

## Policy Brief

# Incorporating a Masculinities Perspective in UNSCR 1325 Implementation

This policy brief draws on the discussions and insights gained during the following consultations and meetings with WPP partners:

WPP Global Consultation  
*“Men and Women as Partners for Gender-Sensitive Active Nonviolence”*

27-29 May, 2013 in The Hague, The Netherlands

WPP Global Consultation  
*“Gender and Militarism: Analyzing the Links to Strategize for Peace”*

4-8 July 2014, in Cape Town, South Africa

WPP Asia Network Meeting  
8-9 November, 2014 in New Delhi, India

UNSCR 1325 conference  
*“Women: Powerful Agents for Peace and Security”* organized by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch civil society

16-17 February, 2015 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

For more information, please visit the WPP website for the following WPP publications:

May 24 Pack 2010

*Together for Transformation. Men, Masculinities and Peacebuilding*

May 24 Pack 2013

*Men and Women Working as Partners for Gender-Sensitive Active Nonviolence*

May 24 Pack 2014

*Gender and Militarism: Analyzing the Links to Strategize for Peace*

Policy Brief

*Gender & Militarism*

[www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/resources](http://www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/resources)

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), the first-ever Women, Peace & Security Resolution. This Resolution called for the recognition of women as agents of change in conflict prevention and resolution; acknowledgment of the different impacts of conflict on men and women and the necessity of appropriate protection measures; and underlined the need to include women in all aspects of peace processes as a prerequisite to the attainment of sustainable peace.

Following UNSCR 1325, over the years six additional Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) were passed: 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013).

With the adoption of Resolution 2122 in 2013, the United Nations Security Council reiterated its intention to convene a High-level Review in 2015 to assess progress in implementing UNSCR 1325 (2000) at the national, regional and global levels.

## Including a Masculinities Perspective in the Women, Peace & Security Agenda

The adoption of six additional UN Security Council Resolutions since 2000 has done much to increase global awareness about the Women, Peace and Security agenda, both at the level of civil society and at the governmental level. It has resulted in the adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs) worldwide, as well as growing recognition of the importance of addressing the systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. However, fifteen years onwards, implementation remains a challenge. Conflict-related sexual violence continues to occur with impunity. To date, few women have been able to penetrate the decision-making arenas around war and peace, and as such are prevented from shaping a more gender-just and peaceful future for all.

In recent years, concerns have been growing within the WPS community. Some are arguing that ‘1325’ is not able to deliver because it has become interpreted as ‘fitting women into the current peace and security paradigm’; rather than about ‘assessing and redefining peace and security through a gender lens’. As Anne-Marie Goetz mentioned during the WPP Panel Discussion ‘Taking UNSCR 1325 to the Next Level - Gender, Peace and Security - Mainstreaming, Masculinities and Movements’ (2013): *“UNSCR 1325 is not just about changing the players at negotiations, it is about changing the nature of peace processes.”*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Report and Recommendations ‘Taking UNSCR 1325 to the Next Level: Gender, Peace & Security - Mainstreaming, Masculinities, and Movements’: <https://www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/assets/CMS/Resources/Reports/Report-NY-1325+13.pdf>

With UNSCR 1325 having its roots in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); what some feel is missing in current UNSCR 1325 implementation relates directly to some of BPfA's transformative components: that peace is inseparable from development and equality between men and women, and requires disarmament; the prevention of policies of aggression; and the diverting of excessive military expenditures to social development. As such, BPfA not only highlights the crucial role women play in building cultures of peace, it also sheds light on the gendered practice of 'war and peace'. It challenges the investments made in the patriarchal 'Power Over' model, upon which contemporary war and peace interventions are so often constructed. It calls explicitly for a reduction in military expenditures, in favor of co-operative approaches to peace and security.



Unfortunately, current UNSCR 1325 implementation often fails to challenge the gender norms that drive, fuel, and sustain violent conflict. As Cynthia Cockburn explains: *“Patriarchal gender relations predispose our societies to war, acting as a driving force to perpetuate war.”*<sup>2</sup>

Statistical analysis shows that there is a correlation between the occurrence of violent conflict and the level of gender equality in society.<sup>3</sup> The more patriarchal a society, the

more men are taught that their masculinity is linked to an entitlement to power; with the use of dominance, control and violence (structural, physical, sexual, domestic, etc.) becoming justified as a means to get or maintain power. Militarism needs this gender ideology as much as it needs arms, drawing upon the normalization of violence and dominance, as a means to gain 'power over', combat, and destroy the enemy. Within such a framework, women become mainly framed as victims, whose vulnerabilities require protection - or exploitation, depending on the perspective.

On the other end of this binary operate notions of (hyper)masculinity, generating masses of men willing to inflict violence upon others to protect their families, communities, and ultimately, the nation. The ability to hold power over, dominate, and control others hence becomes an intrinsic part of social norms, rituals, and practices that determine an individual's - and ultimately the nation's - 'manhood'.

Redefining this peace and security paradigm from a holistic gender perspective not only brings in feminist perspectives of what makes up real (human) security; it also addresses the normalization of violence and war in patriarchal society. It sheds light on the need to prioritize alternative conflict resolution mechanisms that focus on conflict prevention to address the root causes of injustice and conflict, as well as to equip people with the knowledge and skills to address conflict nonviolently ('People Power' or 'Power With').



<sup>2</sup> Cockburn, Cynthia (2014), *Feminist Antimilitarism: Patriarchy, Masculinities and Gender Awareness in Antiwar Organizing*. In WPP May 24 Pack 2014: <https://www.womenpeacemakersprogram.org/assets/CMS/May-24-gender-May-Pack-2014-web.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ekvall, Åsa (2013), *Norms on Gender Equality and Violent Conflict*. <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/06/10/norms-on-gender-equality-and-violent-conflict/>

Such a holistic perspective points at the fact that men have a stake in changing cultures of violence. Next to the privileges men might enjoy, it is crucial to highlight how men are losing out in patriarchal society. Men are directly affected by violence and armed conflict - both as perpetrators and as victims of the violence (leading to psychological trauma, experiences of (sexual) abuse, injuries, substance abuse, poverty, social exclusion and stigma, suicide, death, etc.). Explaining the gender concept by relating it to men's personal experiences will support men's understanding of the women's rights agenda and their own stake in change, as it exposes how militarization and patriarchal notions of power are harming both women and men. As such, WPS can become an agenda that is about preventing war, and not just making war safer for women.

## Providing Alternatives

Introducing a masculinities perspective in the WPS agenda requires an investment in alternatives to address conflict and injustice. Gender-Sensitive Active Nonviolence (GSANV) can be a powerful alternative, as it provides a comprehensive framework of analysis and tools to address social injustice and (violent) conflict. It is important to recognize that conflict in itself is a natural part of life, and can even provide an important opportunity for change. The challenge lies in how society chooses to address conflict.



Academic literature increasingly argues that a strategy of nonviolence is more effective than a strategy of violence. Stephan and Chenoweth concluded, after analyzing relevant data, that between 1900 to 2006, nonviolent campaigns were successful in achieving their policy goals 53% of the time, whereas violent campaigns only had a success rate of 26%.<sup>4</sup> Nonviolence is a successful political strategy because it (a) enhances domestic and international legitimacy, resulting in broader support and participation (Power With); and (b) regime violence against nonviolence movement is more likely to backfire.

<sup>4</sup> Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth. 2008. "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer): 7-44, 8.

## Recommendations:

The lack of including a broader gender perspective - incl. masculinities - in WPS policies and NAPs contributes to instrumentalist implementation approaches, with a predominant focus on women as victims or 'add-ons', without linking this to a broader picture. Many UNSCR 1325 initiatives are just 'scratching the surface', failing to address the deeply patriarchal conflict roots and practices; such as exploitative neo-liberal socio-economic policies and states' investments in the military industrial complex rather than in an inclusive labor market, education and healthcare systems accessible to all. **A holistic and transformative WPS approach requires addressing the human security issues** that the majority of the population faces, and which women/feminists often bring to the table.

Violent notions of masculinities are at the core of armed conflict and militarism. **Integrating a masculinities perspective in the WPS agenda helps to uncover the gendered roots of armed conflict, and to redefine peace and security from a holistic gender perspective.** As such, BPfA components - the importance of investing in conflict prevention and nonviolent conflict resolution; disarmament; the prevention of policies of aggression; and diverting excessive military expenditures to social development - can be reclaimed and integrated in WPS implementation.

## Recommendations continued:

When integrating masculinities into the WPS agenda, it is important to do this from a feminist perspective. Working on masculinities is going beyond ‘working with men’ - it is about changing patriarchal mindsets and addressing the need for structural and institutional change. Including men in the WPS agenda carries a huge potential for creating more peaceful and gender just societies, but it can also easily become instrumentalized, generating programmatic approaches that merely focus on treating the symptoms (treating men’s war traumas/ increasing discipline amongst the troops to reduce the occurrence of sexual violence and exploitation, etc.) without addressing the roots (patriarchal power and privilege). As such, there is a risk that the work becomes completely disconnected from the women’s movement and feminist analysis, and only generates a slightly “friendlier” form of patriarchy - without men giving up space, power, and privilege. In this regard, the concept of “women and men as partners” is important during the implementation process - in terms of both role modeling as well as ensuring accountability to the women’s movement. The partnership approach should therefore be integrated in all stages - from analysis, development, implementation to evaluation of impact stage.



It is important to link the topic of masculinities to the WPS agenda, but to still recognize women’s need for their own spaces by investing in a two-track strategy. Women’s groups are concerned that working on masculinities might divert the limited funds available for women’s rights and peace work to men’s projects. It is therefore important to monitor that a broader gender approach to WPS does not harm women’s ambitions, space, and organizing.

Addressing militarism starts by exposing its gendered dimensions and related human costs, as well as investing in alternative conflict resolution methods. Gender-Sensitive Active Nonviolence offers a comprehensive framework of analysis and tools to analyze and address conflict.

There are no shortcuts; paradigm shifts take time. Social change is a long-term process, and hence requires donors that are willing to invest in new and groundbreaking approaches that are looking into transforming our peace and security paradigm altogether, which requires a long-term commitment.

### About the Women Peacemakers Program:

*The Women Peacemakers Program (WPP) started in 1997 to support women peace activists worldwide. Over the years, the activists in the WPP network indicated that two key obstacles hindered their work for gender-sensitive peacebuilding: First, society as a whole lacking a gender analysis of violence; and second, men in particular lacking gender awareness and interest in gender justice issues. This confirmed for WPP that changing cultures of violence requires (1) the empowerment of women peace activists; (2) more men working with women as partners for gender-sensitive conflict resolution; and (3) addressing the gendered nature of armed conflict itself. As a result, the concept of masculinities, and how this relates to war and peacebuilding, has been incorporated in WPP’s focus.*

