NOT THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Engaging Male Champions of Women, Peace and Security

OUR SECURE FUTURE

Women Make the Difference

a program of One Earth Future

Jolynn Shoemaker and
Sahana Dharmapuri

October 2017

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ABOUT OUR SECURE FUTURE: WOMEN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference (OSF), is a program of One Earth Future based in Colorado. OSF upholds the OEF vision to achieve peace through governance. Our Secure Future believes that women make the crucial difference to achieving more effective governance and lasting peace. Our mission is to strengthen the Women, Peace and Security movement to enable effective policy decision-making for a more peaceful world. Three key areas of opportunity to strengthen the global Women, Peace and Security agenda are: amplifying women's voices, strengthening the global network of women peacebuilders, promoting committed action by multiple stakeholders to turn policy into practice.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sahana Dharmapuri is the Director of the Our Secure Future program at One Earth Future. From 2006-2016 she was an independent advisor on gender, peace, and security issues to USAID, NATO, The Swedish Armed Forces, the United States Institute for Peace, International Peace Institute, and other international development organizations. Ms. Dharmapuri was appointed a Fellow at the Logan/Carey Institute for Non-Fiction (Winter 2016), a Fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (2011-2013) and an Investing in Women in Development Fellow at the United States Agency for International Development (2003-2005). Her writing on Women, Peace and Security issues has appeared widely, including in *Ms. Magazine*, *News Deeply*, *CNN*, *Christian Science Monitor*, T*he Global Responsibility to Protect Journal*, *The Global Observatory*, The US Naval War College's *Women, Peace and Security* monograph series, and P*arameters: The Senior Professional Journal of the US Army*.

Jolynn Shoemaker is a consultant and writer on international peace and security, gender equality, and women's leadership. She has been involved in Women, Peace and Security advocacy for more than 14 years. She served as the Executive Director of Women in International Security (WIIS), where she conducted studies on women in UN peace operations, and documented the experiences of women working in the U.S. Government on foreign policy and national security. Previously, she led a number of research and advocacy initiatives for the Institute for Inclusive Security. Ms. Shoemaker has served in policy and legal positions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and served in the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. She holds a J.D. and an M.A. (Security Studies) from Georgetown University and a B.A. from University of California, San Diego.

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Launch at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Panelists, from left to right: Ambassador Melanne Verveer (moderator), Ambassador Don Steinberg, Ms. Sahana Dharmapuri, Ambassador Steven McGann, Ms. Jolynn Shoemaker, and Mr. Tim Shand.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed the landmark Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security. UNSCR 1325 is the first formal recognition of the critical role women play in effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The mandate requires attention to gender in all aspects of international peace and security decision-making. The vision of UNSCR 1325 is to fundamentally change our inherited and often exclusionary peace and security approaches so that they are fully inclusive and sensitive to the needs and capacities of the entire population. Achieving the vision of Women, Peace and Security hinges on both women and men working together.

While men still dominate leadership roles within national and international security structures, they have remained on the sidelines of the Women, Peace and Security movement. There are common misconceptions, and biases, about the Women, Peace and Security agenda that have limited the engagement of men and the powerful impact they could have on behalf of this mandate.

Through interviews and surveys of more than 50 male leaders from across the US Government, US military, other governments and militaries, civil society, and international organizations, this study collected the perspectives and experiences of men who demonstrate personal commitment to promoting gender equality in peace and security policy and practice. The purpose was to try to understand how and why men become champions for Women, Peace and Security and for gender equality in peace and security. This knowledge can assist advocates in expanding understanding, support, and involvement within the peace and security arena.

The majority of participants in this study shared the perspective that the dominant approaches to peace and security are failing much of the world's population, and that Women, Peace and Security—and gender equality more broadly—offers a chance for needed structural and social change. Participants highlighted the transformational potential of Women, Peace and Security to redefine how the international community conceptualizes and approaches security.

Interviewees, including those from the military, pointed to the increasing recognition that force cannot solve the underlying issues that drive conflict and instability, and that the entire

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population needs to be engaged in finding solutions to these deeper challenges. The international challenges of terrorism, counterinsurgency, and stability operations may have created an opening within security-focused institutions for these ideas, out of necessity. Many interviewees emphasized that this is the juncture to reflect on the body of research and experiences already collected on Women, Peace and Security and on gender equality, and to learn from best practices. They highlighted the need to move beyond micro-interventions to begin to address the larger social and structural issues as prerequisites for peaceful societies. Many said that it is time to move beyond general gender sensitization and begin to shift the ideas and behaviors of people.

Men who were interviewed for this study readily acknowledged the importance of women's advancement in peace and security. Yet they made a clear distinction between gender parity and the broader goal of gender mainstreaming in peace and security that is a core tenet of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Participants in this study also highlighted the importance of addressing men's roles and masculinities as part of developing a comprehensive gender perspective. Yet, many men emphasized that the focus should be on how engagement of men and masculinities research could support Women, Peace and Security and enhance—not replace or distract from—existing efforts. They acknowledged concerns that too much focus on men and their needs could dilute or dominate the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Not surprisingly, the challenges of gender-blindness and gender bias were noted as being pervasive among men in the peace and security field. Among those surveyed, half reported that they have experienced or observed instances of gender bias against the Women, Peace and Security agenda. While these observations were relayed in both professional and uniquely personal terms, participants indicated that the nature of Women, Peace and Security and gender equality work had altered their perspectives on security significantly.

When considering what positive roles men could play to advance Women, Peace and Security, they answered that men can turn gender bias into an opportunity and convey a persuasive message about the relevance and importance of gender equality principles. They acknowledged that when men deliver the message, it is given more weight precisely because Women, Peace and Security is so often perceived as a "women's issue." In fact, men who are engaged in Women, Peace and Security–related work overwhelmingly pointed to a double standard in terms of the way they are received when speaking about these

issues compared with women. It was an uncomfortable truth for many, but one that they felt could be used strategically to build support from other men. Men with backgrounds in traditional national security portfolios are often purposefully recruited to work on portfolios that include Women, Peace and Security, and senior-level, male champions are brought into meetings strategically to lend support and credibility to the agenda. These men have become bridge-builders between more traditional peace and security portfolios and the Women, Peace and Security community.

These bridge-builders and other male champions consistently emphasized the importance of promoting visibility and recognition for women's organizations working in this space and building alliances to push forward change in policy and practice. In terms of immediate steps to increase dialogue and collaboration between policymakers and civil society, more than half of those surveyed expressed desire for their organizations to improve interaction and learning opportunities from gender experts in civil society.

> The experiences and perspectives of a number of men in leadership positions who understand gender equality as a strategic capability and transformational policy tool point toward a window of opportunity.

Participants observed that as peace and security institutions begin to formally integrate Women, Peace and Security in response to international and national mandates, more men have started to participate directly. Yet, men who are deeply involved in this agenda are still very much in the minority. Many are also relatively new to this topic. Over 50 percent of the participants surveyed have been working on Women, Peace and Security issues for less than five years, which is a possible indication that the movement is gradually being integrated into peace and security organizations and reaching and inspiring more men in recent years.

For example, when asked about strategies for moving the Women, Peace and Security agenda forward, participants named multiple approaches, including using different arguments that are based either in human rights or operational effectiveness depending on audience and context, to influence a shift in priorities and perceptions about security and gender equality.

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> Creating organizational change is perhaps one of the most difficult leadership challenges....Deeply ingrained gendered dynamics also obstruct gender equality efforts.

At the policy level, many male advocates said they focus on the simple fact that gender equality is smart policy because it makes communities and countries safer. Many male advocates working in national security contexts rely on operational effectiveness approaches to convey the Women, Peace and Security agenda to military audiences. Yet, some interviewees, including those from military environments, cautioned against over-emphasizing evidence on effectiveness. Some said that when advocates lead with evidence-based arguments, the conversation shifts from the importance of this powerful agenda to the proof that it matters.

Creating organizational change is perhaps one of the most difficult leadership challenges. Men who were surveyed for this study underscored this, and perceived that changing organizational cultures and leaders is the greatest impediment to Women, Peace and Security. Interviewees described peace and security environments as extremely resistant to change. Deeply ingrained gendered dynamics also obstruct gender equality efforts. Participants in this study agreed that Western governments and international organizations should not be viewing Women, Peace and Security and gender equality as just outward-facing work involving conflict zones. Interviewees noted that it is also extremely important to improve gender equality internally in peace and security institutions.

Political will is crucial to any policy endeavor, and the Women, Peace and Security field is no different. Political will from the top can produce the motivating force that generates action and normative change, or it can frustrate and stall any agenda. According to interviewees, senior-level leadership support, including male voices, is an important strategy to overcome skepticism, resistance, and inertia in peace and security bureaucracies. Male advocates in leadership positions sit at a critical strategic vantage point, and can shift the priorities and perceptions around these issues to gradually reshape how business is done. Interviewees discussed the importance of male leaders examining gender attitudes, relations, and behaviors and how these relate to peace and security in specific contexts. Interviewees also observed the importance of having people inside governmental bureaucracies who ensure policy guidance and programs do not move forward without consideration of gender. These gatekeepers—both male and female—are critically needed until gender analysis is fully embedded within peace and security professions. Male leaders across sectors also pointed to the fact that it is necessary to identify genuine gender-equality champions as partners and allies.

It is worth noting that many of these strategies echo recommendations that women working on Women, Peace and Security have also advocated for many years and continue to pursue today. However, this study shows that a number of men in leadership positions now also understand gender equality as a strategic capability and a transformational policy tool to reduce violence and create a more peaceful world. Their experiences and perspectives point toward a window of opportunity for the field to increase the number of male champions for gender equality, improve collaboration between male and female advocates, and robustly implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the near future.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed the landmark Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security. UNSCR 1325 is the first formal recognition of the critical role women play in effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The resolution mandates attention to gender in all aspects of international peace and security decision-making. UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent family of resolutions are now known as the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

> The vision of UNSCR 1325 is to fundamentally change our inherited and often exclusionary peace and security approaches so that they are fully inclusive and sensitive to the needs of the entire population.

The Women, Peace and Security mandates are about gender equality, not only about women. The vision of UNSCR 1325 is to fundamentally change our inherited and often exclusionary peace and security approaches so that they are fully inclusive and sensitive to the needs and capacities of the entire population. Recent conflicts and current national security threats demonstrate the critical importance of ensuring broader participation and more voices in peace and security matters, beginning at the local level. Implementation of UNSCR 1325 taps into powerful human capabilities to address escalating violence and recover from the destruction that wars unleash on families, communities, and nations. Achieving the vision of Women, Peace and Security hinges on women and men working together toward participatory governance. The agenda recognizes that a whole-of-society approach is necessary to achieve sustainable peace and security.

While men still dominate leadership roles within national and international security structures, they have remained on the sidelines of the Women, Peace and Security movement. With the increasing awareness of the Women, Peace and Security mandates in countries around the world, men who are personally moved by this agenda are stepping forward as supporters and contributors. However, there are common misconceptions and biases about the Women, Peace and Security agenda that have limited the engagement of men and the powerful impact they could have on its behalf.

Recently, some organizations and advocates have started to recognize the role of male champions and discuss ways to engage them more fully, but the efforts have been *ad hoc* and lessons have not been documented sufficiently.

Project Overview

In 2017, Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference, a program of One Earth Future, launched a new project to begin to address this significant gap in research and advocacy. Through interviews and surveys of more than 50 male leaders from across the US government, US military, other governments and militaries, civil society, and international organizations, this project has collected the perspectives and experiences of men who demonstrate personal commitment to promoting gender equality in peace and security policy and practice. The participants shared their personal motivations for becoming advocates of gender equality, identified effective and ineffective strategies for expanding the dialogue on gendered aspects of security, and offered observations about the future of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the next decade and beyond. This study is meant to provide important foundational knowledge to realize the full potential of Women, Peace and Security and gender equality principles.

Project Methodology

Between December 2016 and July 2017, more than 50 semi-structured interviews were conducted by Skype and phone for this project and more than 20 survey responses were collected and analyzed. The majority of participants in this study are men between the ages of 30 and 50 who work on conflict or development portfolios. Participants are from or reside in the US, Afghanistan, Austria, Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cameroon, Canada, France, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Collectively, their work experience spans Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. Those who participated in the study are mid- to senior-level leaders from a variety of sectors. The participants have experience working on Women, Peace and Security and/or gender equality in policy development, programming, research, and advocacy areas. A small number of female Women, Peace and Security advocates were also interviewed to help identify male champions, provide contextual background on the Women, Peace and Security policy discussions, and share general observations on how men are engaging with this agenda.

Participants in this study were not selected on the basis of position, career level, organizational affiliation, or name

This study is intended as a first step in collecting the views of men who are engaging in and supportive of Women, Peace and Security and related gender-equality goals in peace and security.

recognition in the peace and security field. Rather, participants were identified specifically by experts and allies in the Women, Peace and Security and related fields as personally committed to the agenda. Some of the participants did not self-identify as working directly on the Women, Peace and Security agenda, yet every one of them is directly involved in gender equality in peace and security policy and practice within their individual country context, sector, and substantive expertise. Local, grassroots organizations were not a focus of this study, although

representatives from international civil society organizations with networks and partners at local levels were included. The authors recommend future research on the perspectives of local civil-society male champions in conflict-affected countries. This study is intended as a first step in collecting the views of men who are engaging in and supportive of Women, Peace and Security and related gender equality goals in peace and security.

Key Findings

A Redefinition of Security: Women, Peace and Security as a Transformative Agenda

- Men who participated in this study highlighted the transformational potential of Women, Peace and Security to redefine how the international community conceptualizes and approaches security.

- Among male champions of Women, Peace and Security there is a common view that the current institutions and approaches are failing to achieve peace and security and that it is time for change. There is a recognition that gender equality forms a foundational pillar of social justice and that it is impossible to achieve social needs and human potential without addressing gender issues.

- Although policy mandates are a starting point for realizing this agenda, the change needs to be much deeper to address values, norms, and behaviors.

- There is increasing recognition that military force cannot solve the underlying issues that drive conflict and instability, and that the entire population needs to be engaged in finding solutions. Recent experiences with terrorism, counterinsurgency, and stability operations may have created more openness to the agenda within security-focused institutions, out of necessity.

- The vision of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is to incorporate gender perspectives and change the way that peace and security is approached. Gender parity is important, but does not fully reflect the transformative goals of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Men's Engagement in Women, Peace and Security

- Male advocates are often drawn to this agenda by transformative personal and professional experiences that help them overcome gender-blindness. For some men, Women, Peace and Security and gender equality work altered their perspectives on security significantly.

- Men can convey a persuasive message about the relevance and importance of gender equality principles. When men deliver the message, it is given more weight precisely because Women, Peace and Security is so often perceived as a "women's issue."

- As peace and security institutions begin to formally integrate Women, Peace and Security in response to international and national mandates, more men have started to participate directly as champions and experts. The National Action Plans (NAPs) in many countries have opened more space for men's engagement.

- Male advocates echoed concerns that over-focusing on men's engagement could dilute the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Men are cognizant of the need to visibly support the agenda as allies without dominating the conversations.

- Men who work on these issues find they are usually in the minority, but are actively trying to bring more men into the movement as allies. Men say they have received strong support and mentorship from female advocates and civil society organizations.

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The "How" of Gender Equality in Peace and Security

- The gender equality message should be tailored very carefully for specific peace and security audiences, based on the institution and individual. Many male advocates in government, military, or international organization contexts find it most effective to present Women, Peace and Security and gender equality principles as practical, smart policy that makes communities and countries safer.

- For many men, the case for Women, Peace and Security and gender equality has already been made, and the current challenge is to move from "why" to "how," pushing peace and security institutions to inform policy and programs in specific ways.

- The process of changing organizational cultures and leaders is perceived as the greatest impediment to implementation of Women, Peace and Security. Peace and security environments are extremely resistant to changing established policy approaches and processes. Deeply ingrained gendered dynamics also obstruct gender equality efforts.

- In some cases, there is a perception that Western government and military institutions are failing to fully leverage the time and talent of those inside these bureaucracies—both women and men—who want to work on implementing Women, Peace and Security.

- Gender is an issue that intersects and cross-cuts all peace and security fields and areas of work, yet is still siloed. While many men work directly on gendered aspects of peace and security, fewer have formal connections with the Women, Peace and Security community.

- The strategies for promoting gender equality and Women, Peace and Security on the ground vary by individual and organization, but they share a common foundational approach: open dialogue and sensitivity to local context. Gender can be introduced as a concept that helps people make sense of the world if it is connected with everyday life and experiences.

II. A REDEFINITION OF SECURITY: WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AS A TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA

The Women, Peace and Security agenda emerged from the efforts of civil society activists and women's organizations in conflict-affected countries around the world. Civil society leaders recognized that the status quo peace and security decision-making structures are both exclusionary and uninformed by the deep knowledge and experience on the ground. The bold idea behind Women, Peace and Security was to change the way that security is conceptualized (the "what") and pursued (the "how") by national, regional, and international actors. The agenda puts the focus back on those who are directly affected by violence, and on those who have the capacity and will to stop it. It acknowledges that inequalities, power, social status, and violence are intimately linked and that as a result, violent conflict cannot be prevented, managed, or solved without women's inclusion or gender perspectives.

> **❚❚** We are getting to the point of token women's participation in peace processes, mentions in resolutions, and appearance of greater involvement. There has been an attitudinal shift, and that's a change. But I would be very hard-pressed to say there is a change in power dynamics. **❚❚** –INTERVIEWEE

The majority of participants in this study from across sectors shared the perspective that the dominant approaches to peace and security are failing much of the world's population, and that the Women, Peace and Security agenda—and gender equality more broadly—offers a chance for needed structural and social change. Yet, participants expressed frustration about the slow pace of change. As one interviewee noted: "The laws aren't being implemented. There are not funds in the budget. Resistance is still here." Another interviewee noted that: "We are getting to the point of token women's participation in peace processes, mentions in resolutions, and appearance of greater involvement. There has been an attitudinal shift, and that's a change. But I would be very hard-pressed to say there is a change in power dynamics." He observed that the same reasons women are vital for peace processes—including their proven ability to compromise and prioritize societal needs—are also why those in power and vying for power want to exclude them. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 includes four key

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pillars: participation, protection, prevention, and gender mainstreaming. However, some interviewees also observed that there has been more acceptance of the protection elements of Women, Peace and Security, sometimes to the exclusion of the participation goals. One interviewee reflected on the problem: "Most people do not have a problem with the protection part. The participation part is the newest part and people still don't buy into it. They give it lip service." As one interviewee commented: "In peace negotiations, there are still hardly any women. There are still countries where women are walking three paces behind the men."

Yet, interviewees also observed that there is a fundamental problem in trying to fit women into existing institutions that are not working for peace and security. This is not only insufficient, it also misinterprets the purpose of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. According to one interviewee, the deficiencies of peace and security institutions are not women's burden to solve; "It's the institutions that are failing to adapt to the world."

Men who participated in this study highlighted the transformational potential of Women, Peace and Security to redefine how the international community conceptualizes and approaches security. Many interviewees emphasized that gender equality forms a foundational pillar of social justice and that it is not possible to achieve social needs and human potential without addressing it. "Women, Peace and Security is very important for the future course of human history," observed one interviewee.

Many of those interviewed considered the policy arena as a starting point but highlighted that the desired change needs to be much deeper. One interviewee posed the question, "Do we see Women, Peace and Security as a ceiling or a floor? Women, Peace and Security can constrain the conversation if it's a ceiling, but it can be transformative if we see it as a floor." Another observed that this agenda is much bigger than changing policy: "We are not so much talking about policies as much as human values….We do have the capability to change how we see the world."

The Untapped Potential of Women, Peace and Security

The majority of interviewees shared the observation that Women, Peace and Security has remained symbolic, general, and high-level, but has not filtered down to changing practices in life and work. According to one former high-level official from

a Western country: "The elements of government are based on standards and norms on one hand and laws and rules on the other. Much of the Women, Peace and Security narrative has been focused on rules and laws, but what's really important is norms." Many said that it is time to move beyond general gender sensitization and begin to shift the ideas and behaviors of people. As one interviewee said, "Now that we have raised awareness, it is important not to be stuck in cosmetic change."

Interviewees, including those from the military, pointed to the increasing recognition that force cannot solve the underlying issues that drive conflict and instability, and that the entire population needs to be engaged in finding solutions to these deeper challenges. Participants in this study said that recent experiences with terrorism, counterinsurgency, and stability operations may have created an opening within security-focused institutions to incorporate Women, Peace and Security. Due to the manipulation of rigid gender roles by terrorist movements, the security sector in some countries has prioritized the inclusion of women. For example, militaries have increasingly focused on women's inclusion in the armed forces in recent years. There is a recognition that it is impossible to engage with the entire population in areas of instability without having women included as interlocutors.

> **❝** Much of the Women, Peace and Security narrative has been focused on rules and laws, but what's really important is norms. **❞** –INTERVIEWEE

And yet, traditional military approaches are not solving the security problems, as those from this sector acknowledged. One interviewee with a military background observed that the military is very good at "cutting the weeds"—meaning fighting aggression with aggression. But he said that this approach does not change the conditions that give rise to movements such as Boko Haram. He pointed to a recognition that "Changing conditions starts with families, communities, and tribes," and that women play a central role in this process. Understanding the human domain saves lives, time, and resources in the long, messy process of working toward sustainable peace. Interviewees emphasized that all citizens, men and women, should define what security should look like.

Many participants in this study shared a common view that Women, Peace and Security is a global social movement that is on the cusp of a new phase. "Women, Peace and Security has tremendous strategic potential that is not being tapped," said

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one interviewee. Others emphasized that this is the juncture to reflect on the body of research and experiences already collected on Women, Peace and Security and on gender equality more broadly, and learn from best practices. They highlighted the need to move beyond micro-interventions to begin to address the larger social and structural issues as prerequisites for peaceful societies.

The Primacy of a Gender Perspective for Sustainable Security

Men who work in the Women, Peace and Security arena acknowledged the importance of women's advancement in peace and security and of expanding diverse talent in institutions. Yet they made a clear distinction between gender parity goals and the broader goals of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for peace and security: "The point of 1325 is not to have more women doing what we were doing before. It's about including women to transform security. Parity is important, but it is not 1325…It is very valid, but does not supplant the need for gendered institutions." As one senior-level military interviewee noted: "Parity is not irrelevant, but it doesn't achieve the goals. To provide comprehensive security solutions, you must have representatives from all of society. A diverse security sector means that all of society is invested in the solutions."

> ❚❚ The point of 1325 is not to have more women doing what we were doing before. It's about including women to transform security. Parity is important, but it is not 1325. ❚❚ –INTERVIEWEE

Male advocates also cautioned against an overly simplistic view that gender parity in policymaking will naturally shift peace and security institutions to incorporate Women, Peace and Security. The interviewees highlighted that the inclusion of more women in peace and security institutions does not necessarily lead to improved gender perspectives if women in decision-making positions are not well-versed in gender analysis or willing to rethink policy approaches. One former US policymaker noted that in his experience, men and women in policy positions were not that different in terms of their reactions to the Women, Peace and Security agenda: "Most people working around gender are women. The flip-side is that it doesn't mean most women in the US government and other organizations are supportive of this." It was observed that women might be more attracted to Women, Peace and Security because they have personally experienced gender inequality. Yet, some participants in this study also raised examples of resistance from women, especially from Western countries.

Participants in this study highlighted the importance of addressing men's roles and masculinities as part of applying a gender perspective. The majority expressed the view that there is not nearly enough discussion of masculine norms and behaviors and how they affect the realization of Women, Peace and Security. Men appear to see this as an area where they can contribute to this agenda and influence other men to shift perspectives. Yet, men who were interviewed were cautious about how to add the masculinity layer to this agenda. They were not supportive of creating add-on portfolios on "men's engagement" and strongly resisted any type of "men, peace, and security" framework. Most of the interviewees also expressed concerns about diverting funding and attention from women's participation at time when it is finally gaining traction.

> ❚❚ Engaging more men isn't the point— gender equality is the point. ❚❚ –INTERVIEWEE

Men emphasized that the focus should be on how engagement of men and masculinities research could support Women, Peace and Security and enhance—not replace—the work on this agenda. Several also pointed out that there was more space needed for consideration and study of how both masculine and feminine norms affect social dynamics, conflict, and opportunities for peace. One interviewee observed: "For most women who want to work on gender, it's hard to imagine doing this without men and boys. But the default on 'gender' is women and girls. Government and multilateral organizations—when they see 'gender,' they think of women and girls only. Engaging more men isn't the point—gender equality is the point. We need people representatively to move forward." Men pointed out that masculinity and conflict issues should be part of a gradual process of understanding social dynamics. An inclusive approach is necessary in order to dismantle harmful gender norms and social constructs that affect the whole population in conflict environments.

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Overcoming Gender Bias and Blindness in Peace and Security

Men who participated in this study observed that gender-blindness and bias are pervasive among men in the peace and security field. Among those surveyed for this study, half reported that they have experienced or observed specific instances of gender bias against the agenda. Participants observed that often, men do not consider the benefits and harms caused by social norms. Men often have gender bias and blindness because they do not feel affected by gender inequities. Interviewees said that men tend not to reflect deeply on these issues. They spoke of their own personal journeys to understand the influence of gender norms and the critical importance of gender equality. Using a gender perspective can transform the way that men understand family, community, and broader social dynamics. When men internalize gender sensitivity, they start to see peace and security much differently. The interviews indicate that personal experiences (both negative and positive) can often be more influential in shifting perspectives than policy arguments.

The realization of the importance of gender equality often came during formative years within their own families. Numerous interviewees said that their motivation to support gender equality comes from the influence of strong women in their lives. For many of the men who participated in this study, growing up with feminist mothers or other female relatives was a foundation instrumental to their dedication to these issues. Others pointed to influential and visible leaders in their communities, both male and female, who modeled the importance of valuing diversity and equality. These experiences were highlighted by interviewees across nationalities and backgrounds.

Men also pointed to negative experiences with rigid gender understandings, roles, and norms that led them to advocate for gender equality. One interviewee noted the effect of the absence of strong, healthy gender relationships during his upbringing. He has a desire for future generations not to be raised that way, and it is a motivating factor for his work. Another interviewee from a conflict-affected country was intensely affected by the gender violence in his own family; his aunt was forced at age 12 to marry a 50-year-old man and endured tremendous pain and suffering from domestic violence. In adulthood, he was able to help his aunt, and then gender equality became his calling. "This work has transformed my life," he said. One advocate was a teenager when his country became a war zone, and he witnessed the strength of women in his family and neighborhood who stepped up as leaders and providers. He also saw this same fortitude when he became a refugee. He has been working on Women, Peace and Security for his entire career.

In many cases, men traced their understanding of and support for gender equality in peace and security to an intellectual awakening that came during academic studies. Some participants in this study took gender courses in college; were introduced to gendered issues or feminist frameworks in security, political science, or international affairs courses; or pursued specialized higher degrees specifically in gender or related studies. These frameworks continued to guide and inform later professional work when it intersected with gender issues.

Those interviewed are experts in a variety of issues such as human trafficking, environmental security, conflict resolution, radicalization, youth and peacebuilding, global health, and disability rights. Through this work, their research and analysis often organically led to an examination of gender dynamics. As one expert on youth and conflict explained: "In East Timor, Afghanistan, Uganda, Burundi, Mali, 70 percent of the population is under age 30. The median age is 17, 18, 19, 20. If you are talking about conflict, you are talking about youth, and if you are talking about youth, you are talking about gender." The participants in this study emphasized that it was impossible to fully understand the contexts where they work without addressing gender equality issues.

Many of those interviewed pointed to their professional exposure in specific country contexts, most involving conflict, violence, or underdevelopment, that were transformative in their understanding of gender. One interviewee started his professional career working on violence against women and gender-based violence, which was his first contact with the

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feminist movement. Another interviewee shared his experience working in India at the grassroots level, where he learned that the issues of development, economic opportunity, and gender are deeply interconnected. He started to understand gender, and observed that once he saw it, he saw it everywhere. One interviewee recalled working on a project with research teams in local communities where female research leaders were not accepted and the elders asked for men. He realized that deliberate and continued work is necessary to break down prevalent assumptions about gender and women. One interviewee who works in international development recognized the direct involvement of women led to more successful outcomes. He said that in his experience around the world, when programs do not include women, they tend to fail. One interviewee who spent significant time working on stability issues in Afghanistan observed that throughout history, imbalances in gender equality have led to deep problems in security and environment.

Women, Peace and Security gave some men a frame with which to understand gendered dynamics that they had previously experienced in conflict zones. Some men who had served in the military were deeply affected by the realities of war and its disproportionate effects on women. Others saw failures of peacekeeping or stability operations when security forces excluded or exploited women. Those who had served in recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan observed the ability of female colleagues in the military to build relationships with women and increase awareness of what was happening in the communities. It was sometimes eye-opening to realize that they had not been hearing from half of the population. As one participant observed, reflecting on gender and conflict, "It changes people. It changes men and many become champions. Once you put on the lens, you can't take it off. The world never looks the same." Another interviewee noted, "With a gender perspective, everything changes. I cannot return to seeing the world from a male perspective."

> The nature of the Women, Peace and Security work often altered men's perspectives on security significantly.

The nature of the Women, Peace and Security work often altered men's perspectives on security significantly. One interviewee who was in the military said he dismissed "women's issues" for a long time because he considered them "something extra" to think about when he was just trying to stay alive. But he began to see the critical role of gender equality and has been actively

trying to learn more about applying this lens. "The challenge is waking men up to the issue," he said. One interviewee observed: "If the other half of humanity does not have rights, you cannot talk about having liberty. It changed me when I understood. It was an inside transformation." For some, the deeper understanding of Women, Peace and Security and the implications of gender equality globally led them to become vocal champions within their sectors. As one interviewee with a traditional national security background observed: "It had a profound impact on me…How could I not be an activist? I began promoting it quite fiercely." A former senior-level diplomat said that his outlook and his priorities in foreign policy were reshaped by being exposed to Women, Peace and Security.

III. MEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Women, Peace and Security presents an opportunity to make formal peacemaking and peacebuilding processes and structures more inclusive, effective, and sensitive to the needs and capacities of the entire population. Men are critical partners in this endeavor. Men have the power to move forward—or obstruct—this agenda because of their dominant roles in peace and security structures and decision-making. Gender equality, and the transformative change that UNSCR 1325 envisions, will only be achieved with their involvement.

Men who were interviewed for this study pointed out that as men, they can convey a persuasive message about the relevance and importance of gender equality principles. When men deliver the message, it is given more weight precisely because Women, Peace and Security is so often perceived as a "women's issue." When men work on these issues, it signals that gender equality is not just a women's issue. This is especially important because gender equality efforts are sometimes perceived as a burden relating to sex discrimination, political correctness, or additional work requirements by those working in many organizations. Frequently, gender equality is also considered zero-sum; in other words, women's gains are men's losses. According to one interviewee, "When some men are involved, it is a sign that it's not only [to] the benefit of a certain portion of the population, but all of society."

Since the passage of UNSCR 1325, women have been visibly on the forefront of the Women, Peace and Security movement. Men who occupy positions of power within peace and security institutions are usually the advocacy targets for the agenda, but have rarely been the advocates themselves, with some notable

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exceptions. However, as peace and security institutions begin to formally integrate Women, Peace and Security in response to international and national mandates, more men have started to participate directly as champions and experts. The National Action Plans (NAPs) in many countries have opened more space for men's engagement. According to one interviewee who works specifically on developing NAPs, "We are seeing more men in the workshops. Men and women are working together." Men who participated in this study noted generational differences in terms of how men and women are viewing this agenda. More younger men are actively participating and younger women are more supportive of men's engagement.

> One interviewee said that he is always in the minority in events and workshops. He considers this a positive experience because it has given him some empathy for women who work in male-dominated environments.

Men working in this arena are well aware of their minority status in Women, Peace and Security fora and how this is glaringly different from traditional male-dominated security and defense meetings. One interviewee said that he participates in a coalition of civil society organizations working on Women, Peace and Security. There are three men (he is one of them) and 15 women in the group. He is always in the minority in events and workshops. He considers this a positive experience because it has given him some empathy for women who are in male-dominated environments. Others said that it is not easy to find many male colleagues. One interviewee working in peacekeeping contexts said he worries that other men are not doing this work. He asks himself, "If I'm not pushing, who is?" He is trying to identify and persuade others at his rank and level to become champions.

This study shows that many male advocates of Women, Peace and Security are new to the topic. Many men first become involved in Women, Peace and Security and gender equality as part of their jobs. Some interviewees with military backgrounds said that they had never heard of Women, Peace and Security until recently. Over 50 percent of the participants surveyed have been working on Women, Peace and Security issues for less than five years, which is a possible indication that the movement is gradually being integrated into peace and security organizations, and reaching and inspiring more men in recent years.

Men as Bridge-Builders Between Peace and Security Communities

Men with backgrounds in traditional national security portfolios, such as arms control, disarmament, and defense, have been purposefully recruited to work on portfolios that include Women, Peace and Security. Some are approached to work on the issues precisely because of military or traditional defense backgrounds. This is common in governmental and international organization contexts. Senior-level male champions are strategically brought into meetings to lend support and credibility to the agenda, both inside the institution and in interactions with officials from other countries. This is also considered valuable to overcoming the perception that women's or gender ministries, departments, or offices should be solely responsible for this work.

These men have become bridge-builders between more traditional peace and security portfolios and the Women, Peace and Security community. One diplomat who comes from a traditional security background and now also manages the Women, Peace and Security portfolio in a government context explained that he understands and can navigate the stereotypes and biases in the security sector; he is familiar with the perspectives, the language, and its prism. He can also identify opportunities for Women, Peace and Security advocates because he knows about the mechanisms and channels for influence. Another interviewee who is responsible for Women, Peace and Security in a military environment emphasized the value of having credibility in an operational environment. When he walks into an infantry unit as someone who has served in the infantry, there is more receptivity to the message.

Some men who were assigned portfolios that included Women, Peace and Security—especially those with more traditional security backgrounds—expressed anxiety about making mistakes because they are men but also because they did not have decades of in-depth human rights or women's rights expertise to draw upon. They tended to look to the Women, Peace and Security community for advice and support.

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MALE CHAMPIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY:
COLLABORATION, SUPPORT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Men who participated in this study described highly collaborative relationships with civil society organizations. "The support from the civil society side has been profound," according to one interviewee from the security sector. Another interviewee who was assigned to Women, Peace and Security with no previous background in the area said, "Civil society groups on Women, Peace and Security, regardless of my mistakes, have been great about being inclusive and they have never once said 'You wouldn't understand.' They have been very patient, explaining and raising issues."

Those interviewees who work on Women, Peace and Security portfolios inside government ministries and departments considered civil society experts to be invaluable resources for on-the-ground insights and policy ideas. Policymakers who were interviewed said it is the important job of civil society to keep them accountable on these issues. There was a recognition that both those advocates for Women, Peace and Security working inside government and those outside government all wanted to get to the same place: full implementation of Women, Peace and Security and gender equality principles.

Interviewees expressed desire to show solidarity with the movement, promote women's leadership, and share perspectives. They consistently emphasized the importance of promoting visibility and recognition for women's organizations working in this space and building alliances to push forward change in policy and practice.

Participants in the study pointed to increased dialogue and collaboration as essential to overcoming institutional barriers and biased perceptions and to engaging more champions. Many participants expressed a desire for more opportunities for networking and learning between peace and security organizations and the Women, Peace and Security community. Among those who were surveyed for this study, more than half said they would want their organizations to facilitate interaction and learning opportunities from gender experts from civil society. Interviewees also spoke about broadening the engagement and partnerships, identifying intersections across peace and security work, and bridging and sharing practices from multiple sectors as important steps.

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The Challenges of Men's Engagement

Men who are engaged in Women, Peace and Security–related work overwhelmingly pointed to a double standard in terms of the way they are received when speaking about these issues compared with women. Although interviewees acknowledged that as men they often have more influence in getting the message heard, they also often found the double standard personally unsettling. One interviewee noted, "When I say things that other feminists have said, people go, 'That's interesting!'" Another commented, "It is frustrating, the privilege that I gain from being a man saying the same things women have been saying. But you are listened to more as a man." It is a fact he has been personally struggling with: "How can I overcome this and not reinforce male privilege?" Men were also sensitive to the

danger of overstepping in this arena or "mansplaining." As one interviewee observed, "There are certain advantages to being a man because many audiences are more open to having a man speaking. But I do not and cannot speak on behalf of women, and 'empowering women' is horribly condescending. Men working in this field need to be very careful."

Some said that they had experienced pushback from some in feminist circles for their work in this area; several mentioned that others have expressed skepticism about their true intentions in getting involved with this work. Sometimes there is a perception that male allies have a political or professional agenda that is driving their support of these issues. Yet, they acknowledged that some men who on the surface support this agenda may have other agendas. "Often, men are good allies when it's good

for their careers but not necessarily when they have to expend political capital." Another interviewee observed that there is a tendency for men to use gender as a bargaining chip or to achieve other goals.

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Many interviewees acknowledged feminist concerns that men's engagement could dilute or dominate the Women, Peace and Security agenda. "It is not always clear—engaging men for what? Who, and for what?" said one interviewee. Some expressed conflicted views about the idea of too much focus on men's engagement as part of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. As one interviewee reflected: "This has been my work. How much does it become a field of employment with men? I think it's important that men are working to end patriarchy, but we should support the work by women. We don't need a ministry for men. Or a unit on men. That parallel is problematic. It is important for men to also shut up and work under women leaders. If there is a shift in the field, men need to listen, learn, and not always demand a seat at the table, but make room for others. You need some sort of balance between engaging men and men taking over the conversation."

Interviewees were adamantly opposed to any effort to recruit more men into gender equality positions for the sake of including more men. One interviewee observed that in a large international organization, a greater percentage of applicants for high-level, high-paid positions on gender equality are men, while the majority of applicants for lower paid or unpaid positions in the same department are women; "Many [male applicants] don't even try to pretend to have any expertise on these issues but they want to get paid for it. That percentage of men should not get preference."

At the policy level, they recognized that engagement of men—especially high-level men—has led to some positive results, but most did not support too much focus on it. "We already engage too many men in peace and security," said one interviewee. Interviewees also did not like to see men praised too much, too quickly, or be treated as heroic for supporting these issues. Interviewees stressed the importance of identifying men with

common goals and understandings that align with the Women, Peace, and Security movement. One interviewee also observed that an unintended effect of gender equality mainstreaming may be that highly visible male messengers do not always understand the issues. He referenced the 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, headlined by UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and US Secretary of State John Kerry, as an example, although he noted that it did generate attention and funding for the agenda.

IV. THE "HOW" OF GENDER EQUALITY IN PEACE AND SECURITY

Since the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Security Council has passed 12 additional resolutions on specific issues relating to Women, Peace and Security.[1] International and regional institutions such as the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union, and others have adopted Women, Peace and Security policies and are supporting UNSCR 1325 implementation. As of 2017, more than 60 governments around the world have completed National Action Plans intended to guide implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in specific country contexts.

These institutional mandates are perceived as critical victories for the Women, Peace and Security and gender equality movement. In interviews for this study, there was acknowledgement of these accomplishments and the progress that has been made in a relatively short period of time. Many noted that an architecture has been built through these mandates and frameworks. Although the interviewees expressed frustration with slow and underfunded implementation, they acknowledged that the process has forced people to think about and discuss the issues. Many pointed out that there was increased awareness and acceptance within peace and security institutions about Women, Peace and Security and gender equality principles.

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1   For a full list of these resolutions, see http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/search.php?IncludeBlogs=10&limit=15&tag="Security Council Resolutions"+AND+"Women Peace and Security"&ctype=Women, Peace and Security&rtype=Security Council Resolutions&cbtype=women-peace-and-security.

Re-evaluating Peace and Security Policies and Approaches

Participants in this study shared varying opinions on how to promote understanding and support for Women, Peace and Security. Yet, the common view was that the message should be tailored very carefully for specific audiences, based on the institution and individual. Interviewees noted that different institutional cultures need to be navigated, and that some individuals will be convinced by increasing efficiencies while others will be moved by transformational experiences such as combat or war. As one interviewee noted, "People have different triggers." Ultimately, participants shared the view that developing more advocates for gender equality in peace and security starts by engaging people where they are rather than immediately trying to push a specific agenda too aggressively.

At the policy level, many male advocates focus on the simple fact that gender equality is smart policy because it makes communities and countries safer. Some pointed out that they present Women, Peace and Security as a valuable framework for defining and understanding gender equality in peace and security contexts.

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The human security/national security nexus and the business case for diversity were highlighted as concepts that often resonate with Western policymakers. One trainer explained that he asks people to google "gender" with another field (e.g., arts, marketing, business, education, etc.) and see the huge body of knowledge that exists. He then asks: "Why can't the peace and security community also think this is important?"

Male advocates often utilize country-specific examples, from Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of Congo, to illustrate the relevance of gender for audiences who are unfamiliar with Women, Peace and Security or may not see the direct application to their work. These specific examples start the thinking about how gender aspects influence a variety of contexts and have significant implications for security.

Many male advocates working in national security contexts rely on operational effectiveness approaches to convey Women, Peace and Security to military audiences. There is acknowledgement that this is a "beginner approach" before moving into deeper understandings of gendered norms and behaviors. Yet, those who work in security-sector environments noted that an examination of identity, patriarchy, and violence can be uncomfortable for many men and will take longer to achieve. One interviewee who works with military audiences said he is sometimes criticized as oversimplifying the Women, Peace and Security agenda with an operational approach. But he emphasized that this is a long process, and he starts where there is an accessible entry point for the conversation: "It is easier [for military audiences] to accept different tactical approaches to get there."

Yet, some interviewees, including those from military environments, cautioned against overemphasizing evidence to prove that Women, Peace and Security improves "effectiveness" in achieving national security goals. Some said that when advocates lead with empirical evidence, it immediately shifts the conversation from the importance of this powerful agenda to the proof that it matters, which puts advocates in a weakened position. It was also observed that in a few cases, policymakers perceived that advocates inflated the evidence to support their case, which was harmful to the credibility of the advocates and the agenda. One interviewee uses the tactic of emphasizing the negative repercussions of not implementing this agenda: "I used to say 'It's all about effectiveness and this is the right approach.' None of it worked. What tended to work was saying 'Your progress is actually going to fall apart and you will be associated with failure if you don't do this.'" One high-level Western military official observed: "This is logical. You can't have security without half the population. When you present the data up front, it is almost as if you are apologizing for the advocacy. Men and women both bring value to security—we are trying to craft this for an entire society.…The core value is that it is a powerful force." Many interviewees emphasized that the Women, Peace and Security agenda can stand on its own.

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BUILDING SUPPORT IN US POLICY CIRCLES:
THE U.S. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

In December 2011, the United States government released its first National Action Plan (US NAP). The US NAP was the culmination of more than 12 months of work inside the sprawling foreign policy and national security apparatus. Individuals who were closely involved in the process were interviewed for this study.

The US NAP process demonstrated the vital importance of senior-level champions. The unique constellation of leaders across government agencies who were personally committed to Women, Peace and Security was unprecedented. According to one interviewee, "The process was probably just as important as the product. The Secretary of State and President validated it. We could say, 'It's black and white— an adopted program of the US and we need to implement it. This is what we are doing.'" It brought representatives from across the US government together, including diplomatic, military, development, health, and other officials. The process of formulating a US NAP was strongly supported and prioritized at the highest levels; various components of the US government needed to come up with a credible plan.

The process introduced many government policymakers to Women, Peace and Security for the first time. Advocates within the government found that different arguments resonated with different people as they were trying to build support. Many policymakers were influenced by the concept of improving effectiveness; others were moved by a belief in equality, human rights and women's rights; and some were interested in unpacking issues around masculinities and security. It necessitated a factual and nuanced approach. Those who were leading the process framed it as a mission-driven strategy. Women, Peace and Security was presented as a new lens to help the US address complex peace and security issues.

One interviewee observed that those who responded positively to the Women, Peace and Security agenda often tapped into a personal experience (e.g., had a daughter; worked with accomplished women, etc.) to recognize the importance of gender equality. The process was female-dominated (women made up the majority of government staff involved), which complicated efforts to clarify gender equality concepts or to overcome the perception that Women, Peace and Security is a women's issue. According to one interviewee, there 11 senior staff members from various agencies who participated in the working meetings, and only two of them were men (he was one of them). In comparison, teams for Mass Atrocity Response Operations, an interagency initiative that was being developed at the same time, were almost entirely comprised of male staffers.

According to those interviewed, USAID was the agency that did the most to fundamentally transform itself to incorporate Women, Peace and Security. At USAID, the mission is carried out through programs and grants, and there was also more ability to integrate Women, Peace and Security into its processes. The US Department of State was viewed by those involved in this process as resistant to a fundamental reassessment of its work. There was strong resistance to any types of initiatives that resembled quotas to increase women's participation. There was more support from the Department of Defense (DoD) than anticipated. Some former officials attributed that to larger shifts within the DoD that created openness to this agenda. There was a significant increase in the number of senior-level women in the DoD and clear support from the Secretary of Defense. There was a recognition from recent experience in Afghanistan and Iraq that a failure to engage with women in the communities was a strategic disadvantage for the military. Counterinsurgency strategies emphasized engagement of local populations, so the Women, Peace and Security agenda was understood as legitimate. Some of the men from the military were unenthusiastic, although not outright resistant, in the beginning; after some involvement in the working group discussions, many became very supportive and began to see that this wasn't "just a women's issue."

Some participants reported that the momentum during the process of drafting the NAP has faded with implementation. According to those who were involved in the US NAP process, the biggest challenge is that policies cannot be prioritized without adequate resources. It is very difficult to add more to the portfolios of overextended government staff. Senior-level officials, even if they are personally supportive, are time-pressed. The responsibilities are given to the most junior staff, who lack influence or authority (and are often also young women). Interviewees were uncertain about the fate of the US NAP under the new Administration. Many pointed out that the implementation was moving forward. However, they emphasized that the attitudes of senior-level political leaders send a very clear message about priorities that reverberates throughout the ranks of government.

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Interviewees also spoke about strategies to integrate Women, Peace and Security into issues that are trending in peace and security policy circles; they saw both opportunities and dangers in fitting this agenda in. The current attention on violent extremism and terrorism was mentioned numerous times as a potential mechanism to insert gender equality and Women, Peace and Security into policy discussions in a more visible way. One interviewee emphasized that using different policy frames, depending on what can get attention and resources, and working with leaders in those policy areas, is the only way to move this agenda forward. He said this can be done without politicizing the issues. Yet others worried that such an approach can instrumentalize gender and distract from the agenda. As one interviewee observed: "Women, Peace and Security isn't presented as an overarching issue, it is presented as 'Don't discount women in the communities and women's roles in countering violent extremism.'…It is a means to an end. It's much harder to promote Women, Peace and Security as a separate issue." Overall, participants did not discount this strategy but urged caution to balance it with broader goals.

Interviewees discussed the fact that gender is an issue that intersects and cross-cuts peace and security fields and areas of work, yet it is still siloed. While many participants in this study work directly on gendered aspects of peace and security, fewer have formal connections with the Women, Peace and Security community and many do not self-identify as Women, Peace and Security practitioners. Interviews for this study indicated that they work on related issues but define their work as humanitarian, youth-related, health, development, or other portfolios. As a result, these experts and leaders collaborate within their own thematic communities but do not have opportunities to build working relationships or engage in knowledge exchange with other male allies on gender equality. There are also significant gaps between those working in the security sector and those working in civil society, leading to missed opportunities in sharing best practices.

Shifting the Culture in Peace and Security Organizations

Men who were surveyed for this study perceived that changing organizational cultures and leaders is the greatest impediment to implementation of Women, Peace and Security. Interviewees described peace and security environments as extremely resistant to changing established policy approaches and processes. Deeply ingrained gendered dynamics also obstruct gender equality efforts. Interviewees observed that peace and security arenas are male-dominated, and often, men in power

are reluctant to give up male privileges. Many interviewees related experiences working with other men who believed that Women, Peace and Security is an agenda only for and about women. This leads to perceptions that this is a zero-sum agenda: gains for women are losses for men. Interviewees noted that those responsible for Women, Peace and Security portfolios are most often women and junior-level, and those attending meetings or events on this topic are almost always women. One interviewee observed that "at gender-related events, there is always 85 percent women and 15 percent men. I'm not seeing this enlarged at all." Although they acknowledged that young professional women may be more attracted to working on the agenda in peace and security institutions because it resonates personally, they also noted that it perpetuates the perception that this agenda is both low-priority and a "women's issue."

One interviewee described obstructions that he has encountered as a man trying to contribute to Women, Peace and Security within the US national security establishment: "It takes courage to really push this issue forward. There is an insular way of thinking…people talk about wanting innovation and transformative ideas, but when it comes down to it, they see the issue in short-term and small ways. It requires character and moral courage to advocate for ideas that are going to shift the status of women around the world." One former military officer who now works in international development observed that there is an avoidance of nuanced conversations about new policy approaches. He collects information on needs and solutions from local communities—specifically reaching out to women in those communities—then presents this data as the foundation for what policies should look like. "I say, 'This is what the communities on the ground are saying.' Then I ask: 'What data do you have to refute it?'"

> Many participants observed that in male-dominated bureaucratic institutions, male advocates in leadership positions can shift the priorities and perceptions around these issues to gradually reshape how business is done.

Participants in this study agreed that Western governments and international organizations should not be viewing Women, Peace and Security and gender equality as just outward-facing work. Interviewees noted that it is extremely important to improve gender equality internally in order to make a successful case for gender equality externally. One interviewee pointed out, "you need to be walking the walk on gender equality" inside all

"GATEKEEPERS" ARE CRUCIAL TO ENSURE GENDER PERSPECTIVES ARE INCLUDED

Many interviewees observed that current gender equality work has become technical, operational, and structural to help peace and security organizations change how they do business. It requires persistent pushing to embed this into training programs, policies within slow-to-change bureaucracies, and the mentoring of others to raise the level of understanding. Interviewees also observed the importance of having people inside the governmental bureaucracies ensure policy guidance and programs do not move forward without consideration of gender. These gatekeepers—both male and female—continue to be critical until gender analysis is fully ingrained within peace and security professions.

Gender advisors and focal points, both women and men, were highlighted as an important way to mainstream these issues within peace and security organizations. One diplomat who works on Women, Peace and Security described that in his chain of command, everyone (male and female) is vocally supportive of gender equality but the policy documents are often completely gender-blind, even after they are read and cleared by many policymakers. He sends these documents back, and there is always a realization that gender issues have been forgotten in the process. One male interviewee who works for an international organization explained that, designated gender advisors meet regularly with the programs and each program must evaluate progress on gender integration. Each project must also have a gender plan or it is returned to the drafter. Although it does not always directly change behavior, this requirement encourages thinking about gender. One interviewee from a Western country described a successful system of gender focal points in the armed forces. Initially, gender and women were conflated. However, he has developed a training program that has led to more involvement and support from men.

> Interviewees observed the importance of having people inside the governmental bureaucracies ensure policy guidance and programs do not move forward without consideration of gender.

institutions and country contexts. Women, Peace and Security is often viewed as an agenda that only applies to conflict zones. Yet, some interviewees mentioned other aspects of peace and security that should also be considered through a gendered lens. Most expressed the view that a broader understanding of the agenda could increase the interest and participation in conversations about Women, Peace and Security.

Senior-level leadership support, including from male voices, was viewed as an important strategy to overcome skepticism, resistance, and inertia in peace and security bureaucracies. This is especially critical because gender analysis and sensitivity have not yet permeated the ranks of the professional peace and security cadres. "It's still not on everyone's mind unless the boss—leader of the pack—is doing it," according to one interviewee. Many participants observed that in male-dominated bureaucratic institutions, male advocates in leadership positions can shift the priorities and perceptions around these issues to gradually reshape how business is done. Without this top-level support, according to one interviewee, implementation of gender equality inside "starts to feel like

the work is a resistance movement." In addition, although attention is often focused on persuading high-level officials to support this agenda, interviewees noted that it is equally important to be working with the mid-level to cultivate gender equality champions.

Some interviewees expressed the opinion that it is more difficult to integrate Women, Peace and Security into policy and practice in Western countries than in non-Western countries. In countries where the memories of war and injustice are fresh, there is a strong desire to move forward, a mentality which may create more openness for change. One interviewee who works with governments developing NAPs observed that policymakers in Western countries sometimes raise concerns about cultural difficulties in implementing Women, Peace and Security, but this pushback does not come from the conflict-affected countries where he works. "Among young people, there is broad acceptance of equality.. People who show up in my meetings want to do this. There is a sense that inclusion is smart policy. We are seeing the pragmatic—how to make it happen." The NAPs have created a built-in incentive at the

level of governmental bureaucracy because it has become a job requirement for civil servants who want to do their jobs well. It was acknowledged that Women, Peace and Security is easier to implement in smaller countries with smaller governments and bureaucracies where a common language and framework can more easily be developed.

Some observed that there is a sense of complacency in Western countries because of a belief that gender equality has been achieved. Also, interviewees pointed out that Western governments and military institutions are failing to leverage the time and talent of those individuals, both women and men. who want to support this agenda. For example, the US has a NAP, but opportunities for expanding internal engagement on Women, Peace and Security have been extremely limited due to a lack of resources and legal authorities, the expansive bureaucracies responsible for US foreign policy, and currently, uncertainty about high-level political support in the current Administration.[2] Interviewees pointed to instances when they were blocked—by lukewarm leadership, unresponsive staff tasked with NAP implementation, or bureaucratic inertia—from finding paths to support this agenda.

On-the-Ground Realities and Lessons Learned from Civil Society

Interviewees discussed the importance of examining gender attitudes, relations, and behaviors, and how these relate to peace and security in specific contexts. This data is essential to providing a solid "grounding" for peace and security policies and programs. For example, Promundo has conducted its IMAGES survey in the Middle East since 2008. The survey examines the effects of conflict on gender relations as well as behaviors and attitudes. In some ways, the framing of gender equality and Women, Peace and Security at ground level is less confined than in the policy arena. Interviews indicate that the realities on the ground may create openings that enable deeper explorations of gender roles and norms and the impacts on families, communities, and nations. Yet, there are negative assumptions about gender equality— e.g., that it is a Western construct and only about women, or that women's gains are men's losses— and they need to be navigated with open conversation and context-specific approaches. Interviewees observed that the process of conveying and building understanding of gender equality is not always linear; often there are steps forward and steps back.

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2   The interviews for this study were conducted from December 2016 to July 2017, and predate the passage of the US legislation S. 1141 on Women, Peace and Security in which was signed into law in October 2017.

ENGAGING MALE LEADERS IN US MILITARY
CASES OF FAILURE AND SUCCESS

One senior-level US military interviewee articulated frustration about the lack of responsiveness from numerous points of contact in key US agencies when he repeatedly expressed an interest in focusing more of his work on Women, Peace and Security. When asked about opportunities that he could pursue to help with the implementation of the National Action Plan inside his military community, a female senior leader told him to "try googling it."

Yet, there were examples of top-level leaders who consistently and creatively pressed this agenda forward. For one general in the US military, Women, Peace and Security became his top priority. He sent the message to his staff that "resistance is futile." He worked on normalizing women's inclusion and gender sensitivity. He more than doubled the number of women in the professional military training course in his program and included Women, Peace and Security in the content. He considers this his most important accomplishment in his five years in this specific leadership position.

The opportunities for change are influenced by the immediate political environment as well, which can promote or set back these goals.

Although interviewees acknowledged the fundamental importance of universal principles of gender equality, they pointed out that sensitivity to local sentiments and customs is critical to building understanding and acceptance. According to one interviewee: "We need to know the ground we are working on in order to understand how to address it. It is important to know the perspectives of people and institutions we want to change. How is change possible from inside these institutions? If we come in with the 'we are right' attitude, it makes them defensive and they will shut down…You have to listen first. You have to understand the contexts. You need to go in with an open mind, and learning." Many emphasized that to shift perceptions on gender, it is critical to "meet people where they are," and hear their perspectives, preferably without judgment, as a starting point.

The participants in this study spoke of diverse experiences and strategies, yet they shared a similar view that gender can be introduced as a concept that helps people make sense of the

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MASCULINITIES AS A CRITICAL PIECE OF THE CONVERSATION

Addressing masculinities is essential and it must be done carefully, according to participants in this study. As one interviewee explained, "In approaches to men, we need to find a way to balance accountability with sensitivity to the challenges that men face with rigid norms of masculinity. It is important to do this without providing alibis and excuses. It's about empowering individuals to understand social norms are dynamic and social norms that don't work can be changed. Men are eager to open up and discuss. They are often hiding their sufferings and can connect to experiences from their own lives. When they are given the space to open up, they can change."

One interviewee said there is often a "wow" factor among men once they start to understand the power of social norms. According to one interviewee, "It is important to demonstrate to men that they have a gender and have constraints and privileges. You start with the constraints. It's also important to acknowledge men's privilege." He also asks groups what in their society (at the micro level or macro level) marks the transition from boyhood to manhood. Another interviewee recalled that in a training in South Africa, he asked the men in the room if they had male role models and there was complete silence. Without father figures, the military provided a way to live up to social expectations for those men. These are often uncomfortable conversations but valuable entry points for starting to understand how gender affects choices and behaviors.

world. Participants in this study who conduct trainings stressed the importance of connecting gender equality concepts with everyday life and experiences; "When you have examples and connect with lives, it is eye-opening and people are ready to accept ideas." One interviewee observed that introducing and gaining acceptance for gender equality is a process that must start at the personal level and expand out to other areas of society: "The focus at the beginning has to be how gender affects your life, and then how it affects your work."

Participants in this study who work with the security sector observed that there is gradual, growing interest in discussing gender norms in military training environments. Those who conduct professional military trainings with participants from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East reported that numerous questions about masculinities have come up in those fora. However, trainers often do not have expertise in gender issues and are not able to address them. Participants in this study with US military experience observed significant resistance to deeper discussions about masculinities within US military training and education fora.

Some interviewees also pointed to the increasing discussion of men who are victims of violence as a problematic area. One trainer said that when he speaks with men about violence, usually at least one man will push back with the comment that there are male victims, too. He considers this a form of resistance. Interviewees discussed the high levels of impunity for sexual violence and the complicity of institutions that are responsible for stopping the violence in conflict and post-

conflict contexts. As one interviewee highlighted, "The chains of command are men. The criminal justice institutions are men. It's all about men."

Many interviewees spoke extensively about the importance of engaging young people in these conversations. It was noted that because of the youth bulge, the populations in many countries are very young. Young men's experiences affect their propensity to commit violence. Adolescence is a turning point for both girls and boys. Interviewees pointed to the complexity of what is happening to youth in these communities—the dynamics that lead to pressure to fight or create increased vulnerabilities for girls. It was also noted that there is more openness among young people and greater potential to teach conflict-resolution skills and to change norms and behaviors. The youth have a role in shaping more inclusive peace and security, yet different approaches are needed. One example of such engagement is the Promundo partnership with the US Institute of Peace on curriculum for and training of young men as peace activists in Afghanistan.

Participants in this study emphasized that there are opportunities to engage young men and women to strengthen gender equality. Young men can be engaged to promote healthy masculinities and caregiving/fatherhood attitudes; "There is still a perception that most of the violence against women is by men and that's true…But if we ignore the fact that there are champions, we won't solve these problems. A good entry point is to approach men as brothers, neighbors, sons." One civil society interviewee described an approach that has been

used effectively in Uganda; men and women are asked, "How are you using your power in making this community better?" The message is that everyone has a role to play and can benefit. It is a method to engage the entire community in a positive way.

Interviewees said it was important to identify genuine gender equality champions on the ground as partners and allies. This requires relationships and discussions with local institutions and civil society organizations, especially women's organizations. One interviewee noted that the more effective champions are younger, less elite, and more involved in social activism. They may also be less visible to donors and international organizations. Participants in this study also highlighted the power of media and social media to normalize new ideas in family and society, especially among young people, and to simplify the messages. One interviewee said that when his organization, which works in many countries, created a simplified violence prevention message on its website, the number of views and the number of young visitors went up significantly.

Participants in this study indicated that dialogue and collaboration among both women and men are vital to achieving gender equality and realizing the vision of Women, Peace and Security. Some interviewees pointed out that women-only gatherings facilitate the inclusion of women's voices, noting that men often interrupt women or dominate the conversation in mixed groups. Yet, many other interviewees highlighted very positive experiences bringing women and men together to discuss gender equality issues. One interviewee who works extensively on promoting Women, Peace and Security in countries around the world observed, "The women peace activists on the ground are the ones who always say, 'We don't want women-only workshops.'...In Afghanistan, Afghan women said 'We need our male colleagues with us.'" Another interviewee described a program in Nepal where the local government did not have any baseline knowledge about how to apply a gender lens. The men didn't have the necessary relationships with the women. A program was developed to bring women into the meetings and facilitate the collaboration between men and women to address peace and security issues for the local community.

Interviewees who are working on peace and security in various communities also discussed the value of mixed-sex teams. Interviewees pointed out that such teams enable communication with the entire population and can be a visible demonstration that gender equality is a concept that is relevant to everyone. Interviewees highlighted that mixed-sex teams often develop creative new initiatives that may have not emerged from an all-female or all-male cohorts.

V. CONCLUSION AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

The persistent efforts of civil society—mainly women and women-led organizations—for peace and justice led to the formal recognition of this agenda by the United Nations Security Council in 2000. In the years since, the continuous advocacy has also led to the emergence of international and domestic peace architectures, including new UN Security Council resolutions, National Action Plans, regional plans, and domestic laws that recognize women's agency in and contribution to international peace and security. The Women, Peace and Security agenda has continued to develop and adjust to the changing nature of conflict and insecurity.

> **❚❚** Gender equality is a strategic perspective...I don't understand why people don't see this. **❚❚** –INTERVIEWEE

A core tenet of UNSCR 1325 is the integration of gender perspectives into peace and security, yet there is very little understanding of the views and experiences of men who are deeply involved in this work. Despite the growing awareness of both Women, Peace and Security and gender equality within peace and security, there are still relatively few vocal male advocates and experts in this movement. The Women, Peace, and Security community has struggled to find ways to increase support from men.

One of the key reasons for embarking upon this study was to better understand the factors and motivations that lead certain men to internalize this agenda personally and to promote it professionally. The experiences shared by male champions showed that the personal and the political are, in fact, deeply connected. The interviews demonstrate that exposure to gender frameworks, and the real-life repercussions of gender equality, can help men overcome gender-blindness, which in turn will start to shift ingrained biases in institutions and processes.

This study also led to an unanticipated and striking finding: men who understand gender equality concepts view the Women, Peace and Security agenda as much bigger than domestic or international mandates. The interviews indicate that many see it as both a necessary strategic capability and a potentially transformational tool to improve the human condition. Some men spoke about how their Women, Peace and Security and gender equality work redefined their understanding of security

in powerful ways. These experiences led them to a recognition that different needs, perceptions, and experiences of men and women and boys and girls must be incorporated into notions of security.

It is clear from the more than 50 men who participated in this study that the future of the Women, Peace and Security agenda hinges not only on the continued efforts of women globally, but also on the engagement of male advocates and supporters who can amplify these voices and use their influence within peace and security to change the conversations. This study is a first step in understanding how to expand the community of supporters and how to develop stronger, more resilient partnerships between women and men to create a more peaceful and equal world.

One of the interviewees for this study said, "You cannot have national security unless it includes all citizens." We could not agree more.

One of the key reasons for embarking upon this study was to better understand the factors and motivations that lead certain men to internalize this agenda personally and to promote it professionally.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants in this study, reflecting on their experiences and lessons learned, recommended the following approaches to move Women, Peace and Security forward in practice.

Support the Transformational Potential of Women, Peace and Security

- Reflect on the body of research and experiences already collected on Women, Peace and Security and on gender equality more broadly, and learn from best practices. Move beyond micro-interventions and begin to address the larger social and structural issues as prerequisites for peaceful societies.

- Focus on the integration of a gender perspective into peace and security, not just parity in women's participation or advancement in these fields. Address men's roles and masculinities as part of a gender perspective. Facilitate more consideration and study of how both masculine and feminine norms affect social dynamics, conflict, and opportunities for peace.

- Acknowledge that men's personal experiences can powerfully influence their support for gender equality in peace and security, often more than policy arguments. Open up spaces for male champions to discuss their motivations for advocating these issues.

Tailor the Women, Peace and Security Message

- Tailor the gender equality message very carefully for specific audiences based on an understanding of the institution and individual.

- Emphasize that gender equality is smart policy because it makes communities and countries safer. Offer country-specific examples to illustrate the importance of a gender perspective in a direct and powerful way.

- Consider strategic opportunities to draw attention to the gendered aspects of high-profile peace and security issues to gain the attention of policymakers and build increased support.

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RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

Facilitate Connections and Knowledge-Sharing Across Silos

- Strengthen formal connections with the Women, Peace and Security community and other related fields of peace and security. Broaden the framing for discussions to include different audiences and encourage new approaches.

- Facilitate more opportunities for learning from gender experts on best practices. Bridge civil society and security-sector communities working on Women, Peace and Security. Individuals—men and women—who have experience and credibility in traditional peace and security sectors can act as trusted bridge-builders to move the agenda forward.

- Find ways to engage young people, and other sectors, including business and media, to help formulate innovative approaches to gender equality goals in countries and communities.

Cultivate Champions—Women and Men—On the Inside

- Consider Women, Peace and Security and gender equality as both an internal and external policy issue. Peace and security institutions need to improve gender equality internally in order to make a case for gender equality externally in bilateral and international relations.

- Cultivate support from senior-level men and those with credibility within traditional security cultures to overcome skepticism, resistance, and inertia in peace and security bureaucracies. Identify gender equality champions among the mid-level ranks in these institutions.

- Utilize National Action Plans (NAPs), Women, Peace and Security strategies, and policy guidance as mechanisms to encourage and facilitate more engagement from men in Women, Peace and Security. Persistently push the agenda into training, programs, policies within slow-to-change bureaucracies while mentoring others to raise the level of understanding. Integrate gatekeepers, including gender advisors and focal points, to ensure policy guidance or programs do not move forward without adequate consideration of gender implications.

Address Gender Norms as a Foundation for Peace

- Focus on listening and open dialogue as first steps to starting conversations about gender norms and equality principles in local contexts. Connect gender equality concepts with everyday life and experiences.

- Facilitate context-specific understandings of masculinity norms and opportunities to promote healthy masculinities in support of gender equality. Recognize that an inclusive approach is necessary in order to dismantle harmful gender norms and social constructs that affect the whole population in conflict environments.

- Facilitate collaboration between women and men on peace and security issues through mixed-gender meetings and teams. Partner with civil society and women's organizations on the ground to identify genuine champions and to formulate approaches to Women, Peace and Security and gender equality that will resonate with the population.

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