrilineal practices of a number of Pacific Islander cultures, including the Carolinian (Trust Territories and Northern Mariana Islands), Chamorro (Guam and Northern Mariana Islands), and Tongan (Sāmoa). Even as patriarchal institutions and values were implanted by colonization, the practices of matrilineality persisted with family lineage, clan titles, and at times land being inherited from mothers. Laura Souder, for example, recalled growing up on Guam with large numbers of cousins who were all related through her mother and her kin (Souder, 2020). Even today, the current Lieutenant Governor of Guam, Josh Tenorio, discusses how it is still customary in Guam to listen to and respect female elders (Tenorio). In fact, he is serving under the island’s first female Governor Lourdes Aflague Leon Guerrero and a female majority legislature. He describes the female-led government in Guam as a return to matrilineal values. Indigenous Studies scholars and Indigenous activists have increasingly called for rematriation, a restoration of the importance of motherhood as a way to restore Indigenous knowledge, land, and sovereignty (Tuck).

36 The call for rematriation, which Pacific Islander women articulated in their NWC gatherings, was distinct but not completely removed from the gender politics of the mainland. As Marjorie Spruill argues in Divided We Stand, conservative women activists at the Houston conference, led by Phyllis Schlafly, embraced the mantle of family values and motherhood to oppose feminist agendas. They condemned the Equal Rights Amendment, lesbianism, and reproductive rights for threatening the traditional family. The resolutions passed by women in the territorial Pacific indicated that their embrace of women’s power as mothers did not preclude them from demanding attention to domestic violence, social security credit for domestic caregivers, the need for childcare facilities, education and career counseling that offered pathways for women into non-traditional careers, and equal opportunity for employment and political representation. The resolutions did not address non-heteronormative sexuality, however. Overall, even though attendees eschewed the label of “feminism,” their centering of Pacific Islander motherhood was not necessarily in opposition to feminist-defined agendas.

37 The issues of birth control and abortion did raise more controversy, though. Resolutions supporting sex education, knowledge of birth control, and access to abortion passed territorial meetings. However, enough opposition surfaced that the conference reports captured these tensions. In Guam, a “minority views” report indicated a group “SPEARHEADED BY THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER ORGANIZATION,
introduced a pro-life resolution from the floor” and that it was “defeated after a lengthy discussion of its various implications” (“Minority Views”). This proposal directly opposed the resolution sponsored by the Committee on Health Workshop, which passed by a majority vote. Isabel Arriola, a leader in the organization Christian Mothers of Guam and an honoree of the conference who was seated on the platform with other dignitaries, introduced the “The Right of the Life of the Unborn” resolution (Baty 31). She cited the fact that the Speaker of the Fourteenth Guam Legislature concurred with 23 states in petitioning Congress for a constitutional amendment on abortion and noted that territories have the right to decide abortion rights after the first trimester. The resolution failed by a vote of 16-47. The opening day of the conference attracted 1,500 attendees, but fewer people attended the second day, when resolutions were debated and voted upon. The conference organizers pointed out that “Guam being a predominantly catholic [sic] Pacific community, questions may be asked as to whether the pro-abortion resolutions approved in this conference are really representative of the views of the majority in the island” (Baty 87). The strength of pro-life beliefs would persist beyond the late 1970s. In 1990, Guam passed one of the most restrictive bills on abortion rights (Diaz, 1993). Although it was ultimately struck down, the legal battle was positioned to challenge Roe v. Wade (“Guam Is Set Back”). In 2019, the last abortion provider in Guam retired, making it impossible for women on the island to access this legally allowable service (Jones).

38 Guam, similar to a number of other Pacific Islands that had been colonized by Spain, had a strong Catholic tradition. As in Hawai‘i and other states, the Mormon Church also targeted these same islanders for proselytizing (Aikau). Pacific Islanders indigenized elements of these “western” churches and belief systems, but these religious institutions and communities did represent a cultural front of the colonization process (Diaz, 2010). Also, these same religions mobilized conservative opinion to attack feminist calls for reproductive choice. DeLisle has pointed to “messy entanglements between indigeneity and colonialism” that persist in places like Guam and other locales fundamentally shaped by a long history of western colonialism (DeLisle, 2021 xv).

39 Even though the Guamanian territorial resolution supported access to abortion, Baty recalled that she was the only member of the elected delegation to stand in favor of this issue at the National Women’s Conference in Houston. As a Filipina, she came from a both predominantly Catholic and matrilineal society. Her mother, in fact, had served on a village council in the Philippines and became invested in providing birth control after receiving appeals by women for access to birth control and abortion. Souder, who also came from a predominantly Catholic and matrilineal tradition and was also pro-choice, recalled being carefully monitored by the elderly Chamorro members of the delegation in Texas. Souder did not always agree with her elders and found ways to express her viewpoints. However, coming from a matrilineal culture that mandated respect for elderly women, Souder had to navigate these expectations carefully. She recalled that the senior members of the delegation even called her mother and threatened to do so again, when they thought Souder was not behaving appropriately in Houston. Her mother, in fact, served not only as the pillar in their extended family, but also in a highly respected role in their church. Nevertheless, Baty and Souder felt differentially enabled by their status as relatively young women to express feminist-identified beliefs. The fact that Baty was an immigrant, an outsider to the Chamorro community, was significant. In contrast, Souder was amongst Indigenous female elders,
people she was taught to respect, although these same matriarchs were strongly influenced by western religion.

40 A reticence regarding abortion and reproduction also surfaced in American Sāmoa. The conference there declined to discuss and vote on resolutions. Instead, the coordinating committee and the elected delegates and alternates were granted the authority to draft resolutions on behalf of the women in American Sāmoa. Resolution number 1 on “Social Concerns” noted that “abortion is the least desirable method of family planning,” but called instead for educational programs regarding family planning for youth and instructions for parents to learn how to discuss sexuality (“Resolutions on Social Concerns”). Sala, who was in her late twenties in the late 1970s, about the same age as Souder, recalled that the resolution likely reflected conflicts between two factions of female leaders in American Sāmoa. The nurses, who tended to receive their training and held appointments through the US military, opposed abortion. Sala, herself an educator, recalled that the teachers advocated for reproductive choice. The delegation reflected the predominance of these occupations, which explains the criticism of abortion along with the need for public health education. In American Sāmoa, elders were also revered in the matai system. Sala recalled that she, as one of the younger people in attendance, was invited to observe the conference, not serve as a delegate. This divide between delegates and observers, which also surfaced at the national conference, hampered her ability to speak and support certain issues.

41 The valuing of mothers in certain Pacific Islander cultures empowered Indigenous women, most notably elderly women. Their roles as family and community protectors translated into advocacy against gender hierarchies on a variety of issues in the private as well as public realm. Also, the emphasis on motherhood foregrounded gender complementarity between men and women. However, this Pacific form of female empowerment was not free from the influence of western religious and military institutions. Additionally, the valuing of the mother at times came at the expense of the voices of the daughters of the communities.

Who Can Speak for the Pacific Islands?

42 The second main controversy that surfaced in the National Women’s Conferences in the Pacific Territories raised the question of who should represent the islands. The gatherings, as charged by national legislation, provided an opportunity to explore the history of women in these locales in order to assess the current status and offer recommendations for changes to shape the future. The timing of the conferences, initially planned for the 1976 bicentennial year and heavily influenced by social movements for racial, decolonial, and Indigenous justice, inspired Pacific Islanders to reclaim their history and argue for self-determination in the realm of culture, education, and politics. This call for Indigenous representation at the National Women’s Conference, however, clashed with another directive of conference organizers, to create delegations of diverse women. The debates regarding who should represent the Pacific Islands, most notably in Guam, reveals the complex politics of settler colonial societies that seek to promote “equal” representation among Indigenous and settler-arrivants (Byrd; Trask).

43 The NWC gatherings in the Pacific Territories coincided with a flowering of Indigenous claims of cultural and political self-determination. Conference organizers and
resolutions articulated the need to preserve and promote Indigenous language, values, and practices. Laura Souder introduced several resolutions related to Chamorro women. She co-led the workshop on “Women in History” with other scholars to share research on Chamorro women. The conference collaboration inspired the publication of *Women of Guam* in the fall of 1977 (Bamba et al.). Souder eventually amplified this initial research and featured conference leaders in her book-length publication, *Daughters of the Island*, a foundational work in Chamorro women’s history (Souder, 1987). Souder began her research prior to the conference, but the meeting provided an opportunity to share orally and eventually present in published form the ground-breaking histories of Indigenous women on Guam.

Souder, and other herstory tellers at the various NWCs, tended to divide the chronology of Pacific Islander women into three phases: before European contact, the waves of colonization (notably under the lengthy rule of Spain but also inclusive of US control), and the post-World War II era in which the primary influences appear to be modernization and decolonization. Dividing history into these three phases allowed conference attendees to gain an understanding of women’s roles in Indigenous societies, the impact of colonization on gender roles, and the efforts of contemporary women to navigate their changing societies while balancing traditional and foreign influences.

Souder and others sought to disseminate this knowledge broadly. From her workshop, at least three resolutions emerged. One encouraged everyone, especially women, to “take an active role in preserving Chamorro culture” (“Culture and Its Preservation”). Given the centrality of women in matrilineal societies and their role in social reproduction, their remembering of the past could preserve and promote the transmission of Chamorro culture. At the same time, remembering the past also underscores the importance of women in Chamorro society for the past, present, and future. In other words, to be Chamorro was to value women, and to value women was to affirm Chamorro identity. Second, Souder proposed that “local government agencies granting financial aid to cultural institution[s]” should assess the “possible impact of such a grant on the status of women;” in other words, grantors should evaluate projects for whether they emphasize “woman’s role as a dominant culture-bearer” (“Culture”). This resolution recommended both a carrot and stick to ensure the dissemination of Indigenous knowledge and women’s central role. Communal remembrances are not just private practices but institutionally supported through funding. Souder and others called for accountability from funding agencies as well as those seeking to promote education about Chamorro culture. If the local government was serious in its efforts to revive Chamorro culture, then those projects that recognized Indigenous Chamorro matrilineal values would benefit from funding. Proposals that did not recognize matrilineality potentially could be denied resources. Finally, Souder and others called for “the federal government […] to establish Chamorro as a separate ethnic category in government forms and publications” (“Culture”). Akin to the efforts to change census categories, federal recognition of a collective identity held symbolic as well as material importance. Documenting information about Chamorros could lead to the recognition of socioeconomic disparities and the lack of political representation. The data, in turn, could serve as a basis for advocating for funding and policies to address these issues.

Souder was joined in her efforts by Dr. Faye Munoz, an invited speaker at both the Guam and Northern Mariana Island Women’s Conferences. A Chamorro who received
her graduate degrees in the states and who resided on the continent, Munoz held considerable clout among Chamorros in both territories. Both she and Souder were inspired by racial and Indigenous social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and Munoz was active among Pacific Islander women’s organizations in California prior to her residency in Colorado (Munoz). She proposed two resolutions for the NWC and led a workshop added just a day before the conference on “the Rights of Chamorro Women” (Gerhold et al.). The workshop called for a Chamorro Women’s conference that included the Mariana Islands (Guam, Rota, Saipan, Tinian), to discuss cultural preservation and concerns of maintaining one’s family in today’s changing world (“Culture”). This represented a demand for ongoing attention to women’s concerns that would extend beyond the NWC. In addition, the proposal for a Chamorro women’s gathering challenged territorial divides between Guam and the Northern Marianas by foregrounding the historical, cultural, and familial connections that spanned these islands. Munoz and others also insisted that “The Chamorro woman represents issues and concerns of her island at the National Women’s Conference” (“Culture”). Supporting this resolution meant that non-Chamorro women, like Baty, should not serve as delegates. Related to this call for Indigenous representation was a resolution to invalidate the results of the conference delegation election.

The proposal for Chamorros to represent Guam met with resistance and outrage. Other inhabitants of Guam, including “Orientals, other Micronesians, and the ‘Statesiders’” expressed their concern about being excluded, since they too were residents of the territory (“Minority Views”). Critics also questioned “the propriety of favoring an ethnic group when the goal of the conference is to represent the minority groups” (“Minority Views”). Condemnation extended beyond conference attendees and even appeared in the local newspaper, Pacific Daily News, as people wrote in to criticize this resolution. These critics labeled the demand as an expression of “Chamorro supremacy” (“Recommendations Passed”). The wording of the charge evokes the phrase “white supremacy,” thereby equating Indigenous demands for self-determination with racial superiority. This pairing portrays non-Chamorros as minority groups who are denied equal representation.

In particular, Filipinos, who constituted approximately 20% of the population on Guam, occupied a vexed position. The Philippines and Guam are much closer geographically to each other compared to Guam’s location in relation to Hawai’i, which is four times the distance. In addition, Guam and the Philippines share a similar history of Spanish, US, and Japanese colonization as well as indigenous matrilineal tradition. Besides, Filipinos were recruited to work on Guam as the US military established its infrastructure on the island. Intermarriage also occurred, despite the US administration seeking to prevent these relationships (Flores; Perez). Nevertheless, tensions existed between the two groups as well, and these antagonisms led to the emergence of voting blocs at the NWC elections. Baty recalled:

When we were being chosen as delegates, there was an election in Guam before our meeting, the Guam women’s conference, and so there were demonstrations that fed only vote [sic] for Chamorro women. There were placards over there during the conference and the Filipino leader came to me and said don’t worry we are calling each other and you are going to win. (Smith)

Baty did not believe her votes only came from the Filipinx community, given her leadership in organizing and promoting the conference. Nevertheless, she was well
aware of these dynamics, and the call for Indigenous leadership spurred ethnic mobilization among Filipinos.

However, not all non-Chamorros believed that the call for Indigenous representation countered the ideals of the conference (Camacho; Garrison). Sister Joanne Poehlmann asked conference attendees to carefully consider the resolution. She stated that “she is neither Chamorro nor was she born on Guam.” She emphasized that “it was important for the non Chamorro participants to listen to the intent of the resolution which she felt was a genuine need for the Chamorro woman to have others recognize the boundaries that identifies her and no more.” Poehlmann concluded by suggesting that “The boundaries need not be barriers” (“Resolutions of the Coordinating Committee”). Her comments suggest that she sought to respect Chamorro women’s request for self-determination and encouraged others to listen respectively. However, she also framed this as an issue that only defined Chamorros as a group. She did not extend her remarks to suggest that the demand for Indigenous self-representation emerged in recognition of a historical and ongoing process of colonization.

In the end, the resolutions for Chamorros to represent Guam and the request to nullify the delegate votes were both denied. The resolution was barely voted down with 44 votes in support and 46 against. The request to vacate the conference election was also turned down, since the Coordinating Committee followed the procedures that they publicly circulated. The elected representatives, however, were heavily dominated by Chamorros and Catholics. Of the twelve delegates, nine were Chamorro. Baty was the sole Filipina and the only person who self-identified a religious affiliation that was not Catholic. Two representatives were haoles, i.e. white. Of the five alternates, the top vote getters were two Chamorros, followed by two Filipina and one white candidate. The results revealed that the call for Chamorro self-representation held sway with the voters, regardless of the failure of the resolutions.

Although this discussion focused on Guam, women on other Pacific Islands asserted their desire to pursue conversations about women’s rights in their Native languages and with respect to their Indigenous values. Munoz, for example, recalled that as she traveled to attend the conference in the Northern Mariana Islands, her fellow passengers and conference attendees queried her in Chamorro about what the flight attendant was communicating to the passengers. This led her to speak in Chamorro at the Saipan conference, something that she had not planned to do and was unused to doing. She chose to do so in order to directly communicate with her Chamorro sisters. The American Sāmoa conference translated materials into English and Sāmoan. Similarly, the Belau conference featured English and Palauan notes and publications. The Yap IWY gathering even seated groups according to four languages: English, Yapese, Palauan, and Ulithian (Trust Territory International).

Scholars who critique Asian settler colonialism in Hawai‘i argue that “civil rights” and “equal representation” within the US nation serve as technologies of Indigenous dispossession (Fujikane and Okamura; Saranillio; Trask). Regarding Native people as just another racial minority erases the history of settler colonialism, in which settlers and arrivants contributed to the loss of Native Hawaiian land and sovereignty. The National Women’s Conference, a project of civil rights to recognize diverse women’s needs, created a space for Indigenous women to mobilize and make visible their demands. Yet, the NWC’s process of electing “representatives” from “diverse” communities could also be wielded as a weapon to argue against Pacific Islander self-
determination. Nevertheless, the demographics in Guam, especially among motivated conference attendees, favored the appeal for Chamorro representation. Similarly, Pacific Islander representatives tended to be the majority of those elected in American Sāmoa and the Trust Territories.

**Conclusion**

The IWY conferences in the territories of the American Sāmoa, Guam, and Trust Territories offer a snapshot into the complex dynamics that shaped women’s politics in the Pacific Territories. The settler-military state authorized and legitimized these gatherings. These same meetings critiqued the patriarchal hierarchies of these institutions and fostered opportunities for alternative political intimacies that transcended existing state-recognized boundaries. The formulation of Pacific feminism as an extension of traditional practices of matrilineality foregrounded the project of Indigenous rematriation. Yet the privileging of the mother also revealed the imprint of colonization and at times constrained the political agency of daughters. Finally, the call for Indigenous self-determination was rejected ideologically in favor of a “diversity” approach and minority representation for a civil rights project but realized in actuality through the voting process and the demographic dominance of Pacific Islander communities.

The pre-meetings for the National Women’s Conference on American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories were the first such gatherings devoted to the discussion of women’s history, concerns, and agenda on these islands. The activism and scholarship that emerged from these ground-breaking conferences would shape Pacific feminism for decades to come. The people who attended the local gatherings and represented their home islands in Houston went on to shape gender politics within their homes, communities, educational institutions, workplaces, and governments. These developments preceded 1977, but the territorial meetings served as focal points for collective conversation, and these conversations in turn created political ripples throughout the vast sea of Oceania.

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**NOTES**

1. The “territories” represented at the conference were located in the Caribbean (Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands), the Pacific (American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories), as well as the nation’s capital (the District of Columbia).

2. The “On American Samoa Women” convening was held on June 16-18 at American Sāmoa Community College and attracted 300 registrants (“Resolutions on Social Concerns”). The “Guam
International Women’s Year Conference Nihi Ta Fandana Famalaaoan Guam” took place several weeks later on July 8-9 at the Greyhound Race Track and Tamuning School with a high of 1,500 in attendance for the opening ceremonies (Baty 16). The Trust Territories held six separate conferences throughout August and September. The Ponape District in the Trust Territories held a series of meetings and consultations that resulted in over 80 women registering for an August 5 International Women’s Year (IWy) meeting at the Ponape Island Central High School auditorium. In addition, 323 women registered for a week-long IWy workshop (Trust Territory International). The next day, on August 6, the Kosrae IWy meeting was held in Lelu with 70 registrants (Trust Territory International). On August 6-7, the IWy Northern Marianas Women’s conference was held at the Inter-Continental Inn on Saipan Beach with 115 participants (McPhetres). Thirty-nine individuals attended the IWy Yap District workshop on August 15, which had been preceded by a pre-district meeting on the 12th as well as two post-conference meetings on the 18th and the 25th (Trust Territory International). Around the same time, 456 women gathered at the Marshall Islands Memorial Church in Majuro for the Marshall Islands IWy meeting on August 15-16 (Trust Territory International). On the first two days in September, an unspecified number of women attended the Belau Women’s Convention held at the Palau Civic Center. The organizers did acknowledge that “due to bad weather and the fact that it was the first day, delegates were late in coming to the convention” (Trust Territory International). The Truk IWy Conference was the last to be held on September 10 and 11. The overall number of attendees was not reported, but the minutes indicate that at one point 40 people were participating in deliberations (Trust Territory International).

3. Due to the unevenness in available archival materials, which reflected the size and scale of the organizing efforts, as well as access to oral histories, more attention will be paid to Guam and to a lesser degree to American Sāmoa compared to the Trust Territories.


5. Guam, similar to other territories, was represented in the US Congress through delegates who did not have voting power.

6. Indigenous women also emphasized environmental issues, such as the call for a nuclear free Pacific and the reclamation of land under Indigenous stewardship.

ABSTRACTS

In November 1977, approximately 20,000 people gathered in Houston, Texas for the National Women’s Conference (NWC), the first and only federally-funded convening charged with developing a national agenda of women’s issues. Inspired by the 1975 United Nations Conference on the Status of Women that was held in Mexico City as part of the International Women’s Year (IWy), the NWC represented an opportunity to reflect on the history, contemporary status, and future of women in the United States. Among the attendees were 2,000 delegates, elected from 56 pre-conferences held in each of the states and six territories. Just as the NWC made visible the persistent challenges for gender justice, the existence of US territories reveals the ossified status of colonies within a self-proclaimed democratic nation. What emerged from these Pacific
territorial meetings of the NWC reveals the conflicted politics of women’s empowerment as islanders challenged militarized patriarchy, reclaimed matrilineality, and called for island sovereignty. The 1977 NWC offers a window into these complex politics as women from the Pacific envisioned new possibilities for their future.

En novembre 1977, près de 20 000 personnes se rassemblent à Houston, au Texas, pour la National Women’s Conference (NWC). Il s’agit de la première manifestation financée au niveau fédéral dans le but d’élaborer un programme national pour combattre les discriminations à l’égard des femmes. La CNF s’inspire de la première conférence mondiale sur le statut des femmes, qui a été organisée par les Nations Unies à Mexico en 1975, dans le cadre de l’Année internationale de la femme (AIF) ; deux ans après, c’est l’occasion de faire le point sur la place des femmes dans l’histoire des États-Unis, sur leur statut à ce moment précis et sur leur avenir au sein de la nation. Parmi les participants, se trouvent 2 000 déléguées, élues lors des 56 pré-conferences qui se sont tenues dans chacun des 50 États et dans 6 des territoires du pays. Au moment même où la NWC donne de la visibilité aux difficultés à résoudre en termes d’équité entre les sexes, l’existence de ces territoires des États-Unis non intégrés à l’union fédérale démontre la persistance de colonies au sein d’une nation qui se dit démocratique. Les rassemblements qui se tiennent dans ces territoires du Pacifique en vue de la NWC révèlent les complexités de la politique d’émancipation des femmes, dans des îles dont les habitantes s’opposent à un patriarcat militarisé, tout en revendiquant la matrilinéarité en même temps que l’autonomie de leur île. La NWC de 1977 permet d’étudier ces phénomènes politiques complexes, à un moment où les femmes du Pacifique commencent à entrevoir de nouvelles possibilités quant à leur avenir.

INDEX

**Keywords:** National Women’s Conference (NWC), International Women’s Year (IWY), American Sāmoa, Guam, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, rematriation, matrilineality, indigeneity, sovereignty, feminism, Pan-Pacific, reproductive rights, settler colonialism, nuclear-free

**Mots-clés:** National Women’s Conference (NWC), Année internationale de la femme, Samoa américaines, Guam, territoires sous tutelle des îles du Pacifique, ramatriement, matrilinéarité, indigénéité, souveraineté, féminisme, approche pan-pacifique, droits procréatifs, colonialisme de peuplement, monde sans nucléaire

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