

## Special Issue: Celebrating and Interrogating Women and National Security

GUEST EDITORS: SUSAN HARRIS RIMMER AND SUE THOMPSON

### *Celebrating and Interrogating Women and National Security*

Susan Harris Rimmer and Sue Thompson

### *Speech by Defence Minister, 4 April 2017*

The Hon. Marise Payne

### *Speech by Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, 4 April 2017*

The Hon. Penny Wong

### *Speech by Chief of the Defence Force, 5 April 2017*

Air Chief Marshal M. D. Binskin

### *Increasing the Number of Senior Women in the Australian Army*

Lee Hayward

### *Trust the Women as I Have Done: An American's Reflections on Australia and WPS*

Valerie M. Hudson

### *Women and Islamic-State Terrorism: An Assessment of How Gender Perspectives Are Integrated in Countering Violent Extremism Policy and Practices*

Sofia Patel and Jacqueline Westermann

### *Civil Society Participation in Women, Peace and Security Governance: Insights from Australia*

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Pip Henty and Beth Eggleston

### *Leading the Operationalisation of WPS*

Susan Hutchinson

### *Beyond the Band of Brothers by Megan Mackenzie*

Reviewed by Elise Stephenson

### *The Women in Blue Helmets by Lesley Pruitt*

Reviewed by Olivera Simić

### *Gender, UN Peacebuilding, and the Politics of Space by Laura Shepherd*

Reviewed by Lizzy Ambler





# Security Challenges

Volume 14 Number 2 (2018)

# Security Challenges

ISSN 1833 – 1459

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All articles published in *Security Challenges* are fully peer-reviewed. Any opinions and views expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Kokoda Foundation or the editors of *Security Challenges*.

*Security Challenges* is indexed on EBSCOhost™



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# **Celebrating and Interrogating Women and National Security**

Susan Harris Rimmer and Sue Thompson  
Editors

As we push for progress on issues of gender equity in 2018, can we claim that women in national security and gender perspectives on security are finally being taken as seriously as they deserve? What does the future research agenda for security studies look like when designed by women or aimed at gender-responsive defence policy? While much can still be done, a landmark conference held in Canberra in 2017 indicates that gender perspectives on security are beginning to be taken seriously by sections of some national governments, academia, the private sector and the media. And, this research journal's landmark special edition on Women and National Security showcases a promising research agenda that can celebrate inclusion and also interrogate the need for further structural change.

In early April 2017, there was a conference focusing on Women and National Security in Canberra. More than 335 participants attended the conference that represented the first national conversation of its kind about the importance of enhancing women's participation and leadership in national security-related policy and decision-making, implementation and practice.

Led by Marina Tsirbas for the National Security College at the Australian National University (ANU), the event attempted to bring together the national security communities in government, private sector, academia, the diplomatic corps and NGOs here and overseas. Fifty-one speakers included the Defence Minister, Opposition Foreign Affairs spokesperson, the then Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as international delegates. They discussed women as actors and receivers of national security in the defence and security context, the gender based peace dividend, and government and private sector priorities in the context of the Defence White Paper, Cyber Security Strategy, academic security studies and foreign policy.

Participants pondered the problems of how to increase female participation in decision-making and leadership in national security fields across public policy, the armed forces, the private sector and academic spheres. They examined women's portrayals in the media and the barriers still present for

many women in the security sector. Discussion flowed on why gender perspectives on national security policy matter for future successes in security fields. Senior panels from the public and private sectors and across disciplines shared experiences, insights and best practice research and strategies on this ever increasingly important field of research, policymaking and practice. Some of these speakers and insights animate the increased International Women's Day 2018 focus for the security and foreign affairs blogs *The Strategist* for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (for the second year)<sup>1</sup> and *The Interpreter* for the Lowy Institute.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, the presence of keynote speaker Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, Minister for Defence sharpened the conversation, as the first woman in this role. This is significant not only in Australia but in the region, especially in conjunction with Julie Bishop, Australia's first female Foreign Minister. Notably, Minister Payne was part of the inaugural Female Leaders Panel at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2018.

At one point, Ms Frances Adamson, the first female Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade asked all the women in the QT Ballroom who were the first women to hold their job to raise their hand. At least a third of the room of roughly 300 delegates responded.

One of the most notable 'first women' to speak was Ms Habiba Sarabi, Deputy Chair to High Peace Council and Senior Advisor on Women to the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. She spoke on the importance of women as policy-makers and enablers in peace and security, and the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in the context of Afghanistan. This is Australia's longest war, a war that included serious public commitments on our part to protecting women's rights.

In February 2018, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani called for the Taliban to join peace talks, offering to treat the insurgent group as a legitimate political party 'without preconditions'.<sup>3</sup> Ms Sarabi discussed the targeting of women in the town of Kunduz, northern Afghanistan, by the Taliban since 2015 as a precursor of what might come to pass in any such deal. In a methodical campaign, the Taliban drove out of Kunduz any organisation or individual working to protect and support women, and hounded any woman with a public profile. The women of Afghanistan have much to consider in their quest for peace, and the discussion led to the idea that Australian policy

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Strategic Policy Institute, *The Strategist*, <[www.aspistrategist.org.au/dinkus/wps-2018/](http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/dinkus/wps-2018/)>.

<sup>2</sup> Lowy Institute, *The Interpreter*, <[www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/weekend-catch-international-women-day-tariffs-timor-leste-and-more](http://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/weekend-catch-international-women-day-tariffs-timor-leste-and-more)>.

<sup>3</sup> Susan E. Rice, 'Tell the Truth About Our Longest War', *The New York Times*, 14 March 2018, <[www.nytimes.com/2018/03/14/opinion/afghanistan-longest-war.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/14/opinion/afghanistan-longest-war.html)> [Accessed 15 March 2018].



towards Afghanistan should be more informed by women's direct and diverse voices.

There was significant emphasis on the inclusion of women in the national security sphere and the ADF in particular, supported by Minister Payne and Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC, then Chief of the Defence Force. Some of the gaps identified were strategies to ensure equal participation of women in the fields of cyber security, defence industry and intelligence. There was an interesting assessment of media portrayals of senior women in national security, and their impact. The 'business' case for inclusion was thoroughly explored. The Minister stated: 'For the Australian Defence Force, addressing equality is about improving both our capability and our operational effectiveness.'

But the conference went further than inclusion, to consider more structural reasons why a focus on gender in the field of national security is crucial in terms of both intrinsic merit and capability. Professor Valerie Hudson, George H.W. Bush Chair, Texas A&M University, and author of *Sex and World Peace* was the key academic speaker, giving a wide array of data to demonstrate the proposition that "the very best predictor of a state's peacefulness is not its level of wealth, its level of democracy, or its ethno-religious identity ... it is how well its women are treated".

Hudson and others led discussion of deepening the community of female security scholars, and taking a more structural gender perspective on many issues, including what mainstreaming of gender and gender considerations in foreign and security policy might look like.

Women's representation and leadership in security-related academic fields were discussed by a panel of academics from the ANU and University of Queensland (UQ). Discussion covered a broad range of issues from structural inequalities in universities to the under-representation of women in security-related disciplines. The panel discussed efforts underway in universities to address the barriers women academic often face during their careers as well as solutions to the problems of structural biases in academic publishing and hiring practices.

The ANU has now created a specialised training course at the National Security College. The ANU course ran for the first time in September 2017 as a part of the NSC's professional development program. The inaugural course investigated gender issues from a broad range of security issues such as foreign policy, defence, terrorism, cyber security, national interests, and national security decision-making. There is a new Canberra-based network of women in security and defence. There is also a small but vibrant Australian community of civil society organisations focused on peace and disarmament, such as the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom Australia, the Nobel Prize-winning International Campaign to

Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and many others, linked to regional and global networks.

In this spirit of reflecting these vibrant contemporary debates, the leading Australian journal on the future of national security, *Security Challenges*, has commissioned a Special Issue on Women and National Security. The collection of articles, speeches and commentaries reveal that women and national security is a broad and complex topic that affects security issues at every level. It captures commentary from Minister Payne, Shadow Minister Penny Wong, then Chief of Defence Biskin, Major Lee Hayward and Professor Hudson, as well as research articles from established and emerging scholars in the field.

Like the conference, the Special Issue examines the landmark UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women Peace and Security (WPS), adopted in 2000, which acknowledged that men and women experience conflict differently, and that women are critical security actors. Since 2000, there have been seven additional resolutions from the UN Security Council seeking to support and expand the provisions of UNSCR 1325. Countries are encouraged to devise a National Action Plan to implement the resolutions.<sup>4</sup>

Australia's National Action Plan is coming to the end of its first cycle in 2018, and receiving considerable civil society attention.<sup>5</sup> Minister Payne notes this robust interaction in her reprinted speech in our collection:

Women, Peace and Security is a community, a state and a global issue. Its implementation is a whole-of-government priority, and a whole of society undertaking.

She stresses further that her government is committed to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and that her department in particular has seventeen areas of responsibility under Australia's National Action Plan. Minister Payne's speech highlights some of the successful strategies that have been implemented under the plan, such as the ADF's appointment of a Senior Gender Adviser to the New Security Force Assistance mission in Afghanistan and the development of Australia's first Gender Advisor Training

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<sup>4</sup> The text of the resolutions can be found here: Security Council Report, <[www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/search.php?IncludeBlogs=10&limit=15&tag=%22Security%20Council%20Resolutions%22+AND+%22Women%20Peace%20and%20Security%22&ctype=Women,%20Peace%20and%20Security&rtype=Security%20Council%20Resolutions&cbtype=women-peace-and-security](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/search.php?IncludeBlogs=10&limit=15&tag=%22Security%20Council%20Resolutions%22+AND+%22Women%20Peace%20and%20Security%22&ctype=Women,%20Peace%20and%20Security&rtype=Security%20Council%20Resolutions&cbtype=women-peace-and-security)> [Accessed 10 March 2018].

<sup>5</sup> See further Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018, <[www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/international-forums/australian-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018](http://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/international-forums/australian-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018)> [Accessed 15 June 2018].

Course. Her speech also takes the opportunity to announce the establishment at ADFA of the Minister for Defence WPS Visiting Fellowship.<sup>6</sup>

Air Chief Marshal Binskin's reprinted speech also addresses the work the ADF has been doing to implement the principles outlined in UNSCR 1325. He highlights two contemporary tactical level experiences that have enhanced the ADF's operations: one from the use of female engagement teams in combat operations in Afghanistan and the other from engaging with women on the ground in the aftermath of Cyclone Winston in Fiji. He uses these examples to stress that only when a gender perspective is implemented at all levels will the defence forces be able to maximise their effectiveness.

Susan Hutchinson's contribution to the special edition also focuses on operational effectiveness in the ADF and other militaries. Entitled, 'Leading the operationalisation of Women Peace and Security in the ADF', she tackles the problem of trying to bring together practical outcomes from the broad WPS agenda. Hutchinson draws largely on the Australian experience and, like Air Chief Binskin and Minister Payne, notes in particular the efforts that the ADF have made to the implementation of WPS in their operations. However, she expands on this and points out that in the Australian context, the WPS agenda is largely externally focused, and the ADF provides minimal contribution to UN peacekeeping—a key element of the WPS agenda. Furthermore, the author stresses the importance of implementing a gendered approach in all aspects of the operational cycle: pre-planning, planning, conduct and transition. By employing a gendered approach, Hutchinson states:

the ADF and other militaries will improve their operational effectiveness and supporting international peace and security as well as enhancing the safety, security and human rights of women in accordance with international obligations as well as the values and national policy of successive Australian governments.

Professor Hudson compares this vibrant policy community and debate in Australia with the disappointing situation in the United States, where the administration appears unconcerned with the WPS agenda. Since the resignation of their Ambassador for Global Women's Issues well over a year ago, there has not been a replacement and the Office of Global Women's Issues (OGWI) will no longer report to the Secretary of State, but rather an Undersecretary. The OGWI was threatened with massive funding cuts, until a public outcry halted the process. Hudson points out that the only positive note coming out of Washington currently is that Congress passed the

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<sup>6</sup> Announcement available at: Department of Defence, <[www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-releases/minister-defence-announces-new-visiting-fellowship](http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-releases/minister-defence-announces-new-visiting-fellowship)> [Accessed 20 April 2017]. Angeline Lewis was announced as the first Fellow on 8 March 2018.

Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 that mandates a quadrennial Women, Peace and Security Strategy be produced by the government with bi-annual follow-up reports. Nevertheless, Hudson praises Australian efforts in the WPS space and welcomes the publication of this special issue.

From an emphasis on leadership and governance to perspectives from the grassroots, Laura J. Shepherd and Anuradha Mundkur document what grass roots participation really means in a research article entitled: 'Civil Society Participation in Women, Peace and Security Governance: Lessons from Australia'. These authors examine current engagements between civil society and government around the WPS agenda, using Australia as a case study—one of the countries named in the 2015 global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as evidencing best practice in civil society participation. They explore ways to enhance these interactions and stress the importance of civil society work. This work is underpinned by three principles: expertise, ownership and accountability. However, they also point out potential problems, namely drops in funding and that recommendations laid out in National Action Plan annual report cards are non-binding.

The subject of women and national security is relevant far beyond the WPS agenda. While much work has been done in this space, our authors Sofia Patel and Jacqueline Westermann provide a gender lens on current Australian Government efforts to counter violent extremism (CVE) as they consider 'Women and Islamic-State terrorism: An Assessment of How Gender Perspectives Are Integrated in Countering Violent Extremism Policy and Practices'. Their paper provides an overview of women's experiences with IS terrorism, questioning why women join IS, the roles they play within the organisation, and why gender perspectives within terrorism matter for countries such as Australia. The overriding issue in this paper is that terrorism and counter-terrorism are products of a gendered world and therefore gender issues matter in the field of CVE. Therefore, a reassessment of existing policy and practice is needed.

Pip Henty and Beth Eggleston also argue that CVE is a gendered issue. Using examples from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Tajikistan, they stress that current initiatives often see women excluded or marginalised from the development, implementation and evaluation of these efforts in their article 'Mothers, Mercenaries and Mediators: Women Providing Answers to the Questions We Forgot to Ask'. Thus, their paper analyses the role women can play in CVE through various approaches, including the WPS agenda. They stress the positive impact women can have when they are included at various levels of CVE initiatives—from the grassroots to the formal government mechanisms—and the implications this has on approach, policy and strategies.

However, while many of our papers and speeches stress the progressive outcomes that can be achieved through increased women's participation in

security fields, major barriers still exist. Major Lee Hayward provides an expert comment on 'Increasing the Number of Senior Women in the Australian Army'. In her article, she explains that it is generally accepted in multiple national and international frameworks that increasing the number of women involved in peace and security processes is fundamental to ensuring successful outcomes, and that this includes women at all ranks of the military. Yet women's participation in the Australian Army is historically low, particularly in leadership ranks and indeed despite some efforts the number of women serving in the Australian Army over the past sixteen years has not increased significantly. The author identifies the merit-based system as problematic for achieving gender equality goals, claiming that it is highly subjective and shows unconscious bias against women. She then provides suggestions on how to overcome this through a number of measures, or bias interrupters. However, despite the positive examples highlighted from other industries, the message from this paper is that unless the Army can transform structures and change mindsets, it must question whether the current merit system provides the best outcomes for women's career advancement.

This discussion is timely as was demonstrated by the appointment of the new Chief of Defence Lieutenant General Angus Campbell AO, DSC, in April 2018. Minister Marise Payne conceded at a press conference that promoting women into the top leadership roles of Defence remained a "work-in-progress" but the current service chiefs had done a significant amount of work to bring women through the ranks and give them command experience.

I have made it my business to make sure that I meet with those people in the last few years and I'm very confident that standing not too far behind the gentleman that you see in front of us, there's an impressive cadre of women coming our way.<sup>7</sup>

There are still significant areas of debate and public practice around gender and national security that this Special Issue does not encompass but which deserve scholarly attention; notably sexual identity and security studies, alleged hyper-masculinist practices in the Special Forces, issues of inclusion in the intelligence and cybersecurity communities, feminist critiques of the new Defence Exports regime, gender analysis of Defence procurement, gendered impacts of the new Home Affairs portfolio, and many other topics we have not yet even conceptualised.

Our book reviews therefore celebrate Australian female security scholars and feminist scholars thinking about women at the table as peace

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<sup>7</sup> Press Conference with the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, the Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC, and Lieutenant General Angus Campbell AO, DSC, Parliament House, Canberra, 16 April 2018. Available at <[www.malcolmturnbull.com.au/media/press-conference-with-the-minister-for-defence-senator-the-hon.-marise-payn](http://www.malcolmturnbull.com.au/media/press-conference-with-the-minister-for-defence-senator-the-hon.-marise-payn)>.

negotiators, builders and peacekeepers—drawing on lived experiences from conflicts and overseas deployments. Books include *Beyond the Band of Brothers: The US Military and the Myth That Women Can't Fight* by Megan Mackenzie (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and Lesley Pruitt's book, *The Women in Blue Helmets Gender, Policing, and the UN's First All-Female Peacekeeping Unit* (University of California Press, 2016) reviewed by Elise Stephenson and Dr Olivera Simić. Mackenzie's book provides important contributions to understanding women's role in combat and military culture, especially given the efforts to increase the number of women in leadership positions within national militaries. Lesley's book, too, provides valuable insight through a critique of the effects of policies translated in the field, filling the gap in the current research on women and peacekeeping.

Scholars are also thinking deeply about gendered ideas and language in practice. Lizzy Ambler reviews Laura Shepherd's text *Gender, UN Peacebuilding, and the Politics of Space: Locating Legitimacy*, part of the Oxford Studies in Gender and International Relations (Oxford University Press, 2017). Ambler finds that the book provides a stimulating analysis of UN peacebuilding interventions and the way they reproduce power relations in relation to gender, women and civil society. Shepherd draws on country-specific configurations within the current agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, including references to discourse and practice in Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Shepherd conducted extensive interviews across various UN staff, activists and analysts involved in peacebuilding activities to provide insights into how the UN can achieve its mission of hope.

It is clear that there are many more voices and perspectives that could be celebrated in the field of national security studies, and that this diversity could bring profound benefits to our understanding of security itself. We hope this special edition can encourage further such publications. As Shadow Minister Senator the Hon. Penny Wong describes in her contribution to the Special Issue:

Much of our public discourse and visible signs of our national security efforts focus on 'hard' responses such as CCTVs, bollards, static barriers and armed guards. There is no doubt that these responses are necessary. The question is whether they are sufficient. As important as these may be, are we thinking sufficiently broadly both about security risks and the way in which we respond to them? Should we elevate our discussion of the values we seek to preserve as an open and inclusive society—equality, co-operation, tolerance and compassion?

Overall, the speeches, papers and books showcased in this special edition strongly argue that ensuring a gendered perspective on security issues can only benefit security-related policy, decision-making and practice; as well as wider issues of gender equality. These papers also reveal a rich and emerging body of research on these topics. However, while achievements

to date have been noted and celebrated, further research in security-related fields is needed to continue the foundations that have been laid by governments, grassroots organisations and researchers.

5 September 2018

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**Speech by Defence Minister the Hon.  
Marise Payne to ANU:  
Women and National Security  
Conference,  
Canberra, 4 April 2017**

Thank you Margaret and good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Let me begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respect to their elders past and present.

We have very many distinguished guests here today, indeed the conference has a stellar line-up of distinguished panellists and speakers, excluding myself of course. I also would like to particularly acknowledge Professor Margaret Harding, the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), ANU, and Professor Rory Medcalf, the Head of College, National Security College.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests one and all, to members of the ADF who are here, and very many other guests arrayed in front of me.

I am very pleased to be at ANU's National Security College today and thank both Margaret and Rory for their introductions and for their very warm welcome and for the opportunity to speak. The college is indeed one of our premier defence and strategic institutions and I am sure this week's Women and National Security Conference will cement that reputation already strongly held.

I must apologise in advance. One of the by-products of this job is that you tend to speak and run. Usually it's to go back to Parliament but on this occasion it's to attend a Cabinet meeting this morning and there are no excuse for lateness in that context.

Yesterday I was in North Queensland and dealing with some of the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Debbie, which will be familiar to many of you. Only in Australia would a tropical cyclone be called Debbie.

But in the context of this conference, I had the very great pleasure of meeting Lieutenant Colonel Jenny Harris, who is leading a particularly impressive team of men and women in their support work in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie. It made me think, in terms of today's conference,

that no matter where I go, no matter what I do, in this job, I meet the most extraordinary women working in national security and I am extraordinarily grateful for the honour and the opportunity of this role, enabling me to do that and I am extraordinarily proud of those women particularly with whom I work in the ADF.

I wanted to begin with a very broad overview of Australia's current operations and security environment.

Some of you will know that President Ghani, Ashraf Ghani, of Afghanistan, is in Australia today. That is of course, one of the missions to which we are currently contributing—270 troops in a NATO-led Train, Advise and Assist mission.

But across the world we have over 2,000 personnel deployed on over thirty operations, from Afghanistan to Egypt to Sudan and as I said, as we speak, we have more than 1,600 ADF personnel engaged in clean-ups in Queensland, following Cyclone Debbie.

Our highest rate of operational tempo though continues to be focused across the Middle East region.

When I meet President Ghani this afternoon, I look forward to discussing further with him Australia's role in Afghanistan, as a follow-up to a trip I made to Kabul last year.

Additionally, in Iraq and Syria Australia continues to make one of the largest contributions to the counter Daesh campaign.

Daesh has now lost more than 60 per cent of the territory it once held in Iraq and more than a third of the territory it once controlled in Syria.

However, the Iraqi Security Forces continue to meet with fierce resistance from Daesh fighters, who are determined to fight to the end in their last stronghold in Iraq.

As the fighting and the complexity of the fight escalates in Mosul, we are cognisant of the threats also posed by the links between Daesh in Syria and Iraq and South-East Asia.

This government is working closely with our partners in the region to address this threat, including across Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Ladies and gentlemen, a secure and stable Indo-Pacific underpins our economic security.

In this region we have threats that we face from a number of [indistinct]. Our stability is threatened by North Korea's continuing reckless and destabilising behaviour.

The ongoing pursuit of its nuclear and ballistic missile programs is a clear breach of UN Security Council resolutions and further threatens regional peace and stability.

We have consistently called upon North Korea to cease its provocative behaviour, to abandon its nuclear and missile programs and to engage constructively with the international community.

We do believe that with calls such as our own, China also has a central role to play in contributing to the peace and stability of North Asia and the Indo-Pacific, including with North Korea.

It is important for regional stability that we all play our part. We—Australia—are committed to working with our international partners and allies to ensure a stable region and a rules based global order.

With this in mind, it is important that we are able to work effectively with partners and ensure we have operational effectiveness.

To today's topic though, if I may: 'Women, Peace and Security' and in this case, I wanted to speak for a few moments about the National Action Plan.

For the Australian Defence Force, addressing equality is about improving both our capability and our operational effectiveness.

The landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, acknowledged that men and women experience conflict differently.

It addressed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, humanitarian response and peace building and urged all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all peace and security efforts.

Since that resolution of 2000, seven additional UN Security Council resolutions have been adopted providing an international framework that underpins the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Women, Peace and Security is a community, a state and a global issue. Its implementation is a whole-of-government priority, and a whole of society undertaking.

Australia is a strong and consistent advocate for the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda. In September of last year, I moderated the session on

Women, Peace and Security at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in London.

I spoke there about the importance of increasing the number of women leading and serving in peace and security operations and supporting inclusive peace processes.

We know that armed conflicts, and disasters for that matter, contain elements that are inherently gendered.

They affect men and women, boys and girls, in different ways.

Differences include the vulnerability to violence and deprivation, and this vulnerability impacts different sectors of the community in different ways. There are gendered differences in risks and threats; and in capabilities, coping strategies and opportunities.

So, effective crisis responses will reflect a sound understanding of these differences in policy, plans, training and operations.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda encourages action against four pillars, widely known as the four Ps:

1. Participation of women at all levels of decision-making, in peace operations and peace processes;
2. Protection of women, including from sexual and gender based violence;
3. Prevention of violence against women through the promotion of rights, accountability and law enforcement; and
4. 'Perspective': incorporating a gender perspective into policy, planning and operations.

On International Women's Day in 2012, Australia adopted a six-year National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The plan demonstrates Australia's commitment to implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It provides a clear whole-of-government framework and a joined-up approach to strategies and actions.

Defence itself has seventeen areas of responsibility under the plan. Our actions inform everything that we do—from our international engagements, to exercises, to developing the operational capabilities of the ADF.

## **Delivering Operational Effectiveness**

As I said a moment ago, the Women, Peace and Security agenda is not just about equality. It is about improving our capability and operational effectiveness.

Recent operational experience in Afghanistan, in disaster response operations and on exercises demonstrates the importance of integrating gender perspectives as part of military operations. Through the test-bed of exercises such as the very large Talisman Sabre we have shown that female military personnel may be in a better position than men to engage with local women to identify potential threats, to conduct searches, to identify community needs.

Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, recently commented that in Afghanistan female soldiers were deployed deliberately to balance the all-male infantry companies. There was much more engagement with women in the villages. He observed that there would be no engagement or the most cursory engagement otherwise.

In 2015, the ADF appointed a Senior Gender Adviser to the new Security Force Assistance mission in Afghanistan.

The role was established to ensure the safe and meaningful participation of Afghan women within the Afghan National Defence Security Forces, placing women at the frontline of addressing Afghanistan's security challenges.

Colonel Amanda Fielding was the first of four ADF female officers to take on this role.

During her tenure, Colonel Fielding established the inaugural Afghan Women in Security Advisory Committee; a strategic, politically engaged committee that is ensuring the longevity of current efforts for women's integration and empowerment within the security architecture.

Colonel Fielding is currently responsible for integrating Women, Peace and Security into ADF operational planning and I know that she'll be speaking here on the subject of 'A practitioner's perspective from the field'.

This is a subject in which she is eminently well qualified.

In November last year, Major Betina Stelzer was deployed as the first military gender adviser to the UN mission in South Sudan.

Major Stelzer is assisting local women to reduce the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence by training local forces on the effect of violence and inequality on the peace and stability of the country.

The UN global study on the implementation of Resolution 1325 highlighted that “the principles of gender equality in humanitarian assistance are not limited to conflict-affected settings but equally relevant to natural disasters”.

In February last year, Tropical Cyclone Winston hit Fiji. It devastated many parts of the country, resulting in forty-four deaths and affected some 350,000 people.

Australia was quick to participate in the assistance to Fiji in the immediate aftermath and the ADF deployment for Operation FIJI ASSIST.

This was the first ADF operation to fully incorporate a ‘gender perspective’ into operational planning and conduct.

Operation FIJI ASSIST included two gender advisers in its personnel. Lieutenant Commander Jacquie Swinton embarked on HMAS *Canberra* and provided advice to the Commander of the Joint Task Force to implement a gender perspective in all operational activities.

At the same time, Major Jo Richards was on the ground in Suva representing Defence at the UN Protection and Gender Based Violence meetings.

Major Richards identified and engaged local women’s networks to coordinate and establish appropriate relief activities. Major Richards was part of the team that delivered 200 dignity packs, sourced from the UN Population Fund, to the women of Taveuni Island; one of the worst affected islands.

Based on the valuable and critical contribution these gender advisers made during FIJI ASSIST, the Chief of Joint Operations, Rear Admiral David Johnston, within the Department of Defence has directed that at least one gender adviser *must* be deployed on all future humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

To support that directive, Defence is developing Australia’s first Gender Advisor Training Course that will be piloted this year.

In the context of the opportunity to speak here today, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to be able to announce the establishment of the *Minister for Defence Visiting Fellowship in Women, Peace and Security*. The fellowship will be established at the University of New South Wales in the Australian Defence Force Academy. The Rector at ADFA has agreed to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the collaboration between the university and Defence by creating this fellowship, and I thank him very much for this honour.

I have consulted with the Secretary of the Department of Defence, and the Chief of the Defence Force, and together with the Rector we will advertise

the application and selection processes in due course. The fellowship will be open to Defence civilian and military candidates, regardless of gender.

The purpose of the visiting fellowship is to transfer practical and research knowledge of Women Peace and Security experiences between Defence and the Academy.

This is a pragmatic whole of enterprise approach. I intend for this fellowship to fast-track the incorporation of Defence's learning from various deployments into the Academy's civil and military education and training programs; and to transfer the latest research findings of the university's Faculty back into Defence for refinements into deployable capability. The objective is to make the whole of Defence approach to Women, Peace and Security a 'business as usual' capability enhancer.

Let's be clear: a 'Women, Peace and Security' perspective built into our operations **is** a capability enhancer.

This is more than another important milestone; it is tangible progress.

Building on these experiences, in mid-2017, Australia will launch its first comprehensive study into the contributions of Australian uniformed and civilian female personnel in peace and security operations.

This study is being undertaken by the University of Queensland, in partnership with the Australian Civil-Military Centre. Drawing on the operational experiences of 350 women and men from the ADF, Australian Federal Police, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Defence Public Service from 1988 to 2014, the study will provide insights into how women contribute to the effectiveness of these operations and how we can better support their participation in future missions. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of that study as well.

## **Building Regional Capacity**

Ladies and gentlemen, Australia has taken a lead role globally in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. We have had the opportunity to share the lessons we have learned and solutions we have adopted with our regional partners, as well as being able to learn from their experiences.

In February of last year, the Prime Minister and I launched the Defence White Paper—setting out a comprehensive, long-term plan for the security of the Australian people.

For the first time, we have prioritised and funded international engagement as a core Defence function.

As Defence increases its investment in international engagement over the coming years, prioritising the Women, Peace and Security agenda presents a real opportunity to deepen cooperation and build stronger relationships with our international partners. We are doing this now through the Defence Cooperation Program.

In December last year, Australia hosted a delegation of Indonesian TNI military officers, seven out of eight of them women, for a seminar and workshop on women, peace and security. These Australian and Indonesian soldiers worked side-by-side, sharing their experiences and their unique perspectives about military deployments.

The outcomes of this seminar have contributed to planning for the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus Expert Working Group on Peacekeeping.

As co-chair of this Expert Working Group, with Indonesia, Australia will use its leadership to ensure that Women, Peace and Security is firmly on the agenda for ADMM+.

We are also working with PNG through our long-running Defence Cooperation Program to increase female participation.

Some initiatives include:

- Embedding an ADF Lieutenant Colonel into the PNG Defence Force personnel branch to help develop policies to recruit and retain women; and
- Upgrading the Landing Craft Heavy vessel *Lakekam* to include an accommodation module enabling increased participation of women on maritime patrols.

And in 2017, we now have the first female PNG Defence Force member at the Royal Military College, here in Canberra.

We must also be careful that we do not artificially create barriers to women's participation.

Let me give you an example:

The Turnbull Government is very proud of our shipbuilding program and an important element of that program is the replacement patrol boats for twelve of our Pacific Island neighbours.

The Guardian-class patrol boats are part of the Pacific Maritime Security Program, building both capacity and capability across the Pacific.



During consultations with our Pacific Island neighbour countries on the design of the new patrol boats, though, we learnt it was difficult for some countries to send women to sea because of the undifferentiated accommodation and ablutions layout.

This layout makes it unnecessarily difficult to integrate women into the navies and police maritime wings of some national cultures.

By identifying this in the planning phase, Defence included the requirement for separate accommodation for men and women in the design of these Guardian-class Patrol Boats.

This relatively simple redesign removed a barrier to women's participation and will help Pacific Islands nations harness the capability of the full workforce available to them.

I am pleased that we have national security policymakers and practitioners from Palau, from Tuvalu, from Solomon Islands, from Kiribati, from Fiji, from Tonga, from PNG and from Timor-Leste with us here today. I welcome the opportunity for all participants to share experiences and discuss how we can work with you to strengthen the participation of women in all aspects of your national security capabilities.

## **Defence: Gender Equality and Cultural Change**

I'll turn briefly to the culture that defines us. While the Women, Peace and Security agenda focuses on Australia's contribution to overseas missions, gender equality at home is of equal importance.

Fifty-one percent of our nation's human capital is women.

If we are not fully able to access that 51 per cent of the population, we are not recruiting the best people for the Australian Defence Force or the Australian Public Service.

In March 2012, Defence set out a unified statement of cultural intent and supporting strategy in *Pathway to Change*.

It was clear at the time, from multiple studies and reviews and experiences, that Defence did not consistently meet the high standards expected of it and we needed a clear framework to accelerate cultural change.

*Pathway to Change* acknowledged that noticeable gaps remained in the representation of women across senior leadership positions, and this was not supportive of the generation and sustainment of a representative and inclusive organisation.

*Pathway to Change* acknowledged that gender inequality is an issue that can impede organisational capability and resilience by not maximising the potential of female ADF members and public servants, and the potential of half of the Australian labour force.

I strongly believe that Defence's continued capability and success relies in large part on addressing these issues, including cultivating a diverse workforce with an inclusive culture. Diversity brings tangible benefits to organisations, such as attracting the best talent from the entire recruiting pool, increasing our human capital, increasing resilience, more accurately reflecting the community we defend, and bringing a diversity of thought to decision-making and practice.

I am very proud to say, as I did at the beginning of my remarks, that women in Defence are making extraordinary contributions across the range of military planning, policy, and operations in support of our national interest.

The number of women at the Australian Defence Force Academy and overall in the ADF has increased.

Australian servicewomen now comprise 16.1 per cent of the permanent full-time ADF.

At the moment, 266 women are serving overseas on ADF operations, representing about 14 per cent of the total deployed force.

We have 82 women in senior officer positions—colonel equivalent and above—compared to 48 in February 2012.

Progress has been made but there is more to do.

As of 1 January 2016, Defence began direct recruitment into all combat employment categories.

With the removal of all gender restrictions from combat roles, women can pursue their career in the ADF based solely on considerations of their preference, intellect, and their physical capacity.

That's not just another milestone; it's a foundational reform.

For the benefit of our nation—to ensure that we have an ADF that is broadly representative of our society—it is crucial that we attract, retain and nurture our talent; all of the talent available to us.

The result is that we are growing the future force with the broader perspectives and leadership skills that both men and women bring to our national challenges.

Our Defence civilians are also an important repository of new and experienced women.

Women make over 41 per cent of Defence public servants, and more than 40 per cent of the Defence Graduate Program is now female.

At the senior leadership level we are also seeing real progress, and I acknowledge the efforts of the senior leadership of Defence—the Secretary, the CDF, in large part, in relation to these achievements.

In the most recent recruitment rounds for the Senior Executive Service, 43 per cent of appointments were women, compared to around 30 per cent in the existing senior executive cohort.

All of these women are making outstanding contributions to our country and are outstanding role models for other women.

We are also in the process of increasing the number of women on internal senior committees and, in alignment with Coalition Government's stated policy, as members of Australian Government boards.

So the culture is changing. The challenge is to make our success sustainable, so that we can continue to build on the foundations that we have laid and continue to see female participation increase in our ADF, in the APS, and in senior leadership positions.

## **Conclusion**

On 8 March, on International Women's Day this year, the Prime Minister and I spent the morning at the Australian Defence Force Academy to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of women in the Australian Defence Force and at the Academy.

As the Prime Minister said during his speech that morning, the opportunities that have opened up for women in the ADF across the recent years are extraordinary.

Those young men and women, currently at ADFA, will one day lead our ADF. From the outset of their careers they will have a different perspective of women's roles in national security from the generations that have preceded them.

That is why it is essential that we are consistent and persistent advocates for gender equality and change, both at home and abroad.

Gender equality is a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty, which in turn will underpin regional stability and prosperity.

There is an appetite for engagement on gender initiatives and many countries we work with are doing excellent work in this area.

By building capacity and understanding gender considerations in each country with which we partner, we are better prepared to respond during a crisis, disaster or operation.

But we can't expect to succeed or achieve our best, as a nation, without greater participation of women—at all levels and in all roles.

It's been very interesting, preparing my remarks for today's presentation. In fact I've had the opportunity to reflect on twenty years of broad involvement in the parliamentary aspects of the national security debate and policy development, and to reflect on the changed world in that time. Rory Medcalf in his opening remarks referred to the purpose of this conference in enhancing the role and work of women in national security. It's an excellent aim for the conference. The women I work with across the world—female Defence ministers in a number of nations—the women I work with in the ADF—we will all work to lead the way, with organisations such as the College and to make sure that the outcomes are as positive as they can be.

Thank you very much.

The speech can be viewed on ANU TV—  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVstlRUtgVM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVstlRUtgVM)

**Security in a Disrupted World—  
Speech by Leader of the Opposition in  
the Senate the Hon. Penny Wong,<sup>1</sup>  
Women and National Security  
Conference Dinner,  
Canberra, 4 April 2017**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this inaugural Women and National Security Conference. It's a pleasure to be here, but it is even more gratifying to see a conference of this calibre focused on such an important issue.

I have always believed that our institutions should seek to reflect the diversity of our community. So you might well be expecting me to bemoan the fact that there are still too few women inhabiting the secret cloisters of the national intelligence and security community, particularly in senior positions. And you might expect me to issue yet another appeal for a concerted attack on the glass ceiling.

You might also be expecting me to offer you all further encouragement in tackling the somewhat clubby character of the intelligence and security community which remains predominantly a male preserve.

There is no doubt that we need more women in the security business; equally, we need more women in leadership positions. So, more strength to your arm, collectively and individually, in your pursuit of equality.

But what I want to focus on tonight is why women are so important in enabling our national intelligence and security community to meet the challenges that uncertain times bring with them.

In other words, I want to consider equality with a focus on the 'why' rather than the 'what'.

At one level, the rationale for more equal representation in the national security space is similar to that offered in the political and management spheres. As the 2014 UN Women's Australian National Committee's Conference on Gender Equality in Business noted, a more inclusive leadership cohort can improve performance, bringing a diversity of experience and perspective to both problem identification and decision-

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<sup>1</sup> Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Labor Senator for South Australia.

making. More generally, there is a growing recognition of the relationship between gender equality and community well-being.

Professor Valerie Hudson, who is here with us tonight, and whom you heard earlier today, is perhaps the leading authority on this topic.

As Professor Hudson wrote in her 2012 book *Sex and World Peace*,

the very best predictor of a state's peacefulness is not its level of wealth, its level of democracy, or its ethno-religious identity ... it is how well its women are treated.

There is intrinsic merit in greater engagement by women in our national security institutions, and a stronger focus on women when identifying the collective problems we face and the solutions we help generate. My emphasis tonight, however, is that the times and circumstances we face make that cultural shift, in both personnel and perspective, even more vital.

I've previously made the point that we live in more than interesting times. Indeed, I've suggested that the circumstances we confront go beyond uncertainty, or even discontinuity, and that this period is best characterised as one of disruption.

Whatever nomenclature one uses, I suspect we might find broad agreement around this central proposition—that we are unlikely to successfully deal with today's problems by simply replaying our past responses.

There is a need for a careful reconsideration of what security is fundamentally about and whether our national responses to security issues are the most appropriate for uncertain times.

The paradigm change that may be necessary in our approach to security questions is only possible if the security community itself undergoes rejuvenation and transformation. One of the best ways to generate fresh thinking and innovation in any business is to ensure that gender equality and ethnic diversity are put to work to drive change.

Much of our public discourse and visible signs of our national security efforts focus on 'hard' responses such as CCTVs, bollards, static barriers and armed guards. There is no doubt that these responses are necessary. The question is whether they are sufficient. As important as these may be, are we thinking sufficiently broadly both about security risks and the way in which we respond to them? Should we elevate our discussion of the values we seek to preserve as an open and inclusive society—equality, cooperation, tolerance and compassion?

Do we need to remind ourselves more persistently that we will not succeed or become safer by closing ourselves off from each other or from the world?

Security challenges are best met working with others rather than turning inwards. And history reminds us of the risks that inward-looking, disengaged societies pose—risks of misunderstanding, tension and conflict.

Senator Hanson's recent foray is a reminder of the risks we face. Her call to ban Muslim immigration was rightly condemned by the Prime Minister as doing exactly what the terrorists want.

Now I don't claim expertise on these issues. You are all in a much better position than I to evaluate the various security measures that governments have mandated. And you are no doubt in a better position than I to assess whether the language we use to talk about security issues deals with them accurately and intelligently. I shall return to that issue in a moment.

What I can say, however, is that the concept of security for most Australians would also encompass economic and financial security, affordable health care, job and income security, quality childcare and the promise of a dignified retirement.

In other words, 'security' has a much broader connotation than the more threat-based protective and response concepts on which a lot of public policy concentrates. This in no way diminishes the work that you all do.

But what it might suggest is that a broader understanding of what security means for the general populace and where it impacts on people's lives may in turn expand the range of tools at your disposal and the effectiveness of the programs you design and implement.

The philologists among you would already know that the words 'security' and 'sinecure' derive from the same linguistic origin—*sine* meaning 'without' and *cura* meaning 'care'. Far from having connotations of sanction and punishment, the word originally brought with it the sense of being without care or worry. Disrupted times, however, bring with them a raft of cares and worries. The French economist Thomas Piketty has identified economic inequality as a principal cause of the political instability currently infecting Europe—the Brexit vote and its currently unforeseeable consequences, the rise of radical parties on both the left and the right, the resurgence of nationalism in countries like Austria, Hungary and Poland, and the politics of exclusion on religious and racial grounds.

Into this mix come historical grievances driven in more or less equal parts by colonialism on the one hand and its collapse on the other. The picture becomes even more bleak when we see political leaders who reject the operating rules by which the international system has worked for the past seventy years, the emergence of new international players that want to impose new operating rules, and all of this rendered even more toxic by the emergence of nihilist ideologies that advocate death rather than tolerance.

Many of you would be familiar with the impact that discontinuity can have on complex systems. But complex systems generally have sufficient resilience to manage discontinuities, to bounce back relatively quickly. Indeed, many of the security features inbuilt into complex systems are specifically designed to deal with discontinuity.

But as I have said, the uncertain times into which we are currently heading are less characterised by discontinuity than they are by a much more destructive phenomenon—disruption. As you know, disruptive changes can generate existential threats. Disruptive technologies have allowed Amazon and Kindle to challenge the very existence of the book trade as it was. Disruptive business models like Uber and Airbnb threaten current structures and practices in the taxi and hotel industries, with real implications for working conditions and income streams for those who work in those industries.

Disruption is at the centre of the malaise that we see globally. Political and economic disruption are the main drivers of strategic disruption. It is that form of disruption that is undermining the confidence of people everywhere, generating care, worry and, more alarmingly, fear. And fear is particularly dangerous because it prompts irrational and dangerous actions.

It is a curious fact, however, that disruption can generate a critically important reaction, and that is innovation.

More than a decade ago, the American political theorist Philip Bobbitt published *The Shield of Achilles*. Bobbitt deals with that most disruptive of all human activities—war. His thesis is essentially that war generates substantial constitutional change as people recoil from the destruction and horror that war inevitably brings.

His analysis of the relationship between war and constitutionality may be contested. But what is pretty incontestable is that disruption is best addressed by innovation. And that is the challenge, I think, that faces all of us in the security domain.

You would all be aware of the call by many international commentators for governments to deal with the ‘root causes’ of the various forms of politically motivated violence presently affecting the global community. Of course, few of those commentators actually identify what those ‘root causes’ are.

But what we do know is that the so-called ‘root causes’ lie at the intersection of the economic, social, cultural, ethnic and ideological forces that lend movement and colour to human collective activity. And the agent who acts at the intersection of these forces is always an individual person.



In a very thoughtful opinion piece published in the UK *Guardian* a couple of weeks ago, the novelist and former security specialist Nicholas Searle cautioned against rhetoric as a component of security policy.

Sweeping terms like ‘radical Islamic terrorism’ cannot alone explain the breakdown of law and order across the Middle East, nor radical groups that have spread their tentacles into Europe, North America, South and South-East Asia, Africa and even Australia. It is interesting to note that the incoming National Security Advisor in the Trump administration, General H. R. McMaster, has also counselled against the use of terms such as ‘Islamic terrorism’.

Politically motivated violence is a form of criminal activity. It needs to be dealt with as such. And as an international phenomenon, politically motivated violence will best be contained and eliminated when nations, some of which are Muslim, work collaboratively to address the broad security needs of the communities in which the perpetrators live.

That kind of collaboration depends for its success on the ability to address the human security needs that condition fear and violence. That kind of collaboration will also serve to identify, detain and prosecute those who undertake politically motivated violence.

As Opposition Leader Bill Shorten said recently,

we have a solemn responsibility to counter that argument of the extremists, of the extreme right and the extremists in the Middle East who say that being a Muslim citizen of this democracy is incompatible with their faith. We need to counter that argument, not amplify it. It is our job, our duty, to foster a more inclusive, a more respectful, a more egalitarian Australia. We do not just tolerate diversity; we embrace diversity. We do not just acknowledge multiculturalism; we embrace multiculturalism—as a bipartisan achievement and as a shared priority.

Recognition that language has consequences was at the heart of the success of the Northern Ireland peace deal.

Nicholas Searle commented on the highly deliberate and painstaking efforts that led eventually to the 1998 Good Friday agreement that ended political violence in Northern Ireland.

Careful timing, nuanced language and emotional gearing on all sides enabled the moment to be won.

This is exactly what should inspire all of you in your professional efforts in the national security domain.

Rejuvenation and regeneration should always be front of mind for those who lead high-performing organisations. Subtlety and nuance in both policy and

operations are most likely to be effective when organisations are truly representative of the communities they serve.

Open communities have the strength of inclusion. Closed communities have the spectre of fear.

Conferences such as this, and people like all of you in this audience tonight, provide the critical wherewithal that keeps our national security community ahead of the serious problems it is designed to address.

**Speech by Chief of the Defence Force  
Air Chief Marshal M. D. Binskin, AC,  
Women and National Security  
Conference,  
Canberra, 5 April 2017**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, it is pleasing to see so many participants here today. You represent an impressive array of agencies and nations and I extend a warm welcome to you all—particularly those of you who have travelled a great distance to join us here today.

Like many nations, Australia has a long, proud military history stretching over more than a century and women have always formed an integral part of that story. During World War One, around 3,000 civilian nurses volunteered for active service, joining the 2,000 enlisted members of the Australian Army Nursing Service. They worked in clearing stations close to the front line in Britain, France and Belgium as well as hospitals in the Middle East and India, and on allied hospital ships and trains.

Sadly, twenty-five Australian women died in service during World War One. Many more were awarded military honours, including eight women who received the Military Medal for Bravery for their actions during the conflict. Our Diggers are renowned for their courage and ingenuity and our nurses were no different. During heavy artillery shelling in France, Sister Alicia Kelly shielded her patients' heads with enamel bedpans and basins. While in Antwerp, Sister Clair Trestrail and her colleagues carried 130 badly wounded patients, one by one to the cave-like cellar hidden beneath the basement of a concert hall in the city; flagging down a British ammunition bus the following morning to escape with their patients to safety.

In World War Two, additional opportunities opened to women who wanted to contribute to the nation's war effort. The Australian Womens' Army Service; the Womens' Royal Australian Navy Service, and the Womens' Auxillary Australian Air Force all formed in 1941. Accepting women into non-medical military roles increased the number of men available for front-line duties. Women continued to serve, predominantly in medical or support roles, during the Vietnam War and the three womens' service organisations remained separate entities until the early 1980s when each was subsumed into the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force.

When I look at the Australian Defence Force today, I am encouraged by how far we have come, even over the course of my own military career. In 2017, no job is off limits to women. We have female personnel performing critical roles on all our current operations and there are an increasing number of female commanders leading at all levels across the organisation. I was privileged to meet one of them in Proserpine on Monday—LtCol Jennifer Harris, Commanding Officer of No. 3 Combat Engineering Regiment, who is doing a magnificent job leading the main ADF engineering response to Cyclone Debbie in northern Queensland.

I know the Defence Minister spoke at length yesterday about Australia's commitment to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and our recognition that men and women experience conflict and disaster quite differently. This morning, I would like to focus on two contemporary tactical level experiences where applying the principles outlined in UNSCR 1325 has enhanced our operational effectiveness.

The first is from combat operations in Afghanistan; and the second, from Fiji last year, when helping the nation respond to the devastation caused by Cyclone Winston.

At the height of combat operations in Afghanistan in 2009, the International Security Assistance Force began to recognise the important role and influence of women in the Afghan social hierarchy. The women, who gathered regularly at the community well to collect water and gather firewood, conveyed and received the local news which also made them attentive observers and, in a military sense, a useful source of intelligence. However, cultural practices meant that male dominated security forces were prohibited from engaging with the female population and this source of information remained inaccessible.

In an effort to address the information gap and bridge the cultural divide, ISAF [International Security Assistance Force], including Australian personnel based in Uruzgan province, formed Female Engagement Teams. Based largely around education and health care, the Female Engagement Teams were able to interact with the Afghan women in a manner not previously available to the security forces.

Female engagement was not without its challenges, but the benefits were profound.

Earning their trust gave the Afghan women confidence to openly discuss concerns for their families, community issues and other problems arising in their villages. In return, the Australian women were able to gain valuable insights on local personalities and economics, to understand community grievances and gather critical intelligence on enemy activity.

As an aside, the Pashtun men came to see female military personnel as a type of 'hybrid-gender'. Women in the security forces were afforded the same respect shown to their male colleagues, yet they were still permitted to interact with local women and afforded access to the family home.

So what did experience in Afghanistan teach us?

Women in the Afghan communities where we operated consistently demonstrated their ability to read the atmospherics and provide a valuable source of information that enhanced our overall situational awareness. However, the women who formed our Female Engagement Teams performed this task in addition to their primary duties. There was no dedicated role. Female engagement was more opportunistic than deliberate and activities were conducted around a unit's operational tempo and tasking. Had we seen female engagement as a necessary part of our operations and included it in our planning up front, we may well have seen greater benefit sooner.

In fact, even more basic than that—if our ADF units had more women in them, we would never have needed to form dedicated Female Engagement Teams.

The other major lesson arising from our experience in Afghanistan was the need for professional training to apply the four principles outlined in the Women Peace and Security policy. That is to encourage:

- Participation of women at all levels
- Protection of women
- Prevention of violence against women, and
- Incorporating a gender perspective in policy and planning.

Fast forward seven years to February 2016 when Tropical Cyclone Winston struck Fiji. At that time, organisationally, we felt we were better prepared to incorporate the gender perspective into a major ADF operation. For the first time, two gender advisers were assigned to the taskforce deployed on Operation FIJI ASSIST—Lieutenant Commander Jacqui Swinton embarked in HMAS *Canberra* and Major Jo Richards who was based in Suva.

As with most Humanitarian and Disaster Relief operations, FIJI ASSIST was stood up rapidly. The initial notice to move was issued around 8am Sunday and the first deployment of ADF personnel was on the ground in Fiji by 6pm Monday.

Like the evolving situation on the ground, our operational planning matured as FIJI ASSIST progressed and we worked closely with the Fijian authorities

to access real-time information in order to best respond to the population's needs. Joint Task Force Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Scott Hill recognised that as a very proud people, the Fijian men appeared reluctant to ask for assistance—in fact, they are probably no different to men in communities all around the world. As a consequence, it was difficult to initially determine how best to help, or where to direct our resources.

It became apparent that one of best sources of information on where help was most needed would come from the women who were, in military terms, the family 'logisticians'. Lieutenant Colonel Hill did two things. First, he looked to the women within his team; assessing their individual skills and the expertise each woman brought to the mission to determine how to capitalise on their talent.

Second, the taskforce actively sought out key women in high profile positions within the local population to establish a rapport and open a line of communication. This engagement ran across the full spectrum of the population—from the village matriarchs to those working in the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the Fijian Police, with Major Richards representing the ADF at United Nations' coordination meetings.

The engagement strategy also extended beyond the ADF taskforce to non-government organisations and other Australian government agencies, all the way to the Australian High Commissioner in Fiji, Margaret Twomey. By seeking out the female population, the taskforce, working with the local authorities, gained access to tangible, accurate information about the communities' needs. That insight proved to be a turning point for the mission. Where the taskforce had previously been working on assumptions early in the mission, this maturing local engagement allowed the taskforce to plan and make decisions based on the situation on the ground. Let me give you an example. The local women influenced the decision for ADF engineers and trades people to help local authorities rebuild a number of schools.

Remember TC Winston was a Category 5 cyclone—the strongest known to have crossed land anywhere in the southern hemisphere. Forty-four people were killed and up to 350,000 people were directly affected including around 55,000 people who lost their homes. In that context, rebuilding the local school may not seem like a high priority, but the Fijian women highlighted the importance of getting the kids back to school.

On an emotional level it was, in part, about instilling a sense of normality after such a distressing event but there was also a significant practical element to their request. Getting the children back to school released the women from their caring responsibilities during the day and allowed them to focus their time and attention to assist with the recovery.

Engaging women in all aspects of the recovery process was critical to the operational success of our close partnership with the Fijian authorities. Equally important though was ensuring the women remain engaged once the taskforce departed. Since our engagement in Fiji, the Australian High Commissioner and the Department of Foreign Affairs have put strategies in place to ensure Australia sustains more active engagement with the Fijian women, providing support through education and church programs—while the Fijian–Australian military-to-military links that flourished during the operation have also proven enduring, and last month the ADF delivered ten Bushmasters to the Republic of Fiji Military Forces observers deployed on the UN peacekeeping missions in the Golan Heights and Syria. That agreement was underpinned by the friendship and goodwill established through our cooperation during Operation FIJI ASSIST.

Perhaps the greatest lesson arising from FIJI ASSIST is for future taskforce commanders to actively seek to establish a specific line of communication with the local female population as a priority. The first week of our operations in Fiji involved gaining the best on-ground situational awareness. We could have expedited this if we had made a more concerted effort to engage the local women from the outset.

The principles demonstrated through our interaction with the female population in Fiji are indicative of the way diversity improves our capability. Women in the communities where we operate consistently demonstrate their ability to read the situation and provide a valuable source of information and enhanced situational awareness. The same is true of the ADF.

I am fully aware of comments that arise from time-to-time about this being '*a great time to be a woman in the ADF*'. I know some of you here today are convinced about our drive toward increasing gender diversity. It is true that many women in our organisation; and indeed in the audience today, have succeeded despite the previous 'male bias' that existed in our organisation, but the fact is—diversity improves capability.

A diverse workforce is all about capability. The greater our diversity the greater the range of ideas and insights to challenge the accepted norm, assess risks and develop creative solutions. I have seen this on operations, and I see it every day in my own office.

Right now, 57 per cent of my own staff are women. This is no mistake. They are a diverse and extremely capable group of non-commissioned and commissioned military personnel, as well as a number of APS staff. Collectively, they represent a good cross-section of the Defence organisation in both a professional and a personal sense. From Corporal to Colonel and equivalent, each person brings their own view of the organisation to the table. They are the first people to tell me how it really is, and their candour on behalf of their peers combined with the mix of unique insights helps me

see issues from a different point of view—and in my experience, our differences make us a stronger team.

You have all seen the stats I'm sure. Women make up 51 per cent of the Australian population and more than 40 per cent of the Defence Public Service workforce, yet female members account for just 16.1 per cent of the ADF population. We are often criticised for the relatively small number of women in senior leadership positions in the ADF. That criticism ignores the fact that it takes time to grow a senior officer. I'm confident female representation will increase proportionately over time but, in my view, we cannot claim we're recruiting the best if we're only choosing from half the population.

While there are more than 500 additional women serving in the ADF today, than there were, more than a year ago; if we want to attract and retain the top talent, we have to change the way we do business. We need to continue to drive out unacceptable behaviour. We must empower people to adopt flexible working arrangements where appropriate and we must consider their family needs, and importantly, we need to ensure we have a common understanding about what a diverse, inclusive and capable ADF looks like—and how to achieve it.

As an example, since 2012, my Gender Equality Advisory Board has helped shape and drive the strategic direction of our gender equality priorities in the context of our broader cultural reform program. While this Board includes Defence members, its real benefit to me are the number of external members who bring experience and expertise from other large public and private sector organisations. Since it was established, the board has provided advice on a range of policies and processes to better support women through a long and rewarding military career. A significant component includes expanding our approach to flexible work arrangements for all Defence personnel.

Working with the board, we have also taken a detailed look at the way women experience the recruitment process, leading to significant changes in the way we enlist and appoint female candidates. In reality, it has helped us assess how we recruit both male and female candidates. It is an important step in reaching the recruiting targets we have set for ourselves. Navy and Air Force are working toward a 25 per cent female workforce 2023, while Army has set its sights on achieving 15 per cent female participation within the next six years.

Unfortunately, the notion of 'targets' is not well understood. It is often misinterpreted as counter to merit based recruitment or promotion. This is wrong. Selection should always be based on the best person for the job but the idea of increasing diversity without introducing a target is like saying you want to be an Olympic champion without setting some goals along the way—



it's an admirable ambition but you will never achieve it if you don't have a plan with strategic milestones to accomplish along the way. In the same way, we will never reach our goal to increase the number of women in the ADF if we don't set ourselves realistic targets and put programs in place to help us achieve them.

As part of our efforts to increase the number of women in the ADF, each of the services has implemented a range of mentoring and leadership programs designed to develop confidence and professional skills in a female workforce. Navy is focused on mentoring women in the fields of engineering and project management, Army is working to develop future leaders and Air Force has established a network to support women working in non-traditional roles. Diversifying our demographic base and increasing the number of women in the ADF correlates directly to what we are trying to achieve in support of UNSCR 1325. Our goal must be to reach the point where applying the principles outlined in the Women Peace and Security agenda is no longer considered special. It needs to be accepted, not as an adjunct duty, but as a primary element of all our operations.

Based on our valuable experiences in Afghanistan and the critical contribution applying the gender perspective provided during FIJI ASSIST, the Chief of Joint Operations has directed that at least one gender adviser must be deployed on all future humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations and we are taking steps to ensure the Women Peace and Security principles are incorporated into all future operations.

In order to achieve this and, in turn enhance our overall capability, we are currently developing Australia's first Gender Advisor training course and we will contribute to a new, comprehensive study on the contribution of Australian women to peace and security operations. These are just a number of the many initiatives in train at the moment. There are many more across the ADF. Importantly, they will all play a part in us continuing to evolve as a capable and modern fighting force.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Australian Defence Force has come a long way since the days of World War One, when women were restricted to medical roles.

While we have done much, there is still work ahead of us to ensure the gender perspective is embedded in everything we do—only then will be able to fully maximise our operational effectiveness.

*Air Chief Marshal Binskin was Chief of the Air Force from 2008-2011, Vice Chief of the Defence Force from 2011-14 and was appointed as Chief of the Defence Force on 30 June 2014.*



## Increasing the Number of Senior Women in the Australian Army

Lee Hayward

Increasing the number of women involved in the peace and security process is fundamental to ensuring successful outcomes, a conclusion that has been captured in multiple national and international frameworks. This includes women at all ranks of the military, but particularly at the more senior leadership and decision-making levels. The career progression of Officers in the Australian Army is heavily reliant on the merit system. Unfortunately, systemic issues with this process result in a subjectivity that undermines efforts to increase the number of women in Army senior leadership. The introduction of bias interrupters throughout the employment pipeline will remove some of the barriers to the progression of women into senior positions, resulting in a more effective force that is better able to achieve military objectives.

The Australian Army's recent operational experience "has coincided with a growing awareness and understanding of women's ... valuable contribution to peace and security efforts ... and the benefits associated with increasing the number of deployed women".<sup>1</sup> This sentiment has been formalised in multiple international and national frameworks, including United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1325 (2000), UNSCR 2122 (2013), UNSCR 2242 (2015), the 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action' (1995), and the supporting country-specific National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS).<sup>2</sup> These frameworks provide recommendations and governance for increasing female participation in decision-making and leadership levels in peace and security organisations and processes, many of which have been implemented by the Australian Defence Force. Despite this, the number of females in the Australian Army has hovered around 12 per cent for the past sixteen years, with very few women at the senior decision-making levels.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. Studdert and S. Shtier (eds), 'Women, Peace and Security: Reflections from Australian Male Leaders', *Civil-Military Occasional Papers*, 4/2015 (Canberra: Australian Civil-Military Centre, 2015), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Report of the Australian Government Delegation to the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015, <[www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/CSW59\\_government\\_report.pdf](http://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/CSW59_government_report.pdf)> [Accessed 18 September 2017].

<sup>3</sup> Department of Defence, *Annual Reports*, 1999-2000, 2005-2006, 2009-10, 2016-17; Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15*; Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2013-14*; Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2015-16*, <[www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/](http://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/)> [Accessed 20 February 2017]. The data does not provide a consistent break-down by gender, nor are the available statistics consistently presented. Additionally, women were unable to serve in combat roles until 2013: while this did not prevent females from being promoted, it is certainly a factor which must be considered when

This commentary will provide an overview of the importance of women in military leadership. It will then discuss certain issues inherent in the Australian Army Officer career stream, specifically the merit system, and how these undermine efforts to achieve the gender equality goals captured in the frameworks.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it will offer some options, in the form of bias interrupters, for improving the merit system in order to mitigate cultural barriers to women in leadership.

## The Importance of Women in Military Leadership

The 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action' calls for an increase in the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels, and the full involvement of women in all efforts to prevent and resolve conflict.<sup>5</sup> The Australian Defence Force (ADF) strategy for implementing the Australian Government's NAP WPS lists "increasing opportunities for women" and "increasing the gender advisor and female engagement capability as key to enhancing military effectiveness".<sup>6</sup> Across the

looking at the promotion of women prior to 2013. As at June 2014, at the Senior Executive level, there was 1 female Major General (up from zero the year before) out of the 17 available positions, and 6 female Brigadiers, out of the 58 available positions (a fall of 0.6%). At the lower Officer ranks, the number of females was 18 out of 171 for Colonels (a 1.4% increase), 78 out of 625 Lieutenant Colonels (a 1.5% increase), 267 out of 1781 Majors (a 0.5% increase), and 281 out of 1874 Captains (0% change).

In FY 2014-15 at the Senior Executive level, zero of the three promotions to Major General were female (a 25% decrease in the number of women promoted to the rank of Major General from the previous year), and 1 of the 8 promotions to Brigadier was female (a 5.7% decrease). At the lower Officer ranks, 2 of the 32 promotions to Colonel were female (an 8% decrease), 12 of the 69 promotions to Lieutenant Colonel were female (a 4.3% decrease), and 28 out of the 192 promotions to Major were female (a 1.9% decrease). Data for Captains and below are not available.

In FY 2015-16 at the Senior Executive level, zero of the 2 promotions to Major General were female (no change from previous year) and 3 of the 13 promotions to Brigadier was female (an increase of 10.6%). At the lower Officer ranks, 6 of the 31 promotions to Colonel were female (a 13.1% increase), 19 of the 71 promotions to Lieutenant Colonel were female (a 9.1% increase), and 46 out of the 200 promotions to Major were female (a 3.9% increase). Data for Captains and below are not available.

As at June 2017, 12 of the 80 Senior Executive positions in Army were occupied by women.

<sup>4</sup> The arguments contained within this commentary are equally applicable to any career model based on the ideal of merit.

<sup>5</sup> 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action', The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 15 September 1995, paras 131-41.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Defence, 'Women, Peace and Security: Implementing the National Action Plan', *Annual Report 2014-15*, <[www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/14-15/features/feature\\_oscdf-women-in-defence-engaging-women-in-peace-and-security.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/14-15/features/feature_oscdf-women-in-defence-engaging-women-in-peace-and-security.asp)> [Accessed 28 September 2017]; United Nations Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York: UN Women, 2015), <[wps.unwomen.org/](http://wps.unwomen.org/)> [Accessed 12 August 2017]; United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2242 (2015), S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015), <[www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2242.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf)> [Accessed 18 September 2017]; United Nations Security

international frameworks more broadly, UNSCRs 1325, 2122 and 2242 all emphasise the importance of women in leadership roles during conflict resolution.

Within the ADF, several notable commanders have emphasised the importance of women in military leadership. These include former chief of the Defence Force, General D. J. Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd),<sup>7</sup> former chief of Army Lieutenant General D. Morrison, AO (Ret'd),<sup>8</sup> Chief of Army and Male Champion of Change Lieutenant General A. J. Campbell, AO, DSC,<sup>9</sup> and Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal M. Binskin, AC.<sup>10</sup> The words of these men are supported by actions. A 2015 review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 recognises the significant progress the ADF has taken towards a more female-inclusive military, highlighting the importance of measures including targets, Flexible Work Arrangements, the use of gender advisors, male champions of change and diversification of promotion boards.<sup>11</sup> However, the UNSCR 1325 review contains one noteworthy criticism: “much of [the progress] has been through incremental and sometimes ad-hoc measures that have yet to transform military structures and mindsets”.<sup>12</sup>

The debate around gender in the Army is controversial and ongoing. Notable publications include the Broderick Review (2011-14), *Pathway to Change* (2012), *Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture 2017–22* (2017) and *Teaming: Optimising Military Capability for the Coming Era of Equality: 2020 to 2050* (2017). All are confronting, insightful and contain recommendations on gender issues within Army and the broader ADF community.<sup>13</sup> Despite the amount of work conducted thus far, gender bias remains an issue in the Army.

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Council Resolution 2122 (2013), S/RES/2122 (18 October 2013), <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2122>> [Accessed 28 August 2017].

<sup>7</sup> Australian National Committee for UN Women, *Women, Peace and Security: An Introductory Manual* (Canberra: UN Women Australia, 2014), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Australian of the Year Awards, ‘Honour Roll: 2016’, <[www.australianoftheyear.org.au/honour-roll/?view=fullView&recipientID=1348](http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/honour-roll/?view=fullView&recipientID=1348)> [accessed 28 September 2017].

<sup>9</sup> Report on Institute of Public Administration Australia, International Women’s Day Breakfast, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. 3 March 2017, <[www.pmc.gov.au/news-centre/office-women/ipaa-international-womens-day-breakfast—championing-change](http://www.pmc.gov.au/news-centre/office-women/ipaa-international-womens-day-breakfast—championing-change)> [Accessed 18 September 2017].

<sup>10</sup> Department of Defence, ‘Women, Peace and Security’.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 138.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-37.

<sup>13</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, ‘Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force [Broderick Review]’, <[defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/report-review-treatment-women-australian-defence-force](http://defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/report-review-treatment-women-australian-defence-force)>; Department of Defence, ‘Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture, 2017–2022’, <[www.defence.gov.au/PathwayToChange/](http://www.defence.gov.au/PathwayToChange/)>; Elizabeth G. Bolton, *Teaming: Optimising Military Capability for the Coming Era of Equality: 2020 to 2050*

The recruitment and retention of women are a function of women seeing the Army as a viable career option, one that includes opportunities for progression. This commentary will focus on merit within the Army, simply because progression through the ranks is determined primarily by merit. Without first challenging the assumption that the career progression model, ostensibly a merit system, results in the objective selection and promotion of the best candidate, the Army is unlikely to achieve meaningful and sustainable increases in female recruitment, retention and representation at senior leadership levels.

## The Problem with Merit

A meritocracy or merit system is defined as a social system in which merit or talent is the basis for sorting people into positions and distributing rewards. Advocates of the system believe that in a meritocracy everyone has an equal chance to advance and obtain rewards based on their individual merit and efforts, regardless of class, ethnicity, gender, race, age, or other non-merit factors.<sup>14</sup>

There is clear evidence, however, that measures of merit include subjective elements and that they are influenced by stereotypes and subconscious bias. The result is a meritocracy that reflects the values and biases of the decision-makers, and an organisation that is increasingly homogenous as positions become more senior.<sup>15</sup>

Prominent studies have looked at the impact of biases and stereotypes using the concepts of aesthetic capital or ugliness penalty;<sup>16</sup> height premium;<sup>17</sup> ethnicity penalty or Anglo advantage;<sup>18</sup> and variations on the Heidi vs

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(Canberra: Australian Army Research Centre, 2017), <[www.army.gov.au/our-future/publications/research-papers/army-research-papers/teaming-an-introduction-to-gender](http://www.army.gov.au/our-future/publications/research-papers/army-research-papers/teaming-an-introduction-to-gender)>.

<sup>14</sup> E. J. Castilla and S. Benard, 'The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organisations', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 4 (2010), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change, 'In the Eye of the Beholder: Avoiding the Merit Trap', 2016, <[malechampionsofchange.com/take-practical-action/avoiding-the-merit-trap/](http://malechampionsofchange.com/take-practical-action/avoiding-the-merit-trap/)> [Accessed 14 May 2016]; UN Women National Committee Australia, 'Re-thinking Merit: Why Meritocracy Is Failing Australian Business', <[unwomen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Re-thinking-Merit-Whitepaper.pdf](http://unwomen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Re-thinking-Merit-Whitepaper.pdf)> [Accessed 14 May 2016].

<sup>16</sup> T. L. Anderson, C. Grunert, A. Katz and S. Lovascio, 'Aesthetic Capital: A Research Review on Beauty Perks and Penalties', *Sociology Compass*, vol. 4, no. 8 (2010), pp. 564-75; Hays and Insync Surveys, Gender Diversity: Why Aren't We Getting It Right?, October 2014, <[www.insyncsurveys.com.au/resources/research/2014/10/gender-diversity-research/](http://www.insyncsurveys.com.au/resources/research/2014/10/gender-diversity-research/)> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

<sup>17</sup> P. Lundborg, P. Nystedt and D.-O. Rooth, 'The Height Premium in Earnings: The Role of Physical Capacity and Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills', *IZA Discussion Paper*, no. 4266 (Bonn: Institute of Labour Economics, June 2009), <[www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/35678/1/607729732.pdf](http://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/35678/1/607729732.pdf)> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

<sup>18</sup> A. Booth, 'Job Hunt Success Is All in a Name', Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, 4 March 2013, <[crawford.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/104/job-hunt-success-all-name](http://crawford.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/104/job-hunt-success-all-name)> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

Howard study.<sup>19</sup> Broadly, these studies have found that, first, tall and good-looking candidates are more likely to get a job (and get paid more). Second, candidates with Anglo-sounding names are viewed most favourably. Third, when the only difference on a resume is gender, the male candidate will be considered to be more qualified and more likeable than the female candidate. Additionally, humans have a strong 'in-group' bias that sees them favour members of their own group, typically those who look and think like them, and discriminate against those who do not.<sup>20</sup> In the Army context, this 'in-group' are the white males who are the majority of the (Regular) force.<sup>21</sup>

The United Nations Women's National Committee Australia states that "countless academic, social and business studies have proved that our conception of meritocracy is a myth".<sup>22</sup> Castilla and Benard refer to a 'paradox of meritocracy' to describe their finding that when an organisation sees and promotes itself as a meritocracy, a bias exists which sees men favoured over equally performing women.<sup>23</sup>

Despite all the research, societies and organisations continue to use merit as the measure for allocating rewards. The reasons for this are understandable. At a social level, organisations and individuals have a stake in the merit principle. Questioning the idea that true merit exists is to undermine the status quo and current power structures.<sup>24</sup> On an individual level, confirmation bias leads to the rejection of any evidence that suggests merit is flawed.<sup>25</sup> This offers some insight into why, despite acknowledging the importance of female leaders to the peace and security process, the Australian Army has thus far failed to address a significant obstacle to achieving this: the merit system.

## Merit in the Army

At key career milestones, Personnel Advisory Committees (PAC) select individuals with 'merit' for further career progression. On average, Army

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<sup>19</sup> UN Women National Committee Australia, 'Re-thinking Merit'.

<sup>20</sup> D. G. Rand, T. Pfeiffer, A. Dreber, R. W. Sheketoff, N. C. Wernerfelt and Y. Benkler, 'Dynamic Remodelling of In-Group Bias During the 2008 Presidential Election', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 106, no. 15 (2009), pp. 6187-91, <[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2664153/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2664153/)> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

<sup>21</sup> Department of Defence, *Annual Reports*, from 1999 to 2017, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15*, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2015-16*.

<sup>22</sup> UN Women National Committee Australia, 'Re-thinking Merit'.

<sup>23</sup> Castilla and Benard, 'The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organisations', p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> G. Dvorsky, 'The 12 Cognitive Biases That Prevent You from Being Rational', Gizmodo, 30 June 2016, <[io9.gizmodo.com/5974468/the-most-common-cognitive-biases-that-prevent-you-from-being-rational](http://io9.gizmodo.com/5974468/the-most-common-cognitive-biases-that-prevent-you-from-being-rational)> [Accessed 12 September 2016]; B. B. Cooper, '8 Subconscious Mistakes Our Brains Make Every Day—And How to Avoid Them', Fast Company, 15 October 2013, <[www.fastcompany.com/3019903/work-smart/8-subconscious-mistakes-our-brains-make-every-day-and-how-to-avoid-them](http://www.fastcompany.com/3019903/work-smart/8-subconscious-mistakes-our-brains-make-every-day-and-how-to-avoid-them)> [Accessed 12 September 2016].



Officers will first present to a PAC eight years after entering the Officer Career stream. Due to the numbers involved, not all Officers will be considered by a PAC. The annual reporting tool, known as a Performance Appraisal Report (PAR), is the primary mechanism used to determine which Officers have the 'merit' to be presented to the PAC. PARs are also the primary tool used by the PAC to identify Officers with 'merit' for promotion.<sup>26</sup>

Multiple studies indicate subconscious bias and stereotypes manifest in these PARs, at the expense of individual merit. PARs rely on the statistically unlikely event that the Assessing Officer (AO) will provide an honest performance review, and they are subject to the personal biases of the AO.<sup>27</sup> These studies further suggest that for those not part of the 'in-group' these biases lead to negative reviews and subsequent promotional biases. Conversely, the merit of those who are part of the 'in-group' is overstated.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, research shows large discrepancies between gender when analysing performance reviews. Studies from Stanford University demonstrate 59% of male performance reviews contain critical feedback, of which 2% is attributed to personality. For women, these numbers jump to 89% and 75% respectively.<sup>29</sup> Other studies show leadership skills, communication skills and personality attributes—such as confidence, directness and a willingness to speak out—are seen as positive traits in men and negative traits in women.<sup>30</sup> 'Masculine' leadership styles are perceived to be more effective in those organisations that are traditionally more masculine, and females displaying 'masculine' leadership styles are seen as unnatural or fake. Finally, males tend to evaluate female leaders more harshly than other males, female leaders are consistently held to a higher standard than male leaders, and female leaders are unlikely to be perceived as both competent and likeable.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Department of Defence, *Military Personnel Policy Manual*, <[www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Resources/MILPERSMAN.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Resources/MILPERSMAN.pdf)> [Accessed 20 September 2017], Part 5.

<sup>27</sup> B. I. J. M. van der Heijden and A. H. J. Nijhof, 'The Value of Subjectivity: Problems and Prospects of 360-Degree Appraisal Systems', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2004), pp. 493-511.

<sup>28</sup> Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change, 'In the Eye of the Beholder'.

<sup>29</sup> Center for the Advancement of Women's Leadership, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, 'Assessing Performance and Potential: *See Bias; Block Bias*', Stanford University, 2015, <[gender.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/See\\_Bias\\_Eval\\_2015.pdf](http://gender.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/See_Bias_Eval_2015.pdf)> [Accessed 12 January 2017].

<sup>30</sup> G Toegel and J Barsoux, 'Women Leaders: The Gender Trap', IMD, February 2013, <[www.imd.org/research/challenges/women-leaders-the-gender-trap-ginka-toegel-jean-louis-barsoux.cfm](http://www.imd.org/research/challenges/women-leaders-the-gender-trap-ginka-toegel-jean-louis-barsoux.cfm)> [Accessed 12 January 2017]; Kieran Snyder, 'The Abrasiveness Trap: High-Achieving Men and Women Are Described Differently in Reviews', *Fortune*, 26 August 2014, <[fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/](http://fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/)> [Accessed 12 January 2017].

<sup>31</sup> van der Heijden and Nijhof, 'The Value of Subjectivity'; R Silverman, 'Gender Bias at Work Turns Up in Feedback', *Wall Street Journal*, 30 September 2015 [Accessed 2 October 2016]; 'See Bias Block Bias', Center for the Advancement of Women's Leadership, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, 2015; H. Ibarra, R. J. Ely, D. M. Kolb, 'Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers', *Harvard Business Review*, September 2013, <<https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>> [Accessed 2 October 2016]; M. Heilman, 'Sex Bias in Work Settings',



Significantly, these biases impact an Army Officer's career throughout the employment pipeline, potentially preventing them from reaching their first PAC. In the Army, a traditionally masculine organisation, this research suggests that PARs for male candidates will reflect better performance and potential than their female counterparts, irrespective of individual merit. It is beyond the scope of this commentary to consider the potential reinforcing effect of (relative) negative feedback on individual performance over time; however, it is certainly something to consider should Army decide to address flaws in the merit system.

Historically, the biggest drop in female representation in the Army Officer stream occurs at the relatively junior Captain to Major level, a fall which is attributed to women leaving Army to become mothers.<sup>32</sup> While parental responsibilities are certainly a factor,<sup>33</sup> it is not the only reason for this drop. Importantly, this assumption fails to consider the fact that it is at the Captain to Major level, the point at which select individuals first go to PAC, that any lack of career progression options becomes clear. The challenge for Army is to ensure the lack of options is not due to bias resulting in a perceived lack of merit. This can be done by taking steps to interrupt bias throughout the employment pipeline.

## **Alternate Methods for Increasing the Number of Women in Leadership in Army**

A 2016 paper by Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change uses the Army introduction of a balanced PAC to highlight the advances

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<<https://psych.nyu.edu/heilman/>> [Accessed 2 October 2016]; Catalyst, 'The Double-Bind Dilemma for Women in Leadership: Damned if You Do, Doomed if You Don't', 15 July 2007, <<http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/double-bind>> [Accessed 2 October 2016]; Catalyst, 'Women "Take Care," Men "Take Charge:" Stereotyping of U.S. Business Leaders Exposed', 19 October 2005, <<http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-take-care-men-take-charge-stereotyping-us-business-leaders-exposed>> [Accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>32</sup> Australian Army, Chief of Army Directive 16/12 Enhancing Capability Through Gender Diversity, Army Headquarters, Canberra, 2012; Department of Defence, *Annual Reports* from 1999 to 2017, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15*, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2015-16*, <[www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/](http://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/)> [Accessed 20 February 2017, 8 March 2018]. Whilst outside the scope of this commentary, it should be noted that the Australian Army does not offer males the same paid parental leave options as females: the onus remains on women to play the role of primary caregiver. In an organisation dominated by men it is not feasible to offer all males the same paid parental leave options as females; however, a change in policy to allow either parent to take the maximum paid parental leave where both members are serving would be cost neutral and allow Army to continue progression towards removing all gender discrimination from policy.

<sup>33</sup> It is possible the emphasis placed on motherhood as a trigger for resignation from the Army is overstated. The Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15* indicates over 95% of female Army Officers who undertook paid parental leave in the 18 months prior to 30 June 2015 were retained. The Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2013-14* indicates over 96% of female Army Officers who undertook paid parental leave in the 18 months prior to 30 June 2014 were retained.

made by Army in confronting subjective merit. Without question this is a significant step that should be celebrated and retained. However, as the first active step towards confronting merit it is almost a decade too late for those not part of the 'in-group'. Bias should be addressed earlier to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunity to reach a PAC, and should be managed throughout the employment cycle.<sup>34</sup>

Bias interrupters are useful instruments for changing mindsets and structures because they are based on objective metrics and can be iterative, building change over time without meeting the resistance that broad cultural change measures can meet.<sup>35</sup> There are numerous bias interrupters that Army can implement throughout employment cycles, some more gentle than others. Given the importance of increasing female leadership reflected in national and international frameworks, and failure of previous efforts to recruit and retain women to increase representation above approximately 12 per cent for the past sixteen years, it is worth considering controversial options in order to meet obligations and stated goals.

Quotas are an active and conscious method of overcoming subconscious bias. While targets are a less divisive method of increasing the heterogeneity of individuals in leadership positions, multiple studies indicate they are inefficient and thus far proving ineffective beyond the short term as organisations adopt a 'set and forget' attitude, due a lack of accountability where targets are not met, or because of organisational resistance resulting from arguments being incorrectly framed.<sup>36</sup>

There are arguments against quotas. Much of the concern over quotas is built on the refutable assumption that hiring practices based on quotas for

<sup>34</sup> Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change, 'In the Eye of the Beholder',

<sup>35</sup> Joan C. Williams, 'Hacking Tech's Diversity Problem', *Harvard Business Review*, October 2014, <[hbr.org/2014/10/hacking-techs-diversity-problem](http://hbr.org/2014/10/hacking-techs-diversity-problem)> [Accessed 10 October 2016].

<sup>36</sup> Hays and Insync Surveys, Gender Diversity: Why Aren't We Getting It Right?; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Women in Leadership Strategy: Promoting Equality and Dismantling Barriers', November 2015, <[dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/women-in-leadership-strategy.aspx](http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/women-in-leadership-strategy.aspx)> [Accessed 12 June 2017]; M. Edwards, B. Burmester, M. Evans, M. Halupka and D. May, *Not Yet 50/50: Barriers to the Progress of Senior Women in the Australian Public Service*, (Canberra: ANZSOG Institute for Governance, University of Canberra, 2010), <[www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/events/celebrating-the-contribution-of-women-to-public-sector-excellence/not-yet-5050-barriers-to-the-progress-of-senior-women-in-the-australian-public-service-report](http://www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/events/celebrating-the-contribution-of-women-to-public-sector-excellence/not-yet-5050-barriers-to-the-progress-of-senior-women-in-the-australian-public-service-report)> [Accessed 10 May 2017]; Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, Australian Government Boards (Gender Balanced Representation) Bill 2015, The Senate, November 2015, <[www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance\\_and\\_Public\\_Administration/Gender\\_Balanced\\_Represent](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/Gender_Balanced_Represent)> [Accessed 12 October 2016]; A. Wittenberg-Cox, 'The Trouble with Gender Targets', *Harvard Business Review*, <[hbr.org/2013/10/the-trouble-with-gender-targets](http://hbr.org/2013/10/the-trouble-with-gender-targets)> [Accessed 27 October 2017]; Chief Review Services, 'Evaluation: Gender Integration in the CF', June 1998 (Revised November 1998), <[www.forces.gc.ca/assets/FORCES\\_Internet/docs/en/about-reports-pubs-audit-eval/p0037.pdf](http://www.forces.gc.ca/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/about-reports-pubs-audit-eval/p0037.pdf)> [Accessed 7 March 2017].

women will result in a less competent workforce.<sup>37</sup> Quotas and merit are not mutually exclusive: qualified women exist, and the use of quotas simply forces an organisation to become more actively involved in the search for talent. Professor Madeline Heilman highlights that quotas can be a cause of tension because of the perception of tokenism in the appointment.<sup>38</sup> In 1998 the Canadian Forces (CF) conducted a review into gender integration in the military.<sup>39</sup> The review noted that even the perception of the existence of quotas, which arose from the use of targets, was enough to generate friction. This sentiment was echoed by RAND in 2015, during their research into the implications of integrating women into the United States Marine Corps.<sup>40</sup> Any use of quotas will need to be part of a broader plan that includes mechanisms to respond to these perceptions. However, it is worth noting that change inevitably results in friction, and that in the Army, as in life, there will always be a group of individuals who will seek to undermine the success of others or attribute their success to something other than merit. Quotas will simply become one more mechanism to do this. While the excuses change, the underlying themes do not, and will not until women in the Army are normalised and accepted as equal.

A final argument against quotas is that they are seen as discriminatory. Given the empirical data on bias presented in this commentary, a solid argument can be mounted that they are an equaliser. Where subconscious bias gives the advantage to those individuals that fit the homogenous mould and ensures they are selected over others, quotas ensure the more heterogeneous candidates receive equal access to these advantages.

Multiple studies have shown that quotas can work and can assist Army in breaking the homogenous mould in the near-term, which will in turn play a direct role in increasingly the number of females in leadership and decision-making positions.<sup>41</sup> However, the use of quotas must be accompanied by

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<sup>37</sup> ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 'The ACE Encyclopaedia: Parties and Candidates', 2013, <[aceproject.org/ace-en/pdf/pc/view](http://aceproject.org/ace-en/pdf/pc/view)> [Accessed 3 April 2018]; Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 'Targets and Quotas: Perspective Paper', 2013, <[www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/20131119\\_PP\\_targetsquotas.pdf](http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/20131119_PP_targetsquotas.pdf)>; K. Morley, 'You Only Got Here Because of a Quota—Really, How Likely Is That', 4 November 2015, <[www.karenmorley.com.au/you-only-got-there-because-of-a-quota-really-how-likely-is-that/](http://www.karenmorley.com.au/you-only-got-there-because-of-a-quota-really-how-likely-is-that/)> [Accessed 12 October 2016]; J. Whelan and R. Wood, 'Exploring the Use of Quotas for Women in Leadership Roles' 10 May 2012, <[theconversation.com/exploring-the-use-of-quotas-for-women-in-leadership-roles-6864](http://theconversation.com/exploring-the-use-of-quotas-for-women-in-leadership-roles-6864)> [Accessed 12 October 2016].

<sup>38</sup> ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 'The ACE Encyclopaedia: Parties and Candidates'; Heilman, 'Sex Bias in Work Settings'; Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 'Targets and Quotas: Perspective Paper'.

<sup>39</sup> Chief Review Services, 'Evaluation Gender Integration in the CF'.

<sup>40</sup> A. Schaefer Gereben, J. W. Wenger, J. Kavanagh, J. P. Wong, G. S. Oak, T. E. Trial and T. Nichols, *Implications of Integrating Women into the Marine Corps Infantry* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2015), <[www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1103.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1103.html)> [Accessed 6 March 2018].

<sup>41</sup> 'Why Quotas Work for Gender Equality', OECD Forum 2015, <[www.oecd.org/social/quotas-gender-equality.htm](http://www.oecd.org/social/quotas-gender-equality.htm)> [Accessed 27 August 2017]; Whelan and Wood, 'Exploring the Use of

leadership commitment and a communication strategy that clearly articulates the business case and improvement to capability that will result from breaking the homogenous mould.

If quotas are considered too direct, there are other bias interrupters Army can consider. The current Army PAC process allows decision-makers to know the name and gender of individuals, as well as what they look like, prior to determining their relative merit. As noted earlier, these seemingly benign details can influence outcomes: blind PACs, the use of gender-neutral terminology in annual reporting, and the removal of the requirement to submit a photograph are easily implemented ways of mitigating some of the cultural biases that inevitably manifest in the current PAC process.<sup>42</sup>

Ensuring all Army Officers have the same opportunity to reach a PAC requires a different, but complementary, strategy. In 2014, Dow Australia and New Zealand, part of the global agricultural research and development company Dow AgroSciences, made subconscious bias testing a mandatory requirement for all 'people leaders'. This proved to be a pivot point for the company in how they overcame the inherent subjectivity of merit.<sup>43</sup> For Army, the introduction of mandatory subconscious bias testing for all Officers will address some of the flaws intrinsic in the current PAR process, and move Army closer to objective merit. The timing of the training will be important: a study in the United States showed that where decision-makers were given a presentation on overcoming the influence of subconscious bias during interview processes, an increased number of individuals not part of the 'in-group' were offered positions.<sup>44</sup> Correspondingly, Assessing Officers should be provided an understanding of their individual subconscious bias prior to writing annual reports, easily achievable through mechanisms such as the Harvard Implicit Association Test.

Despite differences between Army and the private sector, it is worth looking to external organisations for ideas on how to increase the number of females

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Quotas for Women in Leadership Roles'; V. Sojo, R. Wood, S. Wood, and M. Wheeler, 'Reporting Requirements, Targets and Quotas for Women in Leadership', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 13 (June 2016), <[www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984315001514](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984315001514)> [Accessed 14 August 2017].

<sup>42</sup> In the United States, the introduction of blind auditions for major symphony orchestras increased women's chances of advancing through preliminary rounds by 50%, and in one example (New York Philharmonic), the proportion of women hired went from 10% of new hires to 45%. The Australian Bureau of Statistics introduced blind recruiting (concealing names, age, genders and other identifying details of the hundreds of applicants) and found that of the nineteen successful applicants, fifteen of them were female.

<sup>43</sup> Tony Frenchman, Regional President Dow Australia and New Zealand, 'Women World Changers', The Growth Faculty, Sydney, 12 October 2016.

<sup>44</sup> Lydia Dishman, 'Can This Change Eliminate the STEM Gender Gap?', Fast Company, 21 October 2015, <[www.fastcompany.com/3052518/can-this-change-eliminate-the-stem-gender-gap](http://www.fastcompany.com/3052518/can-this-change-eliminate-the-stem-gender-gap)> [accessed 14 August 2017].

in leadership positions and around the negotiating table. Consulting firms McKinsey and Aurecon are two examples of multinational companies that have implemented workplace changes to overcome homogeneity in order to increase capability. Key initiatives include bias training, the use of gender-neutral terminology in all policy, and a robust review of their respective merit systems.<sup>45</sup> Of these, redefining merit and bias training proved to be the two most effective initiatives for increasing female representation in the workplace.<sup>46</sup> An additional initiative, which is becoming increasingly popular in the private sector,<sup>47</sup> is equal paid parental leave options for both parents. While the Army offers paid parental leave options for both parents, there is an expectation that mothers will be the primary caregiver. Offering parents the opportunity to choose who will take this role—which would be a cost-neutral decision where both members are serving—provides women with the option to remain on a steady career path, and would have the additional benefit of ensuring Army maintains pace with broader social and cultural change.<sup>48</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Increasing the number of women in decision-making and leadership levels in peace and security processes is fundamental to successful outcomes. This includes the number of women in the militaries who play a key role in peace-building, peacekeeping and peacemaking. This knowledge has contributed to the implementation of a number of measures designed to increase the number of serving women, particularly at the higher levels of leadership.

Despite these efforts, there has been no meaningful increase in the number of women serving in the Australian Army over the past sixteen years, with very few women at senior decision-making levels. There are a number of measures, or bias interrupters, that Army can introduce in order to meet gender equality goals and better achieve military objectives. However, in order to transform structures and mindsets that hinder the career progression of women, Army must first challenge the idea that the merit system results in the objective selection of the best candidate.

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<sup>45</sup> John Lyndon, Tony Frenchman, Giam Swiegers, 'Women World Changers', The Growth Faculty, Sydney, 12 October 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Firms that offer both parents the choice to become primary caregivers immediately following the birth or adoption of a child include McKinsey, Aurecon, Ernst Young and Pricewaterhouse Coopers. John Lyndon, Tony Frenchman, Giam Swiegers, 'Women World Changers'; Pricewaterhouse Coopers <[www.pwc.com.au/](http://www.pwc.com.au/)> [Accessed 8 March 2018]; Ernst Young <[www.ey.com/au/en/home](http://www.ey.com/au/en/home)> [Accessed 8 March 2018].

<sup>48</sup> It is beyond the scope of this commentary to provide detail on the benefits for fathers, families and societies on fathers becoming more actively involved in the upbringing of their children. However, there is increasing research, nationally and internationally, which is readily available for any interested reader.

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## **Trust the Women as I Have Done: An American's Reflections on Australia and WPS**

Valerie M. Hudson

The Fulbright Commission sent me on the adventure of a lifetime earlier this year, allowing me to spend almost six months based at ANU in Canberra, as well as providing the opportunity to travel and meet other scholars in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Hobart, and Perth. Touring Parliament House with my family one day, I happened upon the impressively tall banner of anthropomorphised Australia gently admonishing the UK to grant women suffrage as the colony had already done; “Trust the Women, Mother, As I Have Done”. I think I cleaned the gift shop out of keychains of this banner that I later passed out to all my friends upon return to the United States.

In thinking about the theme of this special issue, it seems to me that Australia is playing a similar role today, for in recent years Australia's leadership has once more emerged with regard to women, specifically with reference to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda catalysed by UNSCR 1325 in 2000. What I found during my time in Australia was a vibrant effort at realising the WPS vision, not only by an energised network of scholars (many of whom are authors in this special issue), but also within the Australian national government. For example, I was privileged to attend the first stand-up of a Gender Advisors training course by the ADF [Australian Defence Force], which course is meant to be a regional resource for the promulgation of UNSCR 1325 in military operations. I was also privileged to attend discussions on the updating of Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, which task appeared to be taken very seriously by those inside and outside government.

As an American, I could only look on with envy during my time in Australia. In the United States, the current administration appears to be wholly unconcerned with WPS, whether on purpose or through ignorance is hard to discern. Catherine Russell, Ambassador for Global Women's Issues—only our second such ambassador, mind you—resigned in December 2016 and has yet to be replaced. The Office of Global Women's Issues [OGWI] was originally slated by the present administration to have its budget completely zero'd out; while its current level of funding has now been restored after an outcry, OGWI will no longer report to the Secretary of State, but rather will



report to an Undersecretary. The only bright spot is that our Congress passed the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 that mandates a quadrennial Women, Peace, and Security Strategy be produced by the government, with follow-up reports to Congress every two years.

We in the United States are back to making the case that the WPS agenda is good for national security; we are back to square one. And we are going to need your help, including your admonishments to our country that this is the right course of action. For example, the Australians have led out in introducing WPS objectives and trained gender advisors to the Talisman Sabre bilateral military exercises with the United States. Without Australian leadership, I do not believe it would have happened. The Americans were not prepared to lead on this front. During this period in which the US government appears indifferent and uninterested in WPS, insistence by a close ally such as Australia can make all the difference. Australia can help light the way.

And this isn't just the *right* thing to do—to include half the world in defining and ensuring national and international security—it's absolutely the *smart, realistic* thing to do. My own research has helped to demonstrate that no matter what facet of security you are interested in, whether that be food security, demographic security, peace and stability, economic prosperity, health, quality of governance, the empowerment of women strengthens your hand.<sup>1</sup> The first template for conflict or peace, exploitation or cooperation, democracy or autocracy, inequality or equal access is the template each society builds with respect to the relationship between the two halves of humankind, male and female. That founding template sets the horizon of possibility for national security. Pursuing the WPS agenda is thus the height of Realism in foreign and security policy.

Not only does the empowerment of women help in all ways to stabilise nations, but also putting on 'gender lenses' permits a much more advanced situational awareness that can aid security policymakers. Allow me to provide one small example. This past summer, my co-author Hilary Matfess and I published an article on the linkage between rising brideprices and the outbreak of rebellion and terrorism in several case studies, such as Nigeria and South Sudan.<sup>2</sup> Brideprice is the cost the groom's family must pay to the bride's family for receipt of the bride. A deeply embedded custom in many countries, brideprice operates as a flat and inflationary tax on all young men

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<sup>1</sup> Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli and Chad Emmett, *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Valerie M. Hudson, Donna Lee Bowen, and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen, 'Clan Governance and State Stability: The Relationship Between Female Subordination and Political Order', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 109, no. 3 (August 2015), pp. 535-55.

<sup>2</sup> Valerie M. Hudson and Hilary Matfess, 'In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage Between Brideprice and Violent Conflict', *International Security*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Summer 2017), pp. 7–40, doi:10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00289.



in the society, easing the way for terrorist and rebel groups to recruit young men when an inflationary bubble ensues, as it often does. After that article's publication, I received this communication from a State Department officer who had been working Kabul:

[Your article] brought back to mind a conversation I had with one of my Afghan colleagues a few years ago when I was stationed in Kabul. He was exasperated by the insanely high, and ever rising costs, of weddings in Afghanistan. I really didn't understand what the big deal was. He wanted the government to intervene and thought we in the Embassy should get involved in the conversation. At that time, we, the ever so enlightened American political officers, viewed it through the lens of cultural pressures to put on a good party, as a poverty issue, or discussed it in the terms of women's rights and social issues and cultural norms. We never linked it to national security implications and for me, this research provides the vocabulary necessary. You rightly point out the importance of taking the emotion and moralizing out of it and counting it as an important variable that has a place in the policy conversation. I got a bit exasperated with his insistence on it being a serious issue and showed him research about how many Americans go into extreme debt to have the 'dream wedding' making the argument of who are we as foreigners to tell people how to spend their money – I was certainly moralizing.

This is the difference WPS can make. You can 'see' aspects of security you never noticed before, and once you have that sight, then security policy also looks like a much different enterprise than when you were in the dark. As an American, I doubt my country's current ability to understand the importance of WPS. Frankly, at this point in time I look to Australia to hold aloft the torch, which makes this special issue so very welcome. Thank you, Australia, for once again being the voice that advises, "Trust the women as I have done".

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# Women and Islamic-State Terrorism: An Assessment of How Gender Perspectives Are Integrated in Countering Violent Extremism Policy and Practices

Sofia Patel and Jacqueline Westermann

This paper discusses Western women's involvement with Islamic State terrorism, to evaluate how governments and civil society can comprehensively develop countering violent extremism (CVE) strategies that are inclusive of gender perspectives. The paper's overarching goal is to demonstrate that existing approaches to CVE do not adequately incorporate the challenges posed *by women and for women*, and that much more empirical research is required to develop a holistic understanding of women's experiences with violent extremism. CVE initiatives must engage women at all stages including design, implementation, operation and evaluation, and engagement must comply with human rights standards,<sup>1</sup> and in advancement of gender equality.<sup>2</sup> A set of policy recommendations for Australia will be provided based on assessing existing national and international practices.

Terrorists, terrorisms and counter-terrorisms are products of a gendered world.<sup>3</sup> The ideological distinctions between ethno-separatist and religious terrorist organisations have dictated the different roles, responsibilities and opportunities afforded to women.

It should not be a surprise that women have joined and supported Islamic State (IS) either by making *hijra* (migrating) or from their home countries. Women have participated in geographically and ideologically diverse manifestations of violent extremism and terrorism throughout modern history.<sup>4</sup> Women have played multiple roles within terrorist organisations from facilitators and recruiters to suicide bombers and frontline fighters. There has been a range of left-wing and ethno-separatist terrorist groups

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<sup>1</sup> Global Counterterrorism Forum, 'Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism', 2015, <[www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf](http://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, 'Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls', <[www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>3</sup> Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry (eds), *Women, Gender and Terrorism* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), p. 236; Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters and Whores* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015); See also writing by Katherine Brown, Fionnuala Ni Aolain, and Laura Zahra MacDonald.

<sup>4</sup> Sjoberg and Gentry, *Women, Gender and Terrorism*.

that have had strong female presence, including female leadership. Ulrike Meinhof was the female leader of the German Baader-Meinhof group; Fusako Shigenobu founded and led the Japanese Red Army; Leila Khaled was the first female hijacker for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the (former) Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have incorporated female militants in their ranks for decades.

Despite the growing awareness of the varied roles that women play within peace, security and conflict, namely through UNSCR 2242,<sup>5</sup> the international community still responds to the idea of women in terrorism and political violence with surprise. Governments and media regularly defer to recurring narratives such as “mothers, monsters [and] whores”<sup>6</sup> to explain and rationalise women’s participation within political violence, as “violent women interrupt gender stereotypes”.<sup>7</sup> Women are labelled either as victims or fetishised as hypersexualised warriors who are more dangerous than their male counterparts—both labels deny the woman agency as an individual actor. Women are also “defined via their roles as mothers, wives and sisters of radical men”<sup>8</sup>—this is particularly the case with Muslim women and is very often applied when developing and implementing countering violent extremism (CVE) policy and practice.

## Overview of the Literature

As the number of women perpetrating terrorism has increased, the literature has also burgeoned. Mia Bloom, Karla Cunningham, Cindy Ness, Katherine Brown, Laura Sjoberg and David Cooke are a selection of scholars who have consistently made valuable contributions to the motivations, roles and responsibilities of women in terrorism and political violence. Margot Badran, Lila Abu-Lughod, Asef Bayat, Aili Tripp and Valentin Moghadam have made essential contributions to explaining the cultural mobilisations and experiences of women in postcolonial nations and have explored how women have resisted dominant patriarchal order in Muslim societies through different types of feminisms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Katherine Brown have provided nuanced analysis on the impact of resilience building in mitigating violent extremism, and how governments have attempted to integrate women into existing counter- and de-

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2242 (2015), S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015), <[www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2242.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>6</sup> Laura Sjoberg, ‘The Women of ISIS: Gender and Political Violence’, Political Violence at a Glance, 28 August 2017, <[politicalviolenceataglance.org/2017/08/28/the-women-of-isis-gender-and-political-violence/](http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2017/08/28/the-women-of-isis-gender-and-political-violence/)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>7</sup> Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, ‘Reduced to Bad Sex: Narratives of Violent Women from the Bible to the War on Terror’, *International Relations*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2008), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Katherine E. Brown, ‘Gender and Countering Islamic State Radicalisation’, *E-International Relations*, 18 February 2016, <[www.e-ir.info/2016/02/18/gender-and-countering-islamic-state-radicalisation/](http://www.e-ir.info/2016/02/18/gender-and-countering-islamic-state-radicalisation/)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

radicalisation efforts. Edith Schlaffer's research and grassroots programs have been central to informing current approaches to counter- and de-radicalisation efforts that identify mothers as being the front-line of defence against radicalisation. On the other hand, Jacqui True has addressed the lack of gendered analysis of international counterterrorism (CT) and CVE measures that are employed by governments and civil society. Laura Shepherd's work has linked the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda with a gendered approach to CVE at global, national and local levels.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, multilateral research institutes such as the OSCE and RAN Europe,<sup>10</sup> have produced useful toolkits to help guide and advise policymakers and practitioners working as with communities and civil society to counter and prevent radicalisation towards violent extremism. A major factor that is missing from practical responses to terrorism and violent extremism, is the integration of gender perspectives during design, implementation and review processes, which this research hopes to inform.<sup>11</sup>

Different disciplines have approached the subject of women in political violence from a variety of angles and theoretical framings, which shifts the focus of the debate accordingly. Feminist critical theory seeks to remove the binaries of public and private so that "the personal is redefined as political, and the political as personal".<sup>12</sup> This helps restore agency to the individual, by redrawing the barriers of behavioural norms. Furthermore, this approach has been influential towards developing and understanding of female engagement in political violence as a form of resistance where "the everyday survival strategies of individuals can be reconstituted as subtle forms of resistance".<sup>13</sup> By redrawing the boundaries by which we understand how women participate conflict and political violence, we are able to consider all

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<sup>9</sup> Laura Shepherd, 'The Role of the WPS Agenda in Countering Violent Extremism', *The Strategist*, 8 March 2017, <[www.aspistrategist.org.au/role-wps-agenda-countering-violent-extremism/](http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/role-wps-agenda-countering-violent-extremism/)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>10</sup> RAN Centre of Excellence, 'The Role of Gender in Violent Extremism', *RAN Issue Paper*, 4 December 2015, <[ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/issue\\_paper\\_gender\\_dec2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_gender_dec2015_en.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018]; and RAN Centre of Excellence, 'Response to Returnees: Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Their Families', *RAN Manual*, July 2017, <[ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran\\_br\\_a4\\_m10\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>11</sup> Jacqui True and Sri Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism: Gender Perspectives and Women's Roles', Monash Centre for Gender, Peace and Security, Monash University, 2017, <[docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b4aef1\\_5fb20e84855b45aabb5437fe96fc3616.pdf](http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b4aef1_5fb20e84855b45aabb5437fe96fc3616.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>12</sup> Katherine E. Brown, 'Blinded by the Explosion? Security and Resistance in Muslim Women's Suicide Terrorism', in Sjoberg and Gentry, *Women Gender and Terrorism* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod, 'The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1990), pp. 41-55.

actions and interactions as being part of a 'gendered process'.<sup>14</sup> This includes the gendered approaches to counter- and de-radicalisation processes.

Gender perspectives are rarely holistically integrated into definitions and processes of radicalisation. This has resulted in incomplete understanding of female pathways into and out of violent extremism, as well as the ways in which women develop resilience to resist radicalisation; as argued by Jayne Huckerby, "policy makers are playing catch-up when it comes to understanding the full extent of women's roles in jihadist groups".<sup>15</sup> Understanding the gendered experiences of radicalisation processes is essential. Men and women—especially within religious communities—may have different experiences of radicalisation. For example, Elizabeth Pearson's research into online IS Twitter communities has pointed to the differences in the operation of Salafi-jihadi gender norms in the offline and online spaces. Pearson, and others, have asserted that "the online space is popular among female extremists as it operates as a comparative site of liberation, free of the gender boundaries and restrictions frequently found offline...",<sup>16</sup> thus demonstrating that the online freedom of the internet has greatly enabled and facilitated female radicalisation and recruitment to IS in place of offline restrictions.<sup>17</sup>

Women have key roles to play in both perpetrating and preventing violence. According to Valerie Hudson,

over a decade's worth of research shows that women's advancement is critical to stability and to reducing political violence. Countries where women are empowered are vastly more secure, whether the issue is food security, countering violent extremism or resolving disputes with other nations peacefully.<sup>18</sup>

Research has demonstrated that a peacekeeping agreement is more likely to be reached—and to hold—if women are involved in the process.<sup>19</sup> It is

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<sup>14</sup> This research will apply Randy Borum's understanding of pathways into and out of radicalisation as a 'set of diverse processes', 'Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories', *Journal of Strategic Security*, vol. 4, no. 4 (2011), pp. 7-36.

<sup>15</sup> Jayne Huckerby, 'When Women Become Terrorists', *The New York Times*, 21 January 2015, <[www.nytimes.com/2015/01/22/opinion/when-women-become-terrorists.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/22/opinion/when-women-become-terrorists.html?_r=0)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Pearson, 'Online as the New Frontline: Affect, Gender and ISIS-Take-Down on Social Media', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 7 July 2017, <[www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1352280](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1352280)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Valerie Hudson and Dara Kay Cohen, 'Women's Rights are a National Security Issue', *The New York Times*, 26 December 2016, <[www.nytimes.com/2016/12/26/opinion/womens-rights-are-a-national-security-issue.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/26/opinion/womens-rights-are-a-national-security-issue.html)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, 'Women Too Often Omitted from Peace Process, Despite Key Role in Preventing Conflict, Forging Peace, Secretary General Tells Security Council', Meetings Coverage, United Nations Security Council Meeting 7793, 25 October 2016, <[www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12561.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12561.doc.htm)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

therefore vital that women occupy a seat at the negotiating table when designing and implementing programs or policy concerning security and development, including counterterrorism and countering violent extremism.<sup>20</sup>

With the disintegration of the IS's caliphate in the Middle East, which had been propped up by committed international *muhajrun* (migrants), it is incumbent on governments to implement appropriate strategy, policy, legislation and operations to prepare for the aftermath. Governments and civil society need to be prepared for security challenges posed by women involved in violent extremism, as well as develop new approaches to holistically integrate women within CVE initiatives that ensure gender perspectives are reflected at all stages from design to implementation and evaluation.

This paper offers a state of the field assessment on how gender perspectives are integrated within CT and CVE policy and practice. The analysis draws upon international academic literature, field research and policy documents and provides some concise recommendations from an Australian policy perspective.

## Structure

The paper will be divided into three parts:

- The first will explore the gendered roles of women in IS-terrorism, and explain why policymakers need to pay more attention to women's experiences within terrorism.
- The second will locate CVE within Australia's national security architecture. It will analyse how gender perspectives are incorporated, and where the gaps and challenges lie.
- The third will advise how to improve CVE gender mainstreaming in policy and practice. An analysis of existing empirical and academic research will present examples of positive and negative policy and practice and provide comments on how to move forward.

## A Note on Terms and Distinguishing between Processes

The term 'returnees' will be used instead of foreign terrorist fighters to refer to individuals who want to or have already returned from IS territories. This term is more 'gender-neutral' noting that both men and women migrated

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Kirby and Laura J Shepherd, 'The Futures Past of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda', *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2 (March 2016), pp. 373-92, <[www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/ia/inta92-2-08-shepherdkirby.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/ia/inta92-2-08-shepherdkirby.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

overseas to IS territories, but only men were authorised to take up combat operations within the caliphate.

This paper understands the term ‘radicalisation’ within the context of Islamic State, as a process leading to terrorism.<sup>21</sup> (There are many alternative understandings of ‘radicalisation’ that are not related to violent extremism or terrorism.) ‘Resilience’ will be understood as the ability for communities to recover from or respond positively to negative experiences, such as radicalisation.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, the phrases ‘violent extremist’ and ‘violent extremism’ will refer to individuals or processes that relate to ‘*terrorist radicalisation*’, and specifically in the context of IS terrorism.

‘CVE’ is understood to be the ‘softer’ end of a government’s CT strategy. The researchers acknowledge an important distinction between CVE<sup>23</sup> and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE).<sup>24</sup> However, since Australian policy does not yet distinguish between the two processes, we refer mainly to CVE practices, unless otherwise indicated.

The phrase ‘de-radicalisation’ will not be used, and all references to CVE and PVE should be understood as part of a disengagement<sup>25</sup> process, unless otherwise stated.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Definition as explained in the OSCE’s *Women and Terrorist Radicalization Final Report*, 2013, <[www.osce.org/atu/99919?download=true](http://www.osce.org/atu/99919?download=true)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>22</sup> OSCE, *Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach* (Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, March 2014), <[www.osce.org/atu/111438?download=true](http://www.osce.org/atu/111438?download=true)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>23</sup> CVE—or countering violent extremism—is a process that attempts to *disengage* or *deradicalise* individuals or groups who have already had some level of exposure to radical or extremist ideology. CVE efforts must distinguish which avenue they are going down, as conflating the two goals is impractical.

The researchers will refer to processes such as rehabilitation, reintegration and resocialisation. These are interpreted as non-punitive methods of CVE and PVE for individuals—men and women—involved in IS-related terrorism and violent extremism.

<sup>24</sup> PVE—or preventing violent extremism—is a process that tries to stop radical extremist ideology from taking root within individuals and communities in the first place. PVE is something that should be taught at school and at home from a young age, and should be a skill rooted in critical thinking and global citizenship education. PVE should be taught in the same way as other social security issues, including those related to domestic violence and crime prevention and should emphasise the values of being a good citizen.

<sup>25</sup> J. M. Berger, ‘Making CVE Work: A Focused Approach Based on Process Disruption’, *ICCT Research Paper* no. 5 (The Hague: The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, May 2016), <[www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/J.-M.-Berger-Making-CVE-Work-A-Focused-Approach-Based-on-Process-Disruption-.pdf](http://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/J.-M.-Berger-Making-CVE-Work-A-Focused-Approach-Based-on-Process-Disruption-.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



## Women's Experiences with IS Terrorism

### NUMBERS

It has been estimated that 17 per cent of all Europeans who made *hijra* to IS were women.<sup>27</sup> French intelligence reported that “women made up more than a third (35 percent) of French citizens travelling to Iraq and Syria to join the IS group, up from just 10 percent in 2010”.<sup>28</sup> Similar trends were seen in Germany, with 930 people leaving Germany to join the Islamic State, of whom around 20 per cent were women.<sup>29</sup> There are reports that hundreds of British girls that despite information as to the brutality of the Islamic State still want to join the group.<sup>30</sup> Two years ago, Julie Bishop confirmed that up to forty Australian women were known to have supported terrorist activity abroad and at home.<sup>31</sup> Exact numbers of Australian women who migrated to the caliphate are unknown; open source information can be found for nine of them, and of these individuals, four are known to have been killed.<sup>32</sup> Although research has suggested that a “mass exodus”<sup>33</sup> of returnees is unlikely, the issue of returning families is nevertheless of paramount concern to Australia, noting that 30 per cent of individuals have already returned from the conflict zones to home countries in the European Union.<sup>34</sup> There has been no indication that Australia has yet had to deal with women returning from IS territories, but the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) has cited that there are around seventy children of Australians who may want to return.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>27</sup> B. Van Ginkel and E. Entenmann (eds), ‘The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union: Profiles, Threats & Policies’, *ICCT Research Paper* no. 2 (The Hague: The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, April 2016), 2016, <icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report\_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU\_1-April-2016\_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>28</sup> Sam Ball, ‘Rise in French Women Joining IS Group Ranks as Jihadists Target Female Recruits’, *France24*, 10 January 2016, <www.france24.com/en/20160108-france-women-islamic-state-group-female-recruits> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>29</sup> News Agencies, ‘ISIL Women Recruits Arrested in Mosul’, *Al Jazeera*, 23 July 2017, <www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/isil-women-recruits-detained-mosul-170722190720527.html> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>30</sup> Mark Townsend, ‘Hundreds of Young People in UK Still Want to Join Isis in Syria’, *The Observer*, 13 August 2016, <www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/13/hundreds-of-uk-girls-still-want-to-join-isis> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>31</sup> Susan McDonald, ‘Islamic State: Up to 40 Australian Women Including “Jihadi Brides” Supporting Terrorist Activity in Syria and Iraq, Julie Bishop Says’, *ABC News*, 26 February 2015, <www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-25/40-australian-women-supported-terrorists-iraq-syria-bishop-says/6262452> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>32</sup> Sofia Patel, *The Sultanate of Women: Exploring Female Roles in Perpetrating and Preventing Violent Extremism*, Special Report (Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, February 2017), <s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/import/SR100\_Sultanate-of-women\_v2.pdf?7BtsSZBgI0DezLXkbPXgQXW.A5UiYFz> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>33</sup> RAN Centre of Excellence, ‘Response to Returnees’.

<sup>34</sup> Van Ginkel and Entenmann, ‘The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union’.

<sup>35</sup> David Wroe, ‘Security First, But Welfare of IS Fighters’ Children Will Be Managed: Government’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 September 2017, <www.smh.com.au/federal-

## WHY HAVE WESTERN WOMEN JOINED IS?

Far from the sensationalised media coverage painting women as vulnerable victims manipulated by their recruiters, or as lovestruck 'jihadi brides', research has demonstrated that Western women joined IS for many of the same reasons as their male counterparts. The range of push and pull factors encouraging women to join IS included issues relating to identity and belonging, alienation, perceived persecution of Muslims, social/cultural isolation in the West, redemption, shared experiences, adventure and romance.<sup>36</sup> Another prime reason for women's migration to IS territory was to be part of a utopian state building project.<sup>37</sup>

Prolonged issues of displacement, peripatetic lifestyles, insufficient or inadequate economic or employment opportunities are real contributing factors to creating conditions conducive to radicalisation. These political, economic and social grievances transcend gender; focusing on women as 'jihadi brides' "diverts attention and resources away from enhancing critical skills and engagement with real problems of youth unemployment, islamophobia, political participation and gender barriers".<sup>38</sup> To understand motivations for joining IS, research needs to move away from gendered stereotypes that afford binary distinctions between men and women as an explanation.

## WHAT ROLES HAVE WOMEN PLAYED WITHIN IS?

Western women's support of IS—both inside and outside the caliphate—ranged from recruitment and homemaking to financing and attack planning. Women who made *hijra* were assigned a set of roles that conformed to IS's strict gender binary principles without much flexibility: women's roles were confined to the domestic sphere, and were largely non-combative. As part of the state-building project, women were also required to work in professions including education, healthcare and policing (e.g. the Al Khanssaa Brigade) to ensure gender segregation was upheld. Although media reported that IS allegedly deployed female suicide bombers in Mosul in July 2017 for tactical

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politics/political-news/security-first-but-welfare-of-is-fighters-children-will-be-managed-government-20170924-gynrrq.html> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>36</sup> Erin Saltman and Melanie Smith, *Till Martyrdom Do Us Part* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015), <[www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Till\\_Martyrdom\\_Do\\_Us\\_Part\\_Gender\\_and\\_the\\_ISIS\\_Phenomenon.pdf](http://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Brown, 'Gender and Countering Islamic State Radicalisation'.

purposes,<sup>39</sup> these reports remain unverified and IS has not claimed responsibility for the attacks.<sup>40</sup>

Dominant official IS doctrine maintained that a woman's jihad is as a "wife of a mujahid and the mother of lion cubs".<sup>41</sup> Women are considered as "teacher[s] of generations and the producer of men ... the woman is a shepherd in her house and is responsible for her herd".<sup>42</sup> Thus women are encouraged and praised for encouraging their men to take up arms,<sup>43</sup> rather than engaging in combat operations themselves.

Women have had mixed reactions to their exclusion from the battlefield. For example, Hayat Boumeddine—wife of Amedy Coulibaly who killed four civilians at a kosher grocery store in Paris in 2015—did not encourage women to take up arms, and said in an interview:

Be a base of support and safety for your husbands, brothers, fathers and sons. Be advisors to them. They should find comfort and peace with you. Do not make things difficult for them. Facilitate all matters for them. Be strong and brave.<sup>44</sup>

Others have lamented about being excluded from combat. Zehra Duman, a Melbourne girl of Turkish descent who travelled to the caliphate in 2014, identified on social media her desire to take up operational roles for IS; she simultaneously demonstrated by her enthusiasm her ideological commitment to the organisation with the caveat that this was not permissible for women.<sup>45</sup>

In October 2017, IS shifted their rhetoric to endorse female combatants (until then combat roles were only permitted in very specific circumstances).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For more information on terrorist organisations deploying women in operations for tactical purposes see Mia Bloom, *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); and Mia Bloom, 'The Changing Nature of Women in Violent Extremism', *Freedom From Fear Magazine*, issue 11, <f3magazine.unicri.it/?p=1093> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>40</sup> Charlie Winter and Devorah Margolin, 'The Mujahidat Dilemma: Female Combatants and the Islamic State', Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 10, no. 7 (16 August 2017), <ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-mujahidat-dilemma-female-combatants-and-the-islamic-state> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>41</sup> Aaron Y. Zelin, 'A Jihad Without Fighting', *Dabiq*, no. 11 (9 September 2015), <jihadology.net/category/dabiq-magazine/> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Louisa Tarras-Wahlberg, 'Promises of Paradise? A Study on Official ISIS-Propaganda Targeting Women', Master's Thesis, Swedish Defence University, 2016, <fhs.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:942997/FULLTEXT01.pdf> [Accessed 5 April 2018]; Saltman and Smith, *Till Martyrdom Do Us Part*.

<sup>44</sup> Clarion Project, 'A Brief Interview with Umm Basir al-Muhajirah', *Dabiq*, no. 7 (12 February 2015), <clarionproject.org/docs/islamic-state-dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>45</sup> Saltman and Smith, *Till Martyrdom Do Us Part*.

<sup>46</sup> See Charlie Winter, 'In August #ISjers Circulated This Clarification on Permissibility of Women and Fighting [Translation]', Twitter, 19 November 2015, <twitter.com/charliewinter/status/667326295706050560> [Accessed 5 April 2018]. Furthermore on 6 October, IS

The sanctioning of women to take up arms by IS could be huge and could influence a whole cohort of individuals who had not previously considered taking up arms to do so.

However, it should be noted that women outside the caliphate did take it upon themselves over the past few years to wage defensive jihad (*jihad al-daf*),<sup>47</sup> prior to the official authorisation. Over the past eighteen months, women planned and attempted to execute various types of attacks including shootings, suicide operations and bomb detonation in Kenya, Morocco, France and Indonesia. It is very possible that the number of these incidents is likely to increase, and governments should be prepared to respond to this adequately.

### **WHY DO WOMEN'S ROLES IN TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM MATTER TO AUSTRALIA?**

Governments, multilateral organisations and civil society need to overcome the narrative that within terrorism and violent extremism “women ... rarely [take] decisions and influence events”.<sup>48</sup> Focusing only on male perpetrators of violence has meant that the voices of women have been overlooked, and opportunities for careful CT and CVE policy design and implementation have been missed.

Although statistics remain comparatively low, Australia should pay closer attention to female involvement in IS-related violence for three reasons.

First, due to the dissolution of IS's caliphate, women and children will likely be among those wanting to return. As mentioned, ASIO has identified around seventy children who could be awaiting rehabilitation procedures in Australia. Although Australia has developed competent security procedures, the long-term rehabilitation process is not straightforward. For CVE measures to have resonance and effect, considering sociopolitical and cultural grievances that create conditions conducive to radicalisation is key.

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published their first official statement explicitly calling on women to wage jihad alongside men, Site Intelligence Group, 'IS Urges Muslim Women to Fight in Battlefield Alongside Men to Defend Group', 10 October 2017, <ent.siteintelgroup.com/Periodicals/is-urges-muslim-women-to-fight-in-battlefield-alongside-men-to-defend-group.html> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>47</sup> See analysis of salafi-jihadi ideological inconsistencies on *jihad al-daf* by Nelly Lahoud in Nelly Lahoud, 'The Neglected Sex: The jihadis' Exclusion of Women from Jihad', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20 February 2014, also shorter analysis from Sofia Patel on the implications of IS endorsing female fighters, Sofia Patel, 'The Mujahidat: Myth No More?', *The Strategist*, 16 October 2017, <www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-mujahidat-myth-no-more/> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>48</sup> Peter R. Neumann, 'Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Lead to Terrorism: Ideas, Recommendations and Good Practices from the OSCE Region', ICSR Report, 28 September 2017, <icmr.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Countering-Violent-Extremism-and-Radicalisation-that-Lead-to-Terrorism.pdf> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

Women are at the heart of community activities, and their voices need to be heard.

Second, IS's increased presence in South-East Asia heightens regional security concerns for Australia and other nations. Returnees are likely to attempt to travel to the region, bringing with them battlefield experience, skills, discipline and ideological commitment. Women already play many roles to facilitate violent extremism across South-East Asia, and the prospect of returnees—both male and female—may reinforce their commitment, organisation and effect. Earlier this year the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict reported that Indonesian women are increasingly vocal in their desire to join international *mujahidat* (female fighters) and take up arms for the cause—“Indonesian women in extremist organisations are now catching up with the lethal practices of their sisters in other parts of the world”.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the first Indonesian woman—Dian Yulia—was arrested in December 2016 for planning to detonate a suicide vest at the presidential palace. Yulia appeared in court in July 2017, and is looking at a potential ten-year sentence.<sup>50</sup>

Thirdly, with IS's recent change in rhetoric<sup>51</sup> on female combatants, it could be likely that more women will indeed attempt to wage violent attacks. Australia should be prepared for the possibility of ‘inspired’ women combatants, both at home and in the region, and this requires robust gender perspectives integrated within CT and CVE strategies.

Western governments are slowly beginning to realise the strategic need to integrate gender perspectives within narratives of CVE and PVE. As Strømmen rightly states, “[w]omen need to be considered as full agents’ rather than feeding ‘the gender-paradigm of ‘men-as-perpetrators’ and ‘women-as-victims’”.<sup>52</sup> The proven fact that women can indeed facilitate and perpetrate extremist violence<sup>53</sup> underlines the need for the international community, including Australia, to firstly, put women on the agenda, and, secondly, include a gendered approach in its larger CVE strategy that

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<sup>49</sup> Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, ‘Mothers to Bombers: The Evolution of Indonesian Women Extremists’, *IPAC Report*, no. 35, 31 January 2017, <file.understandingconflict.org/file/2017/01/IPAC\_Report\_35.pdf> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>50</sup> Samantha Hawley, ‘Indonesian Prosecutors Seek 10-Year Sentence for First Woman Charged Over Suicide Bomb Plot’, *ABC News*, 23 August 2017, <www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-23/female-suicide-bomber-jakarta-prosecutors-seek-10-year-sentence/8836096> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>51</sup> MEE and agencies, ‘Islamic State Calls on Female Supporters to Take Part in “Jihad”’, *Middle East Eye*, 6 October 2017, <www.middleeasteye.net/news/islamic-state-called-female-supporters-take-part-jihad-934020595> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>52</sup> Ester E. J. Strømmen, ‘Jihadi Brides or Female Foreign Fighters? Women in Da’esh—from Recruitment to Sentencing’, Peace and Security, *GPS Policy Brief* 01/2017, PRIO Centre on Gender, 2017, <www.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.ashx?id=1219&type=publicationfile> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>53</sup> See for more in-depth Patel, *The Sultanate of Women*.

addresses rehabilitation, resocialisation and reintegration of citizens, who have been involved with violent extremism.

## **Locating CVE Within Australia's National Security Architecture: Are Gender Perspectives Incorporated?**

The current wave of IS-related terrorism has created two main immediate security challenges for governments: returnees and individuals or cells at home who are inspired to carry out attacks on their behalf. There are two main routes for governments and civil society to pursue when dealing with individuals who have been engaged in violent extremist networks: punitive or non-punitive. Regardless of which approach is taken for the individual, research and empirical evidence have demonstrated that it is essential that a tailored approach for each returnee is developed and an individual program of rehabilitation and reintegration is followed.<sup>54</sup>

Australia's federal structure means that the Commonwealth has created an overarching National CT Strategy, and within that sit the national CVE framework, strategy and program.<sup>55</sup> This system allows power to be devolved to states and territories to provide localised policy and operational responses to the threat of terrorism through their own autonomous CT and CVE structures. Australia does not distinguish between CVE and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) initiatives. PVE is not separated from CVE in current policy and practice; this is unhelpful as the aims of PVE and CVE are quite different. PVE needs to address the "drivers of violent extremism".<sup>56</sup> Academics and practitioners have called for a distinction<sup>57</sup> to be made between the two processes, which would separate PVE from hard CT security practices, and instead focus on strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law.<sup>58</sup>

States and territories have developed their own approaches to CT and CVE—some of which are more effective than others. For example, New South Wales's COMPACT Program appears to operate independently from national security agencies or law enforcement—the board comprises members of civil society working in different professions including healthcare, business and academia. A number of community-led projects

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<sup>54</sup> RAN Centre of Excellence, 'Response to Returnees'.

<sup>55</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery* [hereafter *Review*], (Canberra: Australian Government, January 2015), <[www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/190215\\_CT\\_Review\\_1.pdf](http://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/190215_CT_Review_1.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018], pp. 8-9, 16-17, 30-32.

<sup>56</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism', A/70/670 (24 December 2015), <[www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>57</sup> Katrina Lee-Koo and Jacqui True, 'Recognising Women's Roles in Countering Violent Extremism', *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute, 28 August 2017, <[www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/responding-women-roles-countering-violent-extremism](http://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/responding-women-roles-countering-violent-extremism)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>58</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism'.



have been funded by COMPACT in 2016, including a CVE initiative led by the United Muslim Women's Association. COMPACT runs parallel to the NSW CT Plan which was published by NSW Police in December 2016.<sup>59</sup> It is unclear from the plan where the links are between law enforcement, social services, community organisations and other important stakeholders. Further, it lacks details of specific measures to action future developments for CVE, including any references to grassroots organisations, women or gender and terrorism.

Victoria has also separated certain elements of CVE from hard security CT, which is carried out by the Community Resilience Unit (CRU). The CRU published their Strategic Framework in December 2015,<sup>60</sup> which aimed to “Strengthen Victoria’s social cohesion and the resilience of its communities” through a whole of government approach, that is not focused on legislative or law enforcement measures.<sup>61</sup> Although the document outlines good objectives and actions, grounded in solid human rights principles of equality, tolerance and social justice, it does not demonstrate how grassroots or women’s organisations will be integrated or that they are even being considered as community partners. There are many women’s organisations—government and non-government funded—focusing on community strength, resilience building, social cohesion and preventing violent extremism.<sup>62</sup> If these organisations were connected through a centralised platform such as the CRU, information and best practice information and evaluations could be shared, which could assist with generating a more nuanced understanding of women’s involvement in violent extremism.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull recently called for both unification and tightening of detention and investigation laws, and for other states and territories to orientate themselves on NSW’s regulations.<sup>63</sup> This is problematic as states and territories have developed their own unique approaches based on localised sociocultural experiences, values and issues.

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<sup>59</sup> NSW Government, ‘New South Wales Counter Terrorism Plan’, December 2016, <[www.secure.nsw.gov.au/media/admin/220/\\_/644vd9w0jw37s4wss0/Plan-NSWCounterTerrorismPlan.pdf](http://www.secure.nsw.gov.au/media/admin/220/_/644vd9w0jw37s4wss0/Plan-NSWCounterTerrorismPlan.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>60</sup> Victoria State Government, *Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria’s Social Cohesion and the Resilience of its Communities* (Melbourne: Victorian Government, December 2015), <[www.vic.gov.au/system/user\\_files/Documents/riosc/Strategic\\_Framework\\_to\\_Strength\\_Victori as\\_Social\\_Cohesion.PDF](http://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/riosc/Strategic_Framework_to_Strength_Victori%20as_Social_Cohesion.PDF)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Sofia Patel, *The Sultanate of Women*.

<sup>63</sup> Katharine Murphy, ‘Turnbull to Push for Terrorism Suspects to Be Detained Without Charge for up to 14 Days’, *The Guardian*, 3 October 2017, <[www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/oct/03/turnbull-to-push-for-terrorism-suspects-to-be-detained-without-charge-for-up-to-14-days?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/oct/03/turnbull-to-push-for-terrorism-suspects-to-be-detained-without-charge-for-up-to-14-days?CMP=share_btn_tw)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

An overview of the two levels is provided below for context about what the government's current approach is, where gender concerns have been integrated, and where the gaps lie. Even though terrorism and violent extremism are highly gendered processes, Australia's CT and CVE policy and legislation do not explicitly address different gender perspectives at either the Commonwealth or state and territory level.

### **COMMONWEALTH CT AND CVE ARCHITECTURE**

The 2015 *Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery* demonstrates how the Australian Government has expanded its CT (and CVE) architecture post 9/11. Since 2001, Australia's Commonwealth CT architecture has integrated a whole of government approach that mobilises various agencies and departments to deal with different CT challenges. Charts 3 and 5 from the *Review* are providing a good overview of the changes in Australia's CT functions and activities (Figure 1).<sup>64</sup>

The *Review* offered several recommendations, such as "expand Commonwealth efforts to address the causes of violent extremism in Australia", including developing a "national CVE Strategy"; as well as proposing the Attorney General's Department (AGD) develop a strategy for controlled return of so-called foreign fighters.<sup>65</sup> There is no mention of women, or of 'gender' in the *Review*. A request for tender was published in April 2017 by the AGD, calling for CVE services, which may have been in response to the recommendations from the *Review*; a request by the researchers for information on the current situation remained unanswered.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) coordinates several multilateral arrangements, working on punitive and non-punitive approaches to current CT challenges, CVE, and preventative future measures. Some examples are the Australia-New-Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee,<sup>66</sup> Joint Counter-Terrorism Teams<sup>67</sup> (ASIO, state and territory police, AFP) operating across all states and territories,<sup>68</sup> and the National Disruption Group (NDG)<sup>69</sup> with its Diversion Team. The NDG is responsible for non-punitive

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<sup>64</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Review*, pp. 5, 7.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* pp. vi, 39.

<sup>66</sup> Australian Federal Police, 'Governance and Legislative Arrangements', <[www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/crime-types/fighting-terrorism/governance-and-legislative-arrangements](http://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/crime-types/fighting-terrorism/governance-and-legislative-arrangements)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>67</sup> "The aim of the teams is to work closely with other domestic agencies in the broader intelligence community and with international partners to identify and investigate terrorist activities in Australia (including terrorism financing) with an emphasis on preventative operations." Australian Federal Police, 'National Efforts', <[www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/crime-types/fighting-terrorism/national-efforts#dt](http://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/crime-types/fighting-terrorism/national-efforts#dt)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> "The NDG consolidates the capabilities of participating agencies to prevent, disrupt and prosecute Australian nationals who travel or intend to travel offshore to engage in hostilities and/or undertake terrorism training, as well as those providing support to them." *Ibid.*



measures,<sup>70</sup> and has been a successful conduit between government and community activity through the deployment of Community Liaison Officers (CLOs).<sup>71</sup> At present, there is no known focus on integrating gender perspectives within existing CT or CVE strategic arrangements that are carried out by the AGD or AFP. The NDG would be a useful vehicle to communicate community needs to government, including how to address gender-based security issues.

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<sup>70</sup> A requested meeting with involved AFP officials could unfortunately not be arranged.

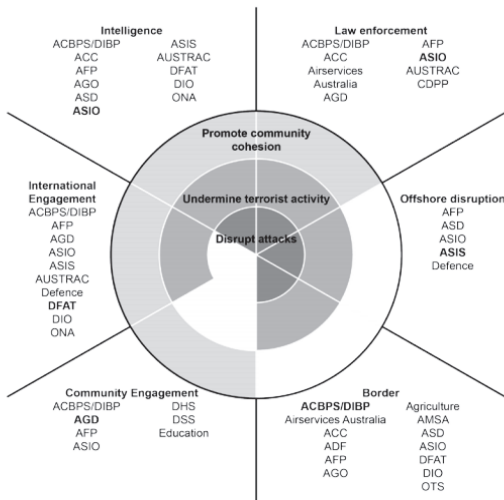
<sup>71</sup> Researcher consultations with members of the AGD Countering violent extremism centre in October 2017.

Figure 1: Comparing Commonwealth CT functions and activities prior to 2001 and in 2014.

Chart 3: Commonwealth CT functions and activities prior to 2001



Chart 5: Commonwealth CT functions and activities in 2014



Source: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery* (Canberra: Australian Government, January 2015).

### **Actors on Commonwealth Level**

For example, the AGD already funds various State and Territory initiatives that work with existing women's associations to prevent and counter violent extremism by building skills such as leadership, education—religious and secular—and vocational training, particularly for immigrant or ethnic minority women. It would be useful to encourage CLOs to communicate concerns and challenges from the local level to the policy level.

### **STATE, TERRITORY AND COMMONWEALTH COOPERATION ON SECURITY ISSUES**

**Returnees:** The 2015 Review emphasised the security challenges posed by returnees.<sup>72</sup> Fulfilling its primary obligation to prevent and combat violent extremism and terrorism, the Australian Government is constantly evolving legislation and policy to be able to deal with the prospect of returnees, and the crimes they may or may not have committed while abroad, and mitigate the risks they may or may not pose at home. A key challenge for judiciaries is determining what kind of offence has been committed, and what laws may have been violated. This will also determine whether the individual faces punitive or non-punitive measures. Whereas committing crimes will be difficult to prove, many returning from conflict zones will likely have committed a 'declared area offence', which is regulated at Section 119.2 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*, by travelling to Mosul or Al-Raqqa.<sup>73</sup> Policy and legislation regarding citizenship, the right to a fair trial, sentencing and rehabilitation processes—for men women and children—have to be grounded in protecting human rights and individual freedoms.

The AGD is coordinating a multi-agency 'reception plan' for those who have been authorised to return home to Australia. This bespoke plan is put together before the individual/family lands in Australia, and is implemented immediately when they arrive. A team comprising border force, immigration officials, law enforcement, healthcare, social workers, child protection, housing and education work together at different phases and stages of the rehabilitation and reintegration process, and the process is adjusted according to the unique concerns for and from the individual. This multi-agency approach is created for those going down both punitive and non-punitive routes, with emphasis on different things for each individual. Details on the concrete design and content of the resources as well as a rehabilitation time-frame, however, were not provided.

**Prisons:** In Australia, the maximum penalty for a person who was found guilty for committing a terrorism offence is imprisonment for up to twenty-five

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<sup>72</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Review*, pp. 11, 34.

<sup>73</sup> Australian Government, 'Australian National Security: Declared Area Offence', <[www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/whataustraliaisdoing/pages/declaredareaoffence.aspx](http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/whataustraliaisdoing/pages/declaredareaoffence.aspx)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

years.<sup>74</sup> However, associating with a terrorist organisation results in only three years imprisonment, but being a member of an organisation, in ten years.<sup>75</sup> With many of today's terrorist attacks being 'inspired' and 'directed', the distinctions and definitions between membership and association could be a grey area.

As of March 2016, there were 37,996 adults incarcerated with only 58 remand and convicted terrorist offenders—15 in Victoria, 41 in NSW and two in Queensland. Nonetheless, this represents a significant growth since 2013 when there were just 13 terrorist prisoners.<sup>76</sup>

Currently, NSW and Victoria operate different practices regarding terrorism-related prisoners: NSW practises a policy of separation and segregation whereas Victoria practises a policy of dispersal.<sup>77</sup>

There are benefits and drawbacks for each approach, but policymakers should be wary of applying short-term solutions (e.g. segregation prevents 'prison radicalisation' of others) that sow the seeds for deeper challenges in the longer term.<sup>78</sup> Thus, confining someone in an environment only to be exposed to others of similar mindset and grievances may cement rather than dilute an individual's commitment to a particular cause. Once he/she serves out the sentence, they may be even more dangerous than when they went in.

The lack of adequate gender perspectives within CVE processes has affected the sentencing of returnee women. Cases abroad have shown a tendency to treat female returnees differently to men, based on prevailing gender stereotypes that position women as less dangerous than men. Strømme presents several examples of women who returned and entered the judicial process but who were either pardoned or sentenced with reduced punishment than their partners or comparable cases involving male returnees, such as the case of Laura Passoni in Belgium.<sup>79</sup> Strømme underlines, how this is problematic:

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<sup>74</sup> Australian Government, 'Living Safe Together: Counter Terrorism Laws', <[www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/informationadvice/Pages/counter-terrorism-laws.aspx#q2b](http://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/informationadvice/Pages/counter-terrorism-laws.aspx#q2b)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Clarke Jones, 'Segregate to Rehabilitate?', Australian National University, 20 October 2016, <[regnet.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/6587/segregate-rehabilitate](http://regnet.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/6587/segregate-rehabilitate)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Sofia Patel, 'Prison Radicalisation: Security Outweighs Reform', *The Strategist*, 12 July 2017, <[www.aspistrategist.org.au/prison-radicalisation-security-outweighs-reform/](http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/prison-radicalisation-security-outweighs-reform/)> [Accessed 5 April 2018]; also see Peter R. Neumann, 'Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries', ICSR Policy Report (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010), <[icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf](http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>79</sup> Laura Passoni returned to Belgium. While her male partner was sentenced to four years in jail, her three-year sentence was suspended. Additionally, she was imposed with restrictions

In treating female violence and membership in an extremist organization as though it cannot be equivalent to male violence and membership, highly problematic and false gendered assumptions about extremism and participation are being made.<sup>80</sup>

**Citizenship:** In 2015 the *Allegiance to Australia Act*<sup>81</sup> legislation was passed to strip dual nationals of Australian citizenship “for terrorist acts committed abroad or by a person who is no longer in Australia”.<sup>82</sup> However, this is heavily contingent on a case-by-case assessment basis, and (hopefully) cannot be implemented carte blanche. The new legislation creates particular risks for children, who may be eligible for the revoking of their citizenship as young as fourteen years old.<sup>83</sup> If enacted, this would be highly controversial, especially as the minimum legal age of a soldier under the United Nations Human Rights Convention on the Rights of the Child, is fifteen.<sup>84</sup> Lydia Shelly, a solicitor, argued that it should be the responsibility of the courts to decide who should and should not be an Australian citizen, and not the government.<sup>85</sup> Further, revoking Australian citizenship leaves the issue of dealing with a potentially radicalised citizen to a third country, which could include Australia’s allies. The fate of the deceased Khaled Sharrouf’s children will be subject to debate, noting that he was the first dual national to be stripped of his Australian citizenship, in February 2017.<sup>86</sup> Questions regarding citizenship of children born overseas as well as others who travelled with their parents are still being debated.

## ISSUES: POLICY AND PRACTICE

According to the CVE Centre at the AGD, effective communication is operating between all involved levels and actors across state, territory and departmental representatives. All officials involved have daily contact with the respective coordinators in the jurisdictions. Quarterly evaluations of the

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including a communication ban to her partner for five years, no internet usage, and a travel ban to leave the country for five years.

<sup>80</sup> Strømme, ‘Jihadi Brides or Female Foreign Fighters?’.

<sup>81</sup> Parliament of Australia, ‘Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia Bill) 2015’, <[www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Bills\\_Legislation/Bills\\_Search\\_Results/Result?bld=r5507](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r5507)> [Accessed 5 April 2018]. Now the *Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Act 2015*.

<sup>82</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘Australia: Don’t Revoke Citizenship Without Safeguards’, 13 December 2015, <[www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/13/australia-dont-revoke-citizenship-without-safeguards](http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/13/australia-dont-revoke-citizenship-without-safeguards)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> United Nations, ‘Convention on the Rights of the Child’, 2 September 1990, <[www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx)>

<sup>85</sup> Michael Edwards, ‘Dual Citizens Involved in Terror Set to Lose Citizenship’, *ABC Radio*, 8 April 2016, <[www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/pm/dual-citizens-involved-in-terror-set-to-lose/7312704](http://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/pm/dual-citizens-involved-in-terror-set-to-lose/7312704)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>86</sup> Jane Norman and Caitlyn Gribbin, ‘Islamic State Fighter Khaled Sharrouf Becomes First to Lose Citizenship Under Anti-Terror Laws’, *ABC News*, 11 February 2017, <[www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-11/islamic-state-fighter-khaled-sharrouf-stripped-of-citizenship/8262268](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-11/islamic-state-fighter-khaled-sharrouf-stripped-of-citizenship/8262268)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

state and territory programs based on qualitative and quantitative data allow for reassessing the current strategies. Furthermore, the current division of tasks among both horizontal as well as vertical levels is seen as well-functioning.<sup>87</sup>

This assessment resonates very differently at the community level: A member of the Muslim community in Sydney, who works closely with men and women affected by violent extremism, domestic violence, child protection and other social welfare issues, commented anecdotally that robust intervention and returnee reception plans may exist on paper, but in practice the reality for the individuals involved looks a lot different. Often, returnees or those from communities affected by violent extremism are approached by government for intelligence purposes rather than genuine assistance and rehabilitation. Furthermore, the spokesperson commented that everyday issues for women left behind (whose husbands made *hijra*) are of key concern, specifically for those who struggle with securing sole parenting rights. These women are reluctant to go to institutions such as Legal Aid, or to members of the Islamic Community as they are worried about the repercussions if they voice their concerns. These women need support and welfare, not securitisation or surveillance.

The reluctance to confide in local authority resonates with the work that the Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition (VIRWC) is doing with female victims of domestic violence. A representative<sup>88</sup> from the VIRWC unequivocally stated that these women are unwilling to go to the police to report family violence, due to fear for their families, religious and cultural profiling, trust and language barriers. This nuanced approach could be beneficial when developing approaches to CVE initiatives. Organisations such as the VIRWC are better placed to establish trusted relationships with communities who are fearful and apprehensive about the involvement of law enforcement. This is a good example of how the concerns of women should be centrally incorporated within CVE policy design and implementation.

The issue of trust is key. An Islamic Council of Victoria spokesperson suggested that a reason they recently distanced from Victoria Police's Community Integration Support Program<sup>89</sup> was because the community no

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<sup>87</sup> Personal conversations with AGD; unfortunately, no answers were provided to questions on gender aspects in the areas of intervention, on monitoring measures regarding the Living Safe Together initiative, on the division between Commonwealth and state/territory levels, the role of law enforcement, and others.

<sup>88</sup> Researcher conversations with the VIRWC, October 2017.

<sup>89</sup> Criminal Code Amendment (High Risk Terrorist Offenders) Bill 2016, Attorney-General's Department submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, October 2016, <[www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence\\_and\\_Security/HRTOB/ill/Report-PDF](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence_and_Security/HRTOB/ill/Report-PDF)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

longer trusted a police-led program.<sup>90</sup> Anecdotal comments have suggested that many individuals—specifically women—are reluctant to participate in initiatives that could get members of their families in trouble.<sup>91</sup>

These examples demonstrate that from a community perspective, there is a genuine lack of trust in what the government is trying to do. There is a discrepancy between policy and practice, especially concerning security and support and community empowerment. While the communication on higher levels might be working successfully, the ground level feels differently about the scope of understanding for particular needs among the involved officials. This could be attributed to a lack of evaluation and monitoring of policies, while regular assessment of policies is essential to develop legislation and operational measures. These issues need to be addressed if CVE policy is going to be implemented sustainably.

## Applying Gender Perspectives to CVE

The UNSCR 2242 in 2015, was a landmark document that addressed the roles of women and girls in countering and assisting in terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>92</sup> This was the first time the international community acknowledged the need for quantitative and qualitative research to understand drivers of radicalisation for women, and the requirement of closer alignment between the women, peace and security (WPS), CT and CVE agendas. The movement towards this has been slow, especially as many WPS practitioners are wary of the securitisation of women's rights by practitioners with no gender training implementing policy.<sup>93</sup> However, if done properly, there is much scope for information and best practice sharing opportunities.<sup>94</sup>

There are two aspects to integrating gender perspectives within CVE. First, governments and civil society must deal with the security challenges *posed by* women who are involved with violent extremism and terrorism. This includes returnees as well as networks integrating women at home. Secondly, governments must work with civil society and communities to better understand the range of roles that women can and do play *to prevent and counter* the threat of violent extremism and terrorism.

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<sup>90</sup> Researcher conversations with the Islamic Council of Victoria, October 2017; Chip Le Grand and Rebecca Urban, 'Muslim Mentors Walk Away from Jail Deradicalisation Program', *The Australian*, 9 June 2017.

<sup>91</sup> Researcher conversations with ICV, October 2017.

<sup>92</sup> United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, 'Role of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism', <[www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/womens-role/](http://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/womens-role/)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>93</sup> Shepherd, 'The Role of the WPS Agenda in Countering Violent Extremism'.

<sup>94</sup> Sofia Patel, 'How Should Australia's WPS National Action Plan Tackle Terrorism?', *The Strategist*, 29 March 2017, <[www.aspistrategist.org.au/australias-wps-national-action-plan-tackle-terrorism/](http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australias-wps-national-action-plan-tackle-terrorism/)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

## **SECURITY CHALLENGES POSED BY WOMEN**

Returnees are a major security concern and pose a set of unique challenges such as battlefield experience, psychological and physical trauma, hardened ideological conviction and international networks of similar mindsets. Individuals who have remained at home, but who may have been drawn towards violent extremist ideologies and narratives because of varying sociopolitical, religious and personal experiences also pose specific challenges. The experiences of men and women in both these cohorts differ, and must therefore be considered as a prerequisite before designing and implementing policy or programs.

There are three main challenges posed by returnees that require gender-based CVE interventions:

1. battlefield experience (not just operating weaponry but also knowledge of bombmaking and detonating)
2. implementing policy for families and children—those taken over by parents and those born overseas
3. the echo-chamber effects of friendship groups and communities that can be maintained internationally through the internet. The challenges posed by returning women and children are similar to a degree to those posed by male returnees.

**Applying Gender Perspectives to Battlefield Experience:** Although women may have less battlefield experience, they have been heavily involved in training exercises, and may have good knowledge of bombmaking and operating weapons. Additionally, based on IS's official documents, reading anecdotal testimonies and interviews with IS women, there is no reason to suggest that women's ideological commitment to the caliphate ideal is not as deep as that of male counterparts. If anything, the struggle for women to migrate to the territory and to exist whilst over there, far exceeds that of men, due to restrictions on their civil liberties, imposed on them both inside and outside the caliphate.<sup>95</sup>

The battlefield extends beyond the physical, into the virtual. Noting Elizabeth Pearson's research<sup>96</sup> of pro-IS Twitter communities, men and women have created highly resilient online profiles to maintain and reinforce the distribution of pro-IS ideology within their own circles and beyond. CVE initiatives must account for these communication channels, especially as

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<sup>95</sup> Rukmini Callimachi and John Woo, 'Dressing Under the Islamic State', *The New York Times*, 7 December 2016, <[www.nytimes.com/video/international-home/100000004807233/dressing-under-the-islamic-state.html?ref=collection%2Fbyline%2Frukmini-callimachi](http://www.nytimes.com/video/international-home/100000004807233/dressing-under-the-islamic-state.html?ref=collection%2Fbyline%2Frukmini-callimachi)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>96</sup> Pearson, 'Online as the New Frontline'.



they are becoming less visible, due to company crackdowns on the one hand, and the proliferation of encryption software on the other.

**Applying Gender Perspectives to Policy on Returning Families and Children:** Women and children are the most likely candidates to return home.<sup>97</sup> If the Sharrouf children—the eldest is now sixteen—are reintegrated back into Australian society, prolonged stringent intervention measures will have to be uniquely tailored to each one to ensure an effective balance between security and support.

Prevailing gender stereotypes that apply ‘maternalistic logic’<sup>98</sup> to women’s involvement with IS could affect how CVE policy is implemented. Governments and media have contributed to the dominant rhetoric suggesting that women’s radicalisation occurs “because they are ignorant or brainwashed”, which “masks cultural and material considerations in their literal and intellectual journey to Islamic State”.<sup>99</sup> Within the narrative of political violence, women are often seen as less dangerous than men. Noting the depth of Zaynab Sharrouf’s commitment to IS’s ideology, it would be heavily misguided to assume she poses less of a risk to broader national security concerns than her brothers. As has been argued, sociopolitical grievances and ideological commitment to IS’s cause transcend gender, thus the risks posed by these individuals to national security should not be underestimated. CVE processes should be equipped to deal with the challenges.

**Applying Gender Perspectives to Social Networks and Echo Chambers:**

The idea of creating a sisterhood was a key pull factor for Western women towards joining IS to bond with others sharing similar ideals. Many Muslim women living in the West felt alienated by the pressures to conform to standards of liberalism. The Australian women within IS’s caliphate were thought to have created a particularly strong bond, mainly due to their openly supportive conversations via their social media accounts.<sup>100</sup> Returnees may still have friends and relatives back home with whom they will likely reconnect with, should they come back. For example, Australian jihadi Mohamed Elomar’s first wife, Fatima Elomar, was prosecuted and sentenced to two years in prison in 2014 for providing support to her husband to fight with IS in Syria (clothing and other items). She was released in 2016 and “appeared to have been rehabilitated and posed low risk of reoffending”.<sup>101</sup> As far as we know, she is back in her former neighbourhood in Western

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<sup>97</sup> RAN Centre of Excellence, ‘Response to Returnees’.

<sup>98</sup> See work of Mia Bloom, Katherine Brown, Karla Cunningham, Laura Sjoberg, Caron Gentry and Laura Shepherd.

<sup>99</sup> Brown, ‘Gender and Countering Islamic State Radicalisation’.

<sup>100</sup> Saltman and Smith, *Till Martyrdom Do Us Part*.

<sup>101</sup> Joanna Woodburn, ‘Wife of Islamic State fighter Mohamed Elomar Given Two-Year Suspended Sentence’, *ABC News*, 1 July 2017, <[www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-01/wife-of-is-fighter-mohamad-elomar-pleads-guilty-terror-charges/7560986](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-01/wife-of-is-fighter-mohamad-elomar-pleads-guilty-terror-charges/7560986)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

Sydney. Should Mohamed's second wife—Zaynab Sharrouf—return from IS territory, with his child, the likelihood of the Elomar family reconnecting with the Sharrouf family is very likely.

The impact of these networks on an individual is important to consider when developing CVE initiatives. IS recruitment relied heavily on cultivating networks of interaction both online and offline. These networks contribute towards reinforcing beliefs between each other and potentially recruiting new members.

### **WOMEN IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

At present, policies addressing violent extremism are limited in their scope and effect due to three main factors:

1. prevailing gender stereotypes that construct women as innately peaceful and maternal;
2. implementing policy or practice that securitises rather than supports women; and
3. policy that marginalises women from participating wholly in public life.

To address these challenges, CVE needs to be designed, implemented, operationalised and evaluated by women as well as men to ensure holistic understanding of the challenges posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

**Gender Stereotypes:** Policy integrating the roles of women in violent extremism replicates gender stereotypes assuming that women are innately maternal, domestic and non-violent. Katherine Brown has argued that this 'maternal logic'<sup>102</sup> depends on reinforcing particular notions of masculinity and femininity. Women in the narrative of IS-terrorism are often portrayed as irrational actors whose involvement with the organisation was either because of manipulation by recruiters or force against their will. This notion denies seeing women as independent agents, which subordinates and patronises them.<sup>103</sup>

This has encouraged governments and civil society to harness the roles of mother, wife and sister as central to detecting early signs of radicalisation, which does not incorporate women into the public sphere as functioning citizens of society.<sup>104</sup> Instead, it restricts women's roles to the private sphere. The valuable roles played by women around the world in all kinds of

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<sup>102</sup> Brown, 'Gender and Countering Islamic State Radicalisation'.

<sup>103</sup> See Bloom, *Bombshell*; Laura Sjöberg and Caron E. Gentry (eds), *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2007); and Brown, 'Gender and Countering Islamic State Radicalisation'.

<sup>104</sup> Brown, 'Gender and Countering Islamic State Radicalisation'.

family, community, society and government efforts in building resilience, peacekeeping and peacebuilding thus go unnoticed,<sup>105</sup> and ineffective CVE processes are created based on inaccurate understandings of women's participation in violent extremism. CT and CVE policies must avoid replicating gender assumptions and stereotypes, otherwise, it "further emphasises how women are only subjects of policy and of the state through their relations with men and their ability to reproduce".<sup>106</sup> Women can and should be considered as powerful agents of change within their communities and in mainstream society.

Example from the field: *Field research in Indonesia, conducted by Monash University has usefully dismantled gender stereotypes surrounding women's roles in PVE and CVE, arguing that "women's capacity to prevent and counter violent extremism extends far beyond their family roles."*<sup>107</sup> *Through empirical evidence, the research demonstrates that women are active citizens within their communities, as educators, running businesses or charities, religious leaders, and family members. Furthermore, the impact of "women's leadership and authority within their workplaces"*<sup>108</sup> *is indicative of a powerful counternarrative to fundamentalist patriarchal ideology of female subordination. The research concludes that championing gender parity is likely to be "the single most powerful counter-discourse to extremist interpretations of religion."*<sup>109</sup>

**Policy and Practice of Securitising Not Supporting Women:** Securitising and instrumentalising women's roles in their communities for CT or CVE purposes is a second problem. For example, women left behind in their communities whose relatives have been involved in IS-terrorist networks (either killed in battle, are incarcerated or are still abroad) may be at risk of being co-opted by government for intelligence purposes; they are offered welfare support including much needed financial support in the absence of their husbands or male relatives. This approach fails to recognise the real security and welfare concerns of women, and puts them at risk of alienation and ostracism from their communities; "though it may produce results in the short-term, in the long-term it will destroy the social fabric of the society".<sup>110</sup>

There is a balance between offering support and mitigating security risks that does not involve securitising women and their communities. These measures require investment in long-term sustainability to develop genuine resilience and build reform within communities. Developing well-supported,

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<sup>105</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York: UN Women, 2015), Chapter 9, <[wps.unwomen.org/pdf/CH09.pdf](https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/CH09.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>106</sup> Brown, 'Gender and Countering Islamic State Radicalisation'.

<sup>107</sup> True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*.

financed and regularly monitored programs to empower women and their families should be prioritised. Local governments should work with these individuals to improve access to education—religious and secular—to develop critical thinking skills and other vocational training initiatives to enable women to provide confident single parenting care.

Often, government-led initiatives are more inclined to reach affected communities by partnering with self-appointed ‘representatives’ claiming to speak on behalf of their communities. These organisations are usually male dominated, have their own intentions and do not always have access to the most vulnerable individuals.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, in conservative communities, women are not always allowed access to certain resources or places, meaning they may never be engaged with ‘official’ community engagement initiatives.

A much better approach would be to enhance already existing initiatives at the grassroots level, often delivering unique, tailored, first-hand support in a trusted manner. This includes activities such as legal representation, financial, emotional, childcare and healthcare support.

Example from the field: *RUSI’s field research on patterns of gendered ‘radicalisation’ to IS in four Western Muslim communities (The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France and Canada) demonstrated that gendered resources contribute towards different pathways into and out of radicalisation for men and women—such as access to public and private spaces, and social networks and groups—both online and offline. Cultural restrictions often influence the dynamics between men and women in these communities and must be considered when trying to understand how individuals radicalise, and where this process takes place.*

**Marginalisation of Women from Social and Political Life:** Thirdly, policy and legislation that is perceived to target specific communities based on race or ethnicity has led to whole communities feeling targeted. Women in Muslim communities are often disproportionately affected by new policy and legislation, enforcing certain codes of conduct regarding dress: for example, Austria’s recently imposed veil ban,<sup>112</sup> France and Turkey’s longstanding laws on secularity, and the controversial attempt to enact a ‘burkini ban’ in France in 2016.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, Muslim women are more vulnerable to the

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<sup>111</sup> OSCE, *Women and Terrorist Radicalization Final Report* (Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2013), <[www.osce.org/atu/99919?download=true](http://www.osce.org/atu/99919?download=true)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>112</sup> Mary Bulman, ‘Austrian Face Veil Ban Comes into Force Under New “Integration” Policy’, *The Independent*, 1 October 2017, <[www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/austrian-face-veil-ban-burka-niqab-a7976531.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/austrian-face-veil-ban-burka-niqab-a7976531.html)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>113</sup> Lizzie Dearden, ‘Burkini Ban: Why Is France Arresting Muslim Women for Wearing Full-Body Swimwear and Why Are People so Angry?’, *The Independent*, 24 August 2016, <[www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/burkini-ban-why-is-france-arresting-muslim-](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/burkini-ban-why-is-france-arresting-muslim-)

effects of hate crime, Islamophobic and xenophobic attacks or abuse from mainstream society due to wearing visible markers of their faith such as a hijab, niqab or abaya.

Despite this, some Muslim women actually started wearing the hijab over the past decade as a means to facilitate greater freedom for themselves, and to integrate into the public domain.<sup>114</sup> Often, girls are denied personal freedoms due to the traditions imposed by a culture, rather than as a result of religious doctrine.<sup>115</sup> If governments are encouraged to identify increased markers of religiosity such as wearing the hijab with signs of radicalisation, it may encourage misleading policy and operational interventions targeting whole communities unnecessarily. Doing so plays into the 'us versus them' narrative terrorist recruiters capitalise on.

Thus, "the introduction of social, political and legal restrictions on women's freedom of movement, dress, access to public and community places ... and the use of derogatory language towards women" is indicative of a larger problem that often "[marginalises] women from being at the centre of social and political life" and restricts their agency.<sup>116</sup> If women are not integrated at the centre of CT, CVE and PVE program and policy designs, women will continue to be disproportionately negatively affected by the effects of such policies and programs.

The integration of gender perspectives into policy, operational, legislative and strategic responses to terrorism and violent extremism is important for effectiveness and inclusiveness. Thus, CVE processes need to target and integrate men and women in compliance with human rights standards, and in advancement of gender equality (SDG5).<sup>117</sup>

Example from the field: *RUSI's research found young Muslim women living in societies where the hijab or niqab has been banned, felt a sense of exclusion from Western society. These same women seek a sense of belonging and empowerment, which they may have found in Islamic State.*<sup>118</sup>

*Both RUSI and Monash research offered familiar insight into potential early warning signs of radicalisation, such as change of clothing, change of discussion topics, change in music taste.*<sup>119</sup> *These factors may be indicative*

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women-for-wearing-full-body-swimwear-and-why-are-people-a7207971.html> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>114</sup> Katherine Brown, 'Realising Muslim Women's Rights: The Role of Islamic identity among British Muslim women', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 29 (2006), pp. 417-30.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Lee-Koo and True, 'Recognising Women's Roles in Countering Violent Extremism'.

<sup>117</sup> United Nations, 'UN Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 5'.

<sup>118</sup> Elizabeth Pearson and Emily Winterbotham, 'Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation', *The RUSI Journal*, vol. 162, no. 3 (2017), pp. 60-72.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.; True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

*of a radicalisation process when combined with other factors such as airing social grievances, identity issues, change in behaviour or friendship groups.*

## Conclusions

This research has outlined the varied and complex challenges facing Australia, and other international governments, regarding female involvement with IS-related terrorism and violent extremism. This research has reinforced the integral participation of women as perpetrators and preventers of violent extremism. It hopes to encourage a reassessment of existing CVE policy and practice in Australia, to address the complex challenges posed by men and women within the context of violent extremism.

This research has incorporated an assessment of existing CVE measures in Australia's national security architecture, which has demonstrated that current approaches to CVE do not adequately integrate gender perspectives; the inclusion of women in CVE efforts are often overlooked. Furthermore, initiatives that do attempt to incorporate female perspectives tend to reinforce gender stereotypes which result in limited scope and effectiveness. Existing government and civil society-led initiatives champion women's roles in the domestic sphere as mothers and wives, arguing that female maternal qualities provide 'unique' perspectives to spot radicalisation early. These initiatives are meant to be 'empowering'. Instead, they come across as patronising, and complicit in endorsing circumscribed gender roles.

As indicated by the GCTF and the OSCE, it is important to "distinguish between women as actors in CVE and the 'gendered' nature of violent extremism".<sup>120</sup> The gendered experiences of men and women with violent extremism affects the ways that they are recruited, their roles and responsibilities within an organisation, and how they are likely to disengage; gendered experiences need to be factored into CVE policy and processes.

For policy to be implemented effectively, clear aims and objectives need to be formulated, as suggested in the UN Secretary General's call for developing a National Action Plan, which Australia has not done yet. International multilateral organisations and states need to develop robust good practice towards integrating women's voices, skills and concerns within all aspects of countering and preventing violent extremism—including efforts to counter men's involvement in terrorism.<sup>121</sup>

The most valuable information about the security concerns of women, and the informal ways in which they already work to develop resilience to

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<sup>120</sup> Global Counterterrorism Forum, 'Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism', 2015, <[www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf](http://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf)> [Accessed 5 April 2018].

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

radicalisation within communities, has come from primary sources and on the ground fieldwork. From Western, South-East Asian and South Asian communities, research has demonstrated that women do desire empowerment and equality, but in ways that they can define themselves. As demonstrated, women already play a range of valuable roles within their communities that extend far beyond the home and domestic environment. Policymakers need to invest in more data-driven research across a broader range of communities and societies to get a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of female involvement within narratives of violent extremism. Women's voices need to be central to program design and planning; only then will it be possible to work towards creating sustainable and effective CVE future initiatives.

Additionally, existing policy and programs that currently integrate gender within CVE need to be regularly assessed and evaluated, as pathways into and out of violent extremism are fluid. In doing so, we can broaden and deepen our understanding of the complex dimensions involved in these processes to develop more nuanced and effective CVE initiatives.

## **Recommendations for Australia**

**1. Develop best practice on gendered CVE initiatives.** Consult and cooperate with existing regional and international research institutes working to advance female participation in design, implementation and evaluation of CVE policy and practice. This also includes regular evaluation of existing programs and policies to ensure accordance with international human rights standards. Furthermore, Australia should consider creating a Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in accordance with Secretary General recommendations, alongside twenty-six OSCE nations that have done so.

**2. Support closer alignment between WPS and CVE.** CVE policymakers and practitioners can apply lessons learned from the WPS agenda when integrating gender perspectives at conceptual and practical levels. That includes appropriate gender training to ensure that women's concerns are adequately addressed and prevent the reproduction of negative stereotypes. The WPS coalition should consider integrating CVE in Australia's next National Action Plan.

**3. Facilitate closer cooperation and information sharing between:** a) **States and territories;** b) **States/territories and communities.** Regular exchange of existing government CT and CVE policy and practice between states and territories would be helpful to identify successful and ineffective measures. Furthermore, the concerns of communities should be taken into account when developing new policy. This would be greatly assisted by facilitating working groups within communities with appropriate representation from both sides.



Findings need to be made accessible and presented in a comprehensive way.

**4. Invest in more data-driven research.** Empirical studies, particularly with a focus on gender, are valuable for developing a broader understanding of roles women play within violent extremism and countering it. That will allow for more appropriate policy development and implementation.

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# Civil Society Participation in Women, Peace and Security Governance: Insights from Australia

Anuradha Mundkur and Laura J. Shepherd

Research on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda frequently focuses on the participation of civil society organisations in the governance and implementation of the agenda. In this paper, we examine the current engagement between civil society and government around the WPS agenda in Australia, and explore the ways in which this engagement could be enhanced and supported into the future. Taking seriously—and facilitating properly, through funding and opportunities for direct ongoing engagement—civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia and across the world is essential for the agenda's continued resonance, legitimacy, and efficacy in world politics.

The policy architecture of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is formed of eight United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) adopted under the title of 'Women and Peace and Security'.<sup>1</sup> These resolutions represent the consolidation of decades of women's activism, leadership and advocacy regarding the importance of women's participation in peace and security governance and the protection of women's rights in conflict settings. The agenda is usually described as comprising three or four 'pillars', of which participation and protection are two. The agenda also engages questions of violence prevention, including but not limited to the prevention of sexualised violence in conflict. The relief and recovery dimension is identified as a fourth pillar in some scholarship and practice. Research on the WPS agenda frequently focuses on the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs), especially women's organisations, in WPS governance and implementation, perhaps as a result of the genealogy of the agenda and the perception that it is founded in civil society activity.<sup>2</sup> Our

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, the eight UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) that form the policy architecture of the WPS agenda, with their years of adoption, are as follows: UNSCR 1325 (2000); UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); and UNSCR 2242 (2015).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example Sanam Naraghi Aderlini, *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007); Judy El-Bushra, 'Feminism, Gender, and Women's Peace Activism', *Development & Change*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2007), pp. 131-47; Elisabeth Porter, *Peacebuilding: Women in International Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 11-42; Elisabeth Porter, 'Women, Political Decision-Making, and Peace-Building', *Global Change, Peace and Security*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2010), pp. 245-62; Julia Arostegui, 'Gender, Conflict, and Peace-Building: How Conflict Can Catalyse Positive Change for Women', *Gender & Development*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2013), pp. 533-49; Jill Irvine, 'Leveraging Change: Women's Organizations and the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Balkans', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2013), pp. 20-38.

paper seeks to contribute to this body of literature, examining the case of civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia. We draw out specific dimensions of the interactions between civil society and government in support of an argument about the role of civil society organisations in the continued resonance, legitimacy and efficacy of the WPS agenda in world politics.

We have chosen Australia as our case study in part due to the unparalleled access to data that we enjoy as a result of our ongoing involvement with WPS governance and civil society activity in this space. More significantly, though, is the fact that Australia is one of the countries named in the 2015 global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as evidencing best practice in the sphere of civil society participation. The study states that “[t]he role of civil society in collecting up-to-date information on the situation of women affected by conflict, as well as in maintaining the momentum for NAP [National Action Plan] implementation, is well recognized”.<sup>3</sup> The 2015 global study lists Australia, among other countries, as having specific provisions for enabling civil society participation in WPS governance. Our intention, therefore, is to present a broader argument about the significance of civil society participation in WPS governance by examining the current engagement between civil society and government around WPS in Australia, and through exploring the ways in which this engagement could be enhanced and supported into the future.

There are three dimensions of civil society participation, namely *expertise*, *ownership* and *accountability*, to which we pay particular attention in this paper. Together, these dimensions form the mode(s) of civil society engagement we identify as critical to the continued development of the WPS agenda. In discussing *expertise*, we investigate the ways in which, both globally and in Australia, the participation of women and women’s CSOs in WPS governance brings to the fore civil society’s capacity to speak with, for, and about, the subjects of WPS governance in ways that government perhaps is unable or at times unwilling to do. We interrogate the question of *ownership*. The WPS agenda is somewhat unique in this regard. While the architecture has an institutional home at the UN Security Council, the agenda lives in civil society, because it is nurtured and kept alive by the various civil society entities—both individual and collective—that are committed to the realisation of the hard-fought commitments that are represented in WPS principles and practices across the world. Finally, we explore *accountability* as a core contribution that civil society makes to WPS governance in Australia. This relates directly to John Keane’s formulation of civil society as “a permanent thorn in the side of political power”,<sup>4</sup> in this case

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<sup>3</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York: UN Women, 2015), p. 248. Online, at: <[wps.unwomen.org](http://wps.unwomen.org)> [Accessed 25 September 2017].

<sup>4</sup> John Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 15.

keeping the Australian Government accountable for the commitments made under the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2012-2018 (hereafter 'the Australian NAP').

The paper proceeds in five substantive parts. First, we outline the conceptualisation of civil society that informs our analysis here. In the second part, we provide an overview of the role played by civil society in the development and implementation of the Australian NAP, in order to provide some context for the tripartite discussion that follows regarding the elements of civil society participation outlined above. We devote parts three, four and five to the discussion of expertise, ownership and accountability respectively. We draw together our various strands of argument in the concluding section of the paper, emphasising the significance of civil society participation in WPS governance and summarising an argument about the importance of taking seriously—and facilitating properly, including through funding and opportunities for ongoing direct engagement—women's CSOs participation in WPS governance in Australia and across the world.

## **The Concept of Civil Society and Its Role in Democratic Governance**

Civil society as a concept has historically been defined in opposition to its others. In some early formulations, as outlined for example by Krishan Kumar, it is held to be an intermediate realm between government and the family.<sup>5</sup> Prior to that, even, in modern political theory, the concept of civil society was juxtaposed with the 'state of nature', in which people enjoy neither the freedom afforded by, nor the protections of, formal government. *Societas civilis*, in this view, is broadly synonymous with subjection to the rule of law and the civilisation of society under democracy.<sup>6</sup> Civil society is also conceptualised as a 'third sphere', a space apart from politics, on the one hand, and economics, on the other. This account conceives of civil society as a facilitative, integrative domain, in which free associations of individuals can collectively counterbalance the power of the state: "Here, social associations bringing people together in networks of solidarity cultivate the art of empathy, perform functions of pedagogy and socialisation and, in general, help citizens to connect".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Krishan Kumar, 'Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 44, no. 3 (1993), p. 378.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example Anthony Black, 'Concepts of Civil Society in pre-Modern Europe', in Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 33-38; John Keane, 'Civil Society, Definitions and Approaches', in Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler (eds), *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2010), pp. 461-64; Kumar, 'Civil Society'.

<sup>7</sup> Neera Chandhoke, 'The "Civil" and the "Political" in Civil Society', *Democratization*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2001), p. 4.

Alternative ways to theorise civil society are represented in Hegelian, neo-Marxist, and Foucauldian writings on the limits of power and resources. All three offer, in various ways, explanations of civil society as a social structure that functions towards more or less democratic or authoritarian ends.<sup>8</sup> The educative function of civil society is held to be integral to the functionality of the state and the relations of production that support and reinforce state power, on this view. Where Gramsci, in particular, breaks from these other theories of power and social control is in the articulation of possibilities afforded by civil society for resistance to hegemony in progressive and positive ways, through a reversal of the logic that sees power flow from civil society or citizenry to the state and the creation of hegemony located in and deriving from a vibrant and effective civil society.<sup>9</sup> In brief, social progress happens when CSOs agree upon and create governance structures in society that are supported and facilitated by the state, which in turn exists to serve civil society, not the other way around. While perhaps not widely or consciously attributed to Gramsci himself, this strategy of social progress underpins much of contemporary civil society's engagement with government.

This is the vision of civil society that underpins our analysis of civil society participation in WPS governance in this paper. Not only do we focus on the democratic aspects of civil society in our articulation of why civil society participation matters in WPS governance, but also our account aligns with that outlined briefly above in its articulation of a vision of social change. Ultimately, our view of civil society is one that engages with the “*articulation and negotiation* of political interests within society”<sup>10</sup> with the outcome of effecting positive change, while remaining in balance with government because CSOs lack the regulatory and geostrategic power of states. In a typically eloquent turn of phrase, John Keane has proposed that “civil society should become a permanent thorn in the side of political power”,<sup>11</sup> but in such a way as the state and civil society are mutually reinforcing progressive initiatives and alternative visions of social organisation. Writing about the role of civil society in democratisation, Keane suggests that “[c]ivil society and the state ... must become the condition of each other's democratization”;<sup>12</sup> we endorse this view and in turn argue that civil society and the state need to enable each other's support of and commitment to ongoing democratic governance. Manuel Castells summarises this view

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<sup>8</sup> Hegel and Foucault tending to see outcomes more conservatively, Gramsci—among others—viewing the possibilities of civil society activity slightly more positively. See Michael Hardt, ‘The Withering of Civil Society’, *Social Text*, no. 45 (1995), pp. 27–44, pp. 28–33 in particular.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Christoph Spurk, ‘Understanding Civil Society’, in Thania Paffenholz (ed.), *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010), p. 8 (emphasis in original).

<sup>11</sup> Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society*, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

when he proposes that “the relationship between the state and civil society is the cornerstone of democracy”.<sup>13</sup>

This conceptualisation of civil society and its function vis-à-vis social progress leaves unanswered questions about *why* civil society is such a valuable sphere of activity. A well thought through account of the benefits of a vibrant and engaged civil society requires that we sketch out the positive qualities or characteristics of civil society participation in governance, lest we present an analysis that romanticises or obscures rather than clarifies the contributions made by civil society organisations in relation to Women, Peace and Security governance. Debates about the inclusion of civil society in WPS governance in particular owe an intellectual debt to debate about civil society as a development actor, which is not unrelated to Keane’s discussion of democratisation. In the context of societal transformation, particularly transformation led by global development organisations in the 1980s and 1990s, “a vibrant civil society was considered an important pillar for establishing democracy, and support for it became an obvious aim of democratization”.<sup>14</sup> The values assumed to inhere within civil society are plural and wide-ranging. However, the significance and worth of fostering an engaged civil society in the development context carry over to and inform assessments of the significance and worth of civil society engagement with WPS principles and practices. In the section that follows, we outline the role that civil society played in the context of Australian WPS governance, particularly in relation to the adoption and implementation of the the Australian NAP.

## The Role of Civil Society in WPS Governance in Australia

As outlined above, the 2015 global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, published under the title *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace* (hereafter ‘the *Global Study*’), highlights the pivotal role that civil society has played, nationally and internationally. Civil society actors have been leaders in both advocacy and lobbying for greater recognition of the WPS agenda and in drafting resolutions, policies and action plans to implement the agenda.<sup>15</sup> As Cynthia Cockburn notes,

It may well be the only Security Council resolution for which the groundwork, the diplomacy and lobbying, the drafting and redrafting, was almost entirely the work of civil society, of non-governmental organisations. Certainly it was the first in which the actors were almost all women.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Manuel Castells, ‘The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks and Global Governance’, *Annals AAPSS*, no. 616 (2008), p. 78.

<sup>14</sup> Schmidt, cited in Spurk, ‘Understanding Civil Society’, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*.

<sup>16</sup> Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand: War, Women’s Activism and Feminist Analysis* (London: Zed Books, 2007), p. 141.

In Australia, CSOs and individuals are deeply engaged in advocacy, lobbying, and activism in the sphere of WPS governance. This section provides a brief overview of that activity in the context of the Australian government's engagement with WPS more broadly.

Australia's aid program has a history of supporting aspects of the WPS agenda even before the adoption of UNSCR 1325. Australian aid played an instrumental role in supporting the Gender Unit of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) to develop gender mainstreaming guidelines for the ministries of education and health. Similarly, well before the Australian NAP was published, Australia supported projects in the Asia-Pacific region that align with the key pillars of UNSCR 1325. In Bougainville, the aid programme funded the Community Trauma Programme developed by the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation. In the Philippines in 2004, the aid program assisted the Mindanao Commission on Women's work to influence public policy and public opinion about peace and development from a women's perspective. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue's project *Women at the Asian Peace Table: Enhancing Women's Participation in Peace Processes* in 2009 sought to increase women's involvement in formal conflict resolution and mediation processes. Ongoing assistance to UNDP's network of peace advocates, N-Peace, is yet another example of Australia's support to the WPS agenda.<sup>17</sup> Australian CSOs sought to leverage this work when lobbying for an Australian NAP.<sup>18</sup> The government's decision to bid for a temporary seat on the UN Security Council (2013-2014) was seen as the window of opportunity to lobby for its adoption.<sup>19</sup> The campaign for the Australian NAP was led by the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF Australian Section) and supported by UNIFEM Australia (now UN Women National Committee Australia), in partnership with other locally based CSOs.<sup>20</sup>

The advocacy work that laid the foundation for the Australian NAP dates back to 2004 when WILPF (Australian Section) received funding from the Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW) to develop an Australian website promoting UNSCR 1325. In the same year, the Australian Government invited WILPF (Australian Section) to suggest ideas on the best way forward to implementing a NAP, as part of preparatory work for the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In 2008, in partnership with UN Women National

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<sup>17</sup> Sherrill Whittington, 'Women, Peace and Security: A Gendered Approach to Aid Effectiveness in Post-Conflict Development', Think Piece, Office of Development Effectiveness, AusAID, November 2011, <dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/Documents/women-peace-security-aid-effectiveness-sherrill-whittington.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

<sup>18</sup> Katrina Lee-Koo, 'Implementing Australia's National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 3 (2014), pp. 300-13.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.; see also Laura J. Shepherd and Jacqui True, 'The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Australian Leadership in the World: From Rhetoric to Commitment?', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 3 (2014), pp. 257-84.

<sup>20</sup> Lee-Koo, 'Implementing Australia's National Action Plan'.



Committee Australia, WILPF (Australian Section) proposed to the former Minister for the Status of Women that not only should Australia develop a NAP but that the Women, Peace and Security agenda should be one of the top ten women's priorities for action. As a result, in 2009 WILPF (Australian Section) was funded to run national consultations to inform the Australian Government on the next steps towards the development of a NAP.

The recommendations derived from national consultation were captured in a discussion paper released in 2009 titled *Final Report: Developing a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (hereafter *Final Report*).<sup>21</sup> The *Final Report* provided a comprehensive framework outlining the scope of the NAP (domestic and international focus), recommendations regarding governance structures, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Following the release of the *Final Report*, OFW convened a Women, Peace and Security Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG), comprising representatives from the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Defence (ADF), Attorney General's (AGD), AusAID (now Australia Aid and part of DFAT), Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). The IDWG was tasked with determining "how Australia could better implement UNSCR 1325" and overseeing the "development of a consultation draft National Action Plan, which was informed by key suggestions from WILPF Australia's work".<sup>22</sup> As discussed below, many of the recommendations made by CSOs in the *Final Report* were ignored by the IDWG.

Australia's six-year NAP details four key strategies with specific actions under each strategy that correspond to the four pillars (which the Australian NAP terms as thematic areas) of UNSCR 1325—prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery.<sup>23</sup> Some actions align with more than one thematic area and some align with the normative thematic area, described as a commitment to "raising awareness about and developing policy frameworks to progress the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and integrating a gender perspective across government policies on peace and security".<sup>24</sup> For each of the actions, the Australian NAP details government agency responsibility. The four strategies that frame the NAP are: integrating a gender perspective into Australia's policies on peace and security; embedding the WPS agenda in the Australian Government's

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<sup>21</sup> WILPF Australia Section, *Final Report: Developing a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2009), <[www.1325australia.org.au/textdocuments/FinalReportJuly2009.pdf](http://www.1325australia.org.au/textdocuments/FinalReportJuly2009.pdf)> [Accessed 25 September 2017].

<sup>22</sup> Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs [FaHCSIA], 'Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018', 2012, <[www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2012/aus\\_nap\\_on\\_women\\_2012\\_2018.pdf](http://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/aus_nap_on_women_2012_2018.pdf)> [Accessed 25 September 2017], p. 16.

<sup>23</sup> The Australian NAP primarily takes UNSCR 1325 as the framework for implementation.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.



approach to human resource management of defence, AFP and deployed personnel; supporting CSOs to promote equality and increase women's participation in conflict prevention, peace-building, conflict resolution and relief and recovery; and promoting WPS implementation internationally. The government departments with NAP responsibility include the ADF, AFP, DFAT, ACMC, AGD and OFW, the entity tasked with coordinating this whole of government effort.

CSOs, despite their vital role in pushing for the national adoption of the WPS agenda, have no clear role in the Australian NAP. Laura Shepherd and Jacqui True draw attention to the lost opportunity to provide for meaningful CSO participation in both the governance and implementation of the Australian NAP: "whereas in some NAPs, civil society is a cosignatory (such as in the Netherlands) or an implementing agency (such as in the Pacific Regional Action Plan), the Australian NAP does not explicitly mention civil society as responsible for any implementing actions".<sup>25</sup> The role of CSOs in relation to the Australian NAP is articulated as a vague encouragement to develop shadow reports on progress.<sup>26</sup> This restricted 'watchdog' function, however, comes without the power and resources required to effectively play this role, as we discuss below in the section on accountability. It was therefore left up to CSOs to create a space to engage with the Australian NAP. This has taken two forms. First, Annual Civil Society Dialogues on Women, Peace and Security and Annual Civil Society Report Cards serve as a means to engage in a policy dialogue on WPS and present an assessment of progress made in implementing the Australian NAP. Since 2013 five Annual Civil Society Dialogues have been held. The first three (2013-2015) received funding from OFW and ACMC, and the remaining two (2016-2017) were funded entirely by ACMC. Second, civil society was successful in lobbying for representation on the Australian NAP governance mechanisms: the IDWG and the IDWG's Sub-committee.<sup>27</sup> As we outline in more detail below, however, this representation does not necessarily translate into "meaningful opportunities for influence".<sup>28</sup>

The Australian experience largely reflects that of others from across the globe. The *Global Study* points to the conspicuous absence of ongoing engagement with CSOs to ensure effective implementation of the WPS agenda. Indeed, "[w]here progress and broader transformation had taken place, the main factor of success was often credited to collaboration and joint action with other civil society organizations, using civil society's role as

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<sup>25</sup> Shepherd and True, 'The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Australian leadership in the World', p. 270.

<sup>26</sup> FaHCSIA, 'Australian National Action Plan', p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> The IDWG and the IDWG Sub-committee were renamed in 2017 the Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) and IDC Sub-committee.

<sup>28</sup> Laura J. Shepherd, 'Constructing Civil Society: Gender, Power and Legitimacy in United Nations Peacebuilding Discourse', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 21, no. 4 (2015), p. 900.

a watchdog and independent monitor”.<sup>29</sup> In the sections that follow, we draw out some insights from Australia regarding the participation of civil society in WPS governance, according to the three dimensions of civil society participation derived from our review of the literature in the previous section: expertise, ownership and accountability. We examine how these three dimensions manifest in Australian CSO participation in WPS governance, in order to better understand how each dimension contributes to and is in turn influenced by CSO engagement.

## The Dimension of Expertise

The norm of women’s participation in peace and security governance has been a core pillar of Women, Peace and Security activity since the formal inception of the agenda in 2000. The foundational UN Security Council Resolution emphasises participation in the Preamble, referencing “the importance” of women’s “equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security”.<sup>30</sup> Participation is described as ‘important’ because of the ‘role’ women play “in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building”.<sup>31</sup> Participation is also given textual priority in the operative paragraphs (which have more political purchase than the preambular statement); the first two operative paragraphs relate explicitly to representation and the “participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes”.<sup>32</sup> We suggest that the norm of women’s participation in peace and security governance, extended and consolidated in later WPS resolutions, relies on the same principle we interrogate here in the context of examining civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia: the dimension of expertise.

Recognising women’s expertise in the field of peace and security is an important component of the WPS project. Sheri Lynn Gibbings identifies the root of the participation norm in a ‘contributor rights’ discourse that articulates the value of women’s participation in terms of its contribution to achieving peace and security.<sup>33</sup> Put simply, women and women’s CSOs have a right to participate in WPS governance, according to this view, because they have expertise that will enable or facilitate the achievements of the goals and objectives under discussion. In a broader sense, this is in

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<sup>29</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 303.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1325 (2000), S/RES/1325, Preamble, <[www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/2000.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/2000.shtml)> [Accessed 3 March 2017].

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., para. 2. For a comprehensive examination of the construction of participation in the WPS architecture, see Laura J. Shepherd, ‘The Development of the “Women, Peace and Security Agenda” and Adopted Security Council Resolutions’, in Sara Davies and Jacqui True (eds), *Oxford Handbook on Women, Peace and Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>33</sup> Sheri Lynn Gibbings, ‘No Angry Women at the United Nations: Political Dreams and the Cultural Politics of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2011), pp. 528-30.

keeping with analysis of civil society participation that identifies an epistemic rationale for the inclusion of CSOs in decision-making and policy formulation. If we accept that, “[i]n order to have good rules, we should bring the experiences, reasons, and perspectives that policy makers and government-appointed experts would not otherwise consider into the decision-making process”,<sup>34</sup> then the participation of civil society in such deliberations is legitimised through the ascription of the subject-position of ‘expert’ to the civil society participant simultaneously as the participation of civil society is justified on the basis of the participant’s expertise: the two concepts go hand-in-hand and are mutually reinforcing.

In the Australian context, we can identify an increasingly strong discourse on expertise being used to legitimise and secure the participation of civil society in peace and security governance. WPS engagement in Australia is primarily driven by the group of CSOs that formed the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security (‘the Coalition’). As explained on the Coalition’s website,

The Coalition brings together activists, feminists, practitioners, humanitarian actors and those with *first-hand experience* working in the frontline on issues relating to women, peace and security. Coalition members have *wide ranging expertise* in gender and peace.<sup>35</sup>

The ‘first-hand experience’ and ‘wide-ranging expertise’ are important legitimating descriptors; moreover, the articulation of ‘experience’ with ‘expertise’ is in line with much feminist theorising around the recognition of ‘experts by experience’ and the praxis dimension of feminist activism.<sup>36</sup>

The Coalition produces annual ‘Civil Society Report Cards’, in part an important accountability mechanism, which we discuss in more detail below.<sup>37</sup> In these Report Cards, the Coalition relies on the dimension of expertise and the depiction of civil society organisations as experts in WPS to explain the importance of civil society participation. In the first Report Card (2013), for example, the expertise of civil society is referenced to encourage the Australian Government to draw on capacity in civil society to

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<sup>34</sup> Jens Steffek and Maria Paola Ferretti, ‘Accountability or “Good Decisions”? The Competing Goals of Civil Society Participation in International Governance’, *Global Society*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2009), p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, ‘About Us’, no date, (emphasis added), <<https://wpscoalition.org>> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

<sup>36</sup> See, for example: Brooke A. Ackerly, ‘Women’s Human Rights Activists as Cross-Cultural Theorists’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2001), pp. 313-14; Felicity Hill, Mikele Aboitiz, and Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya, ‘Nongovernmental Organizations’ Role in the Buildup and Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2003), pp. 1255-69; Sam Cook, ‘The ‘Woman-in-Conflict’ at the UN Security Council: A Subject of Practice’, *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2 (2016), pp. 353-72.

<sup>37</sup> All of the Report Cards are publicly available and can be downloaded from the Coalition’s website, at <[wpscoalition.org](https://wpscoalition.org)>.

provide training on WPS and to become a 'participant and partner' rather than simply a beneficiary of WPS activity.<sup>38</sup> The most recent Report Card (2016), mentions 'expert' and 'expertise' no fewer than twenty times, with the expertise found in civil society explicitly articulated in the methodology underpinning the report and its recommendations related to the next iteration of the Australian NAP, for which planning has already begun given the expiry of the current NAP in 2018.<sup>39</sup> The dimension of expertise, then, clearly informs civil society participation in peace and security governance within Australia. The specific point we wish to emphasise here relates to the ways in which the Coalition *performs* its expertise as part of shoring up the legitimacy of its participation. Internationally, the inception of the WPS agenda more broadly was in no small part due to the recognition of expertise about peace and security embodied in civil society<sup>40</sup> and, true to the spirit of the agenda, both civil society organisations and government actors have a responsibility to ensure that this expertise continues to inform WPS policy and practice.

## The Dimension of Ownership

The second dimension we discuss here is ownership. It is civil society's ownership claims relating to the Women, Peace and Security agenda that render its participation in its governance legitimate, even required. As Karen Barnes comments, "UNSCR 1325 would not have been adopted without the initial momentum from civil society, and NGOs, working at both the international and national levels, have continued to drive the agenda forward".<sup>41</sup> The WPS agenda is somewhat unique in this regard, as it is forged through unprecedented interaction between civil society activists, advocates and practitioners, national governments, and the body charged with "the maintenance of international peace and security"<sup>42</sup> on behalf of all 193 member states of the United Nations: the UN Security Council. This heritage locates the agenda in an awkward and potentially compromised space, manifesting both in completing claims about ownership and tensions between "demands of the 'business-as-usual' politics at the Security Council

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<sup>38</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', 2013, p. 11. <[pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/civil-society-report-card-2013-final-lores.pdf](http://pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/civil-society-report-card-2013-final-lores.pdf)> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

<sup>39</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Fourth Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', (2016), p. 8. <[pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/fourth-annual-civil-society-report-card-on-the-national-action-plan-for-women-peace-and-security.pdf](http://pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/fourth-annual-civil-society-report-card-on-the-national-action-plan-for-women-peace-and-security.pdf)> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

<sup>40</sup> Hill et al., 'Nongovernmental Organizations' Role in the Buildup and Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325'.

<sup>41</sup> Karen Barnes, 'Evolution and Implementation of UNSCR 1325', in 'Funmi Olanisakin, Karen Barnes and Eka Ikpe (eds), *Women, Peace and Security: Translating Policy Into Practice*, (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 25.

<sup>42</sup> United Nations, 'Charter of the United Nations: Chapter V: The Security Council', no date, <[www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-v/index.html](http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-v/index.html)> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

and the feminist aspirations that it may be seen to espouse”.<sup>43</sup> But this awkward location, sustained and reproduced through the claims to ownership propounded by civil society organisations both nationally and internationally, is a productive space indeed.

Two aspects of ownership are significant. The first dimension of ownership is identifiable as *ownership-as-authority*. This is a claim to ownership that envisages the WPS agenda as a product of feminist activism and advocacy; the agenda therefore belongs to the women and women’s organisations that lobbied and fought for the first and subsequent resolutions. Laura Shepherd describes this ownership as a form of authority, which she identifies as “author-ity” to denote both ownership and control.<sup>44</sup> Shepherd notes that, in the international sphere,

[t]he NGO WG [Working Group] has a strong claim to author-ity over the Resolution, and, through its continued political presence, the Working Group has been able to transform decades of theorizing and activism into concrete achievements in the issue area of women, peace, and security.<sup>45</sup>

In the Australian context, there were significant efforts throughout 2017 to demonstrate civil society ownership of the WPS agenda in ways that could inform the next iteration of the Australian NAP. In 2017, the Coalition restructured the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security into two complementary parts. Civil Society Roundtables were held in all capital cities, with some holding more than one roundtable. These roundtables provided a space for over 200 women from diverse backgrounds to express their views on what peace and security means in practice.<sup>46</sup> The intention to anchor the next phase of Australian WPS policymaking in the voices, experiences and expertise of civil society is perhaps clearest in the title of the outcome document from these roundtables: ‘Women Shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda’.<sup>47</sup> The document seeks to reframe peace and security, moving away from state security to human and people-centred approaches: reclaiming ownership of the WPS narrative, as it were. The perspectives on peace and security captured in ‘Women Shape the

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<sup>43</sup> Soumita Basu, ‘The United Nations’ Women, Peace and Security Agenda’, in Simona Sharoni, Julia Welland, Linda Steiner and Jennifer Pedersen (eds), *Handbook on Gender and War* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2016), p. 577.

<sup>44</sup> Shepherd explains: ‘I hyphenate “author-ity” ... to draw attention to the connotations of both ownership (author) and control (author-ity) that the word signifies’. See Laura J. Shepherd, ‘Power and Authority in the Production of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325’, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2008), p. 384.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 391.

<sup>46</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, ‘Women, Peace and Security Roundtable Discussions’, no date, <[wpscoalition.org/annual-civil-society-dialogue-on-women-peace-and-security-2/2017-3/women-peace-and-security-round-tables/](http://wpscoalition.org/annual-civil-society-dialogue-on-women-peace-and-security-2/2017-3/women-peace-and-security-round-tables/)> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

<sup>47</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, ‘Women Shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Roundtable Discussion Summary’, 23 November 2017, <[wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/women-shape-the-wps-agenda-roundtable-discussion-summary-FINAL.pdf](http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/women-shape-the-wps-agenda-roundtable-discussion-summary-FINAL.pdf)> [Accessed 14 March 2018].

Women, Peace and Security Agenda' formed the basis for the Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogue. Led by the Coalition, the policy dialogue was attended by government departments with portfolio responsibilities relating to the Australian NAP and representatives of civil society organisations. Three questions framed the discussions at the policy dialogue: What are the key understandings of peace and security in Australia in the current global context and how do the issues raised at the Civil Society Roundtables confirm, challenge and/or develop these understandings? How can these understandings of peace and security contribute to building an informed and effective approach to women, peace and security in Australia? And, how does the approach to women, peace and security link to broader Australian discussions on conflict and peace processes; domestic and foreign policy; and Australia's response to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 5 and 16?<sup>48</sup> On our interpretation, the reports from this policy dialogue<sup>49</sup> and the Civil Society Roundtables<sup>50</sup> are a clear manifestation of ownership-as-authority as grounds for participation.

The second aspect of ownership relates to recognition and representation. The intensity of effort that goes into the maintenance of the WPS agenda, including ensuring that all 'pillars' receive adequate attention and holding both national governments and the UN itself to account (which we discuss further below), is grounded in the sense of ownership felt by transnational and national CSOs because the resolutions reflect or represent both their concerns and their previous efforts. As Sanam Anderlini reports, "[u]pon the first anniversary [of the passage of UNSCR 1325], in 2001, the council members expressed surprise. 'Other resolutions don't have anniversaries', they said, to which the NGOs replied, 'Other resolutions don't have a global constituency'".<sup>51</sup> Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, co-founder and international coordinator of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, similarly affirms the ownership of the WPS agenda, in particular the founding resolution, when she comments: "I still recall one GNWP member from the conflict-affected Mount Elgon district in Kenya who said to me: 'The first time I read Resolution 1325, I held it close to my chest. This is ours; this belongs to us'".<sup>52</sup>

The efforts made in the Australian context by various civil society actors to push forward the development of the WPS agenda locally through

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<sup>48</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security, *Listening to Women's Voices and Making the Connections to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Fifth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security* (2018), <pscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety\_2018\_report\_ART\_web.pdf> [Accessed 14 March 2018], p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> The Coalition, 'Women Shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda'.

<sup>51</sup> Anderlini, *Women Building Peace*, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, 'It Is Time to Walk the Talk and Fulfill the Promise of UNSCR 1325', *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture*, vol. 17, no. 3/4 (2011), p. 23.



engagement with the implementation of the current Australian NAP are chronicled in the acknowledgements section of each Civil Society Report Card. There are various names that appear consistently, and each year the “vast amount”<sup>53</sup> of “dedicated work”<sup>54</sup> and “commitment”<sup>55</sup> by these individuals and others is celebrated and affirmed, functioning to link the Report Card as a product to these visible efforts, thus forging an association between the ‘care labour’ that goes into maintaining the resolution and civil society as a locus of this labour. This association has the performative effect of constituting civil society organisations as (at least part-) ‘owners’ of the agenda and its architecture.<sup>56</sup> These aspects of ownership combine both the principle of expertise and the principle of accountability to create a mandate for civil society participation in peace and security governance. In the section that follows, we move on to explore the third and final dimension of civil society participation: the principle of accountability.

## **The Dimension of Accountability**

Accountability describes a relationship between actors, a relationship that specifies “who can call who into account, and who owes a duty of explanation”.<sup>57</sup> Power is meant to rest with the actor that calls the other into account: “the notion of authority as the right to call people to account needs to be complemented by the notion of power as the ability to call people to account”.<sup>58</sup> The direction of accountability is meant to illustrate the distribution of power among actors. The exercise of this power requires more than just sharing of information; the ability to call people and/or institutions to account implies what Keohane calls “the ability to impose a cost”<sup>59</sup> or the ability to affect change in the people/institutions being called

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<sup>53</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, ‘[First] Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security’, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, ‘Third Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security’, 2015, <pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/report-card.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017], p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, ‘Second Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security’, 2014, n.p., <pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/second-annual-civil-society-report-card-australias-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

<sup>56</sup> This is, of course, a ‘shared ownership’, given the agenda’s relevance to a range of stakeholders (most of whom, incidentally, are resourced to carry out their WPS work), but our focus here is on the ways in which civil society ownership of the agenda functions within the broader context of civil society participation in WPS governance. We are grateful to the comments from an anonymous reviewer, which encouraged us to clarify this point.

<sup>57</sup> Patrick Kilby, ‘Accountability for Empowerment: Dilemmas Facing Non-Governmental Organisations’, *Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government Policy and Governance Discussion Paper*, no. 04-01 (2004), <openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/10440/1174> [Accessed 25 September 2017], p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Patricia Day and Rudolf Klein, *Accountabilities: Five Public Services* (London: Tavistock, 1987), p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Keohane, ‘Commentary on the Democratic Accountability of Non-Governmental Organisations’, *Chicago Journal of International Law*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2002), p. 479.

into account. By controlling the extent to which change can be affected, actors regulate the exercise of accountability.

At the global level, accountability to the Women, Peace and Security agenda is largely vertical-upward (the UN Secretary General is accountable to the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council). This accountability is activated through mechanisms such as regular reporting (e.g. the Reports of the UN Secretary General on Women, Peace and Security to the UN Security Council) and reviews (e.g. the *Global Study* and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations). This is mirrored at the national level in Australia. The Australian NAP requires all government stakeholders to table three progress reports (one every two years) before Parliament. The Australian NAP is also independently reviewed twice during its life period. The interim review is meant to provide guidance on NAP progress and emerging issues, while the final review assesses the overall success and providing guidance on the next NAP. There is no mechanism, however, to ensure that the recommendations made by the reviews are implemented. Thus, little action was taken to implement the sixteen recommendations made in the 2015 *Independent Interim Review of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*.<sup>60</sup> Poorly articulated mechanisms regulate the extent to which government stakeholders can be held accountable to NAP commitments. In the case of the Australian NAP, this poor accountability is compounded by an anaemic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework that leans on descriptions of actions taken by government stakeholders rather than focusing on the outcomes of actions.<sup>61</sup>

The responsibility to ensure vertical-downward accountability to women and their communities rests with CSOs. At the global level, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security monitors and analyses the entire cycle of UN Security Council decision-making—from the adoption of peacekeeping mission mandates in resolutions, to their implementation reports, to presidential statements adopted in response to an emerging crisis. Another example of monitoring is WILPF's *Security Council WPS Scorecard* which focuses on the five permanent members, analysing statements and commitments made at the Security Council, international gender and human rights commitments, and gender and peacekeeping actions. It also analyses national actions on financing of military versus gender equality, women's participation in parliament and judiciary, levels of sexual violence, and gendered post-conflict stabilisation programs. The UN Security Council's Arria Formula meetings on WPS provide opportunities for women and women's organisations to address members of the UN Security

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<sup>60</sup> Humanitarian Advisory Group, *Independent Interim Review of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018* (Melbourne: Humanitarian Advisory Group, 2015), <[www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/nap-interim-review-report.pdf](http://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/nap-interim-review-report.pdf)> [Accessed 14 March 2018].

<sup>61</sup> Katrina Lee-Koo, 'Engaging UNSCR 1325 through Australia's National Action Plan', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 336-349 (2016), pp. 342-46.



Council. These serve as a reminder to Member States of commitments made to the agenda.

Vertical-downward accountability is, however, limited. This is because while CSOs play a role in monitoring commitments to the WPS agenda, the inability to participate and thereby influence decision-making restricts their function to one of information sharing. Adil Najam calls this type of information sharing role “the sham of accountability [because] unlike Governments, they [CSOs/communities] cannot impose conditionalities” or effect real change.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the exercise of voice remains largely symbolic. Alnoor Ebrahim argues that information sharing (including public meetings, surveys, call for submissions, consultations and so forth) is the lowest level of accountability, as the power to make decisions (including accepting/rejecting/ignoring the views of civil society) rests with the government;<sup>63</sup> this is clearly evident in the development of the Australian NAP. As discussed above, CSO consultations (articulated in the *Final Report*) provided the impetus for the development of the Australian NAP. Many of the key recommendations made in the *Final Report* regarding scope, focus, M&E, and process of NAP development were, however, ignored during the actual drafting of the NAP. For example, the Australian NAP has an international focus, even though there was a strong consensus in the *Final Report* that the NAP should have both a national and international focus: “the establishment of positive national parameters to further peace and security was a prerequisite before adopting a regional or international focus”.<sup>64</sup> Neither the draft, nor the final NAP, included “an action plan matrix with measurable targets ... budgets, timelines”.<sup>65</sup> Again absent from the draft and final NAP was the mandate to establish an “all-party Parliamentary group [to] ensure progress/continuity under all governments/opposition”; this group was intended to “consult frequently with women’s NGOs”.<sup>66</sup>

Higher levels of accountability may be realised by enabling participatory evaluation of the NAP and creating a space in NAP governance structures for CSO participation. In the Australian NAP, as mentioned, CSOs are “encouraged to develop shadow progress reports”.<sup>67</sup> Where this process fits within the overall framework of the Australian NAP’s monitoring evaluation and reporting framework is, however, not articulated—neither is any direction provided on what this shadow reporting process should involve, nor how the government will respond to the report, nor how it will be funded.

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<sup>62</sup> Adil Najam, ‘NGO Accountability: A Conceptual Framework’, *Development Policy Review*, vol. 14, no. 4 (1996), pp. 346-47.

<sup>63</sup> Alnoor Ebrahim, ‘Accountability in Practice: Mechanisms for NGOs’, *World Development*, vol. 34, no. 6 (2003), pp. 951-63.

<sup>64</sup> WILPF Australia Section, *Final Report*, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>67</sup> FaHCSIA, ‘Australian National Action Plan’, p. 27.

The current CSO mechanism for ensuring accountability was developed after the release of the Australian NAP and was designed by the group of CSOs that later formed the Coalition. As discussed earlier, the civil society-led Annual Dialogue brings together CSOs, women and women's organisations, government and policymakers to discuss WPS issues and to contribute to effective implementation through a deliberative process of assessing the Australian NAP's implementation. To facilitate deliberations at the Dialogue, a scorecard was developed that tracks progress against the actions listed in the NAP. Deliberations at the Dialogue are captured in the Annual Civil Society Report Card.<sup>68</sup> The lack of a robust M&E framework has resulted in a rudimentary scorecard that is only able to track progress using the following evaluations:

- Insufficient information (insufficient information has been communicated with civil society to ascertain if this action is being implemented);
- No action (insufficient action is being undertaken to implement this action by 2018);
- Some action (some, not necessarily all agencies, demonstrated and communicated activities that support the implementation of this action by 2018); and
- Extensive action (all responsible agencies demonstrated and communicated activities that support the implementation of this by 2018).

While this process has been vital in allowing civil society to contribute to M&E, the implementation of recommendations made each year are non-binding, raising significant questions about the effectiveness of such a process in holding the Australian Government and government departments with NAP responsibilities accountable.

The reduction in funding (as a result of OFW's inability to financially support the Dialogue since 2015) has also affected the extent to which CSOs have been able to consult on the progress made on the Australian NAP. Recognising their role in ensuring accountability to the WPS agenda and the Australian NAP in particular, CSOs have used the four Annual Civil Society Report Cards to provide recommendations on strengthening accountability processes in four distinct but interrelated ways. First, it has been suggested that reports by CSOs should form part of the overall NAP reporting mechanisms; second, CSOs have proposed the allocation of dedicated resources to support CSO reporting; third, the idea of tabling the CSO reports before Parliament has been mooted; and, fourth, CSOs have

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<sup>68</sup> Lee-Koo, 'Engaging UNSCR 1325', p. 346.

suggested including a provision that necessitates a formal response from the Australian Government to the recommendations made in CSO reports. The fifth report<sup>69</sup> calls for the new NAP to have embedded a commitment to ongoing engagement with civil society (especially women's organisations) in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation. The *Global Study* reports that many plans for implementation are "focused on process, with neither mechanisms for accountability nor budgets for real implementation"; in this regard, the Coalition's advocacy is in line with international understandings of barriers to achieving change in the sphere of WPS practice.<sup>70</sup>

To further strengthen the weak accountability of the Australian NAP, relevant government agencies have attempted to create spaces in NAP governance structure for civil society participation. Although the NAP recognised the role played by CSOs during the development phase, there was no civil society representation on the IDWG that was established to develop the NAP. The Australian NAP includes a vague provision to invite the NGO sector "to nominate a selection of representatives to meet with the Women, Peace and Security Inter-Departmental Working Group each year".<sup>71</sup> It is evident in the Australian NAP that CSOs were not seen as a stakeholder and so no specific role was allocated to them, even though CSOs receive financial resources from government agencies to implement the WPS agenda.

Soon after the release of the NAP, the Coalition successfully advocated for representation on the IDWG and the IDWG's Sub-committee that was created to take care of the ongoing implementation of the NAP. The role of the IDWG was modified to provide the strategic leadership and oversight in the implementation and sustainability of the NAP. Representation on the IDWG has been important in allowing CSO voices to be heard on NAP leadership and implementation, while also serving as an accountability mechanism. Replicating this move at a departmental level, the ADF, as part of its internal NAP implementation working group, has also included a space for CSO representation in an observer capacity. However, the ADF is the only department to do so. While the creation of these spaces has provided CSOs with the means to amplify their voices, it is a significant concern that this participation remains unfunded and is not guaranteed. As a result, CSO capacity is stretched: not only are various CSOs enabling the government to meet their NAP commitments through implementing funded projects, they are also being called upon to provide technical capacity and expertise *pro bono*. This significantly limits the extent to which CSOs are able to participate in time-consuming bureaucratic processes associated with NAP governance and thus further limits the extent to which CSOs can hold the government to account.

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<sup>69</sup> The Coalition, *Listening to Women's Voices*.

<sup>70</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 14.

<sup>71</sup> FaHCSIA, 'Australian National Action Plan', p. 26.

The need to adequately resource civil society's role in enabling accountability and the need for formalised mechanisms for ongoing engagement with civil society are recurring themes in research comparing NAPs from different countries.<sup>72</sup> Two notable exceptions are Ireland and the United Kingdom. Ireland's NAP has established an independent monitoring group, comprising 50 per cent representation from CSOs, which meets regularly and reports on progress and also has the power to modify the Irish NAP based on lessons learned from the evaluation. The United Kingdom has a dedicated budget allocation for external evaluations of its NAP. In Australia, the Fourth Annual Civil Society Report Card (2016) has recommended formalising and clearly articulating civil society's role with regards to participation in governance and shadow reporting in the next NAP. The report card also calls upon government to fund civil society's engagement and participation in NAP governance. This recommendation echoes views canvassed by Women, Peace and Security Network in Canada during the drafting of Canada's next NAP iteration.<sup>73</sup>

Overall, civil society organisations working on the WPS agenda need to also adopt a more strategic approach to accountability. The *Global Study* advises CSOs to utilise mechanisms established under the Universal Periodic Review and submissions to the treaty bodies, particularly CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) to enhance accountability to the WPS agenda.<sup>74</sup> Vertical-downward accountability can be empowering for women and their organisations when there are well-established mechanisms that enable diverse CSOs to participate in all aspects of NAP development and implementation, particularly in monitoring and evaluation.

## Conclusion

Civil society is at the heart of politics, broadly conceived. This is a view of politics that sees it not as a brute struggle for power, but rather as a process: "[p]olitics is about how ordinary men and women think about, conceptualise, debate and contest how people belonging to different persuasions, classes and interests live together in society in conditions of justice and civility".<sup>75</sup> The participation of civil society, then, is necessary to ensure that "ordinary

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<sup>72</sup> See, for example Aisling Swaine, 'Assessing the Potential of National Action Plans to Advance Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law*, vol. 12 (2009), pp. 403-33; Belgin Gumru and Jan Fritz, 'Women, Peace and Security: An Analysis of the National Action Plans Developed in Response to UN Security Council Resolution 1325', *Societies Without Borders*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2011), pp. 209-25.

<sup>73</sup> Women, Peace and Security Network Canada, 'What's in a NAP? A Short Analysis of Selected Women, Peace & Security National Action Plans', 2017, <[wpsncanada.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/short-analysis-paper-wpsn-c-final-2017.pdf](http://wpsncanada.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/short-analysis-paper-wpsn-c-final-2017.pdf)> [Accessed 25 September 2017].

<sup>74</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 306.

<sup>75</sup> Chandhoke, 'The "Civil" and the "Political" in Civil Society', p. 21.

men and women” have access to processes of policy formulation and implementation, to the practices of contestation and debate that keep politics alive.

In this paper, we have outlined three principles that underpin civil society participation in peace and security governance, specifically focused on activity related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Australia: the principle of expertise, which draws attention to the different and complementary insights and ways of knowing that civil society brings to WPS governance in Australia; the principle of ownership, which recognises that, in the case of the WPS agenda in particular, the agenda lives in civil society, because it is nurtured and kept alive by sustained engagement from civil society; and, finally, the principle of accountability, which recognises the valuable contribution of civil society in holding government and international governmental organisations like the United Nations to account in regard to the commitments made by these actors to advancing the WPS agenda. These three dimensions of civil society engagement together comprise the foundation of civil society participation in WPS governance, which we identify as necessary—vital, in fact—to the continued development and relevance of the WPS agenda.

We propose that the Australian case discussed here could usefully inform future practice in other contexts, as well as enabling or facilitating improvements in the participation of civil society in the governance and implementation of Women, Peace and Security initiatives within Australia. As Paul Kirby and Laura Shepherd argue,

The consequences of excluding civil society organizations from the NAP development process include a separation of WPS principles from the lived experiences of individuals within the state in question, a lack of grounded understanding of community needs related to WPS provisions, and a lack of recognition of forms of community knowledge in the development of the plans.<sup>76</sup>

Beyond National Action Plans, taking seriously—and facilitating properly, including through funding and opportunities for direct consultation—women’s civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia and across the world is essential for the agenda’s continued resonance, legitimacy, and efficacy in world politics.

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<sup>76</sup> Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, ‘The Futures Past of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda’, *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2 (2016), p. 384.

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# Mothers, Mercenaries and Mediators: Women Providing Answers to the Questions We Forgot to Ask

Pip Henty and Beth Eggleston

Current initiatives in countering violent extremism (CVE) often see women excluded or marginalised from the development, implementation and evaluation of these efforts. From informal grassroots levels to formal government platforms, women's participation and perspectives in CVE continue to be absent or minimal. This paper analyses the role women can play in CVE, including leveraging global frameworks such as the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In providing case studies of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Tajikistan, this paper seeks to elaborate on and promote women's engagement for more effective CVE outcomes.

Violent extremism is an increasing problem across the globe. The *Global Terrorism Index* states that, in 2014, there was a 172 per cent increase in deaths of private citizens from acts of violent extremism.<sup>1</sup> In 2000, 3,329 deaths from violent extremism were recorded, compared to 32,685 in 2014.<sup>2</sup> In 2016, thirty-four countries were affected by incidents that resulted in the deaths of over twenty-five people, highlighting an increase in violent extremist incidents in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).<sup>3</sup> This was due to an increase in Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-affiliated attacks. Within the last fifteen years, over 140,000 lives were recorded as lost from 61,000 acts of violent extremism.<sup>4</sup> There is a clear need to carefully think through how this problem can be better addressed and why efforts have not been wholly effective to date. With ISIS changing its tack last year calling for women to step up to fight, there has been a recognition that "the potential for women to lead efforts to counter future violent extremism is dangerously underappreciated".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2015', 2015, <[economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf](http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf)>, [Accessed 14 September 2017], p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2016', 2016, <[economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf](http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf)>, [Accessed 20 September 2017], p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Julia Bergin, 'What Role Can Women Play in Countering Violent Extremism', Australian Institute of International Affairs, 3 December 2017, <[www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/women-countering-extremism/](http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/women-countering-extremism/)> [Accessed 29 March 2018].



With the rapid rise of violent extremism—along with its increasing spread to Western countries—governments, and military and civil society organisations across the globe need innovative and flexible responses to the complexity of home-grown threats and social media-savvy religious extremists.<sup>6</sup> And it's not just the modality of the messages but also the power structures behind them. UN Women points out that “violent extremist groups manipulate gender stereotypes to recruit men and women to their ranks, promoting violent notions of masculinity and using women to convey these messages”.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, it can be expected that this surge of interest in countering violent extremism (CVE) will continue, including a focus on the role that women can play, and we must be aware of the potential challenges this may present.

The push to align CVE programs with the global post-2015 agenda aims to maximise impact; however, this harmonisation may have unintended consequences. Whilst the interlocking frameworks outlined in several initiatives and studies (i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals; the Agenda for Humanity; and the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security [WPS]) and by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations could provide an opportunity to amplify CVE efforts and justify the efficacy of involving women in all peace and security issues, CVE approaches are inherently political and “incompatible with principled, needs-based humanitarian action”.<sup>8</sup> This could result in less humanitarian access to affected populations and women and girls, being some of the most vulnerable groups in crisis, being deprived of humanitarian assistance and protection.

Although ideally CVE programs should be diverse and inclusive, ensuring representation and inclusion of different ethnic groups, religions, social status, physical abilities and sexual orientations and identities, this paper will focus specifically on exploring the role of women in CVE, noting, as the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) distinguishes, the difference “between women as actors in CVE and the ‘gendered’ natures of violent extremism”.<sup>9</sup> The paper uses examples from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Tajikistan to demonstrate some of the many ways in which women are being

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Romaniuk, ‘Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism’, Global Center on Cooperative Security, September 2015, <[www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work\\_2015.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work_2015.pdf)> [Accessed 5 October 2016].

<sup>7</sup> UN Women, ‘Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities’, 2017-2018, <[www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2018/02/pve-brochure-final-web.pdf?la=en&vs=3112](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2018/02/pve-brochure-final-web.pdf?la=en&vs=3112)> [Accessed 29 March 2018].

<sup>8</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, ‘Countering Violent Extremism and Humanitarian Action’, Position Paper, June 2017, <[www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/position-papers/170622-nrc-position-paper\\_cve-and-humanitarian-action---fv.pdf](http://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/position-papers/170622-nrc-position-paper_cve-and-humanitarian-action---fv.pdf)> [Accessed 19 March 2018], p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Global Counterterrorism Forum, ‘Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism’, 2015, <[www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf](http://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf)> [Accessed 20 August 2017].

increasingly involved in CVE contexts and programming. Recognising and understanding the role of women in CVE deepens our analysis of how violence is conceptualised, and of the scope with which responses are developed. Women are often excluded from CVE analyses—this could be for a range of reasons including historical inequalities and power differentials, women not having had a voice on this issue previously, the incorrect assumption that women are innately peaceful and are not involved in violent movements, or that women cannot make an impact in shaping the narrative or counter-narrative. This paper challenges these assumptions and will provide insight into where women fit into strategies and programs that aim to make our world a safer place.

## **The Current State of Play**

One of the chronic deficiencies in CVE response is a lack of focus on the positive role women can play. In all three stages of CVE programming—prevention, reconstruction and peacebuilding—the role of women is usually grossly underrepresented. This underrepresentation is seen within civil society, structural institutions such as governments, and in the collection and analyses of case studies. Increasing the role of women in CVE is a crucial aspect of security and peace in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, this can lead to lessons on how to most effectively increase and sustain women's participation in CVE strategies. However, the role of women is a relative blind spot in the analysis around CVE. This directly correlates with the WPS agenda and its implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325<sup>10</sup> and UNSCR 2242.<sup>11</sup>

The role of women in enabling, supporting, benefiting from, being victims of, counteracting, and preventing violent extremism is crucial to explore and understand—but the discourse on this is lacking. This is a result of pre-existing, socially embedded gender inequalities. When a conflict occurs, these gender inequalities and disparities are exacerbated and are projected in many ways, such as through sexual violence, at times adding further barriers to their participation and inclusion.

## **WPS Agenda and UNSCR 2242**

The WPS agenda is explicitly addressed through eight of the UNSCRs. These resolutions were passed over a fifteen-year period. UNSCR 1325—the historical, first resolution passed in 2000—is the acknowledgment that compared to men, women are often disproportionately affected by conflict. It

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<sup>10</sup> United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1325 (2000), S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000), <[documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement)> [Accessed 20 October 2016].

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2243 (2015), S/RES/2243 (13 October 2015), <[www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2242.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf)> [Accessed 30 March 2018].

also emphasises the underrepresentation and marginalisation of women in peace processes and conflict prevention, resolution and transformation.<sup>12</sup> The recognition of the WPS agenda as a framework to position the CVE response is becoming more common,<sup>13</sup> although not uncontested, resulting in an increased focus on the possible ways that women can be engaged as committed, active leaders in CVE initiatives and strategies, and as allies in prevention frameworks. UNSCR 2242 specifically calls for the “greater integration by Member States and the United Nations of their agendas on women, peace and security, counter-terrorism and countering-violent extremism”.<sup>14</sup> A large part of this push is to collect gender-sensitive data around the drivers of radicalisation, which UN Women is heavily engaged in and is elaborated further in the case study below on Bangladesh. UNSCR 2242 also highlights the extreme vulnerability created by the current displacement crisis and the need to increase attention to WPS as a cross-cutting issue in all international peace and security initiatives. However, critics highlight the fact that the UNSCR 2242 does not fundamentally change the marginal status of women within CVE strategies and approaches.<sup>15</sup> This perpetuates the stereotypical dichotomy of women as “wicked purveyors of extremist violence or virtuous saviours of sons, husbands and communities”, undermining the effectiveness of using the WPS agenda to advance the rights and protection of women in times of conflict and violence.<sup>16</sup>

The dominant discourse of responding to and preventing sexual violence in conflict is a concern, displaying a disproportionate focus on the protection aspects of the WPS agenda. This impacts on how women’s participation and agency beyond being a victim are addressed,<sup>17</sup> and results in women being excluded from meaningful participation in government strategy development and implementation. This can compromise the impact of women’s coalitions that strive towards CVE and promoting peace. Additionally, we need to examine the role of women in conflict situations beyond the context of sexual violence and human rights abuses. There is also the need to explore the roles women can play in protection and CVE.

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<sup>12</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York: UN Women, 12 October 2015), <[www.wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf](http://www.wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf)> [Accessed 29 August 2016].

<sup>13</sup> Jayne Huckerby, ‘Gender, Violent Extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism’, Just Security, 3 March 2015, <[www.justsecurity.org/20620/gender-violent-extremism-countering-violent-extremism-cve/](http://www.justsecurity.org/20620/gender-violent-extremism-countering-violent-extremism-cve/)> [Accessed 14 August 2016].

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2243 (2015), S/RES/2243 (13 October 2015), <[www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2242.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf)> [Accessed 30 March 2018], p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, ‘The “War on Terror” and Extremism: Assessing the Relevance of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda’, *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2 (2016), p. 275.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>17</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australia), Submission to the United Nations Global Study on Women, Peace and Security, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2015.

This includes a woman's role in the family, community, faith-based institutions, law enforcement institutions, including formal and informal leadership positions, and access to decision-making forums.

Despite these advances, there is still profound concern about the global rise in violence, conflict and militarisation. We must be careful when analysing women's roles in CVE and recognise the risks that come with it. There is a significant risk that the WPS agenda and humanitarian action will be turned into a security instrument, resulting in the CVE agenda dominating other women's security and humanitarian issues. There is a current environment of militarisation—understood as the “reliance on the use of force as the sole means of conflict resolution”<sup>18</sup>—within many national security, political and social spheres, which often results in the overlooking of women's voices and experiences.<sup>19</sup> Women's rights and women's rights organisations have been adversely impacted in many contexts where there have been CVE attempts via military strategies and agendas.<sup>20</sup>

## Difference Between Violent Extremism and Terrorism

Violent extremism is a concept that often lacks definition and is highly contested.<sup>21</sup> Both the UN and the European Union have yet to state an official definition. The UN, however, states that “definitions of ‘terrorism’ and ‘violent extremism’ are the prerogative of Member States and must be consistent with their obligations under international law, in particular, international human rights law”.<sup>22</sup> Complexities arise due to the interconnectedness of the concepts, ‘violent extremism’ and ‘terrorism’. The lack of a universal definition is due to several compounding factors, including politics, ideology and the various disciplines that undertake research on violent extremism and terrorism.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, there is tension between the political and legislative frameworks that define these terms. The following section will put forward definitions of violent extremism, terrorism and CVE.

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<sup>18</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Bridget Garnham, Katerina Agostino and Gilbert Caluya, *Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review* (Edinburgh, SA: Counter Terrorism and Security Technology Centre, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, March 2011), <[dsto.defence.gov.au/dspace/bitstream/1947/10150/1/DSTO-TR-2522%20PR.pdf](https://dsto.defence.gov.au/dspace/bitstream/1947/10150/1/DSTO-TR-2522%20PR.pdf)> [Accessed 21 September 2017].

<sup>21</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach* (Vienna: OSCE, 2014), pp. 28–30.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations, ‘Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism—The Way Forward’, 7 and 8 April 2016, Concept Note, <[www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org/counterterrorism.ctitf/files/Geneva%20PVE%20Conference%20Concept%20Note%20Final.pdf](https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org/counterterrorism.ctitf/files/Geneva%20PVE%20Conference%20Concept%20Note%20Final.pdf)> [Accessed 20 September 2017], p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Joshua Sinai, ‘New Trends in Terrorism Studies: Strengths and Weaknesses’, in M. Ranstorp (ed.), *Mapping Terrorism Research: State of the Art, Gaps and Future Direction* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 31–50.

In contrast to terrorism, violent extremism encompasses actions that threaten a country's core values and principles, including human rights, the rule of law, democracy, equal opportunity and freedom. The aim of violent extremism is to aggravate the victim into a "disproportionate response [to] radicalise moderates and build support for its objectives in the long term".<sup>24</sup> Many governments and societies reject all forms of violent extremism and seek to promote a harmonious and inclusive society. Violent extremists include groups and individuals who advocate the use of violence against civilians for social, ideological and political ends,<sup>25</sup> reflecting views that seek to exclude, dominate or marginalise others.

Violent extremism is much broader and focuses on factors that can impact it, such as community engagement and grassroots organisation participation. The additional spectrum that accompanies the sphere of violent extremism reflects the shift from traditional conflicts (such as state-versus-state or state-versus-non-state participants) to a conflict that may not directly target governments. Correspondence with various academics and government officials reiterated the still murky context in which violent extremism and terrorism exist.<sup>26</sup> This paper thus includes research and statistics that use the term 'terrorism', as it fits with the outlined definition of violent extremism, as explored above.

## **Women in CVE**

As CVE is typically cited in the context of strategies that aim to either respond to or prevent violence, a new shift to a broader, more holistic approach to CVE is therefore relevant when discussing women's role in it. As explored above, there is a drive to turn away from traditional military approaches to CVE and move towards a paradigm that applies a multi-layered and multidisciplinary approach, including engaging with stakeholders who traditionally did not formally participate in CVE strategies.

Within academic and media discourse, some ground has been gained with the exploration of violent extremism through a gendered lens,<sup>27</sup> looking at

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<sup>24</sup> D. A. Lake, 'Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century', *Dialogue IO*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 2002), p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> A. Aly, A. M. Balbi and C. Jacques, 'Rethinking Countering Violent Extremism: Implementing the Role of Civil Society', *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, vol. 10, no. 1 (July 2015), pp. 3–13.

<sup>26</sup> Jacqui True, email communication with Director of Monash Gender, Peace and Security, 21 October 2016; Bradley Orchard, email communication with Colonel, Director National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security, 24 October 2016; Laura Shepard, email communication with Associate Professor of International Relations and Deputy Head of School, 22 October 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Ellie Hearne, 'Participants, Enablers, and Preventers: The Roles of Women in Terrorism', research paper presented at the British International Studies Association annual conference, Leicester, UK, December 2009, p. 2.

female suicide terrorism and the gendered nature of the war on terror.<sup>28</sup> Stories of women and girls committing acts of violent extremism interrogates the traditional, and often more socially accepted interpretations of gender and women. Women are not inherently peaceful; however, the perspectives that women's role in violent extremism and peace negotiations is that they have "served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls".<sup>29</sup> Therefore because of these gendered assumptions of women, it can make it easier for them to be successful, with violent extremist groups having turned this into a tactical advantage. A 2016 report highlighted that women have been involved in nearly one in four Islamist plots across Europe in the first five months of 2017—a 20 per cent increase from 2015.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, with approaches to CVE shifting to align with new types of violent extremism, it is critical that there is a focus on a gendered lens in analysing violent extremist movements and groups. This includes focusing on women's role in disrupting and preventing violent extremism, and the various contexts in which women join both violent extremist and CVE groups. Of course, it is important to understand the intersectionality that exists when discussing the women in violent extremism and CVE. Around the globe, the identity of a human is so much more than their gender. The paper acknowledges that sexuality, religion, ethnicity, age, (dis)ability, socio-economic and many more factors assist in forming an understanding of the power differential of a gendered understanding of violent extremism and CVE.

There is also a growing call at the UN from many Member State representatives, and from civil society, that women should be at the centre of efforts to fund a sustainable strategic effort to counter the violent extremist threat. There have been innovative studies on the role of women and violent extremism, and such recent research include the first international research focusing on the impact of the US government's counterterrorism efforts on women.<sup>31</sup> The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)<sup>32</sup> made a number of recommendations on women, violent extremism and radicalisations, including the need to effectively involve and

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<sup>28</sup> N. Pratt, 'The Gender Logics of Resistance to the "War on Terror": Constructing Sex-Gender Difference through the Erasure of Patriarchy in the Middle East', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 20, (2012), pp. 1821-36.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations, 'Secretary-General Calls for Council Action to Ensure Women Are Involved in Peace and Security Decisions', M2 PressWire, 25 October 2000.

<sup>30</sup> The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, *Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus*, (London: ICSR, 2016), <[icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Criminal-Pasts-Terrorist-Futures.pdf](http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Criminal-Pasts-Terrorist-Futures.pdf)> [Accessed 28 March 2018].

<sup>31</sup> Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, *A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism* (New York: NYU School of Law, 2011).

<sup>32</sup> The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Women and Terrorist Radicalization: Final Report* (Vienna: OSCE, 2013).



engage women at all stages of the development, implementation and monitoring of CVE policies, strategies and programs, and learn from and integrate the experience of women's involvement and knowledge of CVE processes, including peacebuilding, and the resolutions of conflicts. This can lead to an increase in women's participation decision-making processes.

Despite recent recognition of the role of women in national, regional and global security issues, there is a need for more in-depth research and analysis of women's roles in violent extremism CVE.<sup>33</sup> With an increase of women engaging in violent extremism, the identity of women is being publicly disrupted. Traditionally, women are perceived as gentle, passive and non-violent.<sup>34</sup> Therefore the need for further analysis includes examining the many perceptions, drivers, determinations, goals and political agency of female participants in violent extremism, CVE and, more broadly, political violence. Women play a pivotal role in assisting to prevent both women and men from participating and engaging in violent extremism.<sup>35</sup> Community engagement in CVE can be defined as civil societies' efforts and attempts to both inoculate and extract those vulnerable to violent extremism through increasing these individuals' resilience and enhancing their capacity to resist recruiting efforts of violent extremism groups.<sup>36</sup> By considering women's roles in CVE, there will be an increase in the adoption of a holistic approach to understanding and addressing violent extremism, thus creating a shift from a militarised approach to an approach centred on community participation and engagement, particularly the reintegration of marginalised women into the narrative.<sup>37</sup> OSCE research concludes that women's involvement in the CVE narrative as "policy-shapers, educators, community members and activists" is essential in preventing terrorism.<sup>38</sup> This OSCE research emphasises that women have a critical role in communicating feedback to international communities regarding CVE efforts and strategies, highlighting when these are effective or when these have a counterproductive impact on their own communities and efforts.<sup>39</sup> Although the literature and strategies continue to evolve to include women in CVE initiatives in countries where violent extremism is on the rise, women activists still lack access to resources and support structures.

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<sup>33</sup> Richard Jackson, Lee Jarvis, Jeroen Gunning and Marie Breen Smyth, *Terrorism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 95–96.

<sup>34</sup> Caron E. Gentry and Laura Sjober, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> United Nations, 'Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism—The Way Forward'.

<sup>36</sup> Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work?'.

<sup>37</sup> Daniel P. Aldrich, 'Mightier than the Sword: Social Science and Development in Countering Violent Extremism', in R. Shaw and S. Radelet (eds), *USAID Frontiers in Development* (Washington: United States Agency for International Development, 2012), pp. 46–49.

<sup>38</sup> Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Women and Terrorist Radicalization: Final Report*, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

## The Shape of CVE in Bangladesh

Recent developments have seen a targeted recruitment underway in Bangladesh and women being involved in various roles including 'supporters, sympathizers and perpetrators' of violent acts.<sup>40</sup>

Women are being arrested in higher numbers for various crimes including planning to undertake suicide attacks. Women's roles in violent extremism in Bangladesh is evolving, in the past being 'confined to indoctrination and recruitment'<sup>41</sup> and now moving into more operational and direct roles including logistics, recruitment, and planning and carrying out attacks, as well as being targeted for forced recruitment. 2016 saw the first female suicide attack in Bangladesh and since then there have been more arrest and attempted attacks by women. It is possible that this evolution is due to the rise of IS and the particular type of ideology and the reach this group now has across the globe.

There are a number of initiatives that are mobilising and supporting women to be more involved in the CVE space in Bangladesh. For example, women are a key stakeholder in the 'Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism (STRIVE)' program that aims to enhance young community radio producers to address violent extremism and enhance understanding of rural communities as to how to counter violent extremism.<sup>42</sup>

Another example is the government of Japan funded 'Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities' program in Bangladesh that has a dual approach of addressing economic inequalities at the same time providing training on CVE and engaging at-risk-communities. The women involved in the project also lobby schools to run programs allowing students to identify and prevent violent extremism. The project aims to increase women's economic position and confidence that will empower them to address intolerance and radicalising in their communities.<sup>43</sup> This is part of a larger four-track program run by UN Women in the Asia Pacific, focusing on empowerment, participation, research and policy influence. Research from the project found only 32 per cent women in communities outside of the project agree that

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<sup>40</sup> Ashish Banik, 'Role of Women in Preventing Radicalisation in Bangladesh', Foreign Affairs Insights & Review, 20 June 2017, <[fairbd.net/role-of-women-in-preventing-radicalization-in-bangladesh/](http://fairbd.net/role-of-women-in-preventing-radicalization-in-bangladesh/)> [Accessed 28 March 2018].

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication, 'Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism Through Community Radio', <<http://bnnrc.net/STRIVE/>> [Accessed 29 March 2018].

<sup>43</sup> UN Women, 'Women in Bangladesh Bolster Efforts to Turn the Tide on Rising Extremism', 19 February 2018, <[www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/1/feature-women-in-bangladesh-turn-the-tide-on-rising-extremism](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/1/feature-women-in-bangladesh-turn-the-tide-on-rising-extremism)> [Accessed 30 March 2018].



they know what to do to prevent violent extremism in their families, whilst 51 per cent of women in the project agreed.<sup>44</sup>

In the Bangladesh part of this project

about 1,200 “Polli Shomaj Women” (women-only community groups) have increased their business and leadership skills. In addition, they are building their capacity to identify the early signs of radicalisation of adults and children in their own communities and find solutions for prevention. In total, 600 women have also received funding to start up or expand their businesses.<sup>45</sup>

The strength of the program is its multi-faceted approach—empowering women at the local level, but also engaging the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs using this project to feed into Bangladesh’s first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in the hope this will harmonise and strengthen national efforts on CVE.

This programme also has a research component to inform effective CVE engagement—the most recent data shows that of those search engine users attempting to access extremist content, 89.1 per cent were male and 10.9 per cent were female. This is significant as online users can be desensitised to graphic sexual violence and other acts online that can lead to increased sexual and gender-based violence levels as well as communities becoming more accepting of extremist groups tactics.

Adding to the complexity is the narrative that is being used by both Myanmar and Bangladesh governments that the recent refuge flow of Rohingya into Bangladesh will be associated with an increase in violent extremism and terrorist activities. To date this has not been the case<sup>46</sup> and there are concerns that addressing the situation as a counterterrorism operation rather than a humanitarian operation could have catastrophic consequences.

## **Engaging Mothers to Reduce Violence Extremism**

The role that mothers can play in CVE has increasingly been a focus of CVE programming. Evidence from research highlights that mothers can hold authority within their communities and families.<sup>47</sup> Mothers, through their emotional relationship with their families (and particularly children), are strategically well placed to access key information about “the social and

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<sup>44</sup> UN Women, ‘Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities’.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> International Crisis Group, ‘Myanmar/Bangladesh: A Humanitarian Calamity and a Two-Country Crisis’, Commentary, 31 January 2018, <[www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/myanmarbangladesh-humanitarian-calamity-and-two-country-crisis](http://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/myanmarbangladesh-humanitarian-calamity-and-two-country-crisis)> [Accessed 28 March 2018].

<sup>47</sup> Global Counterterrorism Forum, ‘Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism’, <[www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf](http://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-Women-and-CVE.pdf)> [Accessed 20 August 2017].

psychological landscape” of young adults and adolescents who could potentially become involved in violent extremism.<sup>48</sup> The rapid increase of violence in Asia, including Central Asia, has resulted in a CVE focus on the process of radicalisation and deradicalisation.<sup>49</sup> As a result of their position within the home and family, mothers are often able to identify behaviour that may be conducive to radicalisation and intervene at an early stage.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, mothers often have the trust of their families and the broader community, and hence they are more likely to be able to engage with disengaged or isolated family or community members.<sup>51</sup>

An example of this approach is the Mothers Opposing Violent Extremism (MOVE) initiative in Tajikistan. In the past, Tajikistan’s civil society experienced relative religious freedom, which was fundamental to the functioning of society. However, with the Tajikistan government’s underdeveloped CVE strategy, there are now policies restricting religious freedom. In various international organisations’ assessments and evaluations of civil and political rights, Tajikistan’s scores are consistently poor.<sup>52</sup> With the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, one of the increasing threats from violent extremism for Tajikistan is the flow of Tajik fighters into Syria.<sup>53</sup> Approximately 400 Tajik citizens have joined ISIS in Syria since its rise in 2013.<sup>54</sup>

There are several women-focused CVE initiatives globally, and MOVE (a campaign from the international non-governmental organisation Sisters Against Violent Extremism [SAVE]) is one of them. SAVE is the world’s first female platform that aims to create a cohesive and unified front for CVE. Mothers School was first launched in Tajikistan by SAVE, engaging with local mother’s groups and providing mothers with the resources, support and encouragement to protect and deter their children from violent extremism,

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<sup>48</sup> Edit Schlaffer and Ulrich Kropiunigg, ‘A New Security Architecture: Mothers Included!’, in N.C. Fink, S. Zeiger and R. Bhulai (eds), *A Man’s World? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism* (USA: Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2016), p. 54.

<sup>49</sup> Global Center on Cooperative Security and The Institute for Inclusive Security, ‘Strengthening Rule of Law Responses to Counter Violent Extremism: What Role for Civil Society in South Asia?’, Policy Brief, May 2015, <[www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/May-2015-Strengthening-Rule-of-Law-Responses-to-Counter-Violent-Extremism3.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/May-2015-Strengthening-Rule-of-Law-Responses-to-Counter-Violent-Extremism3.pdf)> [Accessed 25 September 2017].

<sup>50</sup> Schlaffer and Kropiunigg, ‘A New Security Architecture’.

<sup>51</sup> Global Counterterrorism Forum, ‘Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism’.

<sup>52</sup> Eric McGlinchey, ‘Violent Extremism and Insurgency in Tajikistan: A Risk Assessment’, United States Agency for International Development, 14 August 2013, <[pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00JSKG.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JSKG.pdf)> [Accessed 14 August 2017], p. iii.

<sup>53</sup> The Soufan Group, *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq* (New York: The Soufan Group, December 2015).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

and diminish the attraction of violent extremist ideologies.<sup>55</sup> Each Mothers School program is designed to address community-specific issues, such as communication skills, parenting skills, strategies to become involved in their children's education, and how to identify early warning signs of radicalisation. Through Mothers School, new and existing mother's groups undertake a workshop that integrates income generation and CVE. Edit Schlaffer and Ulrich Kropiunigg's report 'Can Mothers Challenge Extremism?' is one of the most comprehensive studies examining the impact of mothers on CVE, and has helped shape and develop the MOVE initiative.<sup>56</sup> This study concluded with two key findings: (i) mothers are willing to prevent children from engaging in violent extremism; but (ii) mothers often lack the skills, confidence and tools to be effective in pursuing such prevention.<sup>57</sup> These findings support the need to engage with mothers as key players in CVE.

The Mothers School launch in Tajikistan stemmed from mothers who were becoming increasingly concerned about their children's safety and risk with regard to violent extremism. The MOVE mother's group agreed that peace begins, and is fostered, at home, and that understanding and communication are tools that are fundamental to building social resilience and cohesion. Through a five-day workshop in Khujand, Tajikistan, twenty-two women from different communities were mobilised to commit to and develop the education of mothers, so as to increase their capacity to counter violent extremism.<sup>58</sup> Mothers Schools were launched in various villages in two northern regions, and the course was able to be conducted in a community setting that was informal and safe. This community setting provided a space where women could find common ground, be provided training and education on early signs of radicalisation, and access resources necessary to address it. Mothers School's initial evaluations outlined that mothers carry intense worry concerning the radicalisation of community and family members. Furthermore, mothers felt immense pressure to ensure that their family's reputation remained unblemished.<sup>59</sup> In light of this, the community welcomed this new approach to security and creating allies in the home.<sup>60</sup>

The further development of the Mothers School program and its expansion into other countries is evidence of the program's success in empowering

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<sup>55</sup> Women without Borders and SAVE, 'Role and Function of Women without Borders / SAVE', 2011, <<http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/specialmeetings/2011/docs/women-wout-borders-save.pdf>> [Accessed 21 September 2017].

<sup>56</sup> Edit Schlaffer and Ulrich Kropiunigg, 'Can Mothers Challenge Extremism? Mothers' Perceptions and Attitudes of Radicalization and Violent Extremism' (Vienna: Women Without Borders / SAVE, 2015).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>58</sup> Women without Borders and SAVE, 'Role and Function of Women without Borders / SAVE'.

<sup>59</sup> Schlaffer and Kropiunigg, 'A New Security Architecture'.

<sup>60</sup> Edit Schlaffer, 'Mothers of Extremists: The Unlikely Allies for a New Female Security Paradigm', HuffPost Blog, 21 May 2013, updated 21 July 2013, <[www.huffingtonpost.com/edit-schlaffer/mothers-of-extremists-the\\_b\\_3314019.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/edit-schlaffer/mothers-of-extremists-the_b_3314019.html)> [Accessed 20 July 2017].

mothers to counter violent extremism. Because the program works with local organisations and is developed to address context-specific issues, the program thus has legitimacy and the trust of the community. Mothers School participants have been reported to have positive responses to the program, including: (i) an increased awareness of their impact on children; (ii) confidence in gaining new skills; (iii) gaining support networks to address the issue; and (iv) practical skills such as an increase in English language and computer literacies, which has resulted in new employment, and thus an increased status in the household.<sup>61</sup>

Another positive outcome of mother's groups is the increased feelings of optimism and hope for participants' families.<sup>62</sup> These engagements with mothers who have lost their sons to violent extremism are important to note, especially in view of the ability of mothers to act as leaders in their communities, stopping the recruitment of children into violent extremist ideologies. One woman, from a group of mothers using their voice to counter violent extremism, has stated:

"When they come to recruit our sons, we must rebel! A mother will gain nothing; her son is more important to her than anything else, and if you promise me the whole world and even heaven I wouldn't change it for the life of my son."<sup>63</sup>

## Women in Leadership—a Place at the Peace Table

It is important to understand how government actions and perspectives on military, defence, policing, and strategy implementation can impact CVE narratives. There is scope to better understand and utilise the capacity of the state to promote the role of women in CVE. Women's representation in CVE strategies is enhanced by their participation in formal government settings.<sup>64</sup> In the context of Afghanistan and examining the role of women and their contribution to the peace process there, this section will also illustrate how, although women may be present in formal settings, governments need to ensure that women's roles are meaningful and contributory. Additionally, this section will address women's absence from formal platforms, and the negative impact this can have on CVE strategies.

It is evident that women are considerably underrepresented in governments worldwide.<sup>65</sup> Currently, the responsibility of CVE falls heavily on government sectors such as the defence and policing sectors, as well as the security industry, and women traditionally lack access to these sectors. The global

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<sup>61</sup> Schlaffer and Kropiunigg, 'Can Mothers Challenge Extremism?', pp. 11–40.

<sup>62</sup> Schlaffer and Kropiunigg, 'A New Security Architecture'.

<sup>63</sup> Schlaffer, 'Mothers of Extremists'.

<sup>64</sup> Global Counterterrorism Forum, 'Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism'.

<sup>65</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics* (New York: United Nations, 2015), pp. 121–35.

statistic of women's participation in formal, political government settings remains low. Globally, women make up a meagre 22.8 per cent of representatives in national parliaments.<sup>66</sup> In terms of armed forces, women make up 14.8 per cent in Canada, 14.6 per cent in the United States, and 9.9 per cent in the United Kingdom.<sup>67</sup> With such limited representation in the aforementioned sectors, women thus lack the opportunity to formally engage in CVE efforts.

The post-2001 period saw Afghanistan transition into a country where gender mainstreaming, and the legal rights of women, made significant progress; after the 1996–2001 Taliban regime, women were able to participate more actively and meaningfully in peacebuilding efforts.<sup>68</sup> Women's participation and rights were formally embedded in the new Constitution for Afghanistan during its development in 2003, and forced the Afghan government to more seriously consider the various frameworks (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and international treaties (such as UNSCR 1325) that the country has joined. In addition to that, documents such as the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Women of Afghanistan were developed. The NAP has outlined the participation of Afghan women in the national security forces and formal peace processes as a priority. The development of the NAP came from a place where it was agreed that the basic rights, responsibilities, and contributions of women, cannot be compromised.<sup>69</sup>

It was the adoption and establishment of such documents and frameworks that assisted in developing women's participation in all peacebuilding processes in Afghanistan. However, in recent years the Taliban and other violent extremist groups have sought to regain their authority and power. In many conflict-stricken areas, strict Sharia law is enforced, imposing severe, strict rules on communities, particularly on women and girls. In such cases, women's societal freedoms and rights are considered as adverse to an ideal society.<sup>70</sup> Attacks on women are severe, such as stoning, and acid attacks of girls who attend school. Furthermore, Afghanistan does not have a national CVE policy or strategy, and the situation remains unstable. Such

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<sup>66</sup> UN Women, 'Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation', July 2017, <[www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures)> [Accessed 20 September 2017].

<sup>67</sup> The Atlantic Council of Canada, *Canada in the World: Youth Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security* (Toronto: The Atlantic Council of Canada, 2015), p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> Melike Karlidag, 'UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Afghanistan: Civil Society Monitoring Report 2014', November 2014, <[www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UN%20Security%20Council%20Resolution%201325%20in%20Afghanistan.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UN%20Security%20Council%20Resolution%201325%20in%20Afghanistan.pdf)> [Accessed 15 September 2017].

<sup>69</sup> Elizabeth Weingarten and Leila Hilal, 'A Step Forward for Afghan Women?', *Foreign Policy*, 3 March 2015, <[foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/03/a-step-forward-for-afghan-women/](http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/03/a-step-forward-for-afghan-women/)> [Accessed 29 March 2018].

<sup>70</sup> Zachary Laub, 'The Taliban in Afghanistan', Council on Foreign Relations, 4 July 2014, <[www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan](http://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan)> [Accessed 10 September 2017].

CVE policy paralysis in Afghanistan means that there is little research in the country on CVE and its possible interplay with women.

For a long time, responding to security issues (such as defence or policing measures) has been accepted as a male-dominated sphere. Therefore, in such areas, women have been, and continue to be, underutilised and often prevented in contributing to peacebuilding efforts.<sup>71</sup> Involving both the government and civil society, peacebuilding has a direct focus on prevention, striving to “prevent, mitigate, and resolve local conflict and promote human security”.<sup>72</sup> Although peacebuilding may seem like it does not explicitly address violent extremism, it can contribute to and enhance CVE measures. In contexts such as Afghanistan, women’s formal participation in peacebuilding should be encouraged, as this encouragement would help create a non-securitised space, a space outside of the Afghan National Security Forces which is traditionally male dominated, that can be a foundational platform for creating and implementing effective CVE strategies. Government strategy and policy should incorporate a CVE framework that understands and respects human rights and is based on a platform where women are present, represented and heard. This can lead to increased trust between formal institutions such as the government and civil society, creating sustained peace and security.<sup>73</sup>

The UN Secretary-General’s 2010 report, ‘Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding’, cautions against simple assumptions such as that if women are simply present in CVE processes, then women are already participating in a substantive way.<sup>74</sup> It is argued that the representation of women is far more complex than simply placing women in leadership positions, and there is also a need to address entrenched gender biases in social norms and formal legislation.<sup>75</sup> However, it can also be reasoned that with more women in leadership positions at the highest levels, these gender bias issues would be more likely to come to the fore and thus be more readily addressed, recognising that having women in leadership position is not enough on its own. There is substantial evidence that women’s political voice has resulted

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<sup>71</sup> Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Sara Zeiger and Rafia Bhulai, ‘Introduction’, in N. C. Fink, S. Zeiger and R. Bhulai (eds), *A Man’s World? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism* (USA: Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2016), pp. 5–6.

<sup>72</sup> Georgia Holmer, ‘Countering Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilding Perspective’, *Special Report* 336 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2013), p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations, ‘Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding: Report of the Secretary-General’, A/65/354–S/2010/466, 7 September 2010, <[undocs.org/en/S/2010/466](https://undocs.org/en/S/2010/466)> [Accessed 28 September 2017].

<sup>75</sup> Pilar Domingo, Rebecca Holmes, Tam O’Neil, Nicola Jones, Kate Bird, Anna Larson, Elizabeth Presler-Marshall and Craig Valters, ‘Women’s Voice and Leadership in Decision-making: Assessing the Evidence’, ODI Report, March 2015, <<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9627.pdf>>, [Accessed 11 September 2017], p. 16.



in gender-responsive legal and policy reform.<sup>76</sup> The resulting impact of this includes: (i) increased transparency in government decision-making; (ii) increased budget allocations for services that benefit women; and (iii) more accessible and responsive services for women.<sup>77</sup>

There are various challenges that need to be overcome in Afghanistan in order for women to participate and engage in CVE at a formal level. Previous peace processes have failed to invite women to various dialogues and negotiations. Furthermore, in Afghanistan, women are constrained, often by families and gendered social norms, with regard to areas (such as insecure areas) they can travel to. This gender restriction is also evident in the representation of women in the High Peace Council in Afghanistan, which consists of only nine women out of a total of seventy members. When women are represented and their voices are heard, it promotes a more satisfactory and sustainable peace and security.<sup>78</sup>

In conclusion, this paper strongly highlights that women need to have meaningful access and participation to formal government settings. Currently, the lack of women represented in settings such as parliaments and formal peace negotiation forums can negatively impact the outcomes of these platforms, such as the development of an effective CVE strategy. When women are in leadership positions, it is important that their roles are not tokenistic and that they are able to participate meaningfully. Having women in these positions can have a positive impact on the government's transparency and effectiveness in CVE.

## **Conclusion**

The inclusion of women in the formal and informal platforms for CVE continues to be insufficient. This paper provides an analysis of the role of women in the CVE narrative highlighting the positive impact women can have when they are able to participate at various levels of CVE initiatives, from grassroots to formal government participation. This analysis explores key approaches where the role of women in CVE can be strengthened and enhanced, this list is not exhaustive however and there needs further investment in exploring these avenues.

There are a number of crucial questions governments and other institutions can ask when creating and developing policies and programs. How can they support and aid grassroots movements that are developed independently of government? What role can and should the government play in initiatives

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. pp. 2-4.

<sup>78</sup> Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): The Role of Women and Women's Organizations', in N. C. Fink, S. Zeiger and R. Bhulai (eds), *A Man's World? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism* (USA: Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2016), pp. 18–35.

created from grassroots movements? How can the presence of women in formal settings translate to meaningful participation and engagement in CVE initiatives? How can governments comprehensively support the WPS agenda and its links to CVE, in particular the relief and recovery aspect, without undermining humanitarian principles and politicising assistance?

In an era when the challenges posed by violent extremism are complex and dynamic, we cannot afford to exclude voices, efforts or leaders who could make all the difference.

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# Leading the Operationalisation of WPS

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This paper considers how an intervening security force can implement the relevant components of the suite of United Nations Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The analytical framework of the paper is a generic operational cycle comprised of pre-planning, planning, conduct, and transition. Specific tasks identified in the resolutions are organised in this generic operational cycle. The tasks are those commonly led by security forces, or directed by government, and include: conflict analysis or intelligence; deliberate planning; force structure; population protection; female engagement; support to the rule of law; security sector reform; and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. This paper focuses on the experiences of the Australian Defence Force, with additional examples from militaries of Canada, Ireland, Sweden and the United States as well as organisational experiences from NATO and the United Nations. The paper draws on operations including, but not limited to, in Afghanistan, Rwanda, Yugoslavia and East Timor. Overall, the paper makes a unique contribution to the military operationalisation of the WPS agenda.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council has now passed eight resolutions (UNSCRs) on the WPS agenda. Resolutions 1820 (2008),<sup>1</sup> 1888 (2009),<sup>2</sup> 1960 (2010),<sup>3</sup> and 2106 (2013),<sup>4</sup> are concerned with protection from and ending impunity for sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict. Most significantly, they label the widespread and systemic use of sexual violence against women and girls as a crime against humanity and a constituent act of genocide. Resolutions 1889 (2009)<sup>5</sup> and 2122 (2013)<sup>6</sup> go into great detail about increasing women's participation and supporting women's leadership in all aspects of conflict prevention, mitigation and recovery. The most recent resolution, UNSCR 2242 (2015), focused on women's participation in conflict prevention, but also covered issues of countering violent extremism.<sup>7</sup> *En masse*, the resolutions cover gendered issues in the context of a range of activities undertaken to support international peace and security. Such tasks include information gathering; protection of civilians; support to the rule of law; security sector reform; and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The tasks covered in the resolutions, will be addressed in this paper as they would be undertaken in a generic operational cycle: pre-planning, planning, conduct and transition.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1820 (2008), S/RES/1820 (19 June 2008).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1888 (2009), S/RES/1888 (30 September 2009).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1960 (2010), S/RES/1960 (16 December 2010).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2106 (2013), S/RES/2106 (24 June 2013).

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1889 (2009), S/RES/1889 (5 October 2009).

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2122 (2013), S/RES/2122 (18 October 2013).

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2242 (2015), S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015).

There is a vast volume of feminist international relations scholarship on women's experience of conflict. Indeed, there is an entire sub-discipline of Feminist Security Studies.<sup>8</sup> But research rarely focuses on the contributions of the military to the implementation of the WPS agenda. The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have gathered some snapshots of tactical activities undertaken by military forces,<sup>9</sup> with some attention paid to some relevant policies including personnel and human resources.<sup>10</sup> However, little research has been done on the comprehensive integration of the WPS agenda at the strategic and operational level. This paper draws on examples of good practice, or leadership, from the militaries of western, liberal democratic countries to highlight what military leadership might look like on the operationalisation of WPS. Reference material comes from researchers based in Africa and the Pacific as well as Switzerland and Sweden, while practical examples and case studies are drawn from the United States, Canada and Ireland as well as Australia and organisations like NATO and the UN.

The Department of Defence has shown clear leadership in their implementation of the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018*. After the inaugural Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security, the Vice Chief of Defence Force established a position in his office for a director of the department's implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP). The Annual Civil Society Report Cards on the implementation of the NAP continue to report that the Department of Defence is the highest performing agency regarding NAP implementation.<sup>11</sup> However, the NAP has many failings and would never have been able to address all the defence specific components of the entire WPS agenda. Additional individual leadership was shown when Joint Operations Command requested the assistance of the Defence Science and Technology Group to support the comprehensive implementation of the WPS agenda in Australian joint military operations. This paper reimagines some of the work undertaken in that project, considering what leadership on WPS would look like at all stages of a generic operational cycle.

The paper will focus on the WPS agenda as one which, in the Australian context, is largely externally focused. While women's participation in peacekeeping and peace negotiations is a key element of the WPS agenda,

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<sup>8</sup> A. T. R. Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> L. Hammar and A. Berg, *Whose Security? Practical Examples of Gender Perspectives in Military Operations* (Stockholm: Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Cristina Figueroa et al., *UNSCR 1325 Reload: An Analysis of Annual National Reports to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives from 1999-2013: Policies, Recruitment, Retention & Operations* (Madrid: Australian Human Rights Commission and Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, 2015); supported by the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme.

<sup>11</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Third Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', 2015, <pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/report-card.pdf>, p. 3.

the Australian Defence Force makes minimal contribution to UN peacekeeping. Any increase in women's participation in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will therefore have little effect on the overall number of women participating in UN peace operations. The issue of military women's participation will only be discussed in so far as it effects operational outcomes such as engagement with the local population. In this way, the implementation of the WPS agenda needs to be differentiated from the gender reform program embodied in the Broderick *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force*.<sup>12</sup> While the implementation of the Broderick reviews does contribute to the participation pillar that appears in both the Secretary General's Seven Point Plan on Women's Participation in Peacekeeping<sup>13</sup> and the Australian NAP,<sup>14</sup> the WPS agenda is much broader than the remit of the Broderick reviews, and any communication that confuses the two<sup>15</sup> should be corrected. As Egnell reminds us, "the core task of military organisations is to fight and win the nation's wars, or to apply organised violence, or threat of such violence in pursuit of the national leadership's political aims".<sup>16</sup> In Sweden much of the success of implementing the WPS agenda is credited to the fact that a gender perspective was considered "an issue of operational effectiveness rather than just a largely politically-laden human resources issue of women's rights and participation".<sup>17</sup>

## Policy Context

Different military organisations have varying frameworks in which they describe phases of military operations. By using a generic operational cycle (pre-planning, planning, conduct and transition) the analysis contained in this paper aims to be applicable to a broad range of professional military organisations. Within that generic operational cycle are security activities that are both explicitly discussed in the suite of UN Security Council resolutions and required of the Australian Defence Force, as directed by the Australian Government. It is with these activities that there is scope to show the greatest leadership operationalising the WPS agenda.

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<sup>12</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, 'Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force [Broderick Review]', <defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/reports> [Accessed 10 April 2018].

<sup>13</sup> UN Security Council General Assembly, 'Women's Participation in Peacebuilding: Report of the Secretary-General', A/65/354-S/2010/466 (7 September 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018* (Canberra: Australian Government, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> D. Fryer, 'Women, Peace and Security: The Agenda Is Not Women and It Won't Achieve Peace and Security', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, Issue 200 (2016).

<sup>16</sup> R. Egnell, P. Hojem and H. Berts, *Gender, Military Effectiveness, and Organisational Change: The Swedish Model* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

The government expects that the ADF will not only abide by international law, but where appropriate it will enforce international law. An obvious example of this would be in upholding sanctions. But the Department of Defence is also responsible for Australia's implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, including its gender provisions. More recognisably, government expects the ADF maintains an ongoing and evolving capability to analyse conflict. While Australia's intelligence capabilities extend far beyond the ADF; the navy, army and air force all contribute information and analyse various aspects of conflict and instability. The function of deliberate planning for joint military operations sits within the defence force and the government expects the ADF to undertake security sector reform; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs as well as other transition assistance such as support to governance and the rule of law in specific cases. These tasks have largely been undertaken, and thought about, in a 'gender neutral' way. However, the suite of Security Council resolutions on WPS identifies specific expectations for the gendering of these activities.

## Pre-planning

### INTELLIGENCE

UNSCR 1889 calls for the data collection, analysis and systematic assessment of the particular needs of women and girls, including "information on their needs for physical security and participation in decision-making and post-conflict planning, in order to improve system-wide response to those needs".

Integrating a gender perspective into security operations requires a gendered understanding of conflict. The data required for operational assessments comes from a broad range of friendly force and intelligence sources.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, a gender perspective will need to be applied across a large range of organisations. One way to assess the extent to which security organisations have a gendered understanding of conflict is to undertake a gender audit of intelligence product. How many times do the words girls, women, woman, wife, children, sexual violence, rape, and gender-based violence appear in intelligence products? Such an audit could be undertaken biennially, with increasing results.

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are required to assess "the implications for women and men, boys and girls of any planned action, including the design of policies associated with peace operations, fragile states and conflict affected situations".<sup>19</sup> This is largely achieved through a methodology known as Gender Based Analysis plus (GBA+), which was developed in

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<sup>18</sup> Joint Doctrine Centre, Australian Defence Force Publication (ADFP) 5.0.1—*Joint Military Appreciation Process*, 2nd ed. (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2015), pp. 1-12.

<sup>19</sup> J. Vance, Chief of Defence Staff, 'Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions into Canadian Armed Forces Planning and Operations', *Chief of Defence Staff Directive*, C. Forces (Ottawa, Ontario: National Defence Headquarters, 2016).

accordance with obligations in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. GBA+ is an “analytical competency used to assess the potential impacts of policies, programs, services, and other initiatives on diverse groups of women and men, taking into account gender and other identity factors”.<sup>20</sup> According to the Chief of Defence Staff Directive, “integration of GBA+ into CAF planning and execution of operations, including incorporation as part of the Operational Planning Process (OPP) is a means of improving operational effectiveness”.<sup>21</sup>

A recent analysis of the Rohingya refugee crises showed what can be learned when such analysis is specifically engendered.<sup>22</sup> The author analysed the data on pregnant women and new mothers in the Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh and determined that such data can be used as an indicator of conflict related sexual violence and ethnic cleansing. The data was problematic but when taken in conjunction with qualitative accounts it was determined that reporting of such a high portion of pregnant women and new mothers inferred a low rate of fighting age males and that the overall demography was skewed by ethnic cleansing, including through the use of conflict related sexual violence such that is in breach of international criminal law.

## EXERCISES

Exercises are a key opportunity to increase the awareness, and test the operationalisation of WPS issues. Multinational Exercise Trident Jaguar 16 was run by NATO in January 2016 with WPS integrated into the planning phase. Gender advisors and planners ensured that a gender perspective was integrated into factor analysis, operational liaison reconnaissance team deployments, rules of engagement, planning guidance, commander’s critical information requirements, the strategic communications plan, war gaming, and course of action decision briefs.

In 2015, Exercise Talisman Sabre integrated WPS into planning and execution in a number of ways. Exercise Talisman Sabre is a biennial exercise with Australia and the United States designed to improve readiness and inter-operability across conflict operations. In 2015 it involved over 30,000 Australian and US defence personnel, as well as civilians from Australian and US government agencies, UN agencies, and humanitarian organisations. UNSCR 1325 was referenced in the training objectives and gender-based issues were written into the exercise scenarios. These issues included the protection of women and their participation in peace processes. Twelve gender advisors provided advice on the exercise design and participated in the exercise itself. WPS training was provided to exercise

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., para. 10.

<sup>22</sup> S. Hutchinson, ‘Gendered Insecurity in the Rohingya Crisis’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 1 (2018), pp. 1-9.

personnel; and staff were directed to integrate WPS into their planning throughout the exercise. After the exercise, participants produced publications and manuals on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 into military exercises. These include a Commander's Guide to Implementing UNSCR 1325 in Military Operations and Planning, and the Australian Civil-Military Centre's guidance document on implementing UNSCR 1325 into exercise planning.<sup>23</sup>

When WPS is integrated into exercises, it needs to be explicitly included in the lessons learned collection and analysis. This is an emerging agenda in the military and its integration needs to be critically analysed according to the requirements outline in the resolutions as well as in the context of the mission objectives of the exercise scenario. This requires clarity of purpose and approach before an exercise begins, in order to effectively report any lessons for ongoing development.

Exercise scenarios on WPS should cover the range of tasks outlined throughout this paper, as well as more comprehensive issues of protection from sexual violence and participation in conflict de-escalation, mitigation, resolution and recovery. Intelligence processes, female engagement, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration scenarios should all include a specific gender dimension. Protection from sexual violence needs to be addressed in scenarios that cover targeting, international legal obligations, and patrol techniques and procedures. The participation of local women needs to be accounted for in scenarios relating to civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), female engagement and transition assistance.

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Operationalising the WPS agenda requires its inclusion in a suite of joint education and training, as well as some single service training. WPS is an inherently civil-military issue. As such it should be added to the Civil-Military Cooperation Tactical Operators Course and CIMIC Staff Planning Course. WPS has been included in the International Peace Operations Seminar since 2015. It should be mainstreamed throughout the curriculum at Staff College, and at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies as well as being highlighted by specific presentations and exercise scenarios. Material such as a guidance notes for applying a gender perspective in the Joint Military Appreciation Process would likely be beneficial.

Education and training can also be used as a vehicle for advancing operationalisation of WPS by other military organisations. Increasing women's participation in peace operations requires the consideration of the promotion of female police and military personnel within their respective

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<sup>23</sup> The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Third Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', p. 3.



domestic institutions, then their deployment on international operations. Progress on this matter has varied across UN Member States but the largest police and troop contributing countries have made the least progress. Around the world, servicewomen face a range of obstacles to operational deployment. Some of these issues could be considered in Australia's Defence Cooperation Program. Australia is a major donor to the female military officer's training program conducted by UN Women but could also, for example, request nomination of female personnel to attend education and training opportunities at the Australian Defence College.

## Planning

### DELIBERATE PLANNING

The Joint Military Appreciation Process (JMAP) provides doctrinal guidance for planning ADF campaigns and operations. Recent developments in the JMAP support better integration of WPS into deliberate planning. The changes are positive, but for WPS to be effectively implemented in the JMAP, producing a concept of operations and operational plan, the doctrine needs to be read in conjunction with specific WPS material. This critical approach is encouraged in the doctrine, emphasising the value of professional military education and describing critical thinking as "an important skill for planners to develop and exercise because it enables them to challenge accepted norms, to determine the right questions to ask and to answer those questions with an intellectual rigour that might otherwise lack depth".<sup>24</sup>

The new first step of the JMAP, 'Framing and Scoping', provides an excellent opportunity to incorporate WPS considerations into planning. A WPS expert could join the small group of skilled personnel from within the joint planning group as a subject matter expert alongside an anthropologist and religious scholar. This would ensure gendered considerations of the problem including the initial commander's critical information requirements and consideration of force elements for the provision of Cultural Support or Female Engagement Teams (FET). Having said that, WPS expertise needs to not only be applied at the scoping phase. JMAP doctrine repeatedly refers to "human factors", "society" and "actors", "often relationships among actors are multifaceted and differ depending on the scale of interaction and their temporal aspects (history, duration, type and frequency)".<sup>25</sup> However, one cannot have a meaningful understanding of these interrelationships, power dynamics, exclusion or conflict in a society if we are blind to identities such as gender, ethnicity, class and income. Without accessing groups other than the most dominant, planners will not be able to answer questions like "why have the current circumstances arisen?"<sup>26</sup> Which related

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<sup>24</sup> Joint Doctrine Centre, ADFP 5.0.1—*Joint Military Appreciation Process*, pp. 1-8.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-15.



conditions, actors or relationships may oppose us; which may help us? “What broad resources can we draw upon to achieve our goals?”<sup>27</sup>

## **FORCE STRUCTURE AND PREPARATION**

Modern stabilisation and counterinsurgency operations continue to require greater human capabilities than conventional conflict. Australia’s Future Joint Operating Concept notes that

success in future conflict will see kinetic approaches to warfighting supplemented with activities designed to influence. ‘Soft power’ will increasingly facilitate the achievement of political goals. The degree to which a state or group can combine hard and soft power will determine the achievement of strategic objectives. A sophisticated understanding of conflict—the actors involved in it, and the mosaic of interests, expectations and allegiances underpinning it—will be required ... Developing this understanding may require new approaches to intelligence gathering, cultural awareness, individual education and collective training.<sup>28</sup>

Operations in urban and peri-urban environments will continue to require engagement with the female population.

The US Army recommends brigades begin selecting personnel for FET as soon as they receive an upcoming deployment notification. “Personnel should not be selected just because they are available. Select only the best female and male commissioned officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers.”<sup>29</sup> Key personal attributes of FET candidates include: sound judgement, good written and oral communication skills, ability to adapt to complex environments with many stakeholders, technical competence and negotiating skills. Personnel who are military police, intelligence, civil affairs, or medical specialists make preferred FET candidates.<sup>30</sup> The US FET School is in Fort Bragg. The FET training program is nine days long. FET members are expected to undertake additional individual and unit level training prior to their mission. Containing six modules, the course covers an introduction to FETs, culture of the area of operations, FET mission considerations, FET engagement considerations, enablers, and a culminating exercise.

Mission Rehearsal Exercises need to include scenarios with accurate gender considerations. This should include a range of situations including, for example, the use of road blocks and access to vital assets. When sexual violence is being used in an area of operations, pre-deployment training needs to include appropriate responses. The UN recommends that training troops to confront sexual violence should start with the practical and move to

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> S. Day, *Future Joint Operating Concept 2030* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2011)

<sup>29</sup> Centre for Army Lessons Learned, *Commander’s Guide to Female Engagement Teams*, CALL Handbook no. 11-38 (2011), p. 28.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

the conceptual. Instead of imparting normative or theoretical content about sex and gender, it should equip troops to meet these challenges in theatre. “Responding to sexualised attacks should be part of Mission Rehearsal Exercises and scenario based training,” remedying messaging about whether or not to respond, with examples of how to respond.<sup>31</sup>

## Conduct

### PROTECTION

Population protection is one of the five lines of operation in the capstone concept of the Australian Army, *Adaptive Campaigning—Future Land Operating Concept*.<sup>32</sup> Population protection is also a key principle in counterinsurgency and stabilisation operations. Protection of civilians is a similar concept that is key to modern peacekeeping operations. Indeed, the majority of modern peacekeeping missions have a strong mandate for the protection of civilians. In UNSCR 1889, the Security Council “reiterates its call for all parties in armed conflicts to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls”.<sup>33</sup> Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009),<sup>34</sup> 1960 (2010), and 2106 (2013), are all concerned with the monitoring of, protection from, and response to sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict.

In 2010, the Australian Government funded the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to develop and publish *An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*. The purpose of the document was to provide cross-referenced examples of successful peacekeeping practice to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.<sup>35</sup> It includes an inventory of tasks and tactics as well as a checklist of emerging elements of an effective response. Tasks and tactics include preventative physical protection through the use of armed patrols and escorts for community activities such as collecting water or firewood and patrols along trade routes and at markets, as well as in farming and foraging locations and routes.<sup>36</sup> The checklist of elements that may support an effective response by security actors to conflict-related sexual violence includes leadership backed by strong command and control structures, understanding the link between sexual violence and the restoration of peace and security, willingness and wherewithal to patrol and operate in unconventional space (villages, compounds, forests and fields) in response

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<sup>31</sup> United Nations, *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice* (New York: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), 2010).

<sup>32</sup> Head Modernisation and Strategic Planning, *Army's Future Land Operating Concept*, Australian Army Headquarters (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1889 (2009).

<sup>34</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1888 (2009).

<sup>35</sup> United Nations, *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

to unconventional threats, and consultation with all segments of the community including women.<sup>37</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL LAW

Rules of engagement are usually focused on allowable responses to the show or use of force. This does not necessarily equip platoon or section commanders to respond to sexual violence, especially when it is under the radar, even when it is an act of war and a destabilising factor.<sup>38</sup> The International Criminal Court (ICC) has jurisdiction to prosecute rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced sterilisation, forced pregnancy and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.<sup>39</sup> But the principle of complementarity of the Rome Statute obliges States Parties (including Australia) that are willing and able, to investigate and prosecute these crimes within their own domestic courts. UNSCR 1820 calls upon Member States to prosecute persons responsible for such crimes and subsequent resolutions call for an end to impunity for sexual violence in armed conflict.<sup>40</sup>

Genocide is justiciable internationally, but has also been a crime under Australian domestic law since 2002, when the federal government passed the *Genocide Convention Act 1949*. For sexual violence to be considered “a constitutive act with respect to genocide”, it needs to have been committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. The precedent for rape as an instrument of genocide was set in the Akayesu Case of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. A more recent example of rape used in this way is in Da’esh’s genocide against the Yazidis in northern Iraq.<sup>41</sup> Despite the heinous use of sexual and gender-based violence by Da’esh, including foreign fighters who come from countries criminalising these acts, not a single Da’esh fighter has been prosecuted for conflict related sexual violence.

Sexual violence can also be prosecuted as a violation of the laws or customs of war, Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions, the Fourth Geneva Convention, or both Additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Conventions.<sup>42</sup> In Australia, war crimes and violations of the laws and customs of war are criminalised in the *Geneva Conventions Act 1957* (last updated in 2009) and the *War Crimes Act 1945* (last updated in 2010). These two Acts have been incorporated in Division 268 of the *Criminal Code*

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> L. Chappell, *The Politics of Gender Justice at the International Criminal Court* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>40</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1820 (2008).

<sup>41</sup> Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, *‘They Came to Destroy’: ISIS Crimes against the Yazidis* (Geneva: Human Rights Council, 2016).

<sup>42</sup> K. Askin, ‘A Decade of the Development of Gender Crimes in International Courts and Tribunals: 1993 to 2003’, *Human Rights Brief*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2004), p. 4.

*Act 1995*. Rape is recognised as a war crime when it is committed in a widespread or systematic way. The Čelebići judgement of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia set the standard for holding a military leader responsible for crimes committed by subordinates under their authority or control, which they failed to prevent, halt, or punish.<sup>43</sup> Having known or had reason to know subordinates committed sexual abuses on male detainees, the superiors in the Čelebići Camp were charged with superior responsibility for ‘wilfully causing great suffering’ and ‘inhumane treatment’ as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, or ‘cruel treatment’ as a violation of the laws or customs of war.

Having the ability to collectively identify when sexual violence is widespread and systematic is required for the force to recognise if sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war. Commanders have an obligation to report this to relevant national and international authorities. Under Australian legislation, if these crimes are being perpetrated by Australian nationals, our courts have jurisdiction over these crimes even when they are perpetrated overseas. Factors such as the capture, enslavement and trafficking of women need to be accounted for in mission conduct. If tactical patrols are simply ignoring the violence against women they see, it is unlikely aggregate data will be gathered.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, due diligence needs to be carried out to prevent the destruction of evidence of these crimes during military operations.

### **TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE AND AGGREGATE REPORTING**

In addition to the legal requirements, sexual violence needs to be accounted for in stabilisation activities.

The extreme physical and psychological trauma suffered by survivors/witnesses, sexual violence may engender and aggravate ethnic, sectarian and other divisions in communities. This engrains conflict and instability and undermines peace-building and stabilisation efforts.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, UNSCR 1820 stresses that sexual violence “can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security”.<sup>46</sup> If situation reports include incidents of sexual violence, there should be a feedback loop to ensure this informs operations.<sup>47</sup>

A key mechanism for accounting for sexual violence and other gendered issues is the conduct and aggregation of gendered reporting from tactical

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> United Nations, *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*.

<sup>45</sup> Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict* (London: Government of United Kingdom, 2014), p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1820 (2008).

<sup>47</sup> United Nations, *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*.

patrols. To do this, the Irish Defence Forces have mainstreamed a gender perspective into all unit and sub-unit patrols. They have updated standard operating procedures and reporting proformas for tactical manoeuvre units, sub-unit patrols and CIMIC village assessments. Information from these reports is collated in the regular Gender Advisor report by the Deputy Commander.<sup>48</sup> Reports now include sex-disaggregated population data; female leaders and influencers; women's groups; roles of men and women in security forces, armed groups intelligence and law enforcement; access to social services; sex disaggregated list of protection threats; and differences between men and women's economic participation.

Threat assessments need to include threats to women. These threats may include sexual and gender-based violence, or they may be more general.<sup>49</sup> What are the differences between threats to men and women? What are the threat courses of action? The same questions apply for assessment of strengths and weaknesses; women are not just recipients of security, but are "countering the complex problems that threaten peace and stability"<sup>50</sup> in a broad range of ways. Women contribute to regular and irregular armed forces, clandestine services, they provide hospitality to insurgents, and raise the next generation into violent behaviours or otherwise. They participate in peacebuilding, negotiate ceasefires and support traditional non-violent conflict resolution processes.<sup>51</sup>

Men and women may use infrastructure and basic services differently. For example, roadblocks have a differing impact on men and women, who may have different roles in the household and society. In Kosovo, women and girls were more adversely affected by roadblocks than men and boys who found alternate routes for resupply.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, men and women are differentially affected by road damage caused by heavy vehicles in inclement weather. In Afghanistan, a Gender Field Advisor to the Commander of Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mazar-E-Sharif provided input to planning of autumn operations that would have otherwise damaged roads, preventing the access of women and girls to health care and education.<sup>53</sup>

## **FEMALE ENGAGEMENT TEAMS**

Women's contribution to security forces have been uniquely effective "in areas such as the implementation of protection innovations and the

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<sup>48</sup> B. Hinds and K. McMinn, *Mid-Term Progress Report: Implementation of Ireland's National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325* (Dublin: Irish Government, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> S. Hutchinson, *Operationalising United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 within the Australian Defence Force* (Fishermans Bend: Joint & Operations Analysis Division, 2016).

<sup>50</sup> M. Hughes and J. Mendelson-Forman, 'Strategic Blindness: The Women in Community Security Project', *Constructive Pathways: Stimulating and Safeguarding Components of WPS* (Newport, Rhode Island: U.S. Naval War College, 2015) p. 170.

<sup>51</sup> C. Buchanan (ed.), *Peacemaking in Asia and the Pacific: Women's Participation, Perspectives and Priorities* (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> Hammar and Berg, *Whose Security?*

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

possibility of engaging with women in the community”.<sup>54</sup> There is a great deal of commentary on the United States’ use of FET. In the past, US Army and Marine Corps FET training has varied from anywhere between one week to four months. The Marines train their FETs for four months prior to deployment, have a formalised FET training program, augment their units with FETs, and have the most FET experience.<sup>55</sup> The US Army Special Operations Command established a training program in 2010 for cultural support teams, which included a significant gender dimension. This program was only open to special operations units. Until recently, the only FET training available to Army general purpose brigade combat teams was internal, based on how the owning unit commander intends to employ the FETs, and usually with no assistance from outside resources. In 2010, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan required all deployed brigade combat teams to send female soldiers to FET training in theatre for one to two weeks.

Analysis of FETs, especially in Afghanistan, has shown very mixed results.<sup>56</sup> The ad hoc nature of FET employment, especially as part of Australian forces, has made comparative analysis quite difficult. But what has been observed is that FETs have been most successful when they have a clear mission and their activities are supported and valued. Leaders, both military and civilian, with political will and courage are essential to their success.<sup>57</sup> Personnel must have adequate and relevant training and their activities must address broader issues of gender and culture, not just female engagement. In this way, Cultural Support Teams have begun to replace FETs, with greater operational success.<sup>58</sup>

## Transition

### RULE OF LAW

The state functions of rule of law and access to justice are also important to broader objectives of stabilisation and security.<sup>59</sup> Rule of law is crucial to the legitimacy of the state. UNSCR 1889

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<sup>54</sup> United Nations Security Council, ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security’, S/2015/716 (16 September 2015), para. 80; Centre for Army Lessons Learned, *Commander’s Guide to Female Engagement Teams*.

<sup>55</sup> Centre for Army Lessons Learned, *Commander’s Guide to Female Engagement Teams*.

<sup>56</sup> B. McNierney, ‘Female Engagement Teams: An Evaluation of the Female Engagement Team Program in Afghanistan’, *Constructive Pathways: Stimulating and Safeguarding Components of WPS* (Newport, Rhode Island: U.S. Naval War College, 2015).

<sup>57</sup> N. Sambhi, ‘Female Engagement Teams: Identity, Military Culture and Lessons Learned’, Paper presented at International Women in Law Enforcement Conference—Leadership, Collaboration and Security, Hyderabad, India, 8 October 2015.

<sup>58</sup> M. Katt, ‘Blurred Lines: Cultural Support Teams in Afghanistan’, *Joint Force Quarterly*, vol. 75, no. 4 (2014): 106-14.

<sup>59</sup> W. Mason, *The Rule of Law in Afghanistan: Missing in Inaction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

encourages Member States in post-conflict situations, in consultation with civil society, including women's organizations, to specify in detail women and girls' needs and priorities and design concrete strategies, in accordance with their legal systems, to address those needs and priorities, which cover inter alia support for greater physical security and better socio-economic conditions ... gender-responsive law enforcement and access to justice, as well as enhancing capacity to engage in public decision-making at all levels.<sup>60</sup>

Donors are often torn between traditional approaches to the law and international principles of justice.<sup>61</sup> But Grina argues that “mainstreaming a gender approach in rule of law initiatives is crucial to long-term success”.<sup>62</sup>

In 2014, the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office published the *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict*. The purpose of the protocol “is to promote accountability for crimes of sexual violence under international law”.<sup>63</sup> It is designed for individuals and organisations faced with the challenge of documenting sexual violence as a crime under international law. It is

recommended in capacity-building efforts for national and local security, judicial, law enforcement, forensic medicine and science, and investigative institutions aiming to improve their understanding of how to collect information on sexual violence as an international crime.<sup>64</sup>

As such, the protocol may be of use in situations where the ADF is providing support to the rule of law, either in a supplementary capacity, providing some governance functions, or in training and capacity building of local institutions.

## SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

A gendered approach to security sector reform (SSR) responds to three key issues, women's inclusion in security sector organisations, the responsiveness of security sector organisations to security needs of women and girls as well as men and boys, and presence of perpetrators of sexual violence in security sector organisations.

The impact of all SSR policies and programmes on women, men, boys and girls should be considered at every stage of the programme cycle, including assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. For example, mainstreaming gender into SSR assessment involves including questions to identify the different insecurities faced by men, women, girls and boys. The results of the assessment might in turn highlight the need to address the particular security need to include ‘gender initiatives,’ and/or

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<sup>60</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1889 (2009), Operative clause 10.

<sup>61</sup> J. Putzel et al., *Do No Harm: International Support for Statebuilding* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> E. Grina, ‘Mainstreaming Gender in Rule of Law Initiatives in Post-Conflict Settings’, *William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2011): 436-73.

<sup>63</sup> Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict*, p. 10.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



initiatives that address the particular security needs of women, men, boys or girls within the SSR process.<sup>65</sup>

Gender responsive SSR assessments can be carried out using: sex disaggregated data; assessment teams that include men and women, persons with gender expertise and local female translators; terms of reference that include attention to gender issues in SSR objectives, products and methodology; interviews with both male and female staff of security institutions and oversight bodies, as well as those responsible for gender issues therein; including questions related to the specific experiences of men and women in interviews and surveys of local security needs; and assessment methods that are gender-responsive, including single sex focus groups.<sup>66</sup>

The preamble to UNSCR 1888 recognises that women's participation in the national defence and security forces helps to build a "security sector that is accessible and responsive to all, especially women".<sup>67</sup> Women's presence in justice and security sector institutions can increase trust in and access to these institutions, and can encourage women to report sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>68</sup> Data from thirty-nine countries shows a positive correlation between the presence of women police officers and sexual assault reporting.<sup>69</sup> One Afghan woman affected by gender-based violence explained "a policewoman would have been good for me. If there are policewomen we can easily say everything to them—she understands how women feel".<sup>70</sup> Security forces that are responsive, effective, professional and accountable are more likely "to be a source of protection for populations and a tool of stability for governments, rather than a source of instability".<sup>71</sup>

Women's participation in the security sector is further encouraged in UNSCR 2106 which requests women's participation in "security sector reform processes and arrangements, including through the provision of adequate training for security personnel, encouraging the inclusion of more women in the security sector".<sup>72</sup> This provision of training for security personnel provides another opportunity to advance WPS more broadly. For example,

<sup>65</sup> K. Valasek, 'Security Sector Reform and Gender', in M. Bastick and K. Valasek, *Gender & Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008).

<sup>66</sup> M. Bastick and K. Valasek, *Gender & Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008).

<sup>67</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1888 (2009).

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1960 (2010).

<sup>69</sup> L. Turquet, *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In Pursuit of Justice* (New York: UN Women, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Oxfam International, 'For Afghan Women, Police Should Protect, Not Abuse', <<https://www.oxfam.org/en/countries/afghan-women-police-should-protect-not-abuse>> [Accessed 14 April 2015].

<sup>71</sup> Oxfam International, *The Accountability of National Security Forces to Civilians*. Oxfam Policy Compendium Note (Oxford: Oxfam International, 2012).

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2106 (2013), Operative clause 16, para. b.



professional military education and even trade training can cover the importance of WPS for operational effectiveness. This might apply to counterinsurgency training in Iraq, or to officer exchanges for military education purposes.

SSR is part of a broader process of improving governance and stability.<sup>73</sup> UNSCR 1820 requests “consultation with women and women-led organizations as appropriate, to develop effective mechanisms for ... security sector reform”.<sup>74</sup> This view is reflected in work undertaken by the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces who recognise the integration of gender issues as a key to local ownership and strengthened oversight. Increasing the recruitment of female staff, preventing human rights violations, and collaborating with women’s organisations contributes to creating an efficient, accountable and participatory security sector which responds to the specific needs of men, women, girls and boys.<sup>75</sup>

Lastly, individuals who have perpetrated sexual violence need to be excluded from SSR programs. UNSCR 2106 requests “effective vetting processes in order to exclude from the security sector those who have perpetrated or are responsible for acts of sexual violence”.<sup>76</sup> In practice, excluding individuals who have perpetrated acts of sexual violence is an issue that is very difficult to navigate. Many nations who contributed to ISAF in Afghanistan felt forced to work alongside a range of individuals suspected of sexual violence. Security sector actors are often among the main perpetrators of violence during and after conflict. Vetting security sector recruits for conflict related crimes against women, including sexual and gender-based violence is an important step toward re-establishing the community’s trust. The intent of UNSCR 2106 is to address widespread or systemic uses of sexual violence as a tactic of war and to address impunity for such behaviour. In those contexts, the issue becomes much more salient and excuses should not be given for not vetting and excluding perpetrators. For example, the Burmese Army continue to use sexual violence against particular ethnic groups including the Rohingya and Chin, in a strategy that has political and economic dimensions.<sup>77</sup> This cannot be tolerated in defence cooperation programs.

## **DISARMAMENT DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION**

UNSCR 1325 “encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account

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<sup>73</sup> A. Schnabel and V. Farr, *Back to the Roots: Security Sector Reform and Development* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1820 (2008), Operative clause 10.

<sup>75</sup> Bastick and Valasek, *Gender & Security Sector Reform Toolkit*.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2106 (2013), Operative clause 16, para. b.

<sup>77</sup> Women’s League of Burma, *Same Impunity, Same Patterns* (Chang Mai: Women’s League of Burma, 2014).

the needs of their dependants”.<sup>78</sup> Good, gendered DDR programming requires accurate understanding of the operational context and a wider range of eligibility criteria than just having handed in a weapon.

Each conflict is unique and DDR processes need to be designed accordingly. Over the past decade, women have been active combatants in at least fifty-five countries, involved in internal armed conflict in thirty eight of those countries and a large number of international armed conflicts.<sup>79</sup> In non-state armed groups, women generally serve in three ways: combatant, support worker or wife/dependant. They can fill these roles voluntarily or under duress and often fill more than one role at once. A woman might be a dependent, but also involved in the planning and execution of war. She may be a fighter, spy, cook and mother all at the same time, filling multiple inseparable roles.<sup>80</sup> Data must be gathered in order to develop a more accurate picture of the particular roles women filled during a specific conflict.<sup>81</sup>

A relatively large number of women, compared with men, operate in armies as cooks, messengers, doctors, logisticians etc. They are not directly engaged in fighting, and therefore tend not to carry a weapon. Without a weapon, they often cannot prove that they have participated in armies during conflict and thus get excluded from DDR assistance.<sup>82</sup>

In Timor Leste, Kent and Kinsella have noted that “women contributed to all aspects of the Resistance”.<sup>83</sup> But women who served have still been excluded from the current veteran’s scheme that includes a pension and access to health and education opportunities. FRETILIN included a women’s wing, whose membership comprised over 60 per cent of the ‘Clandestine’ front. They played “key roles as couriers, supplying those on the front lines with food and other necessities, seeking support within the church and local communities for the independence movement and hiding senior members of the Resistance”.<sup>84</sup> Women also coordinated the provision of supplies to the front line, managed armouries and kept guard against enemy infiltration of bases.<sup>85</sup> Their exclusion from the veteran’s scheme is akin to excluding Australian members of ordinance, transport and intelligence corps from entitlements from the Department of Veteran’s Affairs.

<sup>78</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1325 (2000), S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000), Operative clause 13.

<sup>79</sup> T. Bouta, *Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Building Blocs for Dutch Policy* (The Hague: Conflict Research Unit, 2005).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> S. Douglas et al. *Getting It Right, Doing It Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration* (New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2004).

<sup>82</sup> Bouta, *Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*.

<sup>83</sup> L. Kent and N. Kinsella, ‘A Luta Continua (The Struggle Continues)’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2015), p. 477.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. 478.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

There are two relevant examples of gender specific DDR policy. The Dutch draft DDR policy targets all women and men in armed forces with post-conflict assistance. The disarmament and demobilisation trajectory is gender sensitised, and the reintegration phase responds to the different economic, social and psychosocial needs of men and women. They have also developed a donor checklist on gender and DDR. The list covers the planning phase (including assessment, mandates, scope, international arrangements, the package of benefits), assembly and cantonment, resettlement, social reintegration into communities and economic reintegration.<sup>86</sup>

The Integrated DDR Standards draw upon the lessons learnt and best practices of the UN. They provide guidance and operational tools for all aspects of the DDR process. Gender is mainstreamed as a cross-cutting issue throughout the standards. Rather than just being gender inclusive, the Integrated DDR Standards state that the

design and implementation of DDR programmes should aim to encourage gender equality based on gender-sensitive assessments that take into account these different experiences, roles and responsibilities during and after conflict. Specific measures must be put in place to ensure the equal participation of women in all stages of DDR—from the negotiation of peace agreements and establishment of national institutions, to the design and implementation of specific programmes and projects.<sup>87</sup>

## Conclusion

While Australia has shown some leadership on the operationalisation of the WPS agenda, there is still more to be done. The ADF and other militaries would be showing leadership if they took a gendered approach to a range of military tasks that are outlined in the suite of UNSCRs on WPS. These tasks occur in existing operational cycles. A gendered approach to pre-planning would include intelligence, exercises, and education and training. In the planning phase, gender considerations need to be made in deliberate planning as well as force structure and preparation. During the conduct of operations, protection tasks need to account for different protection needs of men and women, boys and girls; international law needs to be implemented with due consideration for gendered issues; tactical intelligence and aggregate reporting need to be gendered; and personnel engaging with the local female population need to be selected, trained and empowered by leadership. In the transition phase, rule of law, SSR and DDR all need to account for the differing needs and issues faced by women and girls as outlined in the suite of Security Council resolutions.

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<sup>86</sup> Bouta, *Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (New York: United Nations, 2006).

By taking a gendered approach to these tasks through the operational cycle, the ADF and other militaries will improve their operational effectiveness and supporting international peace and security as well as enhancing the safety, security and human rights of women in accordance with international obligations as well as the values and national policy of successive Australian governments.

However, further research is needed to increase our understanding of current military practice, assist institutional learning, undertake comparative analysis and improve ongoing operationalisation of the WPS agenda. Particular subjects ripe for further more detailed research include comparative analysis of Female Engagement Teams to determine their contributions to operational effectiveness, the implementation of the WPS agenda and the conditions thereof. There is also a significant gap in the research on activities in the pre-planning stage. Research into gendered intelligence would be particularly valuable for understanding the background knowledge that shapes operational design and conduct. Force design and force preparation are also understudied from a gender perspective. It is hoped that some of this research will be undertaken by the author and other feminist scholars in Australia, with the increasing traction of the WPS agenda in the national policy discourse.

## **Acknowledgements**

This paper is based on work undertaken during a consultancy with Defence Science and Technology Group. The author continues to undertake research on the subject of this paper for her PhD.

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### ***Beyond the Band of Brothers: The US Military and the Myth that Women Can't Fight***

Megan Mackenzie  
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)  
ISBN: 9781107049765

Elise Stephenson

“The presence of the female Marines [in Afghanistan] brought to the fore issues of human security. Female counterinsurgents are one of the few advantages we have over our adversaries”.<sup>1</sup> As Hudson and Leidl recognise, American women have existed in combat situations in most major wars of the past century. Despite this, it could be said that our history books have done little to document women’s presence and contributions, almost to the point where many would believe that prior to the 2013 decision to reverse the combat exclusion of women in the United States, women *simply were not involved in combat*. Within this context, reading Megan Mackenzie’s book *Beyond the Band of Brothers* (2015) is a welcome relief to know more about women in combat and learn more of the controversial nature of their engagement.

Women’s engagement in security, defence, and on-ground combat has typically been underrated and under-explored. Delving into one of the core bastions of male military dominance, this book unravels the national narrative of a heroic band of brothers—the male combat unit lying at the heart of US military identity. Historical accounts of soldiering, combat and war depict men as “the natural and rightful protectors of society and present war as the ultimate expression of masculinity”, leading to an enforced, if incomplete, exclusion of women from combat (p. 1).

This book was published in light of the 2013 decision to reverse the combat exclusion of women, and amid fears that women’s ‘new’ inclusion in combat would feminise, weaken or ‘spoil’ military culture. Mackenzie, an associate professor of the University of Sydney, presents a succinct, gripping account of the bigger picture—women’s roles in combat before the exclusion policy was repealed, as well as the reality of the military culture this policy was designed to protect. While the exclusion policy was “heralded by Congress

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<sup>1</sup> Valerie M. Hudson and Patricia Leidl, *The Hillary Doctrine: Sex and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 206.

and the Department of Defense (DoD) as crucial for national security”, Mackenzie digs deeper to understand how combat exclusion survived for so long and what role it played in shaping military identity (p. 2). Her argument is twofold: combat exclusion was part of “an evolving set of rules, guidelines, and ideas primarily used to reify the all-male combat unit as elite, essential, and exceptional”, and; that combat exclusion was not evidence-based, but rather was created and sustained through narrative, myth and emotional arguments for women’s exclusion (p. 3). Far from the abolition of the combat exclusion representing a new era in gender relations, she illustrates how female soldiers are and have always been central to rebranding and rewriting history.

Beginning with how combat exclusion has historically comprised fluid and evolving sets of rules and stories restricting women from combat, Chapter One sets the scene for academic analysis of military identity. Far from combat exclusion being an enforceable policy, Mackenzie uses examples from World War Two and the proceeding years of ‘returning to normal’, to demonstrate how myths around gender difference were part of a broader effort to re-establish gender roles following women’s unprecedented engagement in paid labour associated with the war. She further demonstrates examples from the Vietnam War—while women may have been excluded from official combat positions among the infantry, all personnel working or being treated within locations such as hospitals, commonly targeted by guerrilla warfare, were treated as being ‘in combat’. Mackenzie uses the examples of periods during and after war to successfully track combat exclusion as a set of fluid rules in opposition to formal policy able to be ‘repealed’, history-tracing combat exclusion to find it the result of myths and emotions rather than evidence-based policy.

Building on this argument, Chapter Two focuses on US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mackenzie demonstrates how wars eroded any remaining enforceable rules associated with combat exclusion, rendering the distinction between combat and support roles irrelevant. The realities of insurgency warfare in both Iraq and Afghanistan made divisions between front lines and rear units non-existent, as women formed consistent parts of hostile military operations across combat and support units. Mackenzie exposes how despite this, media and official government papers perpetuate the notion that women were not on the front lines. This has not only contributed to inaccurate historical records, which Mackenzie’s book plays a part in correcting, but also contributes to the myth of combat exclusion. In this chapter Mackenzie also presents her most compelling arguments for how repealing the combat exclusion ‘policy’ sought to redefine military identity following the growing association of US soldiers and human rights abuses and sexual violence.

Chapter Three explores the key emotional arguments presented to oppose women’s engagement in combat. Despite the tendency to present combat

exclusion as a product of rational decision-making, this chapter delves into how emotional exclusion of women based on 'gut feelings' present the decisions as 'natural', beyond critique, and therefore difficult to counter and affect. Under such beliefs, Mackenzie notes

the presumption that men, as a result of their physical qualities, are the natural protectors of society, inherently brave, innately aggressive, and willing to use violence ... [conversely] women's bodies ... are depicted as rendering them weaker, more likely to be concerned with protecting life, more nurturing, and prone to peaceful conduct (p. 77).

Physical standards and combat cohesion based on male bonding are presented by Mackenzie as the main 'research driven' standards for exclusion.

Mackenzie goes on to provide a condensed account of research on the standards for exclusion to date and its gaps in the fourth and fifth chapters. The idea that women cannot compete physically with men is the most oft-used argument for excluding women from combat. Mackenzie demonstrates how this assumption makes a considerable leap between physical gender differences and whether that inherently disqualifies women from combat, as if women's difference intrinsically renders them incapable of tasks or duties required. Through doing so, seven core questions are asked which are worth republishing, given the preponderance of emotional arguments used as a basis for discrimination: (1) Are women weaker than men? (2) Is physical difference insurmountable? (3) What are the physical standards for men and women in the military, and are there double standards for women? (4) Are there combat-specific physical requirements? (5) Do combat roles require enhanced, or different, physical capabilities than other roles within the military? (6) Do physical standards discriminate against women? (7) Is the physical argument only about standards? Through a comprehensive assessment of literature and empirical evidence, Mackenzie answers these questions, demonstrating how "growing evidence that women are able to meet military physical requirements remains overshadowed by ... hypothetical and incredibly emotional narratives" (p. 132). Mackenzie paints this absurdity well, summing up "[f]ears of sharks potentially attacking menstruating women, and narratives depicting weak women, unable to drag their comrades to safety on the battlefield" (p. 132).

Physical difference dealt with, Mackenzie then moves to the idea that women would undermine the types of bonding that make combat units able to operate effectively. She outlines the cohesion hypothesis, which "presumes a positive relationship between group cohesion and soldier performance, and a negative relationship between the inclusion of women and the rates of bonding and trust necessary for such cohesion" (p. 134). Rebutting this idea, Mackenzie argues compellingly that not only is *social and task* cohesion possible with both men and women within a unit, but that the outcomes of historically all-male cohesion cannot solely be classified as



inherently 'good'. There is considerable and mounting evidence that with male-bonded groups comes sexual violence and human rights abuses, of not just external parties, but internal troops. Mackenzie refers to examples of indiscriminate violence, looting, rape and destruction, which reveals that cohesion is not simply "a romantic bond between honourable troops; instead, it reveals that bonding can be built on misogyny, misconduct and the abuse of women" (p. 149).

Finally, Mackenzie brings the book together to discuss the wider influence wielded by military myths and stereotypes exemplified by the band of brothers. In this section Mackenzie makes methodological contributions to the analysis of vast quantities of online comments, an important contribution to research across disciplines wanting to quantify and analyse online content. Mackenzie finds that through an analysis of online comments on three articles before, during and after the repeal of the combat exclusion, debates predominantly surrounded women's physical fitness—their capability or their inadequacy. The topic is found to be divisive and evocative of strong emotions, perhaps explaining the over-reliance on emotional arguments for and against the combat exclusion, over the preponderance for evidence-based policy decisions.

Mackenzie self-identifies her book as neither a complete historical account nor a guide to the future of women's engagement in the military. However, her account of military identity skimmed over aspects such as sexual violence within ranks, which could have warranted further coverage. This is a subject covered particularly well by Hudson and Leidl's *The Hillary Doctrine*, and a debate which could have further enriched the exploration of military identity. Many feminist scholars have also discussed the idea of security, and just who is being secured from whom in international relations. A discussion of this kind would not have been out of place in Mackenzie's book and could have further enhanced the dialogue on military identity and what effects this identity had on the security of military women.

Overall, Mackenzie has made an important contribution to international relations and discussions on women, security and identity. One of the great values of this book lies in using the notion of a band of brothers to break down military identity, contributing to the literature particularly with reference to how narratives and stories co-create deeply embedded messages about "appropriate, ideal, acceptable, and legitimate behaviours, identities and practices" (p. 9). Coming from a government and feminist theory perspective, Mackenzie does this well. Perhaps as a scholar based outside of the United States, her analysis is a particularly clear and succinct appraisal of American military identity, which has implications for the assessment of Australia's own military and the myths sustaining any negative elements of military culture, like a similarly high rate of sexual assault and harassment within ranks. This is where this book can make important contributions to ongoing conversations in academic and policy

circles, particularly given the introduction of more women into positions of leadership within world militaries, and how and why this may change aspects of the military identity for the better. While the book contributes to debates on the motivation and justification for war, its methodological contributions are also noted as important and could inform future research in this area and beyond.

This book will interest academic researchers and students alike, however, its appeal is even broader to anyone engaged in the debating the future directions of the military and its engagement of women.

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### ***The Women in Blue Helmets: Gender, Policing, and the UN's First All- Female Peacekeeping Unit***

Lesley J. Pruitt

(Oakland: University of California Press, 2016)

ISBN: 9780520964716

Dr Olivera Simić

Lesley Pruitt's book, *The Women in Blue Helmets*, provides an analysis of the first all-female formed police unit (FFPU) deployed by India to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Pruitt, adopting a normative, critical-constructivist feminist approach, delivers an exhaustive account of the creation, work and implications of the unit at both individual and structural levels.

She explores how the FFPU came about, what some of the expectations surrounding it were and its broader implications for gender equality, peace and security. The book provides an in-depth examination of how the deployment of FFPUs can work as a temporary measure to transform and challenge existing gender stereotypes in the security sector and increase female participation in peacekeeping operations and beyond. The key argument is that the FFPU is a timely innovation and non-permanent special measure that "pragmatically pursues long-term goals while working with short-term options" (p. 2). Women's participation in peace and security work—as one of the three original pillars in the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda—has been embraced by Pruitt as the main strategy for achieving a gendered transformation of institutions like the United Nations.

Her argument is that the deployment of the FFPU has had wide-ranging effects on local–global and individual–structural levels. She argues that "instead of expecting individual women to adapt themselves to the existing male-dominated system, FFPUs provide the option of all-female spaces and pursue structural and procedural changes that give serious attention to women's needs and motivations" (p. 2). Pruitt notes that the FFPU has challenged gender dichotomies and stereotypes (p. 45) and, as such, has brought significant changes for women. The FFPU has encouraged local women to engage with the security sector—as evidenced, for example, by the greater numbers of women who joined the Liberian national police force after the deployment of the unit (p. 54). Reportedly, the deployment of the FFPU has also reduced the rate of sexual harassment and rape in Liberia,

thanks to the unit's enhanced responsiveness to sexual and gender-based crimes.

The FFPU has also engaged in community work since they were expected, as women, to “naturally” (p. 77) do extraordinary and multi-faceted work that would encourage local women to obtain good government jobs in the security sector. While obviously such effective work has been highly praised by women, Pruitt is concerned about this “second shift” (p. 72) that female peacekeepers are expected to do, while male peacekeepers are left off the hook. In her book, Pruitt exposes a tension between the assessment of women's performances and the rejection of instrumentalist discourses, which in fact perpetuate the gender inequality and gendered differences in access to security (p. 73). As argued, instrumentalist understandings are used to link women's presumed qualities with specific outcomes ('operational effectiveness') and, also, as a justification for the women's presence in these sites.

Pruitt argues that women should be included because they are political subjects with rights, not because of their 'operational effectiveness' or other instrumentalist justifications. Still, analysis of the FFPU effectiveness seems to be always discussed through the lens of the differences they (as women) may make in the hyper-militarised space of peacekeeping operations. It has been acknowledged that female peacekeepers make a positive difference, and the deployment of the FFPU shows that “the FFPU can create secure environments as effectively as men, and perhaps even more effectively” (p. 12). Pruitt very carefully tries not to fall into an instrumentalist discourse herself, while at the same time convincing readers that the women's presence increases the operational effectiveness of the mission through the extra benefits that women contribute to operations. Such efforts, however, may unconsciously play into the narrative that she is critical of. Pruitt persuasively argues that the FFPU's extraordinary results are due to a broader vision of their mandate and that FFPUs should be seen as a *temporary* and alternative special measure, and a “good and fair option” (p. 119) for women who are not ready to face the challenges associated with being integrated in mixed-gender units, but who still want to pursue a peacekeeping career.

*The Women in Blue Helmets* provides a refreshing and well-written analysis, building on feminist perspectives and scholarship in women's participation in peace and security work. The reader will be challenged with questions about the meaning of gender mainstreaming in the security sector: What kind of female participation is needed and desired? What should gender mainstreaming look like, and how is it implemented in practice? Do we need to add and stir, or segregate women into separate units in order to achieve gender equity in peacekeeping operations? What impacts do such female units have on the peacekeepers themselves and on local women? Pruitt's book is original, informative and gives a much-needed critique of the effects

of the policies translated into the field. The book does not pretend that it has all the answers to the questions I have raised; yet, it fills a significant gap in the current research on women and the peacekeeping/security sector. Enriched by empirical data, it is a page-turning read that I highly recommend for any feminist scholar.

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### ***Gender, UN Peacebuilding, and the Politics of Space: Locating Legitimacy***

Laura Shepherd

(Oxford: Oxford Studies in Gender and International Relations,  
Oxford University Press, 2017)

ISBN: 9780199982738

Review by Lizzy Ambler

Building on an extensive range of publications in the realm of gender politics and critical security studies, Shepherd's latest offering *Gender, UN Peacebuilding, and the Politics of Space: Locating Legitimacy* provides a stimulating analysis of UN peacebuilding commissions and the way they reproduce power relations in relation to gender, women and civil society. As noted by Shepherd, it is unusual for discourse-theoretical projects to include interview material, however, its inclusion provides insights across various UN staff, activists and analysts involved in peacebuilding activities. Such interview data is treated as a 'discursive artefact' of similar status to the policy documents elsewhere analysed within the discussions. Throughout the book, Shepherd provides a post-structural feminist analysis of the way in which power relations have a profound effect on peacebuilding initiatives. Shepherd draws on country-specific configurations within the current agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, including references to discourse and practice in Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The discussion questions these initiatives' ability to make meaningful change when bound by the reproduction of such power relations. In doing so, the book provides key contributions to the scholarship on peacebuilding and the gendered logics and practices within it.

Shepherd's overarching argument emphasises that the ways in which the UN constructs peacebuilding within its discourse are significant. Specifically, particular realities are made possible and certain practices are prescribed within such peacebuilding imaginaries. These, Shepherd argues, are all reproductions of power and space. Yet, in the analysis of interview scripts and official documents spanning thousands of pages, there is only one statement by the UN that acknowledges gender as a power relation (p. 93). This displays the importance of Shepherd's work, and with the recent revelations within the peacebuilding and development sector, this is both a critical and timely area for sustained analysis and evaluation.



After addressing the project's scope—arguing that the concept of 'peacebuilding' within UN discourse can be regarded as 'state building', Shepherd focuses attention on three areas of analysis. Beginning with a focus on gender, Chapter 3 argues that 'gender' as a term is often conflated with 'women'. The result is a monolithic and thus problematic conception that is seen as something that 'needs to be incorporated' within UN discourse. However, there is little engagement with the evident gendered inequalities that lie in the foundations of this. The result, Shepherd argues, is a limited notion of agency for women and the positioning of them as subordinate to men in a hierarchy of gendered power. As such, the UN is creating in Foucault terms, 'conditions of impossibility' as opposed to 'possibility' in structuring gender-responsive peacebuilding that has resulted in limited programs for women, exclusion of them from formal and informal political spaces, and the perpetuation of discrimination and violence.

Alternatively, Shepherd suggests that the use of 'gendered' (rather than 'gender') as a focus within discourse would have increased utility in recognising power relations beyond an identity category (p. 71); a theme that reoccurs throughout the book. This is not to say that the UN's focus on gender is entirely unsuccessful, as there are suggestions of potential positive outcomes for both men and women, even when the gendered status quo is left undisturbed (p. 77). However, Shepherd shows there is often a disjuncture between country specific configurations and organisational committees with institutional spoken discourse (p. 82). Shepherd cites two reasons for this. First, resistance expressed within interviews in relation to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that urges actors to increase participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts. Interview data suggested that it was much easier to push for women's protection rather than participation within some country contexts. Second, interviews also revealed that the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda does not seem to instil a strategy of gender equality or 'mainstreaming' within peacebuilding discourse at a HQ level, given there is no reliance on the WPS agenda for its articulation. Therefore, there are different notions of this within policy frameworks supporting gendered interventions and with the descriptions of such interventions. This, Shepherd argues, has resulted in a divide between the gendered logic of country-specific configurations that emphasise integration, and transformation being the logic of the WPS agenda. A further problem highlighted by Shepherd within the association of 'gender' as 'women' is that it reproduces binary social relations of power that demands humans to identify as male or female, with the implications being a closure of space for participation of genderqueer individuals. Under such logic, particular performances of gender are rewarded (p. 92), while others are lost or excluded.

In the following chapter, Shepherd explores the way women are associated with and determined as subjects by peace and security practices. Expanding on the themes within the previous chapter, Shepherd asks, *if*

gender is synonymous with women in UN peacebuilding discourse, *how* are women constructed within the same discourse? By virtue of the fact of absence in the discourse, women can be assumed to be unimportant, or at best marginal, to peacebuilding activities, with women being absent from country configurations, and notably the Central African Republic. Building on the literature that emphasises the articulation of women as victims, Shepherd mirrors this analysis through the various logics within country configurations. For example, she shows how in Liberia and Burundi, the vulnerability of women is qualified by their representation as decision-makers. The language around vulnerability and association of women as girls means they are deemed to be required within the peacebuilding process (p. 112). In other reports, Shepherd also shows how women are seen as vectors of disease, notably HIV/Aids and poverty, whereby they have the potential to undermine the efficiency of the state (p. 113), and by extension, masculinity .

Shepherd's interviews showed a conscious effort to shift this discourse of vulnerability to articulate women as agents endorsing a logic of empowerment (p. 115). However, Shepherd identifies that inclusion is 'bought' through victimhood, which brings the mantle of vulnerability through which women become empowered and are 'allowed' to be agents of change. This relationship Shepherd describes is dysfunctional and colonial in nature, as the logic shows women must first be victims of violence (and therefore vulnerable) in order for them to be agents of change (and therefore empowered). Furthermore, Shepherd argues this logic of empowerment is tied heavily to neoliberal economic empowerment (p. 119), a realm deemed 'safer' for women to engage in rather than a focus on political participation.

Shepherd highlights that the discourse seems to compensate for failing to constitute women as political agents by over-determining their responsibilities within peacebuilding (p. 124), in areas such as violence-prevention. Shepherd acknowledges the plethora of roles women inhabit in society; however, she argues that often the articulation of this can result in the construction of a subject who can never achieve that which is expected of them, concluding "the woman in UN peacebuilding discourse would have to be truly (super) heroic" (p. 125). In the case of Burundi where women are recognised within the political realm of discourse, the complexities of national and international structures of political activity mean these are seen as separate from the 'local', whereby the 'local' is also aligned with the 'traditional' and thus inferior.

The final area of focus on 'civil society' highlights further this association of 'women' and the 'local' as spatial and conceptual domains within UN peacebuilding discourse. Shepherd identifies how the legitimacy given to women's social movements is often contingent on their performance of social roles considered appropriate to that context. This is shown by drawing on the example of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, where

femininity and a maternalism were used as political tools within the movement. Shepherd warns about the dangers of this, however, arguing it risks forging and further engraining an association that women conventionally disconnected with formal politics.

Within country specific configurations, Shepherd identifies the involvement of civil society organisations in peacebuilding measures as critical by the UN (p. 143). Regardless of this recognition, however, Shepherd emphasises the presumption that there are no barriers to this involvement of civil society (p. 144). Echoing earlier analysis around gender, the same is said for civil society as it is presented as a rigid concept within UN discourse. Given that capacity of civil society is related to the ability to confirm this uniform nature, civil society is constructed as an ineffective actor that lacks organisation, expertise and authority (p. 151).

Shepherd also highlights the tension in the construction of civil society, as either an active participant in 'sitting on the steering committee' or as a passive subject whereby UN staff 'hear their views' (p. 145). Ultimately, the position of civil society is seen as being subordinate to that of the UN, given that the agenda is not reliant on civil society partners (p. 151). Shepherd stresses again the oppositions at work here: the international versus the national; the midwife versus the labouring woman; and the detached versus the involved (p. 152). Ultimately, the 'international' as both a subject and space is consistently positioned in opposition to 'civil society' which in turn is associated with both 'the local' and women (p. 153). In summary, although civil society organisations may be invited during deliberations over peacebuilding plans, the influence they have is curtailed by their association of knowledge with the local (p. 155) and thus are gendered and engendering, as local knowledge is both valued and then subordinated.

In Shepherd's concluding remarks, legitimacy in peacebuilding discourse and practice are shown to be fundamentally gendered and spatialised, and the author calls for further research on productive and reproductive practices. The reader is left feeling the UN needs to pay significant attention to the ways in which the organisation plays a role in this, given the analysis shows it reproduces the very ideas it apparently tries to address.

One area that is striking, given the theme of the book, is the lack of focus on the bounds of masculinity within the analysis. If we are to talk about gender and critique the UN for adopting a monolithic definition of the term in relation to identity (and thus women), and with this then becoming the focus of the majority of discussions, perhaps a focus on masculinity (and thus men, using the same logic), would have given further weight to Shepherd's analysis. Given Shepherd shows a colonial power dynamic at work here, it would have also been insightful to explore more intersectional elements of analysis in displaying further the limitations of reproduction and binaries, exposing further those who are silenced or excluded from peacebuilding. The analysis

indicates that current discourse benefits (in limited ways) those who fit into the masculine and feminine typologies as this abides by wider gendered power dynamics, but it would have been useful to explore further who these people are. Who are actually empowered by such masculine conceptions of state building and a UN agenda that focuses exclusively on males when not otherwise addressing 'gender'? Although Shepherd does touch on this idea of masculine state building, a depth of analysis is focused on the limitations of femininity and masculinity *on women* with little suggestion of how this also may impact men. Such a focus would have given weight to the suggestion of adopting 'gendered' rather than 'gender' as a concept, as it would have displayed further the limits of power dynamics on both *men and women*, and thus the utility of adopting a non-binary, power-focused term within the peacebuilding discourse.

Shepherd's book is both thorough and articulate in engaging in complex discussions surrounding power-relations in peacebuilding. Shepherd initially focuses on addressing the concept of hope; a guiding principle of the organisation in a post-Cold War world (p. 2), and while the book could initially be perceived as deeply critical of UN Commissions, Shepherd remarks in the concluding section the apparent sincerity and commitment of the organisation to 'achieve good things' (p. 160). Having said that, recent developments have further demonstrated that while intentions may be 'good', this is certainly not enough to guarantee equality in practice whereby hierarchy and processes have resulted in the exploitation of women through gendered power dynamics. As such, this book would serve useful to both academics and practitioners, as it highlights some wider implications for the study of world politics, but also to the particular failures of the UN in serving as significant food for thought for more robust discussions by similar actors about how they engage with peacebuilding activities.

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## Notes for Contributors

*Security Challenges* contributes to innovative and practical thinking about security challenges of major importance for Australia as well as the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The journal's website can be found at [www.securitychallenges.org.au](http://www.securitychallenges.org.au).

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ISSN 1833-1459  
Security Challenges is a fully refereed journal.