CONJUGAL SLAVERY IN WAR (CSiW) PARTNERSHIP

POLICY BRIEF 1.1

LOCATING MEN AND BOYS IN WPS RESOLUTIONS

About the Author
This report was researched and written by Alessia Rodríguez Di Eugenio, a graduate student at the School for Public Policy and Global Affairs (SPPGA) at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Born and raised in Venezuela, Alessia completed a BA (Hons) in International Relations, Political Science, and Sociology at the University of Toronto (UofT).

Summary

- The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda comprises 9 resolutions: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), and 2467 (2019), which establish institutional modalities to mainstream gender across global peace and security processes.
- This is the first policy brief (1.1) of a series that examines the WPS agenda. It aims to locate men and boys in WPS resolutions and evaluate whether their representation has evolved throughout the years.
- For the first 13 years of the WPS agenda, resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960 included men and boys by default, referring to gender broadly and assuming men and boys are the main perpetrators of violence.
- Since 2013, there was a broader effort to represent men and boys in WPS resolutions 2106, 2122, and 2242. This effort, however, was limited to that of 'enlisting' or 'engaging' them as allies in promoting gender equality.
- In 2019, resolution 2467 recognized men and boys as victims of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based abuse for the first time.
- Sexual violence against men and boys in times of armed conflict is a neglected area. Although it is becoming increasingly apparent that this form of violence is widespread, sexual violence against men and boys remains an under-theorised and under-noticed topic.
- Adding men and boys to the list of potential victims is not enough to understand the gendered dynamics and its implications of this, nor does it automatically mean adequate services will be provided.
- Understanding early socialization of masculine ideals is fundamental to explaining the root causes of violent behaviour in war.

Locating Men and Boys in WPS Resolutions

There have been three explicit references to men and boys in resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security:

1. Resolution 2106 (2013) recognizes that men and boys can be secondary victims as forced witnesses of sexual violence against family members and calls upon men and boys to become allies in an effort to combat all forms of violence against women in armed-conflict situations.
2. Resolution 2242 (2015) emphasizes the importance of engaging men and boys as partners in promoting women's participation in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict.
3. Resolution 2467 (2019) recognizes for the first time that men and boys are targets of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, including in the context of detention, and urges Member States to protect victims who are men and boys through the strengthening of policies that offer appropriate responses to male survivors and challenge cultural assumptions about male invulnerability to such violence.

> Resolution 2467 engages men and boys, for the first time, as victim-survivors and not as secondary victims, allies in promoting gender equality, or the embodiment of militarized masculinities.

Literature Review

> *The full realization of the women, peace and security agenda will not be possible without also engaging with men. This is because gender is a relational concept; social changes in the position of women will redefine their relationship with men, and the acceptance of this change will need to involve a shift in male gender norms, otherwise referred to as masculinities.*
>
> (Watson, C. 2015:50)

For the first 13 years of the WPS agenda, the resolutions included men by default, referring to gender broadly and assuming men are the main perpetrators of violence. Since 2013 there has been a broader effort to represent men and boys in WPS resolutions. This effort, however, was limited to that of 'enlisting' or 'engaging' men and boys in achieving the goals of the WPS, and as allies in promoting gender equality.

As D. Duriesmith (2017) argues, the WPS agenda does not reference men and masculine cultures of violence. The WPS agenda assumes all conflict related to violence is committed by men, while little attention is paid to what men or masculinities have to do with causing it. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the gendered dynamics and root causes of violent behaviour in war, the structure of gender relations and the social construction of masculinities (i.e. the norms, values, and behaviour associated with 'men', and the different ways of 'being a man') must be considered.

Violence is a site at which gender is produced. The act of violence, its experience, a person's reaction to it, and the materiality of the body that survives are all related in, to, and through societal gender orders. Not only, then, is violence part of the (re)production of gender, but gender is inescapably a lens through which (our understanding of) violence is produced.

(Shepherd, L., 2018:130)

In 2019, Resolution 2467 recognized men and boys as victims of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based abuse. This recognition can be traced back, to an extent, to the 2015 *Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, which recognized that "while most victims are women and girls, men and boys are also affected, and the overwhelming majority do not feel safe reporting or obtaining redress" (Coomaraswamy, R., 2015). The inclusion of men and boys can be further traced back to policy and academic efforts to examine how gender as a category intersects with other identities of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, class, age, sexual orientation, and others (Rooney, E. 2018; Singh, S., 2017; Myrttinen, H. et al., 2017; Pratt, N. and Richter-Devroe, S., 2011; Refugee Law Project, 2011; Refugee Law Project, 2009; Peterson,V. S., 2007). A number of authors advocate for more studies that locate gender in the context of power relations as it intersects with social identities (Singh, S., 2017), oppression, marginalization, and violence generated by structured inequalities (Pratt, N. and Ritcher-Devroe, S., 2011).

In the words of Ellen A. Philo Gorris (2015), "men and boys have been historically and structurally rendered an invisible group of victims in international human rights and policy responses towards conflict-related sexual violence stemming from the United Nations" (p. 414). The structural silencing of men and boy's victimization through conflict-related sexual violence in international and national legal frameworks has not only diminished our understanding of the gendering of armed conflicts, but also deprived male victims of access to adequate resources, treatment, and justice (Philo Gorris, E. A., 2015).

Sexual violence against men and boys is not consolidated in salient policy guidelines and handbooks (Touquet, H. and Gorris, E., 2016). One of the reasons that might explain this empirical invisibility and theoretical vacuity is its complicated relationship with sexual violence against women, which is evident empirically, theoretically, and politically (Zalewski, M. et al., 2018). The focus on women, and not gender, not only reduces women to an essentialist, homogenous group, but reinforces the erasure of gender-based harm against men and boys.

By concentrating on females' subordinate status rather than the subordinate status of the feminine, [gender-based violence] misses the vulnerabilities of gender non-conforming men, for example, and limits itself to systematically reproduced gender inequality manifest within a (heterosexual) male-female binary.

(Dolan, C., 2014: 493)

The extent to which this violence occurs, moreover, remains unknown. Male survivors of sexual violence are less likely than women and girls to disclose assaults and so are highly likely to cope on their own with the psychological impact (Clark, J. N., 2017; Callender, T. and Dartnall, L., 2011). This under-reporting is largely due to the stigma attached to this type of violence but also partly due to a lack of awareness on the part of those collecting information or offering help (Freedman, J., 2012; Sivakumaran, S., 2007). Medical and humanitarian personnel themselves often do not pick up sexual violence against males, and so these harms are not defined or coded (Watson, C., 2015; Oosterveld, V., 2014). Some are not trained to detect signs of sexual abuse in males; some interpret the silence of males on the subject at face value; and some may assume men and boys are not susceptible to sexual violence in the first place (Oosterveld, V., 2014; Burnett, A. and Peel, M., 2001). Thus, the absence of data on male victims is not an objective reflection of levels of violence, but rather a symptom of immense difficulty – both on the part of the male victims themselves and, for different reasons, on the part of those involved in shaping gender-based violence interventions (Dolan, C., 2014).

While men and boys are not inherently more vulnerable, certain groups are placed into vulnerable situations because of their gender (Watson, C., 2015). As Carpenter, C. (2006) argues, men and boys in conflict situations face major risks of violence based upon culturally constructed notions about gender roles. Adding men and boys to the list of potential victims is not enough to understand the gendered dynamics and implications of this, nor does it automatically mean adequate services will be provided – in particular when these services are already lacking for women and girl victims, who have been the priority of the WPS agenda to date (Myrttien, H., 2019). While there have been many positive developments towards understanding sexual violence against men and boys in armed conflict – in particular, steps taken towards understanding this problem – there is a need to explore this issue in more depth. As part of this series, the following CSiW memos will delve into the various dimensions of how men and boys are portrayed as victims of sexual violence, as allies in promoting gender equality, and as the embodiment of militarized masculinities in an attempt to better understand the gendered dynamics of armed conflict.

To cite

CSiW. "Locating Men and Boys in WPS Resolutions" by Alessia Rodríguez (Policy Brief 1.1, December 2019) as part of *Forward-Looking Strategies in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Policy Brief Series*.

Of related interest

CSiW. "Mapping the Development of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda" by Alessia Rodríguez (October 2019).

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Refugee Law Project. 2009. *Gender Against Men* [Video file].

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