GENDER, CONFLICT, AND PEACEBUILDING

STATE OF THE FIELD AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM USIP GRANTMAKING

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with Elizabeth Murray

[PEACEW⬤RKS]

About the Report

This report is a result of an initiative to reflect on developments, contributions, and prospects in specific areas where USIP grantmaking has been concentrated. The Praxis Institute for Social Justice was commissioned to review the state of the field, identify lessons learned, and contemplate future directions of work in the area of gender, conflict, and peacebuilding. A review of relevant USIP grantmaking—spanning more than 100 projects with gender dimensions—was compiled to complement the report.

About the Authors

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Summary

- The field of gender, conflict, and peacebuilding has emerged over recent decades; become institutionalized through policymaking, legal practice, and the development of practitioner models; and been enhanced through academic research.

- Significant gaps remain in the understanding and awareness of the gendered dimensions of conflict and its legacies.

- The field must overcome a tendency to reduce gender sensitivity to a focus on women.

- Gender identities and norms—as well as the systems, institutions, traditions of practice, and patterns of attitudes that support them—are crucial to conflict dynamics and responses. Both men and women are involved in inflicting violence and are its victims, defying a simplistic classification of roles.

- Sexual violence is a widespread though not universal phenomenon during conflict. It is employed selectively, for strategic reasons, and targets men as well as women.

- During transitions from conflict, gender concerns are rarely taken into account adequately. Gender-based violence, especially against women, often persists. Also, most transitional justice processes have failed to afford a safe space for victims to talk about the violence they experienced and to redress the harms they have suffered.

- USIP grantmaking has supported notable work on gender identities, sexual violence, and women's rights and empowerment, as well as organizations that focus on women's issues. Relatively few of the funded projects, however, have focused primarily on gender.

- The field must embrace a broader concept of gender, examine in-depth the gendered aspects of security and peacebuilding, more fully appreciate the nature of conflict through a gender lens, and develop better ways to undertake gender-sensitive post-conflict measures.

Introduction

> As a starting point, in United Nations usage, gender refers to the socially constructed roles played by women and men that are ascribed to them on the basis of their sex. Gender analysis is done in order to examine similarities and differences in roles and responsibilities between women and men without direct reference to biology, but rather to the behaviour patterns expected from women and men and their cultural reinforcement. These roles are usually specific to a given area and time, that is, since gender roles are contingent on the social and economic context, they can vary according to the specific context and can change over time.[1]

The twentieth century was characterized by numerous armed conflicts, authoritarian regimes, and genocidal episodes, as well as by a significant increase in attention to women's rights and protagonism in the context of political violence. These developments prompted research and policy initiatives on conflict prevention, resolution, and reconstruction activities, which have more recently begun to incorporate the insights of gender studies to better understand and respond to the impact conflict has on men and women. This fusion has produced a new field of inquiry—gender, conflict, and peacebuilding.

Over recent decades, important progress has been made in this field, yet much remains to be understood about the gendered dimensions of conflict and its legacies. With an eye toward addressing these knowledge gaps and heightening awareness in both academic and practitioner work, the Grant Program of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) commissioned the Praxis Institute for Social Justice to review the state of the field, reflect on the lessons learned, and contemplate future directions. To this end, we reviewed the relevant history and literature. In addition, we convened a two-day workshop with USIP grantees working on the cutting edge of gender, conflict, and peacebuilding. The workshop, which brought together researchers and practitioners, was a constructive way to gather insights from a wide range of prominent specialists, in particular to establish outstanding issues and policy needs and to generate new areas of inquiry. This report, in turn, offers an assessment of what has been achieved to date in this growing field and identifies opportunities for advancing the research and policy agenda.

We begin with a brief overview of the rise of women's rights within the international human rights framework, the various documents and agencies charged with upholding and furthering gender equality, and the evolution of practitioner models and approaches. A major issue in this context is the persistent gap between legislating gender sensitivity and implementing that vision in practice.

We then discuss the key themes that emerged in the academic and practitioner literatures, as well as in the workshop.

The first theme highlights a fundamental concern of implementation, namely, defining what constitutes appropriate gender sensitivity. This definition has several notable elements, including the degree of emphasis on women, ambivalence about the role of men as subjects of attention as well as participants in advancing this agenda, and uncertainties that arise when dealing with local traditions and cultures.

A subsequent set of themes spans a multitude of relationships between gender and circumstances before, during, and after conflict. We initially examine processes of militarization and demilitarization, demonstrating that gender is a significant dimension of how security and peacekeeping are oriented and conducted. In this context, we also introduce a number of compelling issues that challenge the tidy distinctions often made between political and criminal violence, the public and private spheres, and conflict and postconflict settings. Next, we focus further on gender identities, arguing that sustaining certain concepts of masculinity and femininity are integral—perhaps as much as guns and bullets—to militarism and conflict.

Gender is a significant dimension of how security and peacekeeping are oriented and conducted.

We follow up by contrasting conventional images of gender to the actual wartime experiences of women, especially as combatants. This discussion reveals that gender stereotypes do not afford adequate representations of the nature of agency and behavior, yet still have potent and even perverse effects that reinforce inequities of power. In particular, the treatment of women as sexual commodities leads us to reflect on the broader phenomenon of sexual violence and its links to the social construction of gender and other patterns of practice surrounding conflict. Here, we show that the typical depictions—of women as victims, with rape an exclusive, predominant, and defining violation—overlook the varieties of violence that both women and men experience and the complex manner in which they are addressed at an individual and societal level.

The last theme concerns transitions from conflict and the extent to which transitional justice mechanisms and institutional reforms incorporate a gendered perspective. A key insight is that the dividends of peace are not shared equally, in part because gender regimes forged or exacerbated in conflict settings can persist after hostilities abate. In fact, violence against women and girls frequently increases—what is referred to elsewhere as the "domestication of violence."[2] Moreover, the design and implementation of specific postconflict policies can exclude women from accessing benefits, reflecting and reinforcing their marginalization in society.

Finally, we conclude by isolating the areas where collective efforts are most needed in the field to ensure a greater measure of gender equality and social justice and by offering recommendations in those regards.

The appendix discusses the patterns of relevant USIP grantmaking and spotlights support for notable work on gender identities, sexual violence, and women's rights and empowerment, as well as organizations that focus on women's issues. It also reflects on the contributions of this funding with reference to the insights in the main body of the report, noting in particular that relatively few of the funded projects have made gender a central focus, which, in part, reflects the structure and limitations of USIP's grant competitions.

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Institutionalizing Gender Sensitivity

The formal protection of women and girls during armed conflict is a relatively recent development, paralleling the emergence of women's rights over the second half of the twentieth century. Before World War I, mention of women in war treaties and international conventions primarily addressed protecting their honor. These same documents included vague references to "soldiers' discipline," without framing violence against women, particularly sexual violence, as a crime punishable by law.[3] Following World War II, faint efforts were taken to punish perpetrators of sexual violence. Mass episodes of rape—such as Japanese "comfort women," the Nanking massacre, and widespread Allied army abuse of local women in occupied countries—were not redressed in proportion to the overwhelming evidence of violations committed. Allied postwar tribunals were designed to try perpetrators of wartime atrocities; with the victorious Allies in control, however, only the defeated Axis troops were brought to account. The Tokyo tribunal for the Far East made an explicit reference to rape in its rulings against perpetrators and included rape in certain convictions.[4] Control Council Ten, which regulated the trials in Nuremberg, also listed rape as a crime against humanity, although none of the subsequent trials resulted in prosecutions for rape. Despite these limitations, the tribunals did help construct certain parameters for prosecuting crimes against humanity involving sexual violence.[5] Nevertheless, the security of civilians, especially women, was clearly considered of secondary importance.[6]

A critical step in advancing the security of women was the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War was the "first modern-day international instrument to establish protections against rape for women."[7] Article 27 of the Fourth Convention stipulates that "women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault." Protocols I and II of the convention, added in 1977, echo this call for special respect of women and the protection of their personal dignity against humiliating and degrading treatment, such as rape.[8]

Yet none of these measures succeeded in breaking the long-standing association between rape and honor.[9] One of the main problems with this approach is that rape "as a mere injury to honor or reputation" does not imply the same level of bodily and psychological harm as "injuries to the person," nor does it merit the same retributive consequences.[10] The first Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy (1994–2003), has asserted that associating rape with honor often confers shame on the victim rather than the perpetrator:

> By using the honor paradigm, linked as it is to concepts of chastity, purity and virginity, stereotypical concepts of femininity have been formally enshrined in humanitarian law. Thus, criminal sexual assault, in both national and international law, is linked to the morality of the victim. When rape is perceived as a crime against honor or morality, shame commonly ensues for the victim, who is often viewed by the community as "dirty" or "spoiled." Consequently, many women will neither report nor discuss the violence that has been perpetrated against them. The nature of rape and the silence that tends to surround it makes it a particularly difficult human rights violation to investigate.[11]

Therefore, although the Geneva Conventions were an important development in advancing women's rights, the task of redefining legal and societal attitudes toward sexual violence had barely begun.

The UN System

Among the outgrowths of World War II that had important implications for gender issues were the United Nations (UN) and the nascent international human rights regime. In 1946, just a year after it was established, the UN created the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as a functional arm of the Economic and Social Council to promote gender equality and the advancement of women. The same year, the Section on the Status of Women—today, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)—was also established to serve as secretariat to the commission. In the decades that followed, these two bodies helped break ground for many important international instruments that would uphold women's rights.

Originally, the CSW focused on incorporating women into international conventions and rectifying inequality and discrimination in legislation. Subsequently, its attention shifted to eliminating forms of discrimination that still existed in practice.[12] In 1963, the CSW drafted the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (adopted four years later) to reinforce the advances in women's rights achieved since the launch of the commission. To make these provisions legally binding, the declaration was designated the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and went into effect in 1981. For the first time, governments were legally required to "take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men."[13]

These achievements were extended by other efforts at the international level to organize, define objectives, advocate for the interests of women and girls, pursue policy changes and programmatic activities, and tackle accountability for criminal violations.

In particular, the four world conferences on women were vital steps in advancing gender equality. The first, held in Mexico City in 1975—designated International Women's Year—called for full gender equality, the elimination of gender discrimination and greater participation of women in development and world peace.[14] It also led to the establishment of two additional UN bodies: the Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW). UNIFEM was created to "help improve the living standards of women in developing countries and to address their concerns," and UN-INSTRAW to promote the advancement of women through research and training.[15] The resounding success of the conference and the growing influence of women's movements around the world prompted the UN to promote equality, development, and peace by declaring 1976 to 1985 the UN Decade for Women.

The second and third conferences, convened during the 1980s, continued to gain ground for women. By focusing on less-explored themes related to women's well-being, such as employment, health, education, and property rights, these conferences helped expand the research and policy agenda.

The fourth conference, held in Beijing in 1995, revisited the issue of gender and conflict and resulted in a large-scale endorsement of gender mainstreaming. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted during the conference, identified "the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women" as one of the critical areas of concern and encouraged the development of a greater gender perspective in international criminal law.[16] Numerous governments agreed to promote gender-sensitive policies and programs, thereby encouraging the UN to implement steps to mainstream gender within the institution.[17]

Meanwhile, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights had underscored the illegality of sexual violence during armed conflict. Soon afterward, in March 1994, the UN established a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, mandated to examine the causes and consequences of gender-based violence. In addition, the UN's ad hoc International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (ICTY and ICTR)—two countries where sexual violence during armed conflict in the early 1990s was so pervasive it captured international attention on an unprecedented scale—achieved major gains in codifying sexual and reproductive violence and in defining potential measures for protection. The jurisprudence resulting from these two tribunals classified systematic rape and other sex crimes as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and forms of genocide. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted in 1998 subsequent to the establishment of the ICTR and ICTY, not only included rape as a crime against humanity, it also managed to break with the honor paradigm of the Geneva Conventions: "Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" were no longer considered merely moral offenses, but rather crimes against humanity.[18] Judge Navanethem Pillay, the ICTR's only female judge, wrote in one of the court's rulings, "from time immemorial, rape has been regarded as the spoils of war. . . . now it will be considered a war crime. We want to send out a strong signal that rape is no longer a trophy of war."[19] In addition, the rulings for the trial of Duško Tadić established that sexual violence could be prosecuted through existing international law even in the absence of domestic legislation directly addressing rape.[20] Furthermore, the presence of women in high-level positions within these tribunals helped increase

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their presence in other important institutional bodies, allowing them to have a greater impact on issues related to armed conflict.[21]

On a complementary front, the UN Security Council progressively reconceptualized its definition of *security*. For many years, security was largely viewed as a military issue. During the 1970s and 1980s, little regard was given to humanitarian issues in conflict settings.[22] During the 1990s, by contrast, a broader definition of human security was incorporated.[23] Unfortunately, as often the case with categories deemed gender neutral, the definition did not include forms of security most important to women and girls.

This oversight was partially addressed in 2000 by UN Resolution 1325, marking the first time the Security Council expressly mentioned in a resolution the impact of war on women and women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. The resolution echoes the Beijing Conference's call for gender mainstreaming, specifically in relation to "peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls."[24] To publicize the resolution and make it accessible to women all over the world, UNIFEM has translated the text into more than seventy languages.

In 2008, Security Council Resolution 1820 went further and recognized rape as a weapon of war and a threat to international security. The resolution noted that "women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group."[25] Meanwhile, the UN Secretary General has also issued various reports and opened debates on issues related to women, peace, and security.[26]

In sum, after a long process the international legal scaffolding related to gender is largely in place. The 1980s and 1990s in particular exhibited important changes in how the UN and other international institutions viewed violence against women. Once considered a private issue to be resolved within the confines of the home, gender-based violence increasingly became public as an issue to be placed "at the forefront of an international agenda."[27] The gap between legislation and enforcement, however, continues and warrants further research into ensuring more effective implementation and evaluation of efforts.

Gender Policies and Practitioner Models

These institutional measures and policies signal a common objective: to address the distinctive concerns and injustices that girls and women face in both war and peace. Despite the ostensible clarity of this goal, identifying the means to that end has presented additional challenges. How could women be incorporated most effectively into existing international systems? What kinds of policies or models of intervention would ensure a genuine, comprehensive, and thorough response to women's concerns? What should be included among women's issues during conflict and postconflict periods? Are there ways to ensure that the global agenda reflects the local and regional priorities of socially, culturally, and historically situated women?

That the majority of conflicts in recent decades were in developing countries has greatly influenced approaches to these questions. Already faced with economic difficulty as part of the Global South, developing countries plagued by conflict often depend on the funding and assistance provided by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and humanitarian organizations. The gender policies and practitioner models promoted by the aid and development fields influence how gender operates during peace and conflict, as well as amid transitional justice and reconstruction processes.

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One of the first attempts to modify these policies and models was the Women in Development (WID) approach introduced in the 1970s, which reached its apex during the UN Decade for Women.[28] Later referred to facetiously as "add women and stir," WID was increasingly criticized for its emphasis on women, rather than on gender relations, and for failing to address systemic gender inequality. WID did not "consider the underlying and often discriminatory gender structures upon which these very projects are often built."[29] As a result, development became a "fixed menu, with women allocated the role of cook." Although women's issues had gained ground, the ground was sown with gendered assumptions.[30]

In response, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach was adopted, focusing more on the gender relations among and the social roles of men and women.[31] Unlike WID, the GAD approach implied "more than . . . getting equal slices of the development pie," by helping women gain power and control within decision-making processes.[32] The idea of mainstreaming gender was forged within this movement. Gaining momentum around the time of the Beijing Conference in 1995, gender mainstreaming quickly became the preferred approach to incorporating women into discussions concerning development and resulting activities, including those involving conflict and postconflict settings. Mainstreaming gender called for an all-encompassing change in the mentality reflected in legislation and institutions.[33] In 1997, the UN Economic and Social Council issued the following definition:

> Mainstreaming a gender perspective 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. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.[34]

The concept has been adopted by most of the large and influential international agencies. The gender policy of the World Health Organization, for instance, asserts that the "integration of gender considerations must become a standard practice in all policies and programmes."[35] This wording is reiterated in the policies of the UN Development Program (UNDP), UNESCO, FAO, the World Bank, and ILO, and widely adopted in the European Union.[36]

Despite the widespread acceptance, criticism about the effectiveness of the approach has been frequent. Gender mainstreaming is ultimately abstract and hence tends to be interpreted differently both across and within governmental and nongovernmental organizations, humanitarian agencies, and international institutions. In many cases, gender policies lack thorough or sincere implementation and accountability.

According to Hannah Warren, one of the principal sources of these issues is "the multiplicity of meanings and goals that this concept [of gender mainstreaming] encapsulates," which has given rise to seemingly limitless approaches to implementation.[37] She further observes that the gender analysis frameworks in practice since the mid-1980s "have evolved in tandem with the evolution of 'gender' in development and are thus 'based on very different understandings of the nature of power and inequality.' As a consequence they differ (in some cases significantly) regarding their assumptions of what needs to be analysed and addressed."[38]

Gender experts and practitioners therefore face a vast array of options when implementing a gendered perspective, making efforts somewhat haphazard.[39] This smorgasbord of possibilities—in terms of both definitions and approaches—obscures what a gender agenda entails. The upshot is that "what development organizations mean by 'a focus on gender' or 'a gendered approach' and what it means to their work is often undefined or even contested."[40]

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Another contributing factor is the array of mandates, ideologies, and goals of institutions and organizations, which affect their overall orientations. A good example of these disparities is "the resource and economic focus of the World Bank, compared to the rights and equality agendas of NGOs such as ActionAid and Oxfam."[41] Logically, those sorts of differences can have direct and significant implications for the nature of gender policies. As a study by the organization Gender Action points out, although "it is mandatory for World Bank staff to analyze the environmental impact of every operation," the same does not pertain to gender.[42] Meanwhile, the UNDP remains unable to mandate gender mainstreaming, which would be irreconcilable with its emphasis on self-determination and the unwillingness of some member countries to adopt gender policies.[43]

Such variation in gender policies is found not only among institutions, but also within them. In fact, a USIP-commissioned report cited the U.S. government for a lack of cohesion on this front, to the detriment of furthering gender awareness and equality:

> Despite rapid progress within the U.S. government to recognize the importance of women's inclusion in stabilization and reconstruction operations, no overarching strategy, mandate, or program exists to ensure implementation. Initiatives, funding, and projects remain ad hoc; research and best practices have not been consolidated; and much depends upon the individual knowledge, commitment, and insight of relevant staff at headquarters and in the field.[44]

The report emphasizes the ongoing need to educate staff, strengthen support dedicated to women's issues (such as by ensuring sufficient funding), and provide systematic training for field personnel.[45] Likewise, gender mainstreaming seems to face major obstacles to institutionalization within the World Bank. The study by Gender Action found that Bank staff could be divided into two groups: the gender experts "who work full time promoting gender integration into Bank activities," and all others, "most of whom have neither heard of the Strategy nor looked at Bank gender web pages providing tools for engendering investments and other activities."[46] One can also juxtapose the groundbreaking decisions of the ICTY and ICTR with the UN's initial silence regarding abuses by peacekeepers against local women during missions. Noëlle Quénivet asserts that it was journalists, rather than UN officials, who first uncovered the violations. Even when confronted by the abuses, the agency's first reaction was the institutional equivalent of a "boys will be boys" shrug of inevitability.[47] This pervasive silence prompted two leading feminists scholars to assert that international humanitarian law conceives "rules dealing with women. . . as less important than others. . . drafted in different language than the provisions protecting combatants and civilians."[48]

The failure to consistently implement gender policies is especially disappointing when one contrasts the simultaneous gains for other notable interests and constituencies. For instance, the Gender Action study reports that in the World Bank, the number of gender experts rose from one in the early 1980s to approximately 115 circa 2003, whereas the number of environmental experts rose from one to roughly 700 or 800 over the same period.[49] Similarly, Natalie Hudson found that among UN system staff, children's issues have stronger mandates than gender. As one UNIFEM official told her in 2006,

> On children and armed conflict, not only have you got six resolutions, six, but each one of them strengthening parts of the original one. There is a working group. There is a champion within the Security Council, which is France. There is a [Security Council] working group which is seized of this matter at all times and has to make sure that all resolutions pay attention. There is a Special Rapporteur [Representative] to the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. . . . And she is allowed to name names. She is allowed to say the LRA are persecuting children, bombing schools and

> hospitals. Now, we're not allowed to do that. [Resolution] 1325 does not empower us or anybody in the UN to say the following armed parties or governments are abusing women's rights, are condoning sexual violence as a military practice, as weapon of war. We're not allowed to say that. If we could, could you imagine the newspaper reports, the outrage from governments, the shame, the embarrassment? Some states and parties would move to stop these practices, but we're not allowed to do that.[50]

A plausible interpretation of these intra-institutional comparisons is that something particular to the gender domain, which distinguishes it from other causes, presents a hindrance to furthering gender policies.

In sum, evidence is compelling that new policies and practitioner models are required for advancing a gender-sensitive agenda. Although mainstreaming has succeeded in certain spheres, it has not generated the desired degree of institutional or attitudinal changes. Even within institutions that pay attention to gender, the gap between a general policy of mainstreaming and its implementation can be significant, undermining efforts to maintain a consistent focus across activities. The evident lack of effective commitment has led some critics to wonder whether gender mainstreaming is now a "token exercise."[51] For example, Hilary Charlesworth has argued that the "force of the term . . . may now be so dissipated that a new term is required."[52] It remains true—as Warren wrote in 2007, well after the gender mainstreaming boom—that the "need for appropriate methodologies was, and still is, felt by many to be the missing factor in translating the desire among those committed to 'incorporating women/gender into development' into practice."[53] What new approaches could achieve the ambitions of gender mainstreaming? At a minimum, greater conceptual clarity is needed to move beyond current piecemeal approaches to ensuring gender awareness, so that gender sensitivity becomes a widely acknowledged and enforced norm.

From Women to Gender?

One of the hotly contested issues in the field has been how much policies and interventions should center on women. As Margaret Andersen explained on receiving the Sociologists for Women in Society Lecture Award in 2004,

> When I went to the University of Delaware in 1974, women's studies was becoming a more established program of study, although most campuses, including mine, were facing enormous political struggles to have women's studies recognized as a legitimate part of the curriculum. Those were heady days. Many reacted to the study of women with ridicule, so those of us teaching at the time had to defend the academic quality of our courses by insisting that studying women was real academic knowledge.

With troubling frequency, gender is used interchangeably with women, conflating the two and leaving men as the unmarked, default category—the generic human against which others are compared and potentially deviate.

The debate is exemplified by the ambiguous use of the word *gender* in policies, literature, and discourse.[54] Sometimes, the reference is to the generally accepted definition of gender as the "relations between men and women," invoking the social and cultural contouring of those relations and gendered identities. With troubling frequency, however, *gender* is used interchangeably with *women*, conflating the two and leaving *men* as the unmarked, default category—the generic *human* against which others are compared and potentially deviate.[55]

Reflecting on this tension, Sylvia Chant and Matthew Gutmann note the resentment of women toward acknowledging and involving men in mainstreaming policies. They argue that "not all women want to include men in gender and development and some are even 'hostile.'"[56] Chant and Gutmann attribute this resistance to concerns about losing ground in the gender equality movement:

> [There are] very real fears that making way for men may eclipse women's primacy in a field which they themselves staked out against major odds and which has been marked by struggle ever since. 'Letting men in' (in anything other than a secondary capacity at

> least), could be regarded as 'letting go' of a terrain in which women have won a legitimate claim to their own, albeit limited, resources.[57]

The perceived stakes include general progress as well as concrete footholds in specific domains of policy and practice, such as international agencies.

Meanwhile, certain men lament—and at times ridicule—the challenges they have faced when working on gender issues, which is generally "assumed to be a woman's job."[58] Feleke Tadele's experiences as a male development worker in Ethiopia, documented in a 1999 Oxfam publication, illustrate these frustrations:

> Many women take it as a joke when they see me in meetings and discussion forums. Even if a man is sympathetic to the cause of gender equity, and has knowledge of the practical and theoretical issues, he may encounter prejudice from those who feel that . . . only women can sense the real issues and can plan necessary changes properly.[59]

From this perspective, tipping the scale in favor of women, let alone pressing for exclusivity, may not be the wisest path to sustainable gender equality. As Tadele insists in the same report, gender-sensitive men seek equality for both genders,[60] and, in turn, all genders lose if men are marginal to the very programs that seek to transform gender relations.[61]

Narrow conceptions of what constitutes gender sensitivity may also prove detrimental to women in many parts of the world, particularly if those conceptions are based on Western feminist theories.[62] For instance, rigid notions of what women need to be equal may obscure spaces where women have traditionally found comfort. Drawing on her work with Oxfam in Bosnia, Usha Kar offers a thoughtful reflection on this tension. During the civil war in the Balkans, Oxfam began sponsoring a knitting project in response to local women's requests for a project to promote their sense of productiveness and well being. Yet many on the Oxfam staff were uncomfortable with a project focused on knitting, an activity they associated with women's traditional—read "inferior" or "backward"—role. Should Oxfam, a leader in the movement toward gender equality, really support a knitting project? Could this actually promote women's well-being or liberation?

Once they began interviewing participants, the Oxfam staff discovered that many of the women had lost their husbands or other male family members during the conflict, and viewed knitting as a way to reconnect with their roles in a society torn asunder. The project grew into "Bosfam" (short for Bosnian Family), and the women began seeking ways to ensure that the project would be self-sustaining under their management. As one step in that direction, the women decided to host a fashion show, which they asked Oxfam to fund. The Oxfam staff was then faced with another dilemma, namely, how they could justify funding a project that could be interpreted as "reinforcing conventional prejudices about women's preoccupation with their physical appearance, their excessive interest in fashion, and other frivolous diversion."[63] Despite staff reluctance and even embarrassment, Oxfam funded the show. The results, according to both the program participants and the staff, were remarkable. Fiona Gell, deputy country representative at the time, recounted:

> It was incredible and fantastic, a sort of glittering parade, in total contrast to all the gloom outside. . . . Young refugee women, ground down by bereavement and violence, their futures bleak and hopeless, were striding up and down a catwalk, tripping up and down playfully in silken evening dresses and gorgeous woolly jumpers. The atmosphere was bursting with self-confidence. They were lovely, exciting, sexy, had the audience rapt.[64]

In this case, therefore, as with earlier, had Oxfam simply stuck with its standard assumptions and intuitions, the activities would never have been implemented and the benefits—the very things it desired in the abstract—would not have been realized.

This example illustrates a series of issues that feature throughout this report. Of course, international and domestic NGOs assure funders that they include their beneficiaries in program

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design and implementation, and that they are sensitive to local needs and priorities. This has become a pro forma component of virtually any grant application. The example points to the challenges that lie beyond the facile rhetoric, and to the ways in which local gender agendas are not a seamless fit with international assumptions regarding gender equality and how best to achieve it. In particular, using *gender* as code for *women* limits the transformative potential of endeavors in the research, policy or practitioner arenas. As Sophie Richter-Devroe observes, "a gender perspective does not mean focusing exclusively on women. It means looking at the inequalities and differences between and among women and men."[65] The example is also a powerful reminder that postconflict recovery may assume forms that bear scant resemblance to the increasingly standardized models routinely exported to various war-torn corners of the globe.[66]

Gender and Conflict

In the following sections, we begin by examining processes of militarization and demilitarization, demonstrating that gender is a significant dimension of how security and peacekeeping are oriented and conducted. We conclude by contrasting conventional images of gender to the actual wartime experiences of women, especially as combatants.

Security and Peacekeeping

Militarization and demilitarization involve micro- and macro-level changes. Every sphere of individual and collective life is affected, and both men and women are pressured to adapt and take on new roles as societies prepare for war or peace.

Numerous scholars have observed that the military and defense industries are steeped in gendered metaphors, frequently of an aggressive nature.[67] Catherine Niarchos, for instance, notes that "military language and training is [sic] saturated with sexual imagery, much of it misogynous."[68] Traditional wartime constructs and propaganda similarly objectify women: "The enemy is portrayed as he who will rape and murder 'our' women; the war effort is directed at saving 'our' mothers, daughters, and wives."[69] In some cases, women serve and fight alongside men in armed forces. Yet this can expose these women to higher risks of sexual violence and harassment. In other cases, the risk of such problems and associated questions about the effects of gender integration on morale—however circular they may be—have limited the extent of female involvement in militaries. Meanwhile, the same military bases installed in the name of security may lead to an increase in sexual violence or prostitution, underscoring the degree to which security itself is a gendered good.[70] In fact, in many instances women are either abducted or effectively provisioned to service male soldiers. Thus, the dynamic among the protection, objectification, and abuse of women by soldiers is contradictory.

> What we need is a body of work that offers us what we now have for capitalism, colonialism, and globalization: a set of texts that analyze militarism in relation to nationalism, late modern capitalism, media cultures, and the state while mapping the ways in which militarism remakes communities, public cultures, and the consciousness of individual subjects in multiple geographic and social locations.[71]

Sexualized imagery and abusive conduct cannot be explained by small group norms or one bad apple: it appears to be systemic within many militaries, including that of the United States.[72] In Washington, DC, for instance, the group Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) reacted to this concern by embarking on a campaign that attempted to "re-humanize the Other."[73] Cami Rowe reported that these veterans "described experiences of discrimination, sexual abuse, rape and harassment" within the U.S. military, and that their comments pointed

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to the conclusion that "gender discrimination is intricately linked with the construction and conduct of war."[74] For instance, a gay male veteran asserted that stark homophobia can push men to commit abuses to prove their heterosexuality:

> From my personal experience I can tell you that young straight men, otherwise good men, will go to great lengths and do horrible things to prove that they're not gay. That somehow this idea that men are beings devoid of feelings and compassion and that women are weak and just a ball of emotion is at the center of all this . . . It's got to stop . . . my highest idea of someone who serves in our military, the code of conduct that they would bring to the battlefield, has everything to do with dispelling these old ways of thinking around gender and sexuality.[75]

We highlight this veteran's insistence that a man's attitudes toward homosexuality may be a factor in his abuse of women. Of note, the performative nature of gang rape signals to other participants that each of the perpetrators is a "real man." Thus it is not only soldiers' views about women, but also their views about sexuality—particularly homosexuality—that can drive them to commit sexually violent crimes.

Just as militarization and armed conflict are highly gendered, so are the demilitarization processes that follow. As Fionnuala Ní Aoláin notes, "The disarmament of weapons is not the disarmament of minds."[76] As mentioned earlier, an upsurge in violence often character-izes postconflict periods. Though evidence is persuasive that reporting of domestic violence increases in significant measure due to restored (or newly established) access to local insti-tutions such as police departments, the persistence of militarized mentalities may also be a contributing factor:

> Attitudinal change is critical and under-valued. For women, it means that while guns may physically no longer be present in public spaces, this does not change a social psychology that makes the use of violence acceptable (whether in the private or public sphere).[77]

The possibility should therefore not be overlooked that militarized men, no longer having an external enemy to fight, shift their violent practices to the home. The bodily capital that served ex-combatants well in the war zone does not easily transfer into civilian forms of so-cial capital when men demobilize.[78] Similarly, Colleen Duggan suggests the term *compromised masculinity* to refer to the loss of status and identity crisis that can affect men after armed con-flicts end.[79] Such phenomena are not limited to former conflict zones, much less to particular regions of the world. In fact, research has revealed the high level of domestic violence in West-ern soldiers' homes following their return from combat, including the "intimate violence expe-rienced by partners of military personnel."[80] These circumstances prompt the question of how gender regimes could be reworked—in particular, to more effectively disarm masculinities—in the aftermath of war.

Gender inequalities can also be imported by international organizations that come into postconflict countries to facilitate transitional periods. For example, Ní Aoláin asserts that "much less scrutiny has been given to dissecting the patriarchy inherent in international in-stitutions, even less to revealing the masculinist bias of these same bodies and the actors who represent them."[81] Even as some "men who were in power are losing power, other men are taking their place," thereby maintaining a male-dominated dynamic,

> the international presence is lauded for rescuing such societies from the worst of their own excesses, [but] what is little appreciated is that such men also bring with them varying aspects of gender norms and patriarchal behavior that transpose into the vac-uum they fill.[82]

In addition, she highlights the irony of "exporting western military models to transitioning states as presumed ideals of virtue" and notes how this might provoke "complementary rather

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