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**Association of World Council of Churches related  
Development Organisations in Europe**



**GENDER  
AND  
VIOLENT CONFLICT**

**GOOD Conference Report**

**12-14 September 2001  
Hosted by Church of Sweden**

174, Rue Joseph II, B - 1000 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 234 68 40, Fax: +32 2 231 14 13  
[aprodev@aprodev.net](mailto:aprodev@aprodev.net) , [www.aprodev.net](http://www.aprodev.net)

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## Executive summary

*GOOD – Gender Orientation On Development – is part of APRODEV, the association of development and humanitarian aid agencies in Europe, which work together with the World Council of Churches. In September 2001, GOOD organised a Conference on Gender and Violent Conflict.*

*There can be no development without peace. Violent conflicts and wars destroy human lives, produce misery and suffering, gobble up financial and human resources which could be used for productive endeavours, and re-direct government policies and national economies away from the delivery of social goods and services, which are vital for human and sustainable development. Recognising the importance of peace-building for their work, development and humanitarian aid agencies are increasingly turning their attention to the question of how they can contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building. However, the role of gender in violent conflict is still a relatively un-explored area for development agencies. In order to stimulate more reflection on this important subject, it was decided to organise this Conference.*

In the context of this Conference on Gender and Violent Conflict, we define **gender through social relations of power, which means placing gender at the heart of relations of dominance and marginalisation, hierarchy, oppression and subjugation.** Gender is constructed at many different levels of society, such as the level of subjective identity, of institutions and organisations, of ideology and doctrine, and of symbols. Other categories such as class relations, race, sexuality, disability, ethnic and religious identities are equally significant in structuring our lives. **Gender looks at the processes in which men and women, masculinity and femininity are produced.** There are many different masculinities and femininities in every society. They are either dominant or oppressed, and are subject to unequal power relations. Thus, it can be said that **gender becomes an organising principle of social life.**

**In the context of violent conflict, it is not gender differences as such that are of interest, but the social processes in which these differences are constructed.** War and violence actually produce a specific social order and social groups. War is a process in which specific social places of men and women are defined, and meanings are attributed to their acts and actions. Dominant notions of masculinity and femininity are constructed or reinforced, which are deeply rooted and which govern our way of understanding war and conflict. **Thus, wars and armed conflicts are among those social processes in which gender relations and gender differences are produced.**

*For example, by joining the army, men find a way to adhere to the dominant forms of masculinity. Militarised masculinity becomes the dominant option for men. Other men and other forms of masculinities are marginalised, oppressed or even*

*persecuted. Dominant notions of femininity often entail motherhood and marriage, which may be used ideologically to stereotype, e.g. ‘the mother of the nation’, the rape victim, the rape refugee, which in turn reinforce the dominant masculinity, therewith justifying dominance. There are dominant forms of femininity that are celebrated, and forms of femininity that are marginalised or explicitly banned from society.*

**The very ideas about masculinity and femininity are used to produce legitimate perpetrators and legitimate victims. Along these lines, ideas about men and women, about masculinity and femininity are products of wars and violence. They become the fuel that further feeds conflicts.**

**Gender can be used as an extremely powerful tool to produce perpetrators and victims in conflict situations.**

*For example, the case study in Northern Uganda, provides evidence that war does reinforce a hegemonic model of masculinity – and this model reinforces war. Notions of masculinity increase the likelihood of violence by non-combatant men, and make non-combatant men more vulnerable to violence by armed forces. Notions of masculinity offer incentives to armed forces to use violence. This use of violence can be perceived as being of benefit to the state, which plays a significant role in the promotion or collapse of alternative (less violent) masculinities. Although there appears to be a correlation between ‘masculinity’ and violence, the use of violence is probably better understood as a potential means to achieve an end, namely masculinity, rather than an integral component of that masculinity.*

**War and armed conflicts are social processes, which are always *incomplete and contradictory*.**

*However, realities of men and women in conflict situations are far from such dominant forms. We simply see male soldiers and female refugees. In every war, however, there are men who actively refuse to be soldiers and women who refuse to become refugees. Other forms are marginalised to an extent that there is hardly any space for other than the dominant form.*

*In Colombia, women have taken the initiative in peace activities with the deliberate aim of changing dominant forms of femininity and masculinity. To organise their survival, Somali women took up activities, spaces and responsibilities, which were originally ascribed to men. However, the Somali women themselves do not perceive this as a process of empowerment; they continue to adhere to the dominant notions of masculinity and femininity.*

**Fault lines and contradictions form the weak links in the processes in which men and women, masculinity and femininity, are produced. These are the ‘ruptures’ where we might attack the dominant ideas and practices of masculinity and femininity in order to try and construct new, less violent and more desirable ones.**

Within Christian social ethics war has normally been justified according to the *just war tradition* or rejected according to the tradition of radical pacifism. Within the just war tradition, two main questions are asked: When would it be justified to resort to war? and: How should a war be conducted justly? Both aspects are codified in international humanitarian law, for example in The Geneva Convention. The just war tradition holds the logic that superiority justifies subordination. The logic of domination has contributed to patriarchy and its system of structural dominance, of which the war system is one important part.

Today, the division between protector and protected in wars must be considered a myth. The correlations between a high level of military violence and domestic violence, and increasing violence against civilians, damage the image of men using violence to protect women and children.

Feminist ethics of war and peace question the legitimacy of military violence, and oppose the identification of masculinity with violence. In the question of violent conflict, women’s voices have often been silenced, and women’s and men’s arguments for peace have not been listened to. But these voices would challenge the legitimacy of the

‘right authority’. **The starting point of a new ethics must be *women and men’s narratives of violent conflicts*.**

### Recommendations

1. **Development activities need to take both social and normative aspects of society which (re)produce dominant masculinity and femininity into account. Church-related organisations are themselves powerful normative institutions within their society and are in particular challenged.**
2. **Gender relations are contextual. Any solutions to conflict have to be locally generated and based on the diversity of women’s and men’s narratives and voices.**
3. **Sustainable change is only possible by addressing the practice of people’s lives and the norms and ideologies that produce their gender relations.**
4. **Working on gender implies working both with men and women on social relations of power. While continuing to work with women, there needs to be an extra effort to work with men to challenge dominant ideas and forms of masculinity and create space for alternative, less violent, forms.**
5. **Dealing with issues of men and masculinities is a new focus area in our work, which offers opportunities for more suitable and comprehensive approaches towards gender justice and conflict resolution. This presents new challenges to our policy development, programme activities, and staff qualifications.**
6. **In order to facilitate processes and activities as described above, we need to change our organisational culture, procedures and structures to allow for a diversity of masculinities and femininities. Within our agencies, we also experience dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity, resulting in unequal power relations (systems of control and hierarchies, control over information, style of leadership, etc).**
7. **Agencies have to rethink their focus on short-term, linear target-oriented programmes, which may not allow for complex long-term processes of peace-building through social change.**

## Introduction

Karin Ulmer, APRODEV

### Why a conference on gender and violent conflict?

What are the implications of the increasing number of conflict situations for development work and humanitarian aid? If development work ends up in conflict situations, then we have to ask ourselves what went wrong. Peace is not only about mediation and prevention, but about the question of what kind of society, economy, education and political organisation we want. Peace is not only a necessary condition for, but should also be the result of effective development efforts.

**“While feminist analyses have identified the significance of gender power relations in pre-war, war and post-war situations, this recognition has not yet entered and shaped mainstream analysis and discussion and – more important still – practice”, Dubravka Zarkov and Cynthia Cockburn.**

To be able to prioritise awareness on gender and to come up with gender aware policies in development work, we need to look at some of the following questions: How significant are gender power relations for development work in conflict situations? How is violence perpetuated? What are the potentials for change? How is gender constructed before, during and after violent conflict and what is its impact on the ideology, people’s lives and organisations? How do the meanings and uses of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ contribute to maintaining unequal power relations or to justifying militarism, violence and fundamentalism?

The aim of this Conference was to understand how gender inequalities / relations produce conflict, how conflict affects gender relations and how to make a start with gender aware thinking. How do APRODEV agencies create space and opportunities for women to participate in an inclusive society at community and institutional level? How do APRODEV agencies create the space to redefine men’s roles and to challenge the perpetuation of patriarchal institutions?

GOOD invited around 40 participants from staff of APRODEV agencies, representatives of partner organisations and related networks. APRODEV is grateful for the hospitality extended by Church of Sweden. The Conference is an APRODEV GOOD

contribution to the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010).

### Policies and Practice of APRODEV agencies in conflict situations

APRODEV agencies are active in most of the conflict regions worldwide. They engage in the fields of emergency aid, post-conflict assistance (rehabilitation, reconciliation, trauma-counselling), and peace building, and increasingly recognise the importance of conflict resolution and conflict prevention. While only a few of the agencies have an explicit peace building perspective in their development work, the need for such policies and approaches is increasingly recognised.

The results of a preparatory inventory suggest that the gender component in activities is limited to the support of women’s organisations at the level of individual desks. None of the agencies have a coherent gender-awareness policy on peace building, conflict resolution or emergency aid. However, special assistance to women and girls is becoming a major concern in emergency aid. Where gender-sensitive policies and programmes are implemented, this is often the initiative of individual staff in country strategies or regional departments rather than an institutionally coherent approach.

### Brief review of recent EU Policies

Uneven distribution of development assistance has increased tensions between groups, protectionist trade policies have hindered the access of developing countries to international markets and created economic shocks, and structural adjustment programmes have forced cuts in spending on social services and fuelled political and financial instability. However, if development cooperation is to contribute to conflict prevention, it has to be targeted at the root causes of conflict. In the past, EU economic policies have often exacerbated tensions in society and increased the risk of violent conflict

Recent progress in the developing of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy has been largely focused on strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence for crisis management. This work is welcome but needs to be balanced with equal efforts to prevent conflicts and crises in the first place. There is a stark contrast

between the swift and costly initiative for building up EU military capabilities (Rapid Reaction Force) and the hesitant and modest efforts at prevention.<sup>1</sup>

The 2001 Review of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) states that “a gender dimension of operations was rarely effectively integrated”.

The EU and member states are increasingly acknowledging the need and value of working with civil society groups and establishing effective partnerships. However, there are not yet effective mechanisms to enable the EU to dialogue with civil society groups in the North and South, and it is difficult for such organisations to access the necessary financial and technical resources.

### **The 11<sup>th</sup> of September**

The Conference started in the aftermath of 11 September, and participants felt a need for reflection. Some space was created to articulate the confusion and contradictions, trying to give some meaning to what had happened. The following expression of concern resulted from the informal exchange at the Conference.

<sup>1</sup> International Alert, ‘Preventing violent conflict: Opportunities for the Swedish and Belgian Presidency’, 2001 analyses EU Policy of Conflict Prevention

## Expression of Concern

### From Participants of the APRODEV GOOD Conference on Gender & Violent Conflict

In the context of the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010), and in the light of our discussions at this conference on the relationship between gender and violence, we express our deepest sympathy with the victims of the hijacked planes and the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (11 September 2001). While the logic of these attacks is not clearly discernible, their consequences threaten to draw us all into an escalation of violence at a global level.

We note with concern the statements of the US President and other political leaders that this is an attack on ‘civilisation’ and ‘the free world’. They are declaring what they call ‘the first war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century’, without yet knowing who was responsible for the attacks.

The almost immediate recourse to the language of ‘war’, the construction of a polarisation into the ‘free world’ and the ‘new evil’, which is linked to the demonisation of Muslims and Arabs, are typical steps in preparing public opinion for war. Within hours of the tragic events it has become almost impossible to question the righteousness of those who threaten to draw us into a global war to ‘defend civilisation’.

We note the gendering of the political discourse in the representation of democracy as ‘vulnerable’ and the declaration of military as the only option for its rescue.

Media organisations with worldwide coverage (CNN, BBC World and others) are willingly and uncritically transmitting these images and rhetoric. The representation of the USA as ‘the most religious of countries’, and the image of the WTC as a symbol of the USA’s multi-racial character come only days after the USA walked out of an international conference on racism being held in Durban, South Africa.

We think that these representations which appeal to prevalent gender stereotypes serve to mask the political nature of events. Furthermore, they serve to prepare the ground for an uncontested series of acts of revenge. They also reduce the possibilities of political debate and analyses about the causes which led to such attacks, and will serve to legitimise a narrowing down of civil rights in the interest of the ‘fight against terrorism’.

We therefore urge everybody, but in particular political, religious and community leaders, media and activists, not to allow the restriction of democracy in the name of its defence.

Uppsala, Sweden, 14 September 2001



## **PART A: UNDERSTANDING GENDER IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

### **Beyond Victims and Villains: Gender and Armed Conflict**

**Dubravka Zarkov, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, the Netherlands, and  
Stefan Dudink, Centre for Gender and Women's Studies of Nijmegen University, the Netherlands**

#### *The concept of gender*

Gender refers to a specific way of looking at the social relations of power that structure our daily lives, our behaviour, our norms and values, and our understanding of ourselves and our place in this world. Defining gender through such social relations of power means placing gender at the heart of relations of dominance and marginalisation, hierarchy, hegemony, oppression and subjugation. To understand armed conflict it is essential to consider the following points related to gender and power.

Gender relations are present on many different levels of society:

1. The level of subjective identity. This is the level at which an individual sense of being a man or a woman is constructed with all that it entails.
2. The level of institutions and organisations: the educational system, the labour market, the military and the organisation of political life. For example, the military constantly produces a connection between men, masculinity and the legitimate use of violence.
3. The level of ideology and doctrine. Systems of thought that appear not to be primarily about men and women are also sites where gender is produced and reproduced.
4. The level of symbols. Masculinity and femininity are present in signs that are used to denote all sorts of norms, qualities, virtues and vices.

Gender is thus not only about men and women. Other phenomena are also presented as male and female, or associated with masculinity and femininity, for example, the state, the nation, the citizen, the military, the soldier-hero, the enemy, the victim, the front, the home-front.

Gender is not the only organising principle of social life. Class relations, race, sexuality, ethnic and religious identities are equally significant in structuring our lives. Thus, we cannot simply say that men and masculinity are privileged in most of

the societies we know, and that women and femininity are oppressed. In every society, only certain groups of men are privileged, and only certain forms of masculinity - those that belong to the privileged men - are dominant. Other men and other forms of masculinity are marginalised, oppressed, or even prosecuted. In western societies, white heterosexual men and their form of masculinity are dominant. The forms of masculinity associated with a Muslim migrant or a homosexual man are marginalised at best, or discriminated and oppressed, at worst. Similarly, there are dominant forms of femininity that are celebrated and given as an example for all women to follow. But there are also forms of femininity that are marginalised or explicitly banned from a society. Motherhood is still one of the most powerful norms of femininity in most societies we know. But in western societies, motherhood is often perceived differently for white women than for young teenage black girls, migrant women or asylum seekers.

#### *Gender and conflict*

Interwoven with class, race, ethnicity, sexuality or religion, gender becomes an extremely powerful tool in conflict situations. Many different forms of masculinity and femininity exist in every society at any given moment, and they exist in unequal power relations. The dominant notions of masculinity and femininity are deep rooted, and they govern our way of understanding war and conflict. We simply see male soldiers and female refugees. In every war, however, there are men who actively refuse to be soldiers. But do we know their numbers, as we know the number of active militaries? Equally, most women who become refugees have no other choice. They are seldom given the knowledge, the infrastructure or the technology of war. It is the social construction of soldiering as an essential part of masculinity - and not of femininity - that produces men as soldiers, and women as victims. The dominant notions of femininity that we grew up with and learned by living in our societies do not easily associate women and femininity with soldiering.

### *War as a productive process*

War and violence do not just threaten the social order; they also create it by producing differences between men and women, between victims and villains, between an enemy and a friend, between religious or ethnic groups. These differences are presented as natural, given, fixed and eternal. So much so that we forget that the process of production even took place.

This production does not concern only gender, but other social relations also. Finally, this production of difference appears not only in the act of violence – at the moment violence is committed– but also at various discursive social levels, such as in collective memory and in media representations. Examples of the writings in Serbian and Croatian newspapers about the war in Bosnia showed how various meanings of gender, ethnicity and 'the nation' were used in the media to construct differences between the warring parties.

**Thus, it is not gender differences as such that are of interest in this context, but the *social processes* in which these differences are constructed. Wars and armed conflicts are among those social processes in which gender relations and gender differences are produced. The very ideas about men and women, masculinity and femininity, are *products of wars and violence*, and the fuel that further feeds the conflicts.**

It is of great importance for our theory and actions, as well as our research and politics, to underscore the *incomplete and contradictory* nature of processes in which men, women, masculinity and femininity are produced in social processes such as wars and conflicts. These fault lines and contradictions form the weak links in constructions of gender. They are the points where we might attack the dominant ideas and practices of masculinity and femininity in order to try and construct new, more desirable ones.

## **Gender as Women, Men as the Problem' - Winning the Battle and Losing the War?**

**Chris Dolan, Agency for Cooperation on Research and Development, (ACORD), UK**

While a lot has been said about the ways in which masculinity allows men to exercise power over women, far less is said about the ways in which masculinity, as a set of ideas, allows men to exercise power over other men. Even less is said about the ways in which this exercise of power is both reinforced by and contributes to a context of violence and war.

By making 'gender' synonymous with 'women', and portraying women's interests as being in opposition to men's, we have arrived at a polarisation along biological sex lines which has been institutionalised in NGOs through predominantly female gender officers, gender projects which target women only, and gender audits which focus primarily on whether equality of numbers between men and women has been achieved. For a number of reasons, many men are alienated by the prevailing gender discourse. As a result, men's gender needs and issues are rarely identified, still less discussed, let alone addressed. The message that gender is about women, which seemed like a good short-term strategy has become something of a long-term obstacle for the cause of true gender emancipation. **It is therefore time to make gender *inclusive* rather than *exclusive*.** If you make it relevant to both sexes, women's rights

will have a better chance of taking off. A key step in undoing this legacy is to question three decades of men being essentialised as a homogeneous category and portrayed as 'the problem'.

### *A case study from Northern Uganda*

Research conducted in Northern Uganda has demonstrated that socially and politically constructed gender roles and identities which influence people's behaviours and lay them open to manipulation, in particular normative models of masculinity, can play a critical role in fuelling conflict. A crucial connection exists between state level dynamics and micro-level behaviour, and the ideas which make up masculinity are a key connector between the two.

The predominant model of masculinity in Uganda is hegemonic in the sense that it largely precludes alternatives and is buttressed by major forms of social and political power. It is normative in the sense that men are taught they should aspire to and judge themselves by it, and state and society in turn judge and assess them against it - and then either validate, or belittle and punish them. The primary

elements of this model are marriage, fatherhood, material provision and security provision.

### *Thwarted masculinity*

In a context of protracted conflict non-combatant men's ability to achieve some of the key elements in the normative model of masculinity into which they have been socialised is severely reduced. War creates an increasing heterogeneity of experiences and growing polarisation between those who are able to attain the markers of masculinity and exercise the power which these bring, and those who are unable to fulfil expectations and are thus deeply disempowered. They experience a loss of domestic and political power, they cannot exercise military power, and their capacity to create a family and then provide for and protect it has been much reduced.

Paradoxically the increasing heterogeneity of experience goes hand in hand with a further homogenising of expectations; as the markers of masculinity become harder to achieve (s.a. above), they become more desirable as they appear to provide anchors and points of leverage in the midst of economic, social and political uncertainty created by war. At the same time, the space to develop multiple masculinities, through education, wealth, or by promoting alternative views on conflict resolution, largely collapses.

### *Gender-produced violence*

The disjuncture between expectations and the ability to live up to them appears to go hand in hand with widespread feelings of fear, intimidation, humiliation, frustration and anger, which are often expressed in physical violence against self and others, psychological violence in the form of seeking to oppress less powerful individuals, notably youth and women, and in decisions to join armed groups.

Within the civilian population, domestic violence becomes a last resort of those who are unable to achieve 'masculinity'. Within the military on the other hand, the institutional framework and the removal of soldiers from more general social networks to an extent promotes the use of violence (including rape of women and men) as an easy route to masculinity, particularly as a way to exercise power over other men. Those in the military also gain in domestic power as they are in a stronger position to provide economically and to protect militarily, and they enjoy military power and social status over other men at the same time. The resort to violence by the military can be seen as a conscious or subconscious strategy to exercise control over

civilians which is effective in that it strengthens the perpetrator's masculinity by weakening that of the victim. The individual's aspirations to exercise power over others also go hand in hand with the state's need for control over the population in general.

Thus, although there appears to be a correlation between 'masculinity' and violence, the use of violence is probably better understood as a potential means to achieve an end, namely masculinity, rather than an integral component of that masculinity. While there is relatively little within the model which explicitly encourages or celebrates the use of violence, there appears to be loud silence on the issue.

### *Implications for NGO interventions*

The results of the research conducted in Northern Uganda point to a number of key issues that need to be taken into account when designing interventions (see presentation of Chris Dolan in the appendix). In the question and answer session following Chris' presentation, the following points were discussed:

- The findings of the research described here are changing the way ACORD works in Uganda. Their view of the overall situation has changed, and specific issues have been incorporated with a greater focus on culture and the socialisation of youth. Questions of sexual violence are being addressed differently. For example, on-going work with the military on HIV and AIDS is being used as an entry point to address issues of sexual violence. A conference was also convened with villagers, field workers, government officials and NGOs to raise important issues, such as sexual violence in the army.
- On an institutional level, gender has to be made relevant to everybody, whether male or female, by addressing multiple ways in which the exercise of power is legitimised using gender constructs.
- More research is needed regarding how men wield power over men, women over men, and women over women.
- We must try to get away from the idea that men are the problem. The gender focus should not move from femininity to masculinity, but it should be expanded to include other categories, such as race etc. While it is important to differentiate between gender, age and other categories in analysing programmes, incorporating these distinctions in the programmes themselves could help to support existing polarisations.
- Violent conflict does not often provide an opportunity to change gender roles. While it

may be possible in other contexts to retain changed roles after a conflict, such as in the aftermath of World War II, such cases are definitely exceptions. An example was given of the conflict in Bosnia, where men had very few possibilities for adopting alternative expressions of masculinity. A man who did not subscribe to the dominant model had to leave or go

underground. The situation was different for women. More social space was available to women in the aftermath of the Bosnian crisis, because so many men were forced underground.

- In many cases, 'peacekeeping' means that another military comes in, which translates into further militarisation for men.

## Gender and War - a Theological and Ethical Approach

Theol. Dr. Anna T. Höglund, Uppsala University, Sweden

### *The Just War Tradition*

Within Christian social ethics, war has normally been justified according to the just war tradition or rejected according to the tradition of radical pacifism. The argument concerning justified war includes two main questions: When would it be justified to resort to war? (the so-called *jus ad bellum* tradition) and: How should a war be conducted justly? (the so-called *jus in bello* tradition). Both these aspects of the just war tradition are today codified in international humanitarian law, for example in The Geneva Convention.

The *jus ad bellum* doctrine (which concerns the question of when it could be morally right for a state to resort to war) holds that war could be justified on condition that the following demands are fulfilled: the war is fought for a just cause, ordered by the right authority, fought with the right intention, resorted to as a last resort, and waged with the aim of peace. Furthermore, the *jus ad bellum* doctrine holds that the military violence permitted should be in accordance with the principle of proportionality, i.e. war cannot be justified unless proportionality can be established between the political objectives and their price.

According to the *jus in bello* tradition (which concerns the means and methods in a justified war), warfare is justified in so far as it respects the claims of necessity (violence is only justified when necessary to achieve the aims) and military proportionality (in the end, more good will be done than undone, or a greater measure of evil will be prevented, through the military efforts). Primarily, though, the *jus in bello* tradition emphasises the principle of discrimination, i.e. the claim that civilians should be kept outside of combat. A war is defined as a fight between military forces, with military attacks directed only towards military goals.

The civilian population, as well as individual civilians, should not be the object of attack. Indiscriminate attacks, i.e. those which are not directed towards a specific military objective, are prohibited.

The principle of discrimination is the rule in war that is most frequently violated. This could be due to the fact that its interpretation is built upon the so-called "principle of double effect". This principle – developed in medieval catholic theology by, among others, Thomas Aquinas – holds that the death of civilians could be morally accepted in war, provided it was an unintended by-product of a legal military attack.

### *Gender construction in and through war*

An important part of the Western tradition and philosophy, as demonstrated in the justification for war described above, is dichotomous and binary in thinking, in which everything is supposed to be divided into 'A' or 'not A'. This logic holds that *superiority justifies subordination*, with regard to e.g. race, class, species and gender. The logic of domination has contributed to, as well as supported and maintained, patriarchy and its system of structural dominance, of which the war system is one important part.

After biological reproduction, war is perhaps the arena where division of labour along gender lines has been the most obvious. Gender identity in war is shaped out of whether you take on one of two complementary roles: as combatant or non-combatant, the protector or the protected, being at the front or at home.

The most obvious form of gender construction in war is the frequency of rape used as a weapon in military conflicts. Rape in war has long been seen as "part of the game", a component of the unofficial

rules of war. Violence against women in the conquered territory is conceded to the victor, according to the ritual rules of the game. Despite its commonality, rape has not until recently been characterised as a war crime of the gravest dimension and prosecutable before the International Tribunal in The Hague.

### ***A new ethical approach to war and peace***

The old rules, based on Christian ethics and cultural norms, that used to govern how wars were to begin and end, how peace was defined as distinct from war, who was to participate, who was the enemy, how the fighting was to be conducted, and what roles were ascribed to women and men during war time, all these old notions, are now called into question. Post-modern wars have changed much of our previous understanding of both war and peace and the role gender plays in them.

Women do take part in wars as combatants today, and weapons of mass destruction have eliminated the division of home and front and civilian and combatant: the front is everywhere and the combatants are everyone. No one is any longer protected from violence through being a civilian, independent of gender.

The notion of protector and protected in war must also be considered a myth. Not only is everyone unprotected, but recent research further shows that societies with a high level of military violence also have a high level of domestic violence. This definitely damages the image of men using violence to protect women and children.

As these divisions can no longer be upheld, *war becomes more difficult to justify*. As moral judgements have an impact upon whether wars are started and how they are conducted, the goal for feminist ethics of war and peace is to question the legitimacy of military violence, to condemn abuses in war, and even to challenge cultural gender norms. The identification of masculinity with violence must be opposed, without falling into the pitfall of complementary gender views, where non-violent men should be complemented with violent women.

The starting point of these new ethics must be women's and men's narrations of violent conflicts.

In order to develop a new ethical judgement of military violence, and to get an extended view of morality, we need to listen to people's experiences of immoral actions in times of war. Women do have experiences of war, but have often been silenced on the question of violent conflicts. It is time to start to listen, both to women's narrations of war and to their arguments for peace. In particular, we have to work both with women and men in relation to sexual violence. The more images of masculinity or femininity are identified, the less binary men's and women's roles will become. As one participant noted: "We grow up with the idea that men and women are complementary. If we understand that there are alternative ways of expression, any two persons can be complementary."

### ***How to apply the theory to the practice of development work?***

Military intervention has become current practice. Different actors have diverse interests in ongoing wars, for example economic interests or change of power relations. What kind of ethical arguments can be used to challenge wars? If we know that it is impossible to guarantee the protection of civilians, can we then still call wars "just" or "justified"? An attempt to challenge current logic may be to reveal the real interests of warring parties and to explore the hidden agendas, or to challenge the legitimacy of the "right authority".

Support to partner organisations in Latin America over a period of three decades shows the changing nature of involvement of partners in conflict situations. During the 70s and 80s unequal distribution of resources was identified as a root cause of poverty and conflict, and partner organisations got involved in redistribution. Fighting for social justice as a higher cause often meant getting caught up in violent conflict. After three decades, we have to conclude that justice has not prevailed, but war remains and has even become a continuum.

What is the specific role of church-related agencies in conflict situations, knowing that often religion is linked to conflict or abused to mobilise warring parties? And how can justice be achieved peacefully?

## **PART B. EXPERIENCES FROM WORK IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND PEACE BUILDING**

### **Introduction**

In conflict situations, interventions often lack an in-depth analysis of the impact of gender power relations and their potential to fuel or to help to resolve a conflict. The following examples, presented by conference participants faced with conflict situations in various countries in different regions of the world, illustrate the complexity and similarities of peace building initiatives.

Violent conflict is present, especially for women, in pre-war, war and post-war situations, and women's organisations face similar problems in times of war and peace. Working to eliminate forms of gender-based violence and inequality is a contribution to the basics of a more just and humane society.

Much more remains to be done to address the root causes of conflict situations, to accept men as serious partners in challenging dominant gender norms and to promote alternative non-violent spaces for women and men.

All development, emergency aid, or peace building initiatives have to take gender issues into account if they are to be effective in working towards sustainable peace and increased welfare for all parts of society.

### **Patriarchy in Colombia's society and its expressions in the armed conflict**

**Mario Enrique Guevara Moreno and  
Ana Cristina Cabrera, Fundación Synergia, Colombia**

#### ***The armed conflict in Colombia: historical background***

The political roots of the internal armed conflict in Colombia are to be found in its past, in particular in the 1950s and 1960s with a confrontation between the traditional conservative and liberal political parties. However, this conflict is only a part of a deeper and far more complex reality, which includes violence perpetrated by the guerrilla, the military and paramilitary bodies, drug traffickers and other criminal organisations. Yet another form of violence is structural and is due to unfair and non-democratic social, political and economic structures of the country. The current situation in Colombia is simply catastrophic with a total of 25 million people living below the poverty line out of a population of 36 millions. Finally, domestic violence completes the picture of a country torn by more than 40 years of continuous armed conflict.

The serious and long-lasting political and social crisis in Colombia has led to an intensification of the armed conflict now called "irregular war" which is

characterised by low intensity and long duration. Interests at stake in such conflicts are manifold: military, economic and political. Key characteristics also include the increase in recruits in each armed camp and important financial resources provided by drug trafficking activities and by foreign countries like the US in particular. In this context, it has become clear that control over civil society is also a key objective, especially since the end of the 1980s. This control ranges from political and ideological influence to coercion, or a combination of both. In many cases civil society groups adopt "adapted" behaviours according to the armed group they have to deal with. By involving civil society in such a manner, the armed conflict in Colombia has taken the shape of a most horrendous and degraded war that includes many acts of extermination and barbarity that deeply affect human consciousness.

#### ***Patriarchy in Colombia's society and its expressions in the armed conflict***

In order to identify the elements that enable violence as a means to deal with differences and conflicts, it is necessary to analyse very cautiously the gender roles

displayed in the context of an armed conflict and the social representations that favour these roles. It is also necessary to analyse the gender relations that emerge from these war dynamics.

### ***Patriarchy as a model that favours armed conflict***

There is a deep relationship between the collective imagery on socio cultural gender relations and conflict that has enabled the reinforcement of power imbalances between men and women. Patriarchy associates power with men: in the war context, the male body incarnates power. Patriarchy associates political power with men: in the war context, power is associated with the male combatant. Men are designated to lead the country, the army, etc. Men are the actors of society (political figures, combatants, citizens) in contrast to women, who are seen as defenders of private spheres, standing “outside” armed conflicts. This supposed distance between women and war/armed conflict is occulting the reality of women as war protagonists.

In general terms, it appears that in a context of war, the roles traditionally assigned to both men and women are reproduced and even reinforced: men are seen as heroes or hero-victims and women are generally seen as indirect victims who have to support their husbands and sons.

However, given the historic context of the Colombian armed conflict, women have not only been direct and indirect victims but, with time, have become active political actors and progressively integrated the armed conflict as combatants. They have also come to participate more actively in various peace and resistance movements (for example the “Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres” - The Women’s March for Peace). This process has impacted the way women are perceived in their roles and relations to men in conflict/war situations.

### ***The relationship between patriarchy and armed organisations: Gender roles and practices.***

In Colombia, women have come to fight as combatants but they have had and still have to cope with the existing military norms including a strict hierarchy: most of the time, women are given no authority during combat or during any kind of negotiations. Furthermore, women have to take on masculine attitudes of courage and physical toughness, etc. Today it is thought that approximately thirty percent of the guerrilla forces are made up of women: investigation has shown that they serve in subordinate positions even though their workload is much higher than that of male combatants. Aside from their fighting activities, they still have to take care of so-called reproductive tasks

(as mothers and wives). Furthermore, women who join the armed forces are often blamed for breaking traditional gender patterns. It is important to highlight that, for women from rural backgrounds, joining the guerrilla movement has often meant progress and emancipation as it allows for new experiences, greater geographical mobility, solidarity, and companionship.

Another element of interest is that the social status of women who became part of an armed group usually corresponds to the social status they previously held in society. The same applies to men but their social status is also determined by traditional representations of male qualities: courage, boldness, strength, etc. This favours of course a dynamic of confrontation inside and outside the group. If men are devastated by military failure, their masculinity is hurt and they have to take steps to reconstruct it. Violence is usually seen as a solution and women often pay the price (through domestic violence).

Another consequence of the living conditions in armed conflict is promiscuity that encourages infidelity and increased neglect of parenthood duties. Very often both men and women combatants lose contact with their sons and daughters born in the context of an armed conflict. Family members or other companions usually raise these children. In the case of men, these realities are justified as a sacrifice for a noble cause, whereas for women they mean being condemned by both the family and society, not only for having assumed an illegal role but a social role usually associated with masculinity.

Finally, there is currently plenty of investigation on women who have fought in the armed conflict, in order to demonstrate the type of gender relationships that are established inside these armed groups. Most of these investigations have shown that gender equity is usually absent in these structures.

### ***Gender roles in armed conflicts - The impact of war on women and men***

Women, men and children are all direct victims of the armed conflict, be it in their capacity as combatant/militant or as a member of civil society. Violence endured includes death, sexual abuse, intimidation and forced displacement, among others. Consequences include the destruction of autonomy, dignity and identity of victims.

In the case of women combatants taken as prisoners, the forms of torture endured are usually crueller than those applied to men and very often include sexual abuse: it is widely assumed that their participation in the conflict is not only a case of political insurrection or betrayal but also a

transgression of the roles traditionally assigned to women. Rape becomes an act of war and to “possess” a woman becomes a symbolic act of domination. Close to conflict zones, prostitution increases at the service of the men involved. It often includes rape, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

Another consequence is displacement which affects a large number of women, some 56%. It has a differentiated impact on women according to their role in the family (head of the household) and the responsibilities they have, coupled with their physical and emotional inequality in facing the realities of a hostile and unknown world. In particular, the destruction of the social identity is usually worse among displaced women (particularly in rural areas) who are less integrated socially and politically and are less mobile geographically.

Given that women are usually in charge of the physical and emotional survival of the family members, in such circumstances they tend to develop survival tactics and techniques that include the setting up of solidarity networks and the provision of work through informal channels. In these circumstances, when a woman earns an income, it can affect the self-esteem of her partner. In this framework, one could say that displacement can also contribute to the building up of tensions within displaced couples.

National and regional organisations are also subject to intimidation and to threats that affect both their members and the community work carried out. In the

case of women, the additional cost is that their participation in political and public spheres is the result of major efforts to overcome the rules excluding them from participating in power. Armed actors usually see women’s leadership as an obstacle that makes their social and territorial control more difficult.

The recruitment of boys and girls is very pervasive, having reached in some cases up to 40% of all recruits, as is the link between the recruitment of young people and poverty situations in many regions of the country.

***Contributions to the transformation of armed conflicts: Deconstructing patriarchy and building a culture of peace***

It is necessary in the described context to work with women and men together. Every proposal for a peace-building initiative should include a gender approach. There is a need to look for adequate space and ways to question men’s roles and behaviours. In this framework, Synergia has developed a training manual for incorporating a gender perspective during the planning phase of projects.

The methodology developed for working in communities that have experienced conflict is to work in separate groups (different parties or genders) and then later bring them together to see what they have in common. The stress should not be on differences, but on dialogue, consultation and non-violent conflict resolution.

## **Kenya: Gender roles in ethnic and cattle rustling conflicts**

**Catharine Mumbi Kimotho, National Council of Churches Kenya**

Men and women have played different roles before, during and after ethnic and cattle rustling conflicts in Kenya in the past decade. Both men and women have been affected by these conflicts and have participated in peace-building efforts.

Most communities in Kenya are traditionally patriarchal and the position and roles of women are subordinate to those of men. Gender talks and issues are seen by almost 90% of Kenyan men as an attempt by women to control men. Nevertheless, various NGOs, churches and individuals in Kenya have tirelessly fought for the rights of women, such as girls’ accessibility to education, equal opportunity in employment positions, women’s and girls’ rights

to land, property and inheritance, affirmative action in leadership positions, eliminating gender-based violence, e.g. rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), wife battering, sexual harassment and exposure during violent conflicts.

***Tribal conflict and cattle rustling conflicts***

From the onset of multi-party politics in Kenya in 1991, politicians used ethnicity to manipulate the outcome of general elections. Violence among different ethnic groups was incited and conflicts broke out in the Rift Valley and Western and Nyanza Provinces after the general elections of 1992 and



1997. These conflicts were politically instigated and occurred in mainly agricultural communities. Pastoral Kenyans, on the other hand, have been historically and culturally involved in sporadic cattle rustling. These activities occurred on a small scale until the mid-1990s, when violence increased, causing heavy casualties, including for the first time women and children.

The consequence of these conflicts has been hatred, mistrust, and widespread trauma. During this period, men and women played different roles and were affected in different ways. Men in leadership positions at all levels incited their communities to turn against their neighbours. Men made decisions on the dates and targets of their attacks on their enemies, and executed the attacks. In some cases, they also made sure that their families were moved to safety. Young men were mobilised, recruited, trained and provided with weapons by their senior male counterparts, some of whom were government officers. They composed war songs.

Men suffered in terms of the highest casualties, including deaths and injuries. Their egos were seriously damaged if they were not able to protect their wives and children. This led to a feeling of hopelessness. Men were depressed and some deserted their families because they couldn't stand to see them suffer. Others found solace in alcohol and drugs and as this took control over them, they became violent towards their wives and other women around them.

In both the aggressors' and victims' communities, women taught their children to think negatively about their neighbours. In pastoral communities women took a bigger role in conflicts than in agricultural communities. They incited their men to go on raids so as to increase their herd of cattle, composed praise songs for warriors who carried out successful raids, blessed their sons when they left for raids and when they came back home successfully, shared in the glory and praise of their brave brothers.

Many women were traumatised and widowed or deserted by their husbands. Some abandoned women had to sleep in caves or forests with their children. Those whose husbands died were subjected to harassment by their in-laws and were chased from family properties, thereby losing their rights to the land. Some widows were inherited by their in-laws against their own wishes. During flight, many women experienced premature births or miscarriages. Other women were raped either by aggressors or security personnel during periods of acute conflict. As they settled in camps, some men from their own communities raped and sexually harassed them. An increase in unwanted pregnancies

and early marriages was reported among young girls. High rates of STDs including HIV/AIDS were reported.

The activities of women's groups were brought to a halt and it became difficult for women from different ethnic communities to meet. Since most of the men who remained with their families could not cope with the effects of the conflict, women were left with the burden of taking care of their families. They took up various activities, such as providing casual labour, selling illicit brew, starting small-scale businesses, selling off their girls to work as domestic servants; or they turned to prostitution. This made them discover their potential and capabilities in providing for themselves and their families. However, some faced problems as their husbands demanded control of their hard-earned money. In most cases this led to domestic violence.

In negotiations for a peaceful settlement, the roles of men and women were again different. Some women pleaded with men to lay down their weapons and negotiate for peace. Some engaged in serious group prayers for divine intervention and others denied their men sexual pleasure to force them to negotiate for peace and reconciliation. Nevertheless, the final decision to negotiate for peace ultimately lay in the hands of men. Some peace-loving men, including members of the clergy, became mediators and bridges for peace between different communities.

#### ***NCKK Community Peace Building and Development Project***

In response to the high numbers of casualties, massive loss of property and huge population displacement caused by the warring communities, NCKK initiated in 1992 the Community Peace Building and Development Project. Its current objectives are to help reduce suffering among the victims of conflict, help warring communities mend their relationships and understand the root causes and issues surrounding their conflicts, and provide relief intervention in times of emergency. To accomplish the above objectives the project continues to undertake various activities including establishing peace structures at village and area levels, identifying and training peace facilitators, facilitating the organisation of community forums for conflict analysis and peace interventions, organising mediation meetings, resettlement provisions to victims of displacement, rehabilitation of social amenities, provision of legal assistance, guidance and counselling services, and public awareness creation.

The project has specifically targeted women by enrolling female staff in all project management

levels, providing women with space to advocate for their own issues, incorporating women in the peace structures at all levels, training women peace facilitators, and helping to revive women's groups or form new ones (that encourage ethnic representation). The project also recently developed a new strategy enabling women to organise themselves. The Rural Women Peace Link challenges women to take up the leadership role. It teaches them leadership skills and encourages them to be at the forefront of peace-making initiatives.

Constraints and challenges faced by humanitarian and development agencies working in conflict areas in Kenya are many.

1. Apart from the provision of sanitary towels, which was introduced in 1997, other women's needs have not been addressed, such as: miscarriages and early delivery during forced migration, STDs including HIV, provision of contraceptives and underwear during periods of acute conflicts. This is a big challenge since men head most NGOs active in relief interventions and the voices of the few women present are not always heard. Priorities for men are different from priorities for women.
2. Culturally accepted norms dictate that women should be reserved, humble, should not speak in front of men nor mix with them freely. This inhibits the freedom of women to express their views during important decision making sessions.
3. The roles reserved for women are many, leaving them with a heavy workload and little spare time to engage in productive community roles. As such, many do not attend peace forums, especially if organised outside their villages. This further affects

the trained women peace facilitators, who are willing to pass on peace and reconciliation messages to their neighbours yet lack the time to do so or are denied the opportunity by their husbands or fathers. Such barriers have discouraged women from becoming involved in church or women's group activities.

4. The majority of women involved in peace work both at community level and staff level have been subjected to exclusion by their husbands, fathers or brothers, and sexual harassment by male colleagues.
5. Recognition of women within community and government systems is very limited. Men have allowed women to carry on their activities as long as they remain within women's groups.
6. Ignorance among men and some women on the meaning of gender equity and empowerment delays progress in involving women in all aspects of life. Most men believe that women want to take over control from men, so anyone who advocates for the rights of women faces great opposition. Unfortunately, this includes some individuals in leadership positions in government, NGOs, churches, etc.

African culture, religious manipulation, non-existent or weak governmental and agency gender policies have largely contributed to the fact that Africa is still lagging behind in addressing women's needs and involving women in decision making. Our hope for the future is that many more individuals and agencies will take an interest in gender issues. Eventually this will lead to more women being in a position to contribute positively to peace and development at their respective levels.

## **Somalia: Changing roles of women before, during and after conflict**

**Deborah Ossiya, Life and Peace Institute, Horn of Africa Programme, Nairobi**

### ***Historical background***

The government headed by General Mohammed Siad Barre ruled over Somalia from 1969. Although claiming to be a 'non-tribal socialist government', his rule became increasingly authoritarian and nepotistic. Clans other than his own Marehan were excluded from participating in governing the nation and from enjoying the fruits of their own labour. In the 1980s five major clans banded together to oust Barre, but once they defeated him they could not agree on who should lead the country and they turned on each other. Various factions formed

according to existing clan lines and fighting continued until a deadlock between the clans developed. Eventually various administrations were formed: Somaliland in the North, Puntland and Southern Somalia. Somaliland has one dominant clan and various smaller ones. Puntland consists of two basic clans and Southern Somalia has a number of large clans. Once the major enemies were driven out of each region, the sub-clans began to emerge. This divisiveness extends all the way to the basic family unit. Some factors that had caused Said Barre to be overthrown, including corruption and nepotism, now began emerging among smaller units. Within Somaliland, intra-ethnic conflicts have

eroded possibilities for reconciliation. A man may now prefer to sit next to a member of a different clan rather than his own brother.

### *“Post-war” Somalia*

Somalia cannot be said to be in a post-conflict situation because fighting continues in the South and other parts of the country are still very volatile. It is clear, however, that the civil war has led to the total collapse of the Somali state and its institutions. Businessmen take advantage of the chaos by financing whichever politicians are in power on any given day, so that they can be granted political favours. Elders have always played a prominent role in peace building, but they are now often on the payroll of various politicians. Some politicians are genuinely trying to find solutions, but others just have a hidden agenda and propagate their own interests. How can peace be restored to this nation?

Civil groups and organisations, which never existed before in Somalia, are now emerging. But who are these groups? Finding them and understanding their (sometimes hidden) agendas can be difficult. The factional leaders are seeing a trend in which international organisations are supporting the civil society movement. So they too are forming groups. This makes it difficult to define what a civil society group is. This has also been the case in Bosnia, where the women’s wing of a political party could be registered as an NGO, even though it is purely political.

When deciding where to focus resources within a region, international organisations may look at Somalia with some degree of scepticism. The choice of which country to support is influenced by the regional strategic interests of the West. If one country becomes stronger in a region, this change can have global dimensions. It is important to look at how Somalia fits in the regional puzzle, and to help the people on the ground understand this dynamic. How can a nomadic woman, for example, begin to understand the larger picture, or personally get involved in peace building? The people who have suffered from the violence are tired of the conflict, but what can they do to help stop it?

Fighting has stopped in Somaliland, but the people in the North still feel the consequences of the fighting that continues in the South. Nevertheless, Somaliland now appears to be one of the safest places in the world to live. For example, the women have taken over the banking industry and they openly sell dollars on the street. Crime is not widespread because the Somalis have resorted to the traditional clan-based system of protection. The Diaspora of Somalis brought about by the civil war

has spread clans beyond their traditional geographic boundaries. If a member of a clan is killed by a member of a different clan, the victim’s clan will receive compensation or get revenge by killing the guilty person wherever he may be in the world. The clan therefore serves as a type of insurance.

Clans in Somalia are patrilineal: every child belongs to his or her father’s clan. When a woman gets married, however, her husband’s clan has to take over responsibility for her. For the rest of her life she is not considered to be loyal to either clan because her allegiance is split. Only divorced women can go back to their own clans.

In a stateless structure in which weapons and violence were the only means of power, women were marginalised, and the development of the traditional socio-culture denied women’s access to decision-making processes. But the lack of clan membership has helped women play a role in peace building. Women have become active in starting NGOs with a women’s rights agenda. Because they do not belong anywhere, they are not part of the political feuds and they can thus join forces for peace.

### *How does conflict impact gender relations?*

The civil war represents a milestone in the life of Somalis. Human and material losses have been great. The war has caused a huge exodus of people and the disintegration of institutions. Not surprisingly, women and children have borne the greatest brunt of the conflict, as has been the case in many other conflict areas. An important finding of research conducted by the Life and Peace Institute was that **the impact of these changes has not always been negative**. Disintegrating institutions have brought about a change in gender relations in Somali society. In their struggle for survival, women have started to discover their own capabilities.

Before the conflict, women’s lives were structured in accordance with traditional religious values but not strict Islamic laws. They lived in a flexible and open society, in which women were not required to be completely covered and in which they were allowed considerable freedom and power in the domestic sphere. However, in response to the vacuum created by the collapse of state institutions, sheikhs stepped in to ensure some form of rule and order. Those who took advantage of this opportunity also chose to import fundamental religious values. Now strict Islamic laws have been added to the people’s traditional belief systems. This change has made it even more difficult for women in Somalia to respond to the current crisis and to take on traditionally masculine roles.

To understand current developments it is necessary to look at traditional gender roles. Somalia is mainly a nomadic society, although there are some agricultural areas in the South. Already before the conflict, Somali women had a very strong economic role within the family. Their responsibilities in caring for livestock, preparing food and building and transporting their family's nomadic hut were appreciated and crucial to the survival of the family. Although they had no right to ownership of the family's livestock, wives had full usage rights over milk and ghee and unlimited access to meat. If a woman married, her security was ensured by her husband and his clan. The men had to provide for their wives and, although the money was not theirs, the women were free to use it.

The changing role of women is most visible in this economic sphere. Primarily due to the continuing conflict and the consequent lack of formal employment, more and more men have been preoccupied with fighting and/or chewing khat, a mild hallucinogenic green leaf. Out of necessity, many women have taken over a major role in supporting their families. Unlike men, women have not hesitated to become involved in economic activities that may be seen as degrading or unmanly. Women sell various goods on the street, including dollars (as there are no longer any banks operating in the economy) and khat. Businessmen are still in control at the wholesale level where most of the money is earned, but as more men forfeit their role as breadwinners, new opportunities and greater independence become available to women. In many ways, women have taken over the entire micro-economy. The butcher may still be a man, for example, but it is women who buy the animal, bring it to the market, and sell it.

How does this greater visibility relate to Islamic laws? Some women have learned that there are various possible interpretations of the Koran, and that it does not necessarily prohibit them from going out as long as they are covered and decent. Most rural women still believe they should not venture outside of the home, but when faced with a husband who decides to chew khat rather than provide for his family, they have no other choice.

Not surprisingly, the decreased economic role of men and subsequent increased responsibilities for women have caused domestic conflicts and an increase in divorce. Women are angry that they have been left to carry the men's economic burden and the men are resentful of the women's newly acquired power. The question of whether to allow women to own property is therefore a divisive issue. Many women believe that granting them ownership of resources will be better for society and family

welfare, because the men will otherwise 'chew up' all the family's money. However, some women still believe that, if women own resources, they will become arrogant and headstrong. They fear this will cause conflicts with husbands and the disintegration of families. As women become more economically responsible, men feel they can no longer control their wives and they fault the women for neglecting their families.

Women in Somalia have always held a significant level of decision-making power at the household level, because domestic affairs are considered to be less significant than community affairs. Men who interfere in domestic affairs are even seen as lowly and are despised. However, only male members of a clan are eligible to participate in community meetings in which decisions are made regarding the regulation of resources, conflict resolution and payment of compensation to settle disputes. The number of men in a clan determines its strength, and the power it will have in securing pasture areas and water. Elders have traditionally created mechanisms to ensure peaceful co-existence with other clans and to share resources. However, as many are now on the payroll of politicians, women are looking for ways to have an input into the decisions made by the council of elders. This influence has to be invisible, as women are still prohibited from taking part in decision making in the public sphere. Today women normally pay the compensation money granted to other clans, even though the men officially decide who to give it to and when. This represents a clear shift in gender responsibilities.

#### ***How can women contribute to the peace process?***

Women have begun to express their concerns through new women's organisations, and they have mobilised people for demonstrations against violence. They have also been active in composing songs and poems for peace, which have a great impact in the traditionally oral society of Somalia. Women representatives attended a peace conference without being formally invited, where they made moving speeches for peace. Despite these encouraging first steps, society's perceptions of women will have to change before they can fully participate in peace building, which is still considered to be the domain of men.

#### ***Lessons to be learned by the international community of development actors***

- Development workers are faced with many, very divergent, issues and organisations within a community. Peace building can never be isolated from other issues.

- It must never be taken for granted that someone is any particular 'type' of Muslim, as there are huge differences within regions.
- Development workers should try to work with an open mind. Lessons must be drawn from interaction with the communities. Action must be based on the experiences of the people themselves. Listen to what they have been able to learn and to how they want to solve their problems.
- An important role of international development organisations is to point out the external and gender dimensions of a struggle, which the people themselves may not be able to see.

- In Somalia, for example, it is important to make women understand that the disintegration of families is not due to their increased role outside the home, but due to the men's refusal to fulfill their own traditional responsibilities. Because the impulse for women to move into the public sphere is mere survival, they often do not understand that what they are doing represents a huge change in their lives. They have to become aware that their new role is a form of empowerment. Otherwise there is a great chance that they will move back into the domestic sphere as soon as their participation is no longer required.

## **Somalia: How to empower women?**

**Mirjam Dahlgren, DIAKONIA, Sweden**

### ***Education programme in Puntland, supported by DIAKONIA***

Since the civil war, the population of the Puntland region has more than tripled because of the continuous influx of displaced people, of which the majority are women and their children. For example, the estimated population of Bosasso has grown from 6 000 to more than 150 000, Galkayo from 6 000 to 70 000 and Garowe from 5 000 to 30 000. This has put a lot of strain on all social services and particularly on the education system. This region was among the less developed by the previous governments and has never had adequate schools for children or any adult education programmes.

The interim government in Puntland, established in 1998, did not have the human and economic resources to meet the growing needs of the population. Therefore, local authorities and community committees took on the responsibility, together with DIAKONIA (among a few other international NGOs), of enhancing and improving the education system, which is based on equity through the provision of a quality system that reduces gender disparities in education.

The programmes are developed by Somalis, who are representatives from civil society, governmental authorities and traditional leadership, together with DIAKONIA staff. The start up process involved everyone in the choice of activities and methods. Discussions continued until a consensus was reached. DIAKONIA received financial support from the EC and SIDA. The following examples demonstrate how common development aid

programmes can be used as tools for improving women's access to decision making in the society.

### ***Rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools***

A consensus was reached on which schools should be rehabilitated and where to reconstruct. Criteria for the choices were agreed upon, for example that the local societies contribute their own labour and local construction material. The two most important criteria were participation of the women in decision making, and mixed classes of both girls and boys in the school.

### ***Management course***

A 6-month basic training and a 6-month continuation training class were organised for women in English, computer skills, accounting, administration etc. The purpose was to get women out in the labour market in institutions, government and other offices, for the first time in modern Puntland history. Issues of concern were discussed in the classes: democracy, human rights, Somali history etc. The classes evoked strong resistance from the conservatives in the society, but the women prevailed in the end and are being employed with great success. The women gained self-confidence and are now much more active in their communities.

### ***Low-cost housing project***

There are many widows with children among the returned refugees in Puntland. Seven communities/towns were selected by consensus decision to receive assistance in the form of newly

constructed housing. The project financed construction material and technical support but the builder had to supply the labour and also had to plant four Nim-trees and build an extra latrine. A committee was established, which included equal representation by women, elders and the local government. The committee had to reach consensus in the criteria and selection of who should receive the assistance to build a house. This was the first time that women had access to decision making together with men in the society.

### ***Literacy campaign***

The women said: how can we discuss the interpretation of the prophet if we can't read? How can we ask to take part in the decision making in society if we can't read and write? The illiteracy rate

among Somali women today is 80-90%. A literacy campaign started in response to the women's request and has so far reached 5 000 women. The method used was participatory and included issues such as democracy, human rights, women's and family health issues, HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation, Somali history etc.

If you offer women the tools to improve their situation, they will use them. That's what I have experienced in the Somali work. When women received an education, they discovered that they could gain access to power through participation in decision making, and that they had the capacity to influence the development processes in their society. They also gained respect among men, even among the elders. Today there are women in the Puntland Parliament for the first time in history.

## **Development NGOs in conflict areas: Extending the humanitarian mandate**

**Bjørn Mide, Norwegian Church Aid, and  
Karin Döhne, Church Development Service Germany (EED)**

The close relationship between humanitarian and developmental concerns and violent conflicts has become gradually more evident for NGOs, which have traditionally had strictly humanitarian and developmental mandates. There appears to be a clear conceptual distinction between the humanitarian and the peace agenda, between working *in conflict* and working *on conflict* (as described by Mary B. Anderson in the 'Do No Harm' approach). Involvement in peace work can be seen as a logical consequence of being involved in humanitarian and development work, as anyone working in a conflict-ridden community will influence the conflict in one way or another. Development may in fact be impossible without peace. However, a project that factors in the dynamics of the conflict will have a different impact than one that systematically aims at influencing the conflict. What does this mean in operational terms and how do we as humanitarian/development agencies express this in the objectives and methodologies of our projects?

The Local Capacities for Peace Project approach (LCPP following the Do No Harm approach as described above) is used by EED. Local partners have started training in their own organisations, and have developed approaches with local LCPP consultants in Manipur/India and the Horn of Africa. In Manipur, a network of about 40 NGOs has come

together since 1998 to reflect on the interrelation of their development activities with the ongoing violent conflicts in the region. They are developing new options for their activities which do not feed into further conflict, but connect people across divides such as ethnic and religious identities. The gender dimension needs to be further explored, as women's and men's perceptions and experiences of the war differ. Women may therefore act as indirect peace builders by working on common women's issues which unite them across other divides. Through training of facilitators and trainers, the approach is being spread throughout the state. Similarly, a consultant in the Horn of Africa is cooperating with partner organisations, which are interested in mainstreaming the Do No Harm approach by offering workshops and trainings.

Norwegian Church Aid is one of those organisations that have chosen to go beyond working *in conflict*. Since the late 1980s, NCA has been involved in selected peace/dialogue/ reconciliation processes in Mali, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia-Eritrea, the Philippines, Sudan, Dominican Republic/ Haiti, and the Balkans. In 1999, NCA established a new Department of Policy and Human Rights to serve as the locus for NCA's increasing involvement in peace and human rights work. This decision represented an explicit and proactive step to expand NCA's

mandate beyond humanitarian and development assistance, to include peacemaking, advocacy and human rights/human security.

NCA has identified four prerequisites that place the organisation in a good position for effective involvement in supporting peace activities within conflictive societies: *A long history of providing humanitarian and/or development assistance (local knowledge and contacts) and a basis of mutual trust resulting from these projects:* Peace processes have to be owned by the affected and implicated people and communities. Local organisations are part and parcel of the conflict and they therefore need to be part of the solution. Bottom-up conflict transformation needs to involve local groups and institutions, and it seems that humanitarian and development agencies that work through local partners are the best placed to become involved. *The absence of any political agenda:* NCA staff has no vested interest in any particular political outcome of a conflict. *A religious base:* A religious base provides common ground and therefore makes it easier to build relationships with organisations based in other faiths. *The 'Norwegian Model':* The Norwegian government works in partnership with and supports NGOs, providing special funding for their peace-related efforts. Norwegian Church Aid's close relationship with the Norwegian government

and our own long-standing network have given us access to many levels of actors in conflict areas.

Another challenge in expanding NCA's mandate is to introduce gender concerns in post-conflict transitions. NCA has not yet sufficiently identified and pursued the role of women in modern wars. Women are usually depicted either as victims or as the peace-loving counterpoint to the war-waging men. In reality, women are active in many ways during conflicts. Wars often create opportunities for women to assume roles and functions usually closed to them.

Gender sensitivity is an added value and offers additional resources to every development activity. Women's contributions are often not used or remain invisible in post-conflict reconstruction and peace processes. Any peace process that ignores the needs and roles of women will not be effective, and will therefore be inherently unstable. Rather than marginalising women, humanitarian and development agencies have to integrate them in the peace-building process by emphasising: local knowledge, women's legal rights (to own and inherit property and to own and carry their own passports etc.), women's personal security, equal political participation and the reintegration of combatants (both men and women).

## **A glance at current policies and practices within the APRODEV agencies**

**Karin Ulmer, APRODEV**

The following findings are based on a preliminary inventory among the participants of the conference who are members of APRODEV agencies. Six agencies (departments) and one partner organisation have replied (BfdW, EED, FCA, HEKS/BfA, CA, NCA, CA's partner organisation in Congo). This information can by no means be considered to be a comprehensive overview, but it does provide glimpses into current policies and practices.

APRODEV agencies are active in most of the conflict regions worldwide. They engage in the fields of emergency aid, post-conflict assistance (rehabilitation, reconciliation, trauma-counselling), and peace building, and increasingly recognise the importance of conflict resolution and conflict prevention. Only a few of the agencies have an explicit peace building perspective in their

development work; however, the need for such policies and approaches is increasingly recognised.

The principles to which individual APRODEV agencies adhere in conflict situations are inclusiveness, community-based approaches, neutrality, a rights-based approach, collaboration across divides, agenda setting by local partners, and the code of conduct of IRC/NGOs in Disaster Relief. The most important project criterion applied in conflict situations is inclusiveness (more than one ethnic group or category).

Examples of advocacy activities carried out by the APRODEV agencies in conflict situations - to name just a few - are peace building and conflict resolution in Sudan; support to the European Coalition on Oil in Sudan; enabling rural poor in Asia to fight for their rights (resource distribution); increasing

political pressure on third parties (military occupation in the Middle East); focusing attention on neglected areas and conflicts; cooperation with human rights organisations (Angola, Colombia, Congo, Middle East and many other regions), working to end sexual violence against women; and promoting increased security in schools.

The results of the questionnaire suggest that the gender component in activities is limited to the support of women's organisations at the level of individual desks. None of the agencies has a coherent policy for including gender awareness on peace building, conflict resolution or emergency aid. On the other hand, special assistance to women and girls is becoming a major concern in emergency aid. Where gender-sensitive policies and programmes are implemented in country strategies or regional departments, it is often the initiative of individual staff members rather than a coherent institutional approach.

Examples of Good Practice carried out by the APRODEV agencies with regard to a gender proactive advocacy approach are the Bougainvillea Inter Church Women's Forum established to bring about peace talks; PLD's rights-based training for women in the Great Lakes region; support to the Women's Platform within a network in Manipur/North East India; cooperation with regional women's organisations involved in peace activities beyond ethnic divides in North East India; gender training in the capacity building process for the indigenous people's organisations in Bangladesh; workshops with women activists from the South in their own

domestic church constituencies (WCC of Churches in Solidarity with Women), and advocacy of women's rights, which include access to health and education, and participation in decision making within local partner organisations.

Recognised needs and recommendations forwarded by Conference participants in view of current policies and practices include:

- A clear analysis of the gender dimension of conflicts and their diverse effects on women is needed in order to promote the development of gender-aware policies in conflict situations.
- Peace work should be mainstreamed into all programmes and policies, with the proposal to establish advisory positions for peace work within the agencies.
- Development work has to become 're-politicised', and more awareness is needed on power relations between funding and implementing NGOs and the reality of agenda setting.
- Agencies should work as facilitators rather than as implementing actors; they should provide capacity building, increased funding and moral support to grassroots and local organisations involved in peace, reconciliation and human rights activities.
- Local NGO staff are all part of the conflict and no distinction between beneficiaries and development workers can be made. Local staff need training on how conflict affects women and men differently, and on what militarism, trauma and prolonged conflict do to the community as a whole and to themselves in particular.



## C. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF APRODEV AGENCIES

### Advocacy on Women's Contribution to Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

Bethan Cobley, International Alert, UK, with added commentary from conference participants

**The conventional wisdom is that men negotiate the peace and women build it.** However, it is now more and more widely accepted that both men and women must be fully included in all peace processes for peace to take root and be sustainable.

80% of today's civilian casualties are women and 80% of all refugees and internally displaced people are women and children. Women in unstable, disruptive conflict and post-conflict situations are at risk from multiple forms of violence and together with girls are deliberate targets, with belligerents using traditional gender relations to inform their strategies of war. Women are killed, wounded, tortured, raped, imprisoned, separated from their families, internally displaced or driven into exile.

The burden of responsibility, in conflict and post-conflict conditions, is highest on women in caring for survivors where development is already severely impeded and where families and communities have been fractured and destroyed. Women suffer economic dislocation, an intense sense of insecurity, the unravelling of traditional social and cultural structures of support and an increased risk of domestic violence, particularly in post-conflict situations.

However, women are not simply passive victims as we are often led to believe. As they experience the immediate consequences of war, women are generally the first to become involved in peace building activities, and they play a vital part in societies affected by conflict through the numerous roles they take on as community leaders, social organisers, farmers, traders and welfare workers, amongst others.

These roles give women a reservoir of knowledge about specific community survival strategies and needs. During times of conflict women are able to expand upon their community roles to provide critical services, and in so doing are often propelled into public spaces. Among their most powerful resources are the community networks that they have built within their traditional community roles. They

have access to grassroots networks, community elders, church leaders and even combatants and are thus able to bring these different sectors and factions together, creating coalitions for peace and discussions about conflict issues in public forums such as seminars, workshops, community meetings and advocacy campaigns. Women often become involved in alternative forms of political advocacy and/or peace building precisely because they do not have access to traditional or mainstream channels of action. Women often use new and innovative methods to work towards peace in their communities and, because these are often socially acceptable practices that have roots deep within the culture, women are able to successfully adapt them to present-day socio-cultural needs without being seen as a threat to local authorities.

In conflict and post-conflict areas, such as Bosnia, Cambodia, Eritrea and East Timor, it is women who are at the forefront of the peace process. Despite the overwhelming challenges, and often at great risk to themselves, women play a significant role in peace building and reconciliation at the grassroots and community levels. Their non-violent interventions encompass a wide range of activities. These include:

- pro-active peace building initiatives, e.g., building confidence within communities through cross community-level reconciliation programmes;
- participation in peace processes at local and national levels;
- involvement in reconstruction and development programmes, e.g., in demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration programmes, both at micro-levels (household, community, etc.) and national levels;
- involvement in leadership and lobbying activities promoting peace;
- coping strategies concentrating on day-to-day basic needs;
- raising awareness through organising demonstrations against government policy and practice. In many instances women are active and effective in anti-war movements. In Chechnya for example, women not only hid

their sons from the military but also went to the front to bring them home. In the Philippines women initiated peace zones in villages, forbidding both army and rebel units from fighting in their zone or abducting their children. In Israel groups like the 'four mothers' gained national recognition of their demands for an Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon.

Women can be extremely effective in mobilising other women and building consensus for co-operation and partnership in peace building and creating spaces for inter-community exchanges and partnerships for sustainable peace. At the community level, women are involved in psychological programmes of healing, reconciliation and therapy for victims and combatants. In the Middle East and elsewhere women have initiated peace education and tolerance projects for schools and community groups, engaging in cross-community trust and confidence-building programmes. In Northern Ireland, women developed joint community-based projects bringing women together around shared concerns over health and child care.

Often the main impulse for these women is the well-being of their children and the struggle for their families' survival. It therefore becomes clear that our definition of 'advocacy strategies,' 'coping mechanisms' and 'peace building' needs to be redeveloped as we evolve a more sophisticated understanding of their motivations and values. As the private and public spheres merge, women's consciousness and involvement in the political domain increases. The Madres de Plaza Mayo in Argentina demonstrated that apolitical strategies such as searching for 'missing' sons can be not only devastatingly effective in their challenge to the activity of the state, but also politically empowering for the women. However, this activism is not always perceived as peacemaking per se. Women often perceive this activism as an extension of their domestic responsibilities. This illustrates the stretched roles that women play, for indeed these grassroots non-violent activities are often the catalysts that motivate women to mobilise and enter the wider struggle for peace.

There are several reasons for the potential success of interventions by women.

- A wider social base is sought for their mandate, because women lack the political platform or power base. Grassroots support then gives them the strength and credibility they need to pursue their agenda.
- Women's organisations draw on international support to voice their concerns and strengthen their legitimacy in the eyes of their own national elite.

- Through valuing principles of inclusion, equality and social justice, these organisations engage wide sectors of society.
- Issues of common concern and shared vision form the basis to concentrate on similarities (e.g. child care problems) rather than on differences. These bring communities together, foster reconciliation and increase cooperation across communities.

Despite the enormous steps that women have taken, most approaches to conflict resolution and peace building have either ignored, marginalised or failed to address the unique needs of women in conflict situations. Women's vital experiences and knowledge of peace building and reconstruction have often been bypassed. Women consistently remain a minority of participants in peace-building projects, negotiations and policies. Burundian women were at first largely excluded from the Arusha peace process; similarly, the Dayton Peace Accords lacked sufficient consideration of women's perspectives and none of the offices established included any gender-based action plans at the beginning of the mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina. A gendered analysis of peace-building strategies, which could potentially strengthen peace-building efforts, is rarely given any priority or attention. This is despite the many United Nations and European Union resolutions, which for more than a decade have criticised such marginalisation and called for women's needs to be given more serious attention in all policies relating to conflict and peace.

#### *Advocacy strategies*

In working towards peace and security, it is often important to strengthen advocacy in developing countries, which are most often affected by violent conflict. Because power resides with national governments and locally based representatives of international organisations, it is essential to:

- empower people to speak for themselves
- identify key issues which arise from a local context
- and thus to increase the potential to target national and international bodies simultaneously.

The advocacy aim of International Alert is to influence decision makers to design, adopt and change policies and practices, and to guarantee implementation and monitoring of these policies and practices. According to Edwards (1993), advocacy aims "...to alter the ways in which power, resources, and ideas are created, consumed and distributed at a global level, so that disadvantaged people and organisations have a more realistic chance of controlling their own development."

Our involvement can be direct, involving direct contact with targets (with or without a public profile), or indirect, involving the provision to our counterparts of funding, advice, training, services, information and access to networks. The key to effective advocacy is to develop focused messages to engage the public and more specific target audiences at their existing level of understanding, and to move them along a continuum from awareness to understanding to commitment to taking action. **For effective advocacy, people need to understand who their audience is, what influence a certain group has, and how to make best use of this influence.**

The last few years have been an historic period for women's movements seeking concrete action by the international community in addressing the injustices women face during conflict. Putting the issue of women, peace and security squarely onto the international agenda has required a comprehensive approach and the use of different advocacy strategies and many initiatives at local, regional and international levels.

### ***International legislation and gender mainstreaming***

*'Equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflict are essential for the maintenance of peace and security.'*(Beijing Platform for Action 1995 UN). With 189 state signatories, the *1995 Beijing Platform for Action* (BPFA) was the first internationally-endorsed document to highlight the plight of women in situations of armed conflict and offer recommendations for action to ensure their protection and participation in all decision-making processes. It specifically upholds and builds upon a variety of international instruments, such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* adopted by the UN General Assembly and Economic and Social Council. However, the 2000 Beijing+5 review of the BPFA revealed that few states have acted to implement the obligations they undertook.

In October 2000 the United Nations adopted the historic *Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*. For the first time the United Nations Security Council called for the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes; gender perspectives of women in decision-making and peace processes; gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping; the protection of women; and gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems and programmatic implementation mechanisms. Needless to say, if implemented these measures

would place women firmly and equally at the centre of peace and security matters. (For more information on the resolution and its history, see Appendix I.)

### ***Bridging the gap***

More needs to be done to bridge the gap between policy and practice, rhetoric and reality. For policy developments and peace building efforts to be sustainable and effective, adequate and sustained funding must be provided for these initiatives. We need to urge the international community to consider this in the development of their policies and budgets and to ensure that women's non-violent interventions are highlighted, recognised and supported. The debate has to be framed in terms of women's participation being a positive solution - and not in terms of a feminist or human rights discourse. This may be difficult for some organisations, but for International Alert it has been essential when challenging constituents such as the military and national governments.

Public campaigns and advocacy programmes need to:

- show policy makers the value of learning from women's peace-building experiences and giving them a more active role;
- press governments and the international community to recognise the needs of women and to ensure they are given the support and resources they need to build peace;
- build up pressure to relate what happens at the local level to international policy formation;
- ensure that international donors spend their budgets more effectively in ways that will benefit the most people and lead to sustainable peace;
- monitor the UN, governments and other parties so that women's full participation and gender mainstreaming in the mandates of peace missions are ensured;
- include gender-equality perspectives in all reports to governmental bodies on peace building, peacekeeping and reconstruction;
- support the creation of alternative/parallel peace teams that include not just those who caused the conflict but those who held society together during the conflict.

### ***Continuing challenges at the grassroots level***

Despite some positive progress, women's voices are still largely ignored in the mainstream policy debate. Many organisations that work on women and peace building do not have a consciously planned advocacy strategy. Many are grassroots, local organisations dealing with day-to-day survival,

coping with conflict situations, and working with particular communities. The work done at the grassroots level is thus not fully recognised or appreciated by major institutions and policy makers. It is a multifaceted challenge. On the one hand, in conflict zones, women peacemakers are often working in an environment which is hostile to their efforts. They are ignored and sidelined. The pressure from the public and private family domain for them to stay 'at home' is too strong. They receive little or no support or resources from the international community. As a result their efforts remain invisible, and with no clear or documented evidence, it is difficult to prove their positive contributions.

On the other hand, women themselves have not always taken up the challenge to prove themselves effectively. While there is much talk of women from conflicting sides uniting around issues of mutual survival and rights and overcoming the distrust based on identity or religious and ethnic differences, in reality the lack of trust often hampers their efforts. Some Conference participants pointed out that these questions of diversity among women and their different positions in peace building or conflict resolution are not mentioned in the Women Building Peace Campaign. Participants from Kenya and Liberia reported how difficult it is to get women at the local and grassroots level engaged in any advocacy activities. Initially, they are willing to participate, but often they are so absorbed by their reproductive and productive tasks that they

eventually stop participating. In some instances women lack the necessary skills to engage effectively in peace processes. Education is still one of the major obstacles to raising awareness in many local communities. Most of the women have never even heard of the UNSC, or national policies in their favour. Elsewhere, they have concentrated too much on local initiatives and thus been left out of the national and official peace plans. In many instances women who have been active in times of crises have stepped aside when peace returns.

A role for APRODEV is to provide a link by making national and international policies understood by local communities and by making the voices of women at the grassroots level heard in national and international fora. While donor agencies and international NGOs often cannot or do not reach organisations at the grassroots level because they mainly are located in capital cities, APRODEV agencies are well placed to reach grassroots level organisations or people due to the local church structures which are present in most of the local communities. The best way to reach women at the grassroots level is through women's organisations. These women are committed to getting involved and they can do a great job. However, more capacity building and confidence building measures are needed. There is also work to be done in making women aware of the potential benefits of participation, and to ease their workload or adapt meetings to their time schedules.

## **Challenges to agencies working for development and humanitarian aid**

**Edda Kirleis, Church Development Service Germany, (EED), and Michelle Yonetani, Christian Aid (CA)  
with added commentary from the workshop participants**

Development agencies are faced with situations in which their activities or the activities of their partner organisations interact with violent conflict. Constant denial of access to basic resources and to fundamental individual and collective human rights can lead to situations in which the poor and marginalised experience structural and physical violence as part of their everyday lives. For many women worldwide, this has been a reality for a long time, as they have been experiencing violence both in so-called 'times of peace' and 'times of war', especially in the domestic sphere. The APRODEV agencies have identified unjust power relations based on gender as part of their central concern for justice.

*The Principles and Policy Guidelines of the*

*Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development, EZE, state that "there is no peace without justice and no justice without peace" (EZE 1997:8). This contribution to the GOOD Conference explores the challenges of putting the commitment for gender justice and peace into practice - both in the programmes of development agencies and in the institutions themselves.*

### **1. Programmatic challenges**

#### ***Interrelatedness of conflict and gender for development and humanitarian aid***

Conflict, like gender, is an important crosscutting issue for the work of APRODEV organisations and

many of their partners. As such, organisations may be faced with similar challenges when addressing both gender and conflict in their development/emergency aid work and internal or institutional issues. While the difficulty of working on crosscutting issues is well recognised by practitioners, this inter-relatedness presents an opportunity for the (re-)introduction of gender training linked to conflict issues and experiences. Training of staff is needed to enable development workers to do the gender-sensitive analysis necessary to make informed choices and to understand the positive or negative impact of their work in conflict situations. This issue has not received sufficient attention.

The gender dimensions of emergency aid are often overlooked by partner organisations and during the implementation of aid programmes. Training and capacity building among partners and staff is required. Challenging the family and household as just distribution channels is a key issue here, among many others.

Staffing for emergency projects, be they run by local partners or agencies themselves, is a gender issue. In emergency work, a macho image has been reflected in job descriptions for aid workers describing them as warriors for a good cause. Because of the danger and long working hours, there is often a clear preference for men. However, sending 'tough warriors' as emergency workers into conflict situations reinforces the image of the masculine hero and warrior as being the 'norm' and it has an impact on the way our organisations are perceived abroad. Understanding the interrelatedness of militarism, patriarchy and gender will enable development workers to challenge such images.

There is a broad range of issues around religion and working with churches in violent conflict situations that organisations have to struggle with. Partners may expect from us an understanding of religion and culture in conflict and we need to consider what our added value or special role may be, coming from organisations with church affiliations.

To some extent, gender and conflict training should be combined. 'Do No Harm' approaches, which are favoured by some APRODEV agencies as the theoretical frame of reference, need to be linked closely with gender analysis, as the latter is not automatically built in.

### ***Reflecting on choices of partners***

There is a need for greater reflection in our choice of partners, programmes, allies and interventions in order to ensure that we 'Do No Harm'. For example,

one organisation's partners were all representative of the dominant ethnic group in a country, which became problematic when conflict broke out. It has taken the organisation years to diversify the group of partners. This is also an issue for APRODEV agencies in their relationships with church or 'natural' partners. Agencies with long-term church partnerships abroad might in some cases be supporting active contributors to violent conflict. Supporting only the churches can be counterproductive in areas of conflict with religious dimensions. Working only through church channels may limit the diversity of opinions and approaches we are working with and our ability to support alternative constructions of masculinity and femininity.

### ***Changing patterns of cooperation***

In war areas, our patterns of development work, i.e. funding of independent partner organisations who responsibly implement programmes, may not function any more. In conflict situations the structure of partner institutions may break down, and in some regions this has meant that the Northern agency has had to withdraw. The failure of our current approach can lead us into:

a) *Giving up partnerships and returning to direct intervention.* In some cases a 'neo-colonial attitude' has been observed in which we become the 'good white peace makers', falling into the trap of not searching for local capacities, but overestimating our role as outsiders to 'help bring peace'. Local innovative initiatives of women's or men's groups might easily be sidelined or discouraged.

b) *Giving up development work in favour of emergency aid only.* Rather than utilising the opportunities to integrate them, especially in the areas of disaster prevention and rehabilitation, we would increase the gap between development activities and emergency aid, and in the worst scenario define certain countries as 'emergency' countries. Both strategies deny local potentials and initiatives for long-term peace building; but they are tempting options when increasing quality requirements get in the way of exploring local capacities.

### ***Difficult choices***

To manage emergency aid in a violent conflict situation, difficult choices have to be made about the ethical messages, which are being implicitly sent out (see Mary Anderson: Do No Harm). To what extent do we accept militarised emergency practices in our own activities? Do we allow the use of arms to protect emergency aid measures? And what

message do we send out when talking peace but using the same techniques as the warriors?

### *New areas of project cooperation*

War is a highly gendered activity. Sexual violence has often been a taboo subject in organisations' dialogue with partners; however, in conflict situations this subject can now be broached through the recognition of rape as a war crime. This also opens up a space for raising the linked problem of HIV/AIDS. In working with trauma victims, there has been a tendency to relate to women only. Where this has not been raised as an issue for men as well as women, Northern NGOs reveal a failure to address broader and changing constructions of gender.

Acknowledging the impact of violent conflict on our project activities may thus open up new areas of support:

- Sexual violence, issues of construction of masculinity and femininity, sexuality and power, which are often taboo in our societies and those of our partners, come to the foreground.
- Psychological support due to traumatic disorders need to be taken into account for both men and women.
- Peace and mediation activities, diplomacy at the grass-roots level, support of local capacities for peace should include exploiting men's groups opposing violence, women's peace initiatives, etc.

These new areas of support might require review and adjustment of our requirements in terms of reporting. Many initiatives might be created spontaneously during war-time by people who do not have a professional NGO background. They may require capacity-building training, but also flexible funding and reporting options. We could suffocate such initiatives with our guidelines and requirements.

### *Possibilities for new gender roles*

Violent conflict may affect gender roles profoundly and offer new possibilities for women and men to take on roles that are - in peace times - ascribed to the other gender. Women might take over men's roles as fighters or as decision-makers in their homes while men are away waging war. Men are not only the perpetrators of violence and atrocities, they are also the poor peasants whose wives and daughters are raped, whose sons are killed, who get blown up by landmines, who desert from wars and who have to take over a caring role for their families.

There is a general tendency to reduce men and women to homogeneous and antagonistic categories

and make blanket assumptions about their behaviour, feelings, interests etc. Masculinity in itself is not necessarily violent; the problem is the violent and oppressive model of masculinity defined by the patriarchal system. This model of masculine behaviour transcends the biological sex and can even be adopted by women who also become perpetrators of violence.

Although these potential spaces for change may not lead to permanent transformation in gender constructions and inequalities, they can provide opportunities for empowerment and challenge oppressive and harmful gender roles and they may provide an entry point for organisations working for gender justice.

### *No peace without justice, no justice without peace*

Fighting for the rights of the oppressed and marginalised is the foremost mission of the APRODEV agencies. There is a danger of losing this focus in order to ensure peace, as the process of trying to restore order from the chaos that conflict creates may lead to the reintroduction of gender and other dichotomies. If we work for social transformation and justice, our work is never neutral as it destroys the structures and dichotomies on which societies rest.

One way to avoid the reintroduction of dichotomies is through the use of a gender rhetoric that is inclusive, rather than exclusive, and that makes sense to the organisation we are working with. Introducing a social exclusion framework as a research methodology could be helpful here. Social exclusion analysis creates a model of how social exclusion happens. The analysis is worked through based on personal experiences of one type of social exclusion. Once a particular personal experience of discrimination is made conscious and understood more deeply, other forms of discrimination, such as gender, can become more clearly understood.

Personal narratives provide a strong entry-point (compared to the limited impact of documents), as was illustrated by the research presented by Dubravka Zarkov on male rape in Former Yugoslavia. Another possible strategy might be to design training with a strong focus on gender and masculinities.

### *National and international dimensions*

Our governments are increasingly using their armies to intervene in violent conflicts abroad, as a way to serve their own set of interests. They often seek cooperation with aid institutions, especially

regarding the local situation. As governments push for greater involvement in peace-keeping activities, NGOs can become instruments of government interests.

The interface between governments and NGOs thus presents a challenge for our advocacy work. We must ask what our role is, what we are willing and able to publicly challenge, and how to avoid the co-option of our thinking and the interests we represent. The space for NGOs to challenge government policy may be very small. With the increasing need and competition for funds, there is a risk of decreasing the number of critical voices in comparison to the power and influence of governments.

World politics deliberately use war as a means to reach political aims. This clearly indicates the need for peace campaigning and awareness raising in our own countries. From a development and gender perspective, we need to show the impacts and gender dimension of 'peace keeping' forces/army interventions, such as an increase in the sex trade, militarisation of societies, etc. Advocacy for peace becomes important vis-a-vis the political decision makers.

## **2. Institutional challenges**

Programme challenges and changes have direct links with institutional issues, as already indicated above. Institutional changes and programme changes may feed into each other in positive or negative ways. A few of these are considered below.

### ***Gender justice in the institutions***

Staff training needs regarding the understanding of gender and conflict as two crosscutting issues have already been pointed out above. Both these issues cannot be limited purely to the situations in the partner countries. Gender issues also exist in our own societies and gender injustice is found in the agencies' structures and procedures. While sexuality, especially in the form of sexual violence, is an issue in our programme work, we cannot deny that sexuality is also an issue in our institutions; that constructions of masculinities and femininities do matter for our institutions as well. Many of our partner organisations have raised this fact and challenged us to work also for justice in our own institutions and societies.

For example, a gendered hierarchy can often be observed in international organisations or governments, where high-status policy and diplomacy work is effectively closed to women. Women in conflict work have often focused on the

areas of mediation and resolution, and this is where their expertise has tended to develop.

### ***Gender analysis as a space for institutional learning***

Reflection about constructions of femininity and masculinity in violent conflict situations helps to improve the appropriateness of our interventions in local situations, but it also allows for reflection on roles and identities relating to gender constructions in our own institutions. These opportunities can be taken up to facilitate institutional learning as well as personal learning, and to improve team building skills, job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation.

### ***The ideal staff - the male soldier***

Increasing pressure is being put on individual staff members to produce output. Funds are short and responsibilities are increasing. The workload is so high that many agencies would like their staff to be willing to take on a 24-hour-per day job, go on field trips, do overtime, etc. The demands made of the staff resemble more and more those made of a 'traditional' man, who has a housewife at home to take care of all his family and domestic needs and duties, or of a soldier, who must always be ready and available. Combining these requirements with social and family commitments becomes extremely difficult and it is not considered to be a responsibility of the employer, but of the individual.

The output orientation also disregards the reality that for effective management, building relationships and communication with an organisation is just as important as achieving goals. Opportunities for informal exchanges are being denied; hierarchies are favoured at the cost of consensus building.

### ***Militarised language and working style***

Many agencies are increasingly adopting militarised language and styles of working: strategic planning, task forces, targeting, and goal orientation are just a few examples. Systems are being streamlined and formalised. This includes favouring a more linear type of thinking, which is goal oriented, short term and focused on definable targets. We expect our partners to speak the same language, but partner organisations or initiatives created in situations of violent conflict may deliberately reject such a language or approach. They may not be able to fit their programmes into such a framework and they may be lost as partners for our agencies, in spite of their peace building potential. Peace building means

working in long-term processes and perspectives, which may not be output oriented in terms of measurable targeting.

In addition, some organisations are also employing staff with military backgrounds. It is difficult to generalise about the attitudes and approaches these new employees bring to their work, but we need to consider the implications of this trend and whether or when it is appropriate for our organisations.

Related issues may arise from having to work in co-operation with the military, which may be necessary for the protection or distribution of aid. For example, engaging in open dialogue with military personnel is difficult due to the military's strict hierarchy that restricts the expression of opinions without the permission of higher-ranking staff.

### ***Commitment to justice and peace in the age of reorganisation and quality management***

Reorganisation and quality management seem to be key issues in our agencies today. However, peace processes require trust, long-term staff-to-partner relationships and in-depth regional knowledge. Increasing pressure on Northern NGOs to be more accountable to the public and a growing emphasis on Quality Management may challenge these long-term, non-linear processes. Re-structuring, staff turnover and the increasing use of time-bound contracts for staff may have a disruptive impact on key relationships between staff, partners and communities.

How can we respond to local capacities for peace, to the processes of peace building that do not yield quick measurable results, but require long-term patient accompaniment? Such processes require:

- systems that allow us to measure processes and not just outputs;
- staff with extensive knowledge of the respective regions, which requires that they work with one region for a longer period of time and that they gain the trust of the (local) actors involved;

- willingness of staff and quality management systems to work with creative, not always entirely institutionalised, initiatives within an overall process, which allows for drawbacks and failures without giving up too early.

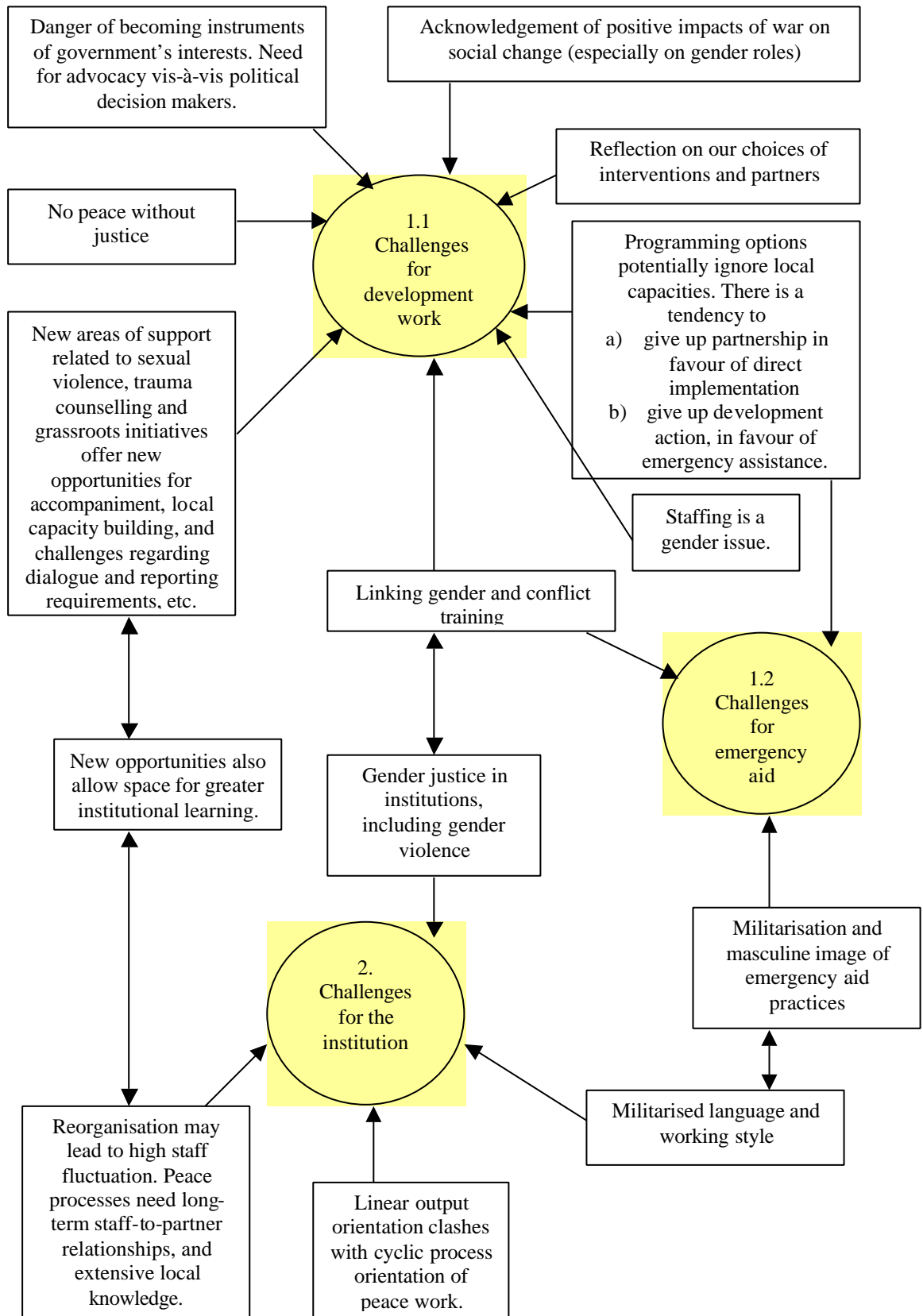
### **3. Conclusion**

Violent conflict challenges the programmatic and institutional practices of agencies. To provide assistance in conflict situations while still maintaining their long-term commitment to peace and justice, agencies have to engage in a process of policy development, taking programming options as well as institutional options into account. As a starting point for this process, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Conflict situations should not be analysed in a simplistic way that creates dichotomies. Using traditional gender rhetoric may produce such a dichotomy.
- Analysis and activities on gender-related power relations need to include men-men, women-women, women-men, and men-women relationships.
- The understanding of power relations should not be limited to gender only. Other cross-cutting categories affecting power relations should also be taken into account.
- Organisational structures, procedures and norms should allow for non-linear, long-term processes of social change and peace building, and the valuing of those processes.
- In our policy development, programmes and staff training, we need to understand and address the construction of masculinities and femininities.
- Organisations' staffing policies should encourage multiple models of professionalism, and not just models that promote or expect the total and permanent availability of staff to work for the organisation.
- Inclusive communication should be promoted across organisational hierarchies.



CHALLENGES RELATED TO GENDER AND VIOLENT CONFLICT



## D. CONCLUSIONS

### Synthesis of Conference

Presented by Edda Kirleis, EED

Gender relations are socially and culturally constructed. There are many femininities and many masculinities, not necessarily linked to the female or male person. Constructions of certain masculinities can be used to define a powerful group and society. During the war in former Yugoslavia, references to the "rape of Bosnia" defined all of Bosnia in feminine terms. This presents the whole nation of Serbia as the aggressor and perpetrator. Thus, gender as a category relates not only to men and women, but to power relations in general. Other femininities and masculinities are marginalised in the process of producing power relations. During conflict situations this marginalisation is exacerbated to an extent where there is hardly any space for other than the dominant masculinity. In former Yugoslavia, for example, men who refused to join the army had no space in society anymore and had to flee the country.

In conflict situations many men are forced (and in some cases fail) to live up to expectations set by dominant norms of masculinity which are held by women and men in society. This situation may lead to an increase of violence: many men join the armed forces as a way to adhere to the dominant forms of masculinities, and we can observe a brutalisation of relationships in communities, both among men and between men and women (increased domestic violence, rape of women and of men, trafficking and prostitution, child abuse etc).

**Militarised masculinity becomes the dominant option for men. Unless alternative options are being created by and for men, violence will be perpetuated. A task for development actors promoting peace is to recognise and strengthen spaces for alternative masculinities, which are not patriarchal and oppressive.**

As we have said, many femininities also exist. The dominant femininity is produced within the dominant power relations. In most societies the dominant femininity entails motherhood and marriage. Dominant notions of femininity may be used ideologically to stereotype, e.g. 'the mother of the nation', the rape victim, the rape refugee, reinforcing the dominant masculinity and thus justifying dominance. However, women's realities in conflict situations are far from these stereotypes.

**The gap between the dominant notions and women's lives can be an entry point for action towards social change and justice.**

In Colombia, women have taken the initiative in peace activities with the deliberate aim of changing dominant norms of femininity and masculinity. To organise their survival, Somali women took up activities, spaces and responsibilities which were originally ascribed to men. However, the Somali women themselves do not perceive this as a process of empowerment; they continue to adhere to the dominant notions of masculinity and femininity. These examples lead us to the conclusion that **sustainable change is only possible if we address different levels: the practice of people's lives and the norms and ideologies that produce their gender relations.**

#### *Conclusions*

1. Development activities, especially those of church-related institutions, need to take both social and normative aspects of society into account.
2. Working on gender implies working with both men and women and on power relations. While continuing to work with women, there needs to be an extra effort in exploring possibilities to work with men on gender relations, especially in conflict situations.
3. Gender relations are contextual. Therefore, any solutions to conflict have to be locally generated and based, and they must allow space for a diversity of voices.
4. In our agencies, we also experience a strong adherence to dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity, resulting in unequal power relations (systems of control and hierarchies, control over information, style of leadership, etc). In order to facilitate processes and activities as described above, we need to change our organisational culture, procedures and structures to allow for a diversity of masculinities and femininities.
5. Agencies have to rethink their focus on short-term, linear target-orientation, which may not allow

for complex long-term processes of peace building through social change.

6. Dealing with issues of men and masculinities is a new focus area in our work, which offers

opportunities for more suitable and comprehensive approaches towards gender justice and conflict resolution. This presents new challenges for our policy development, programme activities, and staff qualifications.

## **Ways forward for APRODEV agencies and development - a panel discussion**

### **Feed back from Conference participants and resource persons**

#### ***Feed back from participants***

- To overcome war and crisis situations, we must allow new symbols and opinions to challenge the dominant logic and ideology of armed conflict, which is still valued and legitimised. Opportunities for new transformative ideas and symbols have to be created at the local level.
- Agency staff should use case studies and narratives and determine what kinds of masculinity and femininity they reflect as one way to take the lessons learned at this Conference back to the agency at a practical level. Case studies of best (and worst) practice should be disseminated throughout the organisation. Do programmes target only male beneficiaries in providing education, training, new privileges or empowerment?
- The concept of various masculinities and femininities is useful as a new entry point for discussion: to recognise *that* both men's and women's options are reduced, *and how* to perhaps increase them. Conflict can be used as an entry point to stimulate understanding of power imbalances, including gender and race. This can be seen as an opportunity to raise the interest of men in gender issues. The position of conscientious objectors can also be an entry point for discussing the concept of differing masculinities.
- Allowing space for different masculinities is a totally new concept: it demands that aid workers open their eyes to a new perspective and look from a different angle at victims of conflict, i.e. those who don't accept the war but have no space to express their opinions and views. Space must be created for them! Agencies and organisations have to facilitate space for men to talk about alternative masculinities. Issues and

definitions have to be identified in our own organisation and at partner level.

- We must build awareness throughout the organisation of the gendered and militaristic slant of language used to describe targets, goals, conflicts etc. How is communication, for example within our agencies, used to establish power, to harden or soften the hierarchy? Is 'gender' the most useful word to use, or has it been co-opted by the women's movement? Others caution against victimising masculinity or men by presenting 'heroes' as 'victims'. Overall, it is very important to have continuity and a critical awareness in the choice and use of language. At the institutional level, attendees of this conference can work together with the communication and media sections to synthesise the use of language.
- To what extent is the gender perspective really taken seriously in the projects the organisations are supporting? As some organisations do not implement projects directly, they depend on the reports and evaluations they receive. Do gender policies really work at the practical level? For example, even though there is a strong legal framework in Sweden, attitudes within society need ongoing work and change. The process of change has to be seen as a continuum, which needs ongoing attention.
- The first step is to reflect and start to work within one's own agency. How much of a profile does the organisation want to have as a humanitarian/emergency agency in relation to its role as a long-term development agency with a participatory, gender-sensitive approach? There is money available from donors for emergencies, but what is the price that has to be paid for it? The documents required by some national governments for development projects include questions about gender, but often this is not the case for humanitarian money.

### *Feed back from resource persons*

#### *Stefan Dudink*

The phenomenon of gender is very complex, and this is reconfirmed by the discussions among practitioners at this conference. While armed conflicts tend to simplify matters of gender, it is vital that we academics and NGOs look beyond simple dichotomies to the complexities that will always remain on the ground.

Gender is complex because it is constructed differently in different contexts, e.g. in armed conflict. But this also presents an opportunity: the current focus on conflict in aid organisations is a tremendous opportunity to introduce the complexity of gender, which is itself central to armed conflict. This can be done by creating alliances with people working on ethnicity, race and poverty since gender is constructed through all these other categories.

Gender is also connected to other forms of differences and inequalities. Gender is defined not just through masculinity and femininity, but also through nationality, religion, ethnicity, etc. or through issues of age or wealth, in the definition of what a true man is.

Practitioners are encouraged to ask academics, not for programmatic guidelines, but for case studies. The academics can apply the concepts to case studies, which can be used very convincingly by practitioners to illustrate best practice.

Since conflict seems to be part of our human reality, we should try to convince people of the importance

of gender and masculinity, rather than to fear or avoid conflict as such.

#### *Dubravka Zarkov*

'It is impossible to be academic without being arrogant.' Academics are ignorant. Writing and theorising is always detached in certain ways, because we theorise over topics from behind our tables in a very abstract manner, without being able to review or check the value of our work in the field. This conference gives academics the opportunity to be exposed to people who work within conflict situations. And it has made it clear that the production of knowledge occurs in a valuable way on very different levels. This gives us the possibility to check and enrich the theoretical knowledge we are working on. The combination of practical knowledge from the field with theoretical knowledge might lead to the birth of new insights which could enrich the work at many levels.

#### *Chris Dolan*

The point of participation and using people's own experiences as the only valid entry point for work in the field has been confirmed by this conference and will be taken back to the organisations. Conflict as a defining mechanism for masculinity and femininity has also been shown to be a very useful entry point for discussing the complexities and impact of gender.

Academics should illustrate their theoretical knowledge with case studies to translate it into tangible and recognisable knowledge and information for people working on a more practical level.

## E. APPENDIX I

### The Women Building Peace Campaign

In 1999 International Alert, together with over 100 other NGO partners, launched the global campaign Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table. It aims to promote and highlight the importance of women's role in peace building, development and security issues, to highlight and celebrate women's achievements in peace making and to encourage the international community to adhere to their commitments regarding the advancement of women.

The campaign works with the international community to promote gender mainstreaming in the UN, EU and other bodies involved in conflict management, peace building and reconstruction, and to provide a platform for women from the global South to present their views and make them accessible to international and regional bodies.

It is based on five key themes:

- *Include women in peace negotiations as decision makers:* Women bring a different and unique perspective to the negotiating table which would be beneficial to draw upon when negotiations have reached an impasse.
- *Put women at the heart of reconstruction and reconciliation:* Recognise the valuable contributions that women have made and are making to post-conflict reconstruction processes and work with them to rebuild society based on inclusiveness and gender equality.
- *Strengthen the protection and representation of refugee and displaced women:* Look at what international humanitarian agencies are doing and can do to ensure protection in order that women have a say in, for example, refugee camp organisation and structure to limit the incidence of rape, etc. : Support the work of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children and others.
- *End impunity for crimes committed against women and ensure redress:* Focus on the role of the International Criminal Court; and the status of signatories and ratifications; and on the role of the USA in weakening the ICC. Identify the successes and remaining challenges related to the landmark Tokyo tribunals.
- *Give women and women's organisations the support and resources they need to build peace.* One aspect is capacity building of women's

organisations locally to empower them to influence the budgets of national governments. Another is pressuring the UN system to allocate enough resources to women's organisations engaged in conflict prevention through UN agencies. Allocating resources would be recognising women's roles in and contributions to peace building and would therefore be a step towards reducing gender inequality.

The first phase of the campaign has three main aims:

**Raising Awareness:** To capture the growing awareness and to generate a groundswell of popular concern around issues of women and peace building, a global petition was initiated addressed to the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan. 100,000 signatures were collected from over 140 countries world-wide. The petition complements, strengthens and enriches the other aspects of the campaign by demonstrating the global awareness of and concern for these issues. It justifies and legitimises the claim that the inclusion of women in peace building is of fundamental importance to women world-wide and that acting on and publicising these issues is both democratic and timely. It has enhanced and strengthened the efforts of those within the UN Security Council who have pushed for action on the inclusion of women in peace processes, and it provides a solid basis from which further lobbying and advocacy work can take place.

On International Women's Day 2001, three women and three women's organisations were awarded a prize for their outstanding work in peace building at local, national and international levels. The Millennium Peace Prize celebrates the achievements and courage of women in conflict zones around the world. The prize highlights the need to recognise internationally women's contributions to peace making and peace building at the UN and elsewhere within the international community, and it puts the issue on the public agenda.

**Affecting Policy,** which focuses on:

- policy proposals
- coalition-building
- policy dialogue with decision-makers
- bearing witness

- follow-up on implementation and policy dialogue
- UNSC Resolution #1325 and NGO Working Group on Women, International Peace and Security
- Motion for a European Parliament Resolution on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution (2000/2025(INI)).

#### **Building partnerships,**

- which develops focal points around the world
- and helps us to promote accountability and compliance, document and disseminate best practice, link women to decision makers and researchers, bridge global policy and grassroots activism.

#### ***Coalitions and networks***

Networking is an important component of the work of NGOs and women's organisations. It is about building strategic linkages with other people and organisations that are working in the same or similar areas. Networking is based on two essential concepts: trust/understanding and mutual benefit.

In any network there needs to be a basic amount of trust. It must be assumed that everybody is honest and shares the same goals (to a certain extent), and that everybody will support each other so that the network does not only work one-way. Mutual benefit in networks is created through exchanging information, building coalitions, developing common strategies, widening the network and linking various groups with one another.

Coalitions and networks are stronger than individuals or individual organisations - the bigger and the more diverse the network, the stronger the message. If a network of very different people and organisations (for example from all regions of the world) puts forward a list of joint recommendations, this can be much more powerful than if one European organisation makes the same recommendations.

In many environments, networking has proved to be a very powerful and important tool for furthering organisations' goals and effectiveness.

The Women Building Peace Campaign believes that the power of a collective voice, expressing a common concern that is informed from experience on the ground, is a powerful and empowering tool for effecting change. To maximise this potential it is vital that links are made between organisations and individuals working for peace, that common issues are explored and lessons shared, to amplify and strengthen these diverse voices.

We have found that the following elements are essential for a strong and effective advocacy alliance:

- a coherent strategy and adequate resources
- consensus on objectives and message
- accountability to people and organisations represented
- use of specific competencies
- clear division of responsibilities and roles
- good leadership : agile decision-making structures
- broad composition.

#### Advantages of networks/coalitions

- greater impact
- diminished risk
- efficient use of different skills and resources
- avoidance of duplication

#### Disadvantages:

- may be cumbersome: delaying decisions and actions
- requires compromise: e.g., watering down of objective or message
- may distance grassroots members from their base

#### ***Second phase***

The next phase of the campaign will be the Peace Audit, which will aim to document lessons learnt and women's peace building know-how in different regions of the world and to monitor the implementation of international and national legislation focusing on women, peace and security. The overall objective is *to help to transform the policies and implementation of policies of international institutions to be more responsive to women's security needs and to facilitate women's access to affect international policy making and policy implementing bodies.*

#### ***The adoption of UN Resolution 1325 and how it was achieved***

A case study of successful advocacy with the United Nations.

The passage of UN Resolution 1325 on 31 October 2000 was the culmination of many years of work by women's organisations around the world, who had been advocating for women to be recognised in peace and security policies and for their right to participate as equals in processes that lead to peace in the international community and their own societies. After 55 years of the United Nations working to end the scourge of war, a women's perspective of war and peace became visible at last in the 41 speeches presented by 41 member states of

the United Nations under the Namibian Presidency. The suffering of women in war, the under-valued and under-utilised conflict prevention and peace building work of women and the leadership they show in rebuilding war-torn societies were all articulated.

This resolution is an important tool. Women want to see a shift from words to action in the bodies that make decisions about peace and security, in the peace negotiation processes, and, most importantly, on the ground where peace keepers fulfil their mandate to protect and safeguard civilians.

The role of NGOs in the build up to this event was critical. Since 1998 when the Commission on the Status of Women reviewed the chapter in the Beijing Platform for Action on Women in Armed Conflict, the women's peace community has been working together more intensively. Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh made a groundbreaking statement on 8 March 2000 as the President of the Security Council, recognising the link between equality development and peace.

The working group on Women and International Peace and Security (made up of Amnesty International, the Hague Appeal for Peace, International Alert, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) worked closely with UNIFEM and the Division for the Advancement of Women, as well as the Namibian delegation, towards this goal.

We urged that the UN system and governments draw, to the utmost, on the insights, experience, indeed expertise, of women and civil society in matters of daily human security, conflict prevention, resolution, reconciliation and reconstruction. We asked for the acknowledgement of non-violent conflict resolution as an imperative of human survival. We asserted that as long as women do not have an equal role in all security matters there is every likelihood that war will continue to put all the human family at risk.

*“In its statement on the United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace on 8 March, the Security Council had declared that maintaining and promoting peace and security required women’s equal participation in decision-making. I am here today to ask you to do everything in your power to translate that statement into action....” KOFI ANNAN, UN Secretary-General*

### ***How did we get there? Beginning the process***

*September-October 1999* – International Alert initiates discussions with Security Council members Canada and Slovenia and with UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to ensure continued attention to the issues regarding women, peace and security. A draft non-paper is prepared by UNICEF.  
*8 March 2000* - International Women’s Day - Under the Presidency of the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, the UN Security Council issues its first-ever press statement (#6816) acknowledging the role of women in preserving social order in times of armed conflict. A step forward, but still the Statement is in no way binding on the Member States.

### ***Gaining broad-based NGO support***

*March 2000* - NGO Caucus on Women, Conflict and Peace Building comprising 60-80 NGOs is formed at the Commission for Status of Women to highlight the issue and continue to press for follow-up.  
*June 2000* - Beijing +5 Conference – International Alert and Amnesty International press for follow-up. During the meetings the members of the NGO Caucus on Women, Conflict and Peace Building are engaged in the discussions.  
*August-September 2000* - The NGO Working Group on *Women and International Peace and Security* is formed to ensure widespread expertise on the issues. Drawing on a much broader global constituency, the Working Group identifies key regional and international organisations and individuals with special interests in women’s roles in peace building. Representing a range of issues relating to women and armed conflict, the group comes together around its shared concerns for ensuring that women’s roles in peace and security are duly recognised by the international community.

### ***Engaging with Security Council Members***

*August-September 2000* - Beginning of informal bilateral discussions. The NGO Working Group on Women and International Peace and Security is persistent in providing ongoing background information, data, recommendations for action, and even a draft resolution to the UN SC Member States. The level of interest among them is growing. However, the Group still needs a Member State to help put the issue on the Security Council’s agenda.  
*September 2000* - Meetings in Country Capitals. In addition to meetings in New York, the NGO Working Group holds a number of meetings with key policy-makers in country capitals. The aim is to disseminate the information packs and build

consensus around the most critical issues and recommendations.

### ***Dialoguing with all governments***

*September 1999 – October 2000* –Members of the Working Group contact all governments, encouraging them to participate in the Open Session, and requesting them to make statements on issues of interest and relevance to them.

### ***Liaising with UN Agencies***

*September 1999 – October 2000* - The NGO Working Group consults and informs other UN agencies including DPKO and the Division for the Advancement of Women to ensure their support for the process and to include their key concerns into the discussions and recommendations.

### ***Informing the media***

CNN, BBC, New York Times... - the members of the Working Group are interviewed and widely quoted. The Group organises a breakfast briefing for all UN-based journalists and an official press briefing following the Arria Formula Meeting. An opinion piece drafted by members of the Working Group is signed by Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and printed in the *Christian Science Monitor* (November 2000).

### ***Getting the Resolution***

*September 2000* - The breakthrough comes. The Government of Namibia formally states its willingness to place women, peace and security on the agenda when it presides over the Council in October. Namibia's interest is based, in part, on a high-level seminar held in Namibia which they had supported in May 2000 on the subject of gender mainstreaming in peace support operations.

*23 October 2000* - UN Security Council holds an Arria Formula meeting. Representatives of women's groups meet privately with NGOs and Security Council members, presenting their views and answering questions. A number of governments issue statements in support of the subject and officially acknowledge the role of the NGO Working Group in catalysing the meeting.

*23 October 2000* - UN Security Council holds an official Open Debate where non-UNSC members offer their views. Namibia presents a draft resolution for discussion and debate. The Resolution is circulated amongst Council members in New York and in country capitals for amendments.

*31 October 2000* - The final draft of *Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security* is unanimously accepted by the UN Security Council.



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efforts to prevent and solve armed conflict; community-based participation in the prevention and the resolution of armed conflicts. The resolution calls on the European Commission to introduce a gender perspective in their asylum and immigration policies by granting asylum to women who have been raped during armed conflict.

### International forums

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(Focus on four inter-related areas: Participation of women in decision-making and peace processes; gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping; the protection of women; and gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems and programmatic implementation mechanisms. The Resolution was drafted by a coalition of five organisations, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), International Alert, Amnesty International, Women's Commission for Women Refugees and Girls, and the Hague Appeal for Peace, joined with UNIFEM.

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*INSTRAW* - International online discussion and debate, set up by GAINS <http://www.un-instraw-gains.org>

*IWTC* - International Women's Tribune Centre, <http://www.iwtc.org>

*End-violence* - <http://www.edc.org/GLG/end-violence/hypermail/> - newsletter sponsored by UNIFEM with support from ICAP.

## Speaker Profiles

### **Chris Dolan**

Current position: Principal researcher for ACORD on the theme of conflict. He is writing up his work in Uganda for the London School of Economics. With this work, he has placed the debate about masculinity on ACORD's gender and conflict agendas. Linked to his work on conflict issues, he has become involved in work on issues of social exclusion, most recently in Namibia where he co-facilitated a workshop on Social Exclusion Analysis with the Rainbow Project. This was the first time ACORD had worked on issues of sexual orientation.

His major projects include an action research programme examining the changing legal status of Mozambican refugees in South Africa (1994-1996), a research project on the reintegration of ex-combatants in Mozambique, with particular emphasis on Manica and Zambezia provinces (1996-1997), and a project on Complex Political Emergencies carried out in northern Uganda (1997-2000). He has also taught about 'Refugee Livelihoods' for the Oxford Refugee Studies Programme in Oxford, and the American University in Cairo.

### **Stefan Dudink**

Current position: Assistant Professor at the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies of Nijmegen University, the Netherlands. He is teaching courses in historical gender studies and gay studies.

Together with Dubravka Zarkov he designed and taught a multi-disciplinary course on gender and violence. His research focuses on the history of

masculinity, with a special focus on masculinity in politics and war.

Currently working on a book on the meanings of masculinity in Dutch political culture since 1800.

### **Anna T. Höglund**

Current position: Assistant Professor at the Department of Public Health and Caring Sciences, Uppsala University. Researcher in ethics.

Dissertation at the Department of Theology, Uppsala University: *War and Gender. Feminist Ethics and the Moral Judgement of Military Violence* (written in Swedish with an English summary), March 2001.

Current research project affiliations:

- Setting priorities for the elderly in health care. Ethical, political and social aspects.
- The impact of work organisation on health care workers' ethical values and decisions concerning priority setting. Evaluation of an education programme.

### **Dubravka Zarkov**

Current position: Senior lecturer at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, the Netherlands.

Her background is in sociology, anthropology, gender studies and development studies. Her primary field of expertise is production of gender, sexuality and ethnicity in wars and armed conflicts. She is particularly interested in the workings of gender, sexuality and ethnicity in the media during armed conflicts. Regionally, she is interested in the Balkans, South and South-East Asia and countries in transition (former Soviet Block).

## Participants List

### **Alajarva, Eija**

Humanitarian Aid Project Officer  
FinnChurchAid  
P.O. Box 185  
FIN-00161 Helsinki  
Tel: +358 9 1802 444  
E-mail: eija.alajarva@evl.fi

### **Colbey, Bethan**

International Alert  
1 Glyn Street  
UK-London SE 11 5HT  
Tel: +44 207 793 8383  
E-mail: bcobley@international-alert.org

### **Dahlgren, Mirjam**

DIAKONIA  
Starrbäcksgatan 11  
S-172 99 Sundbyberg  
Tel: +46 8 453 6900  
E-mail: mirjam.dahlgren@diakonia.se

### **De Groot, Dienneke**

Policy Advisor  
Chair Gender Reference Group  
ICCO  
PO Box 151  
NL-3700 AD Zeist  
Tel: +31 3069 27810  
E-mail: ddg@icco.nl

### **De Kat-Reynen, Catherina**

Editor  
Langohoven 40  
NL 6721 VT Bennekom  
Tel: +31 0318 431141  
E-mail: dekat@bos.nl

### **Dhers-Nauber, Anne-Marie**

EED-Church Development Service  
Ulrich-von-Hassell-Strasse 76  
D- 53123 Bonn  
Tel: +49 228 8101-2149  
E-mail: Anne-Marie.Dhers-Nauber@eed.de

### **Döhne, Karin**

EED-Church Development Service  
Ulrich-von-Hassell-Strasse 76  
D- 53123 Bonn  
Tel: +49 228 8101-2149  
E-mail: karin.doejne@due.org

### **Dolan, Chris**

ACORD-Agency for Cooperation on Research and  
Development  
Dean Bradley House  
52 Horseferry Road  
UK-London SW1P 2AF  
Tel: +44 207 227 8627  
E-mail: chrisd@acord.org.uk

### **Dudink, Stefan**

Lecturer  
Centre of Women's and Gender Studies  
Nijmegen University  
NL-Nijmegen  
E-mail: SDudink@xs4all.nl

### **Felsenstein, Ulrike**

Programme Coordinator  
DIAKONIA Emergency Aid  
Stafflenbergstr. 76  
D-70184 Stuttgart  
Tel: +49 711 2159 556  
E-mail: u.felsenstein@diakonie-emergency-aid.org

### **Gomez Lopez, Alberto Luis**

Project Counselling Service  
Bogota, Colombia  
E-mail: alberto@pcs.org.co

### **Guevara Moreno, Mario Enrique**

Fundación Synergia  
Av. 42 No. 15-71 Piso 3  
A.A. 51228 Bogota, D.C., Colombia  
Tel: +57 7 62 26 625  
E-mail: synergia@colnodo.apc.org

### **Hammer, Anna Karin**

Church of Sweden Aid  
Sysslomangsgatan 4  
S-75170 Uppsala  
Tel: +46 1 816 9500  
E-mail: Anna-Karin.Hammer@svenskakyrkan.se

### **Hansson, Gunilla**

Church of Sweden Aid  
Sysslomangsgatan 4  
S-75170 Uppsala  
Tel: +46 1 816 9500  
E-mail: Gunnilla.Hansson@svenskakyrkan.se

**Theol. Dr. Höglund, Anna T.**

Assistant Professor  
University Uppsala  
Department of Public Health and Caring Sciences  
Biomedical Ethics  
Uppsala Science Park  
S- 751 85 Uppsala  
E-mail: Anna.Hoglund@teol.uu.se

**Holter, Thora**

Gender advisor  
Norwegian Church Aid  
P.O. Box 4544 Torshov  
N-0404 Oslo  
Tel: +47 22 09 27 00  
E-mail: thora.holter@nca.no

**Kanneh, Rojatu**

Women's Health and Development Programme  
(WHDP)  
St Theresa's Convent  
PO Box 2472  
1000 Monrovia 10, Liberia  
E-mail: MPCHS@compuserve.com

**Kirleis, Edda**

Gender and Asian Desk  
EED-Church Development Service  
Ulrich-von-Hassell-Strasse 76  
D- 53123 Bonn  
Tel: +49 228 8101-2149  
E-mail: Edda.Kirleis@eed.de

**Matshikiza, Marian**

Senior Field Officer  
Christian Aid  
B.P. Box 353  
Cyanguu, Rwanda  
Tel: +871 762 741 195  
E-mail: caidbukavu@compuserve.com

**Mide, Bjoerg**

Head of Emergency Unit  
Norwegian Church Aid  
P.O. Box 4544 Torshov  
N-0404 Oslo  
Tel: +47 22 09 27 00  
E-mail: bmi@nca.no

**Morier-Genoud, Michèle**

Bureau femmes et développement  
HEKS/EPER  
Stampfenbachstr. 123  
P.O. Box 332  
CH-8035 Zurich  
Email: secretariat@dmr.ch

**Müller, Ingrid**

Gender Advisor  
Bread for the World  
Stafflenbergerstr.76  
D- 70010 Stuttgart  
Tel: +49 711 2159 700  
E-mail: i.mueller@brot-fuer-die-welt.org

**Mumbi Kimotho, Catherine**

Area Coordinator - Kasei  
National Council of Churches in Kenya  
Community Peace Building & Development Project  
P.O. Box 723  
Eldoret, Kenya  
Tel: +254 2 338211 / 321 31384  
E-mail: nckeld@nckeldoret.org

**Niklasch, Anna**

Bread for the World  
Stafflenbergerstr.76  
D-70010 Stuttgart  
Tel: + 49 711 2159 313  
E-mail: a.niklasch@brot-fuer-die-welt.org

**Nilsson, Eric**

Head of International Department  
DIAKONIA  
Starrbäcksgatan 11  
S-172 99 Sundbyberg  
Tel: +46 8 453 6903  
E-mail: eric.nilsson@diakonia.se

**Nilsson, Eva Christina**

Church of Sweden Aid  
Sysslomangsgatan 4  
S-75170 Uppsala  
Tel: +46 1 816 9500  
E-mail: evachristina.nilsson@svenskakyrkan.se

**Ojanen, Saara**

FinnChurchAid  
P.O. Box 185  
FIN-00161 Helsinki  
Tel: +358 9 1802 441  
E-mail: saara.ojanen@evl.fi

**Olsen, Inger Lise**

Church of Sweden Aid  
Sysslomangsgatan 4  
S-75170 Uppsala  
Tel: +46 1 816 9500  
E-mail: Inger-Lise.Olsen@svenskakyrkan.se

**Ossiya, Deborah**

Life and Peace Institute  
Nairobi, Kenya  
E-mail: Ipihap@africaonline.co.ke

**Polanco, Ruth**

Las Dignas  
Calle Gabriela Mistral 224  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
Tel: +503 225 8944  
E-mail: dignas@vianet.com.sv

**Prøis, Signe**

Policy Department  
Norwegian Church Aid  
P.O. Box 4544 Torshov  
N-0404 Oslo  
Tel: +47 22 09 27 00  
E-mail: signe.prois@nca.no

**Spitzer, Petra**

Africa Desk  
Bread for the World  
Stafflenbergerstr.76  
D-70010 Stuttgart  
Tel: +49 711 2159 710  
E-mail: p.spitzer@brot-fuer-die-welt.org

**Studer-Senn, Lilian**

Coordinator  
Coordination Office Women and Development  
HEKS/EPER & Bread for All  
P.O. Box 332  
CH-8035 Zürich  
Tel: +41 1 361 61 05  
E-mail: studer@hekseper.ch

**Tveøy, Anne Caroline**

Norwegian Church Aid  
P.O. Box 4544 Torshov  
N-0404 Oslo  
Tel: +47 22 09 27 00  
E-mail: acv@nca.no

**Ulmer, Karin**

Gender officer  
APRODEV  
Rue Joseph II, 174  
B-1000 Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 2346840  
E-mail: karin@aprodev.net

**Van der Meij, Suzan**

ICCO  
PO Box 151  
NL-3700 AD Zeist  
E-mail: svdm@icco.nl

**Van Drimmelen, Rob**

Secretary General  
APRODEV  
Rue Joseph II, 174  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 2546840  
E-mail: rob@aprodev.net

**Verhoeven, Maria**

Teamleader for Asia  
ICCO  
PO Box 151  
NL-3700 AD Zeist  
E-mail: MV@icco.nl

**Walters, Hettie**

Moderator  
Gender and Development Training Centre  
Wilhelminastraat 18  
NL-2011 VM Haarlem  
Tel: +31 23 5342149  
E-mail: gen.dtc@inter.nl.net

**Weinbrenner, Sieglinde**

EED-Church Development Service  
Ulrich-von-Hassell-Strasse 76  
D-53123 Bonn  
Tel: +49 228 8101  
E-mail: Sieglinde.Weinbrenner@eed.de

**Yonetani, Michelle**

Capacity Building Officer  
Christian Aid  
P.O.Box 100  
UK-London SE1 7RT  
Tel: +44 207 620 4444  
E-mail: myonetani@christian-aid.org

**Zarkov, Dubravka**

Lecturer  
Institute for Social Studies - the Hague  
Van Doesburglaan 83  
NL-6708 MB Wageningen  
Tel: +31 317 414615  
E-mail: d.zarkov@chello.nl

**Zetterqvist, Jenny**

Coordinator for HR, Democracy and Gender  
Church of Sweden  
Sysslomangsgatan 4  
S-75170 Uppsala  
Tel: +46 1 816 9689  
E-mail: jenny.zetterqvist@svenskakyrkan.se



## F. APPENDIX II

### Beyond Victims and Villains: Gender and Armed Conflict

Presentation by Dubravka Zarkov and Stefan Dudink

As you will have noticed the title of our presentation today is *Beyond Victims and Villains: Gender and Armed Conflict*. We thus follow the request of the organisers to speak about *gender* and armed conflict, rather than to talk about *men and women* and armed conflict. We would like to begin this talk with explaining what we understand gender to mean. We use the word gender to refer to a specific way of looking at social relations of power, specific relations of dominance and marginalisation. We think that such an understanding of gender and power is crucial for an analysis of armed conflict.

In this talk we would like to make several points about gender, and then use these points to discuss war and armed conflict, and the violence they entail.

**A.... The first point we wish to make is that gender is a concept that aims at getting away from the supposedly natural and self-evident fact that there are men and women, that there is masculinity and femininity.**

Many of the ideas about men and women being determined by nature pertain to violence. Men are often seen as being 'naturally' more aggressive, more violent than women. Women are seen as being more timid by nature. The bodies of men are seen as naturally stronger than the bodies of women. Thus, sometimes it seems that nature has already defined women as victims and men as perpetrators of violence.

But aggression, violence or physical strength are not natural. They are socially and culturally produced. For example: A big man may be stronger physically than a small woman. But if a small woman knows karate, or if she simply knows how to hit a big man in one weak point that all men share – he is finished. The thing is – most women never learn to use their bodies the way men do, to use violence the way men do. Thus, an average woman always seems to us smaller and weaker than an average man.

We use gender to 'denaturalise' such ideas about women and men, and to show that masculinity and femininity are not natural and unchangeable, they are not fixed nor transparent. Gender as a concept helps us see that men and women, masculinity and femininity are profoundly social and subject to

continuous change through time as well as through place. Growing up as a woman in socialist Yugoslavia is not the same as growing up as a woman in liberal capitalist Great Britain or in welfare-state Sweden. It is also not the same as growing up in socialist China or socialist Karela. Being a man in the 17<sup>TH</sup> century Netherlands is not the same as being a man in the 21<sup>ST</sup> century Netherlands.

B .....The second point we wish to make is that gender does not only refer to men and women, and their social relations. Gender actually works on many different levels of society.

**1. The level of subjective identity.** Here we refer to the level at which individuals identify with, learn to identify with, and are forced to identify with notions of masculinity and femininity. This is the level at which an individual sense of being a man or a woman is constructed with all that it entails.

**2. The level of institutions and organisations.** Gender is not just an organising principle at the level of individual subjectivity. It is also produced through institutions and organisations. The labour market with its inequalities is one of the many institutions that produce certain notions of men and women, masculinity and femininity. And so does the educational system or the organisation of political life. Especially relevant for our purposes is the way in which the military produces certain kinds of men and masculinity and women and femininity. The military still is an institution that constantly produces a connection between men, masculinity and the legitimate use of violence. This connection is often presented as natural or self-evident and as preceding the gender-specific organisation of the military itself, but actually it is constantly being socially produced and re-established by institutions like the military.

**3. The level of ideology and doctrine.** Notions of men, women, masculinity and femininity are of course actively constructed in all sorts of ideologies and doctrines, be they of a political, religious, scientific or legal nature. They all have a lot to say about what the differences between men and women are, or should be and very often they have the institutional apparatus available to try and enforce their notions of proper masculinity and femininity. What is important to remark, however, is that it is not only in ideologies that are explicitly about men

and women that gender is produced. Ideologies and doctrines that appear not to be primarily about gender often rest on and reproduce specific notions of masculinity and femininity too. Think for instance about political ideologies of self-determination of individuals, groups or nations. The self-determining individuals or collectives in these ideologies are often represented as male. Sometimes explicitly, but more often through ascribing qualities to them – vigour, willpower, stamina – that are generally associated with masculinity. In this way systems of thought that appear not to be primarily about men and women are also sites where gender is produced and reproduced.

**4. The level of symbols.** This is the level where masculinity and femininity is present in signs that are used to denote all sorts of norms, qualities, virtues and vices. Think for instance of the powerful symbolical images of Mary and Eve and all the virtues and vices they represent – an example, by the way, that makes quite clear that these gendered symbolical representations are often highly contradictory. At this level too, it is not just symbols that are explicitly male or female that produce and reproduce constructions of masculinity and femininity.

Thus, gender is not only about men and women. Other phenomena are also being presented as male and female, are also being associated with masculinity and femininity. Phenomena like, for instance, the state, the nation, the citizen, the military, the soldier-hero, the enemy, the victim, the front, the home-front are all in one way or another associated with particular constructions of masculinity and femininity.

**C ... Now, because gender works in so many different levels of society, feminist scholars have said that gender is one of the organising principles of social life. But gender is not the only organising principle of social life. Class relations, race, sexuality, ethnic and religious identities, are equally significant in structuring our lives.** Being a black man in Norway is not the same as being a white Norwegian man. Being a Muslim woman in Pakistan is not the same as being a Christian woman in Pakistan. Being a girl from a lower working class family in Indonesia is not the same as being a member of a wealthy family.

When it comes to violence, we should not forget that men of lower classes and black men are regularly seen as being more violent than white upper class men. Equally important, white upper class women or women who belong to the ruling elites are regularly seen as being more sensitive, more vulnerable to violence than lower class or black women. Consequence of such an idea is that specific

groups of women in every society are exposed to a high level of violence, including sexual violence, with the idea that this violence does not affect them, that they are simply insensitive of it, or can take it.

Thus, we cannot simply say that men and masculinity are privileged in most of the societies we know, and that women and femininity are oppressed. In every society, only certain groups of men are privileged, and only certain forms of masculinity are dominant – those that belong to men of privileged groups. Other men and other forms of masculinity are marginalised, oppressed, or even prosecuted. In western societies, white heterosexual man and their masculinity are dominant. Masculinity of a Muslim migrant or a homosexual man are marginalised at best, or discriminated and oppressed, at worst. It is similar with femininity. There are dominant forms of femininity that are celebrated and given as an example for all women to take up. But there are also forms of femininity that are marginalised or straightforward banned from a society. Furthermore, one kind of femininity does not have the same meaning for all women in one society. For example, motherhood is still one of the most powerful norms of femininity in most societies we know. But in western societies, white women's motherhood is often perceived differently than motherhood of let's say – young teenage black girls, or of migrant women or that of asylum seekers. While the white women are often accused of not having enough children or waiting for too long before their first child, the latter are accused of starting too early or having too many offspring.

This point – that gender is produced through other social relations – is important because as such – interwoven with class, race, ethnicity, sexuality or religion – gender becomes an extremely powerful tool in conflict situations.

Before we turn to analyse gender in wars and conflicts, we want to stress once again the following: many different masculinities and femininities exist in every society; in any given moment, and they exist in unequal power relations.

We live with the dominant notions of masculinity and femininity, where most of the men are imagined as soldiers, as powerful or fierce, as cruel or brave, as capable of violence ... Where most of the women are still imagined as powerless and victimised, as those who are subjected to violence, rather than those who commit violence, as those who are against war, rather than those who incite war. These dominant notions of masculinity and femininity are deep rooted, and they govern our way of understanding war and conflict. We simply see male soldiers and female refugees. We simply say – that is

how it is in wars. The majority of soldiers are men, the majority of refugees are women. And that is true. But at the same time, it is also true that in every war there are men who refuse to fight, who become deserters or flee the war zone. They actively refuse to be soldiers. But do we know their numbers, as we know the number of active militaries? Do we even try to look at them as men-who-refuse-to-be-soldiers? Not really. Most often, we look at them simply as refugees. Equally, is it not true that women become refugees, among other reasons, because they do not have access to weapons by which to defend themselves and they do not have skills to use arms. Why is it so? Because it is *men* who are seen as natural soldiers, and thus women are seldom given the knowledge, the infrastructure or the technology of war. It is the social construction of soldiering as an essential part of masculinity - and not of femininity - that produces men as soldiers, and women as victims. Of course, one could argue that this is not true. In many countries women are soldiers, engaged in war and guerrilla combat. Look at Sri Lanka and Bosnia, look at South Africa and Israel. In western countries there have been women in the military for decades. That is also true. But, when we hear the word soldier - is it a woman we think of first? It is not. Why? Because the dominant notions of femininity that we grew up with and learned by living in our societies do not easily associate women and femininity with soldiering.

**Perhaps it is good to shortly recapitulate the point we are trying to make here. We use the term gender to refer not to men and women, or simply to a masculinity and a femininity, but to the processes in which men, women, masculinity and femininity are produced. It is not the assumed differences between men and women that we focus on, and it is not the different social positions between them that we start our analysis from, but it is the social processes in which these differences and social positions are constructed that interest us. Here we show that war is such a process, in which social places of specific men and women are defined, and meanings are attributed to their acts and actions. As we show in the examples above, these definitions and meanings are not just ideological: they have material consequences.**

It may be strange to think of war and conflict as *productive*. We are used to thinking of wars and armed conflicts as destructive and disruptive. We see them as threatening social order. But we want you to think that war and violence actually restore specific social order, they produce social groups. Most often this production is actually a production of difference: differences between (aggressive) men and (weak) women, between (female) victims and (male) perpetrators, also between who can be seen as a

victim, and who can be seen as a perpetrator. Violence produces difference between religious or ethnic groups. **These differences are then presented as natural, as given, as fixed and eternal. So much so, that we forget that the process of production even took place.**

Further, we want you to remember what we mentioned earlier: this production does not concern only gender, but other social relations too. Finally, this production of difference appears not only in the act of violence - during the moment violence is conducted, but also on various levels of social life.

One of these levels of social life where difference is produced during wars and conflicts is in **media representations**. Examples of the writings of the Serbian and Croatian newspapers about the war in Bosnia show how gender and ethnicity were used in the media to construct differences between the warring parties.

### Conclusion

Finally, we want to argue that we should no longer simply be interested in the given differences between men and women, or in their given roles and positions in society as we encounter them at one specific period in time. It is not gender differences as such that are of interest, but the *social processes* in which these differences are constructed. Wars and armed conflicts are among these social processes in which gender relations and gender differences are produced. We tried to show that the very ideas about men and women, masculinity and femininity, are *products* of wars and violence, and the fuel that further feeds the conflicts.

Why is it important to think of processes when we analyse gender relations? Because a process is something that is always incomplete and contradictory. The nation or the religious or ethnic group might be associated with masculine qualities, but as we have seen, very often it is at the same time symbolised through a female figure. And although such female allegorical representations of the nation are often depicted as being in need of protection by men - thus further strengthening associations of the nation with vigorous masculinity - they also lend the nation an element of vulnerability. These female allegorical figures can also be appropriated by feminist nationalists that fight for full citizenship of the nation for women.

In a similar vein, the male soldier might be the typical representative of a willingness to fight for the nation. However, in the monuments that are erected to honour these masculine qualities, soldiers are often represented in passive and expiring poses. In a

paradoxical way these poses are often the most convincing representations of male vulnerability and weakness we may find in nationalist and militarised cultures.

To underscore the *incomplete and contradictory* nature of processes in which men, women, masculinity and femininity are produced in social processes such as wars and conflicts is of great

importance for our theory and our actions, for our research and our politics. These fault lines and contradictions form, so to speak, the weak links in constructions of gender. They are the points where we might attack the dominant ideas and practices of masculinity and femininity in order to try and construct new, more desirable ones.

## **Collapsing Masculinities and Weak States - a case study of northern Uganda**

**Chris Dolan, Forthcoming in Cleaver F (ed), *Making Men Matter: Men, Masculinities and Gender Relations in Development*, Zed Books, London**

### **1. Introduction**

Much has been said about the ways in which masculinity allows men to exercise power over women. This paper is about the ways in which masculinity, as a set of ideas, allows men to exercise power over other men. It is also about the ways in which this exercise of power is both reinforced by and contributes to a context of violence and war.<sup>1</sup> This paper does not seek to pretend that men do not resort to violence, rather it seeks to examine why they do so under some circumstances and not others, and how this is to an extent a politically manipulated process.

Drawing on material from research in northern Uganda, this paper examines how in the face of the dynamic interaction between a model of masculinity and a context of violence, the possibility of developing alternative masculinities collapses. Unable to live up to the model, but offered no alternative, some men resort to acts of violence.

Furthermore, weak states may perceive a benefit in this collapse of alternatives: the hegemonic model creates incentives for armed forces to exercise

violence on the civilian population in ways which actively undermine civilian men's sense of self. This may contribute to the state's sense of control over both civilians *and* the army, both of which are necessary for national and geo-strategic purposes. The role of the state in constructing and reinforcing this normative model of masculinity is therefore also examined.

### **2. Contextual background**

Northern Uganda, in particular Gulu and Kitgum districts, has been affected by ongoing conflict since 1986 when Museveni and the National Resistance Movement took power in Uganda. There have been several phases to the conflict:

- Phase 1: August 1986- May 88
- Phase 2: June 1988 - March 1994
- Phase 3: April 1994- early December 2000
- Phase 4: Late December 2000 - ongoing

Each of these phases follows a similar pattern, beginning with acute violence, which gradually diminishes - though it never disappears - until a failed peace initiative releases a renewed wave of ever-more intensive violence from those who were part of the preceding war, but not of the 'peace process'.

The first phase, beginning in late 1986 after the National Resistance Army (NRA) had taken control of northern Uganda, was marked by the formation of a number of different insurgent groups: the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), Severino Lukwoya's Lord's Army, and Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). While Lakwena's HSM was militarily defeated in October 1987, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Fieldwork was conducted by ACORD over the period May 1998 – January 2000 for DFID as part of the COPE consortium (Consortium for Political Emergencies). The examples given in this paper are drawn largely from fieldworkers written reports and my personal observations over that period, and from the proceedings of a planning workshop conducted with ACORD staff and fieldworkers in April 2000 which began with a participatory analysis of social exclusion in northern Uganda. This is 'the workshop' referred to in the text (ACORD 2000). All names have been changed.

UPDA was brought out of the bush through political negotiation and the signing of a peace deal in May 1988, some of the remnants of both groups fed into the developing strength of the other two, the Lord's Army and the LRA.<sup>2</sup>

The second phase, following the incomplete peace of phase 1, began with heavy levels of violence, which then fluctuated over the following years, with a longer lull in 1991. The attempts to broker peace with the LRA by the then Minister for Pacification of the North, Mrs Betty Bigombe, raised hopes in late 1993 that peace was just around the corner. Instead, the collapse of the talks in early 1994 led to a dramatic resurgence of violence by both rebels and the army.

This renewed violence, or phase 3 of the conflict, continued until early 1999 when there was a noticeable lull, and some changes in the political climate again led to hopes that peace was just around the corner: an amnesty was put in place, to run for six months, and the American Carter Centre brokered a 'peace agreement' between the Ugandan and Sudanese governments, which was signed on 8 December 1999. Within two weeks of this deal, which did not appear to have involved the LRA (the 'visible actors') themselves, the LRA re-entered Uganda from Sudan. Civilians who had tentatively moved back to their home areas some six months earlier were moved back into 'protected villages' by

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<sup>2</sup> Members of the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) fled northwards following the overthrow of first Obote in July 1985 and then Tito Okello in January 1986. While some went as far as Sudan and formed the basis of the UPDA, also known as *čilil'*, others went directly into Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement/Mobile Forces which began in August 1986, only months after the NRA had established control over northern Uganda.

Some members of UPDA moved across into HSM, but when the HSM was defeated in October 1987, some of its members joined or rejoined the UPDA while others joined forces under Alice's father, Severino Lukwoya, and still others joined Joseph Kony's group.

Confusingly, Lukwoya's group was known as the 'Lord's Army', while Kony's group began as the Holy Spirit Movement, changed its name briefly to Uganda People's Democratic Christian Army, before settling on the name Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which remains in force today. To add to the confusion, Joseph Kony also claimed to be possessed by the spirit of Lakwena...

During the period from late 1986 to mid 1988 the UPDA, Alice Lakwena's HSM, and Joseph Kony's HSM were all in existence. From mid 1988 up to his imprisonment in 1989, Lukwoya's Lord's Army operated in parallel to Kony's HSM, which then transformed into the Lord's Resistance Army.<sup>2</sup>

the army, and vehicles were ambushed and burnt on all roads out of Gulu except the Kampala highway by the LRA. Phase 4 had clearly begun and is ongoing.

These dynamics cannot be understood in isolation from the web of conflicts in the region. There are clear spillovers and even explicit linkages between conflicts in neighbouring Rwanda, Sudan and DRC, and the situation in northern Uganda. 1990 saw the NRA march to invade Rwanda and overthrow its government, as well as the bombing of Moyo by the Sudanese government.<sup>3</sup> John Garang, leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, was seen staying in North View Hotel in Gulu in 1991, and the Pope prayed for peace in Gulu in 1993. People remember 1994 as the year in which 'the Rwanda Patriotic Front and the UPDF overthrew the Rwandan Government'. Late 1999 and the whole of 2000 saw heavy involvement of the UPDF in the fighting in the DRC, with recruitment drives being carried out in Gulu from late 1999 onwards.

Levels of insecurity have fluctuated dramatically but violence in the form of killings, rape, looting and abduction has featured heavily throughout. Hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced, thousands more have taken refuge outside the country. In this potentially fertile area, which was once one of the most productive areas of the country, people have lost nearly all their livestock and access to their farming land, while access to health and education services has been severely reduced.

There appears to have been gradual changes in the nature of violence metred out over the course of the war, which could be characterised as an intensification of methods of violence. Phase 1 saw some appalling incidents of brutality, some of which have been explained by various academic observers as acts of revenge (NRA), or as acts of 'moral cleansing' (Alice Lakwena's HSM). Phase 2 however saw the systematic use of maiming and mutilation, abduction, and landmines, and increasing involvement of external sponsorship. Phase 3 has seen the systematisation of internal displacement through the creation of 'protected villages', and Phase 4 is likely to see more and more intense involvement of international donors and NGOs, ostensibly in the search for peace, but potentially for the spoils of war (lucrative grants for peace building, peace education, reintegration etc.).

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<sup>3</sup> This interpretation is supported by Gerard Prunier's account of the RPF's 1 October 1990 invasion of Rwanda, in which he argues that '...the RPF had about 2,000 men. Most of them were NRA soldiers, although there was a small civilian contingent' (Prunier: 1998:130)

There is thus a sense in which partial or incomplete peace building attempts have not merely failed and thereby left the situation as it was before the collapse: They are correlated with a worsening and intensification of the situation rather than an improvement.

### 3. What is the role of masculinity in the war?

In the face of the above outline of the war in northern Uganda and its links to regional dynamics, which involve a wide range of national and international actors in the stuff of international relations, it may appear odd to argue that a set of ideas about masculinity can play a role in creating and perpetuating violent conflict in northern Uganda.

Nonetheless, there is a crucial connection to be made between state-level dynamics and micro-level behaviour, and the ideas which make up masculinity are a key connector between the two. To outline this connection, this paper addresses a series of specific questions. Firstly, does war reinforce a hegemonic model of masculinity – and does that model reinforce the war? Specifically, do notions of masculinity increase the likelihood of violence by non-combatant men, and do they make non-combatant men more vulnerable to violence by armed forces? Do notions of masculinity offer incentives to armed forces to use violence, and can this use of violence be perceived as of benefit to the state? What role does the state play in the promotion or collapse of alternative masculinities? At a more theoretical level, what do the answers to these questions mean to our understanding of the relationship between weak states and complex emergencies? and of notions such as ‘crumbling social fabric’ and the linked view that war offers opportunities for social change?

### 4. What is the hegemonic model of masculinity in northern Uganda?

In analysing the role of masculinity in provoking or perpetuating violence and conflict in northern Uganda, it is necessary to distinguish between men’s lived experiences of their own masculinities, which are necessarily multiple, and their lived expectations of masculinity, which are contained in a hegemonic normative model or set of ideas concerning what defines a man. The key example is probably marriage and fatherhood: not all men wish to or are able to enter into it (lived experiences), but they are *all* expected to become married at some point (lived expectations).

The model is hegemonic in the sense that it largely precludes alternatives and is buttressed by major forms of social and political power. It is normative in the sense that men are taught they should aspire to

and judge themselves by it, and state and society in turn judge and assess them against it - and then either validate, or belittle and punish them.

In a workshop which considered various forms of discrimination in northern Uganda, and their relationship to conflict, it was apparent that a powerful admixture of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial messages has led to a normative model of masculinity. This model rests on polarised stereotypes and models of what women and men are like, what they should do, how they should relate to one another, and what their respective positions and roles in society should be.<sup>4</sup> At its simplest it can be described as based on sexist, heterosexist, ethnocentrist and adultist premises, and as entailing considerable economic responsibilities and a particular relationship with the state.<sup>5</sup>

Workshop participants argued that it is generally assumed that women differ from men, that they are weaker, incapable and a burden, a position legitimised by the Biblical story in Genesis that man was created first, woman from his rib, and the saying that women are the ‘weaker vessels’. They had been brought up to believe that women cannot perform to the level of men, and must conform to the culture of their husbands. Women are often portrayed as being like children, without knowledge or skills, or as jealous gossipers and busy bodies who are not to be trusted and who are unable to be in solidarity with one another. There are sayings in Acholi that ‘*Women are always cats who seek sympathy*’, and that ‘*when there is constant drizzling it is like women quarrelling*’. They are also likely to be blamed for domestic wrangles and misfortune in the family and organisations. Once a woman marries, which necessarily involves marrying into another clan, she is viewed as an outsider and therefore not to be trusted.

These attitudes are reflected in the power which men exercise over women directly. Men pay bridewealth, women leave their home to live in the husband’s home, where they are considered the subordinates and properties/assets of men, who are richer, more educated and own other assets as well. Women do

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<sup>4</sup> The workshop itself was male dominated, with 19 male and 5 female participants – as such what is presented here can be said with some confidence to reflect what men have been told about women

<sup>5</sup> This paper does not attempt to explore the historical development of this dominant model, though it is clear that it has been influenced heavily by Christianity, and more recently by elements drawn from the women’s movement. For a discussion of how western ideals of masculinity ‘have been exported through colonialism to mingle with local notions of masculinity’ (Oxfam 1997: 4), see Cornwall & Lindisfarne (1994)

the domestic work for the family and can be beaten if they do not show respect to men. Historically, women were not allowed to eat certain foods (eg. chicken), and they are not supposed to initiate divorce, which is seen as the prerogative of men. Their voices are often ignored and they are denied ownership of family assets. Women are regarded as there to produce children, and these children then belong to men; if a woman divorces she has to leave them behind. As suggested above, a woman loses her clan identity on marriage but does not fully assume the clan identity of her husband.

Men are supposed to take priority in education and all other benefits. Boys are regarded as better and brighter, indeed, traditionally a man may take another wife if the first only delivers girl children. Women are regarded as unfit for formal education, and it is argued that education of women is a waste of family resources because they get married and move elsewhere. Technical institutions are regarded as being for men only.

The subordinate position of women is reflected in the fact that in the Acholi language the words for head of family (won paen), elders (ludito), clergy men (ludito kanicha), and doctor (daktor) are all masculine. To this day women do not participate in clan meetings or the traditional leadership, which is all male, and if they do the elders will ask 'what are women doing here in our meeting?'. That women are to be put back in their place if they overstep their limits is clear from an Acholi saying which translates as '*when the hen crows it must be slaughtered*'.

The few positive messages participants could recall hearing about women are that they 'are accommodative, they bear circumstances', 'Women are the custodians of culture', and 'When you educate a woman you educate a nation.'

Against this view of women, it is clear that the normative model of masculinity involves men in multiple subject positions, and is inherently relational; as Connell argues, 'masculinity' does not exist except in contrast with 'femininity' (1995: 68). Equally, while men are powerful by contrast with women, they cannot have the power without the women; the primary markers of masculinity centre around their relationship with women. To be recognised as an 'adult' and a 'man', men are expected to become husbands and fathers (preferably educated), and to exercise considerable control over wife and children. When the head of one of the major Acholi clans, Rwot Achana, died in 1999 and was to be succeeded by his unmarried son, the succession ceremony could not take place without his sister playing the role of surrogate wife.

Being able to provide the material needs of wife and children is one of the key roles contained in the model. However, satisfying the economic needs of others is not enough to define you as a 'man'. Although any young man who has a source of income will come under heavy pressure to support members of his immediate and extended family, he will continue to be seen as a youth or 'boy' until he has married and fathered children, and as such not to be taken seriously.<sup>6</sup> Workshop participants noted that '*Unmarried young people are perceived as UNABLE to participate in political life*' and that whereas '*all adults are responsible (because they have children and houses and run homes)*', youth are stereotyped as '*irresponsible, disrespectful, impatient, extravagant, arrogant, fun lovers who are ineffective at work*' and who '*like leisure at the expense of work*'. As a result, '*development is the domain of adults alone*'. Adults claim their experience counts more and tell youth "*Don't start climbing trees from the top.*' Youth ideas '*are not listened to*' and they are '*kept in limbo about vital information*'. '*Youths' complaints and requests are ignored*', and '*adults are slow to react on decisions important to the youth*' (ACORD 2000). It is perhaps not surprising therefore that for some men having multiple wives and many children adds to their status, though here there is a conflict between Christian and non-Christian value systems in terms of polygamy.

Being able to provide physical protection is another key role for men. However, this is complicated by the fact that responsibility for provision of protection has to a large extent been taken out of the hands of individual men. They are now supposed to earn protection for themselves, their wives and children, by relating to the state as loyal citizens who put their trust in the state to protect their interests and are themselves prepared to take up arms whether as soldiers in the army, or as members of local defence units.<sup>7</sup>

This contract between state and citizen is seriously undermined by a context of war, but in the northern Uganda context it is further undermined by a history of north-south opposition, and widespread perceptions of the role of ethnicity in previous periods of extreme violence and brutality. Under British divide and rule Acholi men were singled out for service in the military and the police, and under the Obote regime prior to Museveni's take-over they

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<sup>6</sup> This conforms with Foreman's description of Indian malehood in which 'malehood and femalehood are partly defined by family, community and social duties'. In that context 'A single man... is defined as not-yet-a-man'. (1999: 16)

<sup>7</sup> For some taking up arms against the state is as powerful a source of credibility, despite the constant media portrayal of rebels as 'bandits', 'thugs' and 'terrorists'.

dominated the armed forces, and were widely blamed for the atrocities which occurred in the Luwero Triangle (one of Museveni's main areas of operation prior to 1986). This has left them with a reputation for militarism and violence which has been played upon by southerners to justify the harsh military control imposed on the area. It is also part of the portrayal of the Lord's Resistance Army which is alleged to be composed primarily of Acholi.<sup>8</sup>

While this national reputation for militarism sits uneasily with Acholi self-perception as being well able to reconcile with others and resolve differences through discussion, it blends almost seamlessly with wider ethnocentric and racist discourses which equate northerners with primitivism and backwardness.<sup>9</sup> It is not uncommon to meet people in Kampala who will explain how they have had to overcome their belief that northerners are 'less than human'. Among the negative messages workshop participants had heard as young children, were that northern Ugandans were 'primitive', 'backwards', 'poor', 'illiterate' 'swine' (ACORD 2000). This fitted into a wider racist discourse under which people could recall how as children they were told that black people were viewed as 'evil' 'animals', 'cannibals', 'monkeys', 'devils' and 'spirits' who 'don't have souls or feelings'. Furthermore, that 'they are dark and ugly', 'smell bad and dirty', and are 'jealous', 'uncooperative', 'backwards', 'unintelligent' and 'associated with disease'. Some were told they were 'supposed to be servants' who were 'not entitled to anything', and 'should be puppets (to be used and thrown at will)'.

As in all such cases of widely prevalent discriminatory stereotypes, it is difficult to identify individual sources of such statements. While some are clearly linked with the colonial period, once internalised they appear to have a life independent of their original source. In a sense the source is not the issue, rather the question must be around how this underlying and tenacious legacy of ethno-centric racist discourses compounds the more immediate causes of suspicion and hostility at group level, destroys self-esteem and self respect at individual level, and how these in turn feed violence and conflict.

##### **5. What is the gap between model and reality? Inability to fulfil external and internalised expectations**

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<sup>8</sup> While it is the case that the majority of those forcibly abducted into the ranks of the LRA are Acholi, it is not clear that the entire leadership are Acholi, nor that they perceive themselves as an Acholi movement.

<sup>9</sup> It has to be said that these kinds of notions are as much subject to manipulation as the ones of militarism (see Dolan 2000 – 1).

In the northern Ugandan context of ongoing war, heavy militarisation and internal displacement, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for the vast majority of men to fulfil the expectations of husband and father, provider and protector which are contained in the model of masculinity outlined. More than 50% of the population of the most affected district have been internally displaced into 'protected villages',<sup>10</sup> thousands more have become refugees outside the country. Within Uganda they have very little access to subsistence farming, education, employment and cash income opportunities, or legal redress, or physical protection by the state.

Subsistence farming has been drastically curtailed by the military situation and the protected village policy. Although curfews and restrictions on movement are not applied consistently in these villages, people are generally unable to return to their own lands to farm and are able only to use those lands immediately around the protected village itself. A fieldworker describes how in January 2000 his protected village was visited by a military commander who urged inhabitants *'to be on watch and be careful of the presence of LRA rebels. He pointed out that LRA exist around the village in scores of numbers. Their "intention was to abduct as many people as possible to join them and that the rebels had landmines which they could plant anywhere – on the roads, footpaths or in gardens. With that the commander warned people not to rush very early in the morning to go gardening. As a precaution measure, the settlers in the camp were advised to move to their gardens late by 8.00 am or 9.00 am.*

Whereas prior to the war many families held their wealth in the form of cattle and other livestock, this source of economic security has been largely wiped out. The majority of cattle have been raided by warring parties since the mid 1980s. Often households lost dozens of head of cattle in one raid. According to one respondent this pushed a close family member to suicide; *'My brother drowned himself after National Resistance Army (NRA) took 100 cattle'*. In the 1990s the Lords Resistance Army at various times banned the rearing of pork, and anybody found doing so was liable to serious reprisals.

Hunting and gathering of wild foods, a further source of food and cash income, is frequently outlawed and always dangerous due to the risk of land-mines, and of being captured by rebels, or treated as a rebel by

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<sup>10</sup> An IRIN report of 24 July 2001 reported a WFP estimate of 480 000 people in the protected villages. It is not clear that this includes those who have been displaced but are in villages not receiving food assistance.



the army. That people do still engage in farming, hunting and gathering activities, is clear from the range of foods available in many of the village market places, but the quantities are much reduced, resulting in the need for food relief. However, relief supplies from the World Food Programme are both inadequate in themselves, and very erratic due to the fluctuating security situation.

Educational opportunities are very limited, with no secondary schooling available outside district capitals, and extremely limited access to tertiary education.<sup>11</sup> This contributes to the tensions between adults and youth; older people are perceived as better educated because they '*grew up when education was at its peak under the British*'. Even if someone succeeds in completing secondary education, the job opportunities are limited, the more so as policies of decentralisation have had the effect of ethnicising government positions at many levels. International NGOs represent perhaps one of the few growth sectors in the local economy.

For adult men with children, the economic context and the lack of schooling available has made it very difficult to pay school fees and associated costs, thus undermining one of the key responsibilities of the 'masculine' role.

While the protected villages with their high population densities may have increased sexual opportunities for some, they have also created a number of obstacles. At a most basic level accommodation in protected villages is overcrowded and does not allow the privacy which characterised pre-war settlement and accommodation patterns. For male youths who engage in sexual activity with female counterparts there is a high risk of being accused of defilement (sex with an under age female) with the risk of a six year prison sentence if convicted, and very costly out of court settlements to avoid such a sentence. A further risk is in contracting HIV/AIDS. Over the course of the war Gulu district has risen through the ranks from having one of the lowest HIV rates in the country to having one of the highest. For those who wish to get married, the absence of cattle or cash as the basis for bride-wealth payments resulting from over a decade of cattle rustling and raiding represents a considerable obstacle. As one youth wrote in a poem:

*'Shall we marry  
Really when our animals  
Scuffled their ways  
To the so called strongmen  
With dry woods on their shoulders*

*That burnt the whole village fallowland  
Even introduced us to beg  
For the mouths from neighbours?'*

Where men do manage to marry and have children, their role as protector of physical security is severely compromised. Despite a military presence in many of 'protected villages' rebels raid with impunity, seizing men, women, children and properties at will.<sup>12</sup> While the state still denies the individual the right to protect his own family (for example by refusing to allow people to leave the protected villages and move back to their home areas), it fails to provide a satisfactory substitute. There is often no response to civilian demands for protection. In August 1998, for example, when rebels attacked an area of Gulu town only minutes from the bank where soldiers were stationed on guard, civilians who ran to request their support were chased away. The army came to the area at around 5 am, some three hours after the attackers had gone, leaving a number of dead behind and having abducted several more (interviews conducted with local councillor, 9 August 1998). This pattern is repeated in many protected villages where deliveries of food relief supplies are frequently followed by rebel raids. Despite this being an oft-repeated pattern, few steps are taken to prevent it happening.

Although men can become directly involved in providing physical protection through joining the homeguard or local defence units, and there are periodic recruitment drives to bolster the homeguards, there are also widespread fears that young men recruited as home-guards will be forced into the army and sent far afield.<sup>13</sup> As one fieldworker reported during September 1998, when there was a recruitment drive throughout Gulu district, *'it came as a surprise when the recruitment into the Local Defence Unit was announced. Many able-bodied youths went into hiding and many were reluctant to come to the trading centre... however, I learned that 20 people joined the exercise voluntarily. ...the*

<sup>12</sup> Abduction of children is one of the features of this war which has been most commented on, though generally to emphasise the evil nature of the LRA rather than to highlight the state's failure to provide adequate protection from them. UNICEF figures suggest at least 8,000 children have been abducted during the course of the war, with only a small proportion returned to date. Some are used to carry looted goods for some distance before being released, but many have been drawn into the LRA's activities, including being involved in many of the atrocities conducted.

<sup>13</sup> These fears were heightened in 1999 when Uganda's involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo became evident. Our interviews with returned soldiers suggested they also had some basis. One incident reported to us was of a soldier who had returned from the DRC and on 18 February 2000 shot dead two people in a fit of madness.

<sup>11</sup> There is now discussion about the creation of an agricultural University in Gulu.

*general mood of the people was appalling. They feared that Uganda was waging a wide-scale war against Sudan the host country of LRA. They didn't want the bloody exercise. The visit of MP, the Honourable \_\_\_ made it clear that the exercise was a voluntary one and no force should be used. (this) cooled the atmosphere.*

## **6. Does this situation increase the likelihood of violent behaviour by non-combatants?**

It is clear that in a context of protracted conflict non-combatant men's ability to achieve some of the key elements in the normative model of masculinity into which they have been socialised is severely reduced. They experience a loss of domestic and political power, they cannot exercise military power, and their capacity to create a family and then provide for and protect it has been much reduced. But does this make them more liable to violence?

While it is easy to see that men who are able to conform to the model do benefit to an extent in terms of the power they can wield over women, children and youth, it is as important to see that the expectations are onerous and indeed many men express a sense of being oppressed by them. This is particularly true for the economic expectations. Not only are they almost impossible to meet in the northern Ugandan context, but the struggle to at least partially meet them leaves men with virtually no possibility of pursuing their individual aspirations.

It is also important to understand that to break out of these expectations is not really an option: men are unable to behave according to it, but they cannot afford not to try to live up to it. The social and political acceptance which comes from being seen to conform to the norm, and the access to a variety of resources which this facilitates, is critical in a conflict situation. As Kabeer has argued, access to intangible resources (solidarity, contacts, information, political clout) 'is likely to be particularly critical in situations where market or state provision of social security is missing or where access to these institutions is imperfectly distributed' (1994: 280).

There is much to suggest a link between feelings such as humiliation, resentment, oppression and frustration, and the use of violence. Moore uses the term 'thwarting' for this dynamic: 'Thwarting can be understood as the inability to sustain or properly take up a gendered subject position, resulting in a crisis, real or imagined, of self-representation and/or social evaluation'... thwarting can also be the result of contradictions arising from the taking up of multiple subject positions, and the pressure of multiple expectations about self-identity or social

presentation' (1994: 66). Foreman makes the same argument when he argues that 'fear of ridicule, of being seen as 'less than a man', lies behind much of the violence men inflict on strangers or their wives' (Foreman 1999: 20).<sup>14</sup> Equally, he argues that resentment is often manifested in anger and violence towards women and other men' (ibid, 1999: 14).

Some of the examples which follow also indicate that it manifests in violence towards self as well. In all cases the links between frustrated expectations and violence very apparent. Example 1 describes the suicide of a young man who feared being imprisoned for 'defilement' of a young woman. Example 2 an incident of homosexual violence which is portrayed as an act of revenge against a relative of the victim. Example 3 details an explosion of inter-personal violence by a man who was both humiliated by his wife becoming pregnant by another man and by his mother-in-law's refusal to repay the bridewealth. Example 4 outlines a man's suicide as being due to humiliation at his inability to exercise control over his wife. Examples 5 and 6 describe how people seek to reassert their right to protect themselves through resort to mob justice of a violent nature.

### **Example 1: Suicide**

One fieldworker described the case of an 18-year-old male who committed suicide by hanging himself after being caught playing sex (having intercourse) with his niece, Miss Alice, a 15-year-old girl, who was a pupil of primary six in P7 school.

*When I investigated the cause of the death of OJ, his friend Mr. Obol says that OJ said he was going to be put to prison for seven years and paying 1,000,000 shillings for the spoiling of the study of Alice.<sup>15</sup> Hence he thought locally to hang himself from a mango tree at 6.30pm on the 8/5/99 very close to his house.*

*According to the feeling of the people around and the relatives are really not happy because they say OJ must not (should not have) hung himself, a sit-down discussion would (have) finished the case. The lady (Alice) on the other hand has been*

<sup>14</sup> An argument behind the frequent assertion that homophobic men are often those who are least secure in their own sexuality and fear the ridicule of being exposed as inadequate.

<sup>15</sup> It is common practice for the parents of a girl who falls pregnant while still at school to demand compensation from the father of the child on the argument that she will have to stop or at least interrupt her schooling to have the child, thereby causing them a loss of their financial investment in her education.

transferred to Kitgum to avoid shame all the time to the lady.<sup>1</sup>

### **Example 2: Male rape**

Mr. Komakech son of Oloya Andrew, who is 35 years old, in the camp of A... on the 29.08.99 at 2.00 am at night was caught red-handed playing homo-sexual with a boy called Okello (12 yrs) the son of O. Alex of LCI L\_\_\_ A\_\_\_. The man became caught after people hearing the cry of the boy very loudly. When people came he ran away but the boy said it was Komakech who forced him (and) played his Anus which became swollen. Komakech was looked for and was arrested. When he was asked why he did it, he said he complained to be drunk. Komakech formerly was the husband of the aunt of this boy and the women died with AIDS her name was Lucy. Immediately Komakech was taken to LCI and the LCI Chairperson transported him to police – Gulu. And at the moment he is in the prison of Gulu waiting for Court. The boy was brought to Gulu Hospital for Blood Check and I have not yet got the report from the medical personnel or the boy.

### **Example 3: Violent dispute over bride-wealth**

In one incident described by a fieldworker, and closely related to bride-wealth, a non-Acholi businessman went to his mother-in-law to demand for refund of his money since the wife had become pregnant with another man... but the mother-in-law said there was no money for refund. He returned to the mother-in-law's house during the night and pushed his way into the house. Then, using a panga<sup>1</sup>, he began to cut his mother-in-law and his wife's little sister, and when he was sure that those people were in a critical condition, he vanished away. And all the attempts by Police to trace him were fruitless. The next morning those people were admitted in the hospital, and the little girl died instantly on reaching hospital. The mother-in-law died on the following day. When the woman's son arrived on the same day that his mother died he rushed to the house of his mother's attacker and immediately began to attack young children in revenge for the death of his mother and sister....

### **Example 4: Suicide due to humiliation at lack of control over wife**

There was a man called Opio. He always drank alcohol at 1\_\_\_ 1. When he came back from drinking he was completely drunk. The way

which he always followed passed via his mother's door. When he was passing he asked his mother in a loud voice 'Where is my wife?' because he always liked beating his wife when he was drunk. His wife has one child only. On that day he began to beat his wife, his wife ran away leaving him with the child. He went to his father's house looking for her... But he found that she was not there with his father, so he picked up his child and he began to go back to his house and as he was leaving he accused his father of changing his (the son's) wife into the Queen in that home. (He threatened that) He will show to them the action. Then he laid his child on the bed to sleep. His father said 'Opio don't shout you go and rest in your bed freely'. But Opio's intention was to die. At around 8.00 in the evening he swallowed the battery of the watch (Cawa). In the morning his child woke up and began crying but his father had died in the house.

### **Example 5: Mob Justice**

*9 January 1999: A group of thugs claiming to be rebels of the LRA went on a looting spree terrorising the village of I\_\_\_. They took advantage of the rebel raid at that village during Christmas period. Those thugs then began to move at nighttime pretending to be rebels to loot valuable items from the people of that village and the neighbouring village... but some people who are security conscious discovered that those people were not real rebels. Thus keen follow up was made and on the night of Friday at around 2:00 am when those thugs went on with their normal routine job of looting other courageous people followed them up from place to place and saw where they entered to sleep, and immediately went and reported to the Local Councillor of the village. So some energetic people were mobilised that night and they went and surrounded the place and in the morning they stormed it and arrested the two thugs. One of them was a well known boy of that village called Ongwech. When interrogation started going on he confessed of the offences that he had been committing in the village and he further revealed that he was in a group of about ten people, some of whom had gone to Kitgum (the neighbouring district) to sell those items they had looted from the villagers. Among the items that had just been stolen that night was a bicycle (sports bike) which was recovered from the house. Martha, the guardian of that boy Ongwech, pleaded in vain for her son to be spared (especially) when the villagers further learnt that... Ongwech had just been released from the police on the 24/12/98 on case of theft.*

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<sup>1</sup> A sharp instrument commonly used for cutting trees

*At around 6:00 am in the morning people armed with pangas, spears and logs, stones stormed the place of Martha. All the attempts by the Local Councillors (LCs) to restrain them from beating the two captured thugs was not possible. They started beating those boys from inside the house and when they saw that the house was too squeezed they brought them outside and burnt down the hut and destroyed even the wall of the hut and by the time the mobile police came with their patrol vehicle, to rescue the boys, all the LCs had injuries and the boys were dead. They were then taken to the mortuary of Gulu hospital. When I visited the scene, the whole place was a pool of blood as if an animal had been slaughtered and the huts had burnt down into ashes. The members of that family could not be seen except those who either participated in the beating or onlookers.*

At times this mob justice is directed at the military themselves and can be seen as an expression of the absence of a solid relationship of mutual trust between military and civilians, as in Example 6.

#### **Example 6: Civilian-military clashes**

*On the night of 23.10.98 a speeding hit and run Dyna<sup>2</sup> pick-up vehicle knocked dead a UPDF soldier who was on road patrol. The colleague of the soldier failed to identify the no. plate of the vehicle. Later, early in the morning at around 8.30 am on the 23.10.98 two armoured vehicles (known as Mambas) full of soldiers invaded Gulu main Taxi Park. To get that vehicle which knocked dead their colleague, they carried out a search all over the park harassing taxi operators within the park.*

*A driver called David was arrested by the soldiers, and taken in front of the Uganda Commercial Bank where their commander was; he was beaten, kicked and manhandled in a rough way on suspicion that he could be the driver who knocked their colleague dead.*

*Later the UBOA (Uganda Bus Operators Association) and GUTODA (Gulu Taxi Owners & Drivers Association) officials intervened to save him from the soldiers. The soldiers later boarded their vehicle and sped off toward their detach in K\_\_\_ promising to come back and continue looking for the culprit.*

I later made inquiry to find out why in particular that driver call David was targeted by the army from amidst the all people in the park. I was told by some driver that David was in the company of one driver called Kenneth who innocently on arrival of the soldiers in the park told one of his

colleagues who was driving and was knocked by the soldiers in a joking manner to knock them if they could not leave for him the way. So the soldiers took it to be further plan by the drivers to kill them once again using vehicles.

The examples given suggest that the disjuncture between expectations and the ability to live up to them go hand in hand with widespread feelings of fear, intimidation, humiliation, frustration and anger, which are often expressed in violence against self and others, in the forms of alcohol abuse, suicide attempts and domestic violence, and also in conflict between civilians and military. They also demonstrate a resort to psychological violence in the form of seeking to oppress less powerful individuals, notably youth and women.

That the psychological dynamics go beyond the arena of domestic violence and into the arena of war, is suggested by workshop participants who argue a link between the experience of humiliation and the perpetuation of war: *'the local population lose their human dignity; they feel unprotected by the national army and or rebel forces and that their lives are not valued. They become aggressive in self-preservation'*. Furthermore, *'people who get victimized take sides in the war with the spirit of revenging the atrocities against them or their families'* (ACORD 2000).

That they also make a connection between individuals' frustrated aspirations and decisions to join armed groups is clear from the discussion about discrimination against youth: *'they defy culture by joining war in order to achieve what they have been denied'*, and *'since they are denied economic opportunity by elders the youth take short cuts through taking up arms'* (ACORD 2000).<sup>3</sup>

#### **7. Does the model increase male vulnerability to violence?**

Given a link between frustrated expectations and violence it is not unreasonable to argue that 'thwarted' masculinity has made a contribution to a climate of conflict. While much of the evidence remains hidden in the domestic sphere, occasional outbursts of mob justice or a keen response to a military recruitment drive serve as indicators of this in the public domain.

Military behaviour, by contrast, is more clearly visible to the public eye, and it is here that the links between a model of masculinity and particular forms of conflict related violence are easier to chart. Some of the dynamics whereby this happens have already

<sup>2</sup> Dyna is the name of the make of vehicle.

<sup>3</sup> An argument also made by Large (1997)

been alluded to, notably the way in which cattle rustling/raiding/theft makes bridewealth payments impossible and creates a population of youth who can never be taken seriously because they cannot marry. More direct attacks on the most fundamental bases of adult masculine identity include rape of women (their wives, daughters and sisters), rape of men (themselves, brothers, fathers, sons), and abduction of their children.<sup>4</sup>

The wider process of militarisation has further undermined civilian men's sense of their own masculinity by creating a large economic disparity which favours the soldiers and disfavours the civilians. Virtually every settlement has a military detach within it or on its outskirts. The soldiers stationed here have considerably more disposable income than their civilian counterparts, and are able to attract local women as temporary wives, though they do not pay bride-wealth. Some parents encourage their children to become soldiers' wives (Dolan, 2000), and some believe that youth are attracted to joining the army in order to get 'free women' (ACORD 2000).

The tensions which this causes are considerably worsened by frequent incidences of rape. While this occurs at the hands of all parties, it is particularly bitter when the rapists are the very men supposedly protecting the civilian population (Example 7 below)

#### **Example 7: Rape by army soldiers**

One fieldworker reported how on 7 February 2000 members of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) entered a village in his area 'where displaced had gone to collect foodstuff. At 8.30pm one of the forces (UPDF) raped a very old mother of 70 yrs. She was at her home. According to information I collected from her she complains of pain in the lower part of her stomach. She says the soldier played sex with her for many hours (2 hrs). She could not make an alarm and he had a gun. According to her statement she is worried about being affected with AIDS (HIV) When I opened the cloth from her stomach, I found that it was swollen badly. This woman has got 50

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<sup>4</sup> The term 'victim' here is used in the sense adopted by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, namely to include relatives and dependants of victims of direct abuse and violence (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1998: 34). Whereas the TRC used it to ensure that women and children were given full consideration, I am using it to ensure that men are given full consideration as psychological victims. Surely the argument that 'it is difficult to separate the psychological pain of a mother whose child has been tortured from that child's physical and psychological pain' (ibid) holds true for men who witness atrocities being perpetrated against their wives and children?

*grandsons and granddaughters. And she has 8 children who are now very matured. Her husband was the late Mr. O.*

*On the 8<sup>th</sup> /02/2000 at 8.00pm another mother in the same village was also with another soldier raping her. She is called S D, she is 29 years old and she has one child. The woman is now very worried about being affected with AIDS. She was (forced) to accept sex for 1 hour. Now the woman is crying all the time for fear that she has been infected with AIDS.*

*Another woman on the 9<sup>th</sup>/02/2000 was also raped she is Mrs A M, 43 years old and she has 3 children. This soldier took 2 hours intercouring this old mother. At the moment she complains of the stomach pains, cervix pain and constant malaria. She is from the same village..*

*The case of rape became common within this area because UPDF had settled for 2 days. And at night they scatter to operate.*

*Another case also happened to a wife of Mr. O. who is called A N. She is 30 years old with 6 children... It was 7.30 pm that this soldier came and sent away the husband ...from his home and forced the wife to enter the house to play sex. This soldier took 10 hours to play sex with the wife of O. Now the woman complains of stomach pain and with a lot of worries of being affected with AIDS. She also complains of cervix pain due to over playing sex with her and might be the over size of the penis of the soldier.*

*The husband tried to boycott the wife (i.e. not have intercourse with her) but his parents advised him not to beat the wife because it wasn't her need (wish) to meet the soldier.*

*In conclusion, people in the camp and the few who go to collect food are really very worried and not happy because these (soldiers) are more harmful than rebels.*

In some instances the army does take disciplinary steps against soldiers who behave in this way, and in some instances this provokes the guilty party to extreme steps, as in the following example:

*A Home guard who was integrated among the UPDF soldier based at K\_\_\_ detach raped a women by the name Lucy on the above mentioned date. The Homeguard appeared in Lucy's compound and found a group of women eating. He then requested drinking water, after taking the water he told the people that they were very many therefore one of those women should direct him*

*through a path which goes up to the main road. So he requested Lucy to do that. He pretended to be somebody new in that area. When Lucy moved 100 m away he ordered her to take another path which goes down the valley and told her that if she shouted he would kill her. For a short while he ordered the women to lie down and (he) fucked her until late in the night. When the women came back home she told the story to the husband and the people of her home. The following morning on 4/3/2000 the soldier committed suicide by shooting himself dead when he was being looked for by the military personnel.*

However, it is more usually the case that when soldiers who are supposed to be guarding civilians break discipline, there is no redress. As one fieldworker reported

*The UPDF soldiers based at A\_\_ detach are giving a lot of embarrassment to the people in the camp by beating and raping. On the 10-2-00 a UPDF soldier came to the place of Agnes at night and hid himself behind the house. When Agnes was asleep he opened the door and flashed a torch. He then landed on the neck of the women and wanted to have sex with her forcefully but Agnes began to shout loudly for help. Then Ay-who is the cousin sister rushed to find out what was wrong with Agnes. On hearing foot steps coming from the neighbouring houses the soldier ran away.*

*The following morning the LCs followed the case up to the barracks and the woman identified one of the soldiers named O. But the Commanding Officer of the detach argued that the statement given by the woman was wrong because O did not go out that day. The case ended there just like that.*

Another described how in February 1999 a young woman was raped and shot dead by an army soldier: her relatives (impoverished subsistence farmers) were told by the army's public relations office to obtain a signed statement from the soldier's commanding officer before they would take action. Faced with this intimidation they were unable to take action, and by August there was still no progress on the case (personal interview with the relatives).

As workshop participants noted, *'when a woman is raped, the husband feels inactive to stand up and bring change (disempowered). He was supposed to protect her, but soldiers continue raping'* (ACORD 2000).

Rape of men is less common, but has occurred, with particular prevalence in the early 1990s, when

respondents reported an increase in STDs, allegedly due to 'indiscriminate rape of men (*tek gungu*)<sup>5</sup> and women by NRA'. The level of stigma attached is even higher than that associated with female rape. While ACORD has been able to work closely with many female rape victims, it has found it almost impossible to get known victims of male rape to discuss it in any way at all. In the workshop, participants described how *'when a man is raped it takes away his manhood and he fails to act to bring change'* (ACORD 2000).

The model of masculinity makes non-combatant men vulnerable to the use of violence by combatants, and the process of undermining men's sense of masculinity becomes a key channel for some men to exercise power over other men. In a sense interactions between combatants and non-combatants around masculinity are something of a zero sum game; the civilian's loss in masculinity is the combatants gain. In other words, it is possible for particular tactics to simultaneously reinforce the perpetrators' and undermine the victims' sense of masculinity.

#### **8. In what ways does the state benefit from the hegemonic model?**

The interaction between individual behaviour and group intention is a complex one. It is highly unlikely that the individuals involved in acts which undermine other men's sense of masculinity do not understand the impact of their actions on the men who are their direct or indirect victims. But does this mean that the state, through military and other channels, deliberately manipulates the hegemonic model as a means to military and political ends?

There are several major elements of the state's behaviour in the northern Uganda which suggest that this may be the case. At the most basic level, the state bears considerable responsibility for the social and economic conditions which make it difficult for individuals to live up to expectations of masculinity. Many acts of violence and abuse against civilians, including rape, abduction and looting, are not dealt with in any meaningful sense. Indeed, the state has itself been a frequent culprit, and has arguably used these practices as instruments of war at particular times.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the state is directly responsible for the increasing militarisation of the war zone in the form of 'protected villages' – but also for failing to provide adequate protection within these.

<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to give a literal translation, but essentially means to rape someone while they are bending over.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the examples and discussions about the use of rape in Mozambique, Rwanda, Chad, Liberia and elsewhere in Turshen & Twagiramariya (1998).

At a more insidious level, the state has consistently promoted a militarist approach to dealing with the LRA (at least in terms of rhetoric and visible militarisation) which goes hand in hand with preventing the emergence of alternative forms of masculinity based on practices of negotiation, reconciliation and non-violence. Repeated calls for negotiation from people in northern Uganda have been as repeatedly ignored by the State. The President's frequent statements that he will not negotiate with Kony because he is a 'madman' also implicitly suggest that he regards those who would try to negotiate with Kony as mad. Similarly, the Government's approach to developing an amnesty bill in 1999 demonstrated a singular lack of commitment to the idea, despite the overwhelming support for it expressed by people in northern Uganda themselves.

From a more strategic perspective, it can be argued that the Ugandan state may see benefits in sustaining a context of conflict which helps to justify the maintenance of a large military force for deployment in other regional theatres of war (most recently the DRC and South Sudan). From such a perspective, addressing the situation of northern Uganda is not a relevant consideration, indeed, the creation of a context which empowers military and disempowers civilians may be seen as strategically justified. The selective way in which discipline is applied to soldiers who engage in acts of violence against civilians suggests that playing on soldiers' sense of masculinity is used both to reward them and to control them.

Similarly, given a belief system which portrays the north as a threat to the south, the state may see benefit in the creation of a disempowered male population which turns violence on itself rather than against the state, and in the maintenance of a context of violence which justifies military intervention and the strengthening of army control over the civilian population in the area.

## **Discussion & Conclusions**

### **Masculinity or Masculinities? Does conflict reinforce a hegemonic/normative model?**

The study of masculinities and their relationship to violence is important in a number of ways. Firstly, it reflects a healthy concern not to reduce the equation between men and violence to simple biological determinism. Secondly, it aims to dispel the notion that there is only one way to be a 'real man'.<sup>7</sup> The

very notion that there are masculinities rather than a single masculinity acknowledges that there are potentially many ways 'to be a man'. Much of the literature has set out to prove this by demonstrating empirically the great diversity of lived experiences which cannot be described as conforming to hegemonic models of masculinity, and which suggest the reality of multiple masculinities. However, it should be clear by this point that lived experiences and lived expectations are two very different things.

The lived experiences of men in northern Uganda are very heterogeneous; whereas in a peace time context it was possible for a majority of men to attain a reasonably close match between expectations and experiences, war sees an increasing heterogeneity of experiences and growing polarisation between those who are able to attain the markers of masculinity and exercise the power which these bring, and those who are unable to fulfil expectations and are thus deeply disempowered. Some (most clearly the youth) have little power whether in the domestic or the political/public sphere, others exercise considerable power in their domestic sphere over their wives and children, but little power over other men, others (notably military) exercise power in all spheres and over both men and women.

Paradoxically the increasing heterogeneity of experience goes hand in hand with a further homogenising of expectations; while marriage and fatherhood, provision and protection become harder to achieve, they do not become less desirable as a result, in fact they become more desirable as they appear to provide anchors and points of leverage in the midst of economic, social and political uncertainty created by war. The attainment of different components of the model creates a hierarchy among men – and a man's position in this hierarchy is not completely fixed. Although it has become ever more difficult to do this in a civilian context, and levels of domestic violence bear witness to this, it remains possible in principle to attain a full masculine identity, and social expectations are fully in support of this. Individuals subscribe to the model for economic and psychological survival reasons, and their family have a vested interest in ensuring that they do so for economic security reasons. Militarism provides a route for some, with full support from a state policy of increasing militarisation and associated recruitment drives into both home guards and the army itself.

Under these circumstances the space for multiple masculinities largely collapses. The destruction of education opportunities has removed one avenue for alternative forms of achievement, as has the destruction of an economic environment in which it

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<sup>7</sup> The possibility of multiple masculinities has long been explored in psychoanalytic and sociological theory, as reviewed by Connell (1995; chs1-3).

is possible to become somebody through wealth. Attempts to promote alternative visions of how to resolve the situation are ridiculed both implicitly and at times explicitly; implicitly by policies of non-protective militarisation, explicitly by the utterances of various key leadership figures. Even if people were able to pursue one or more of these alternative sources of identity, a national level populist discourse which links key sources of identity (e.g. sexuality, nationality and being 'African') serves to further restrict the room for individual manoeuvre. For example, a Ugandan doctor who did not marry would have a difficult life, however brilliant he might be; similarly, a politician. With this ever narrower horizon and fewer and fewer windows of opportunity, what people are left with as sources of identity and power is each other. The war has not led to the emergence of alternative masculinities, rather to the bolstering up of a hegemonic model.

This model of masculinity is shown to be relational not just between men and women, but between men and men. While masculinity is articulated in terms of how it differs from femininity, between men it is lived as a zero sum game which allows power differentials between them, notably between military and civilian men, to be established. Whereas women cannot be removed from the achievement of a masculine identity, the removal of other men is a key part of that process. The very sources of power for men contained in the prevalent model of masculinity are also the roots of their vulnerability, generating the possibility of any man being both a perpetrator and a victim of violence. It is therefore not surprising that the bundle of ideas which goes to make up masculinity exercises such a hold over men – sufficient to prompt many into acts of suicide when they find that they cannot succeed within the only sphere of influence which remains open to them, and to prompt others into acts which demonstrate their power relative to other men; rape, pillaging etc.

This points to a critical issue in discussing the relationship between masculinity and violence. Although there appears to be a correlation between 'masculinity' and violence, the use of violence is probably better understood as a potential means to achieve an end, namely masculinity, rather than an integral component of that masculinity. While the hegemonic model of masculinity is a complex animal involving multiple roles and behaviours (and there are some paradoxes within this, such as the compatibility of beating your wife for stepping out of line and providing her with protection) there is relatively little within the model which explicitly encourages or celebrates the use of violence. Rather there is a kind of loud silence on the issue.

Within the civilian population it is the thwarting of men's wish to achieve masculinity which appears to reduce them to acts of domestic violence; violence becomes a last resort of those who are unable to achieve 'masculinity'. Within the military on the other hand, the institutional framework and the removal of soldiers from more general social networks to an extent promotes the use of violence as an easy route to masculinity. Those in the military gain in domestic power as they are in a stronger position to provide economically and to protect militarily, and they enjoy military power and social status over other men at the same time. The resort to violence by military can be seen as a conscious or subconscious strategy to exercise control over civilians which is effective in that it strengthens the perpetrator's masculinity through weakening that of the victim.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, their individual aspirations to power over others (for they too are by and large from opportunity deprived backgrounds) go hand in hand with the state's need for control over the population in general.

The normative model is thus shown to have considerable destructive power which can be manipulated by the state for purposes of social control and creating more space for political and military manoeuvre – and the nexus of 'masculinity', power, violence and conflict begins to come into focus. Within this nexus it is impossible to dissociate power relations between individual men from the power relationships existing between individual men and the state. The gap between individual psychology and state level power plays is bridged.

### **Implications for interventions in the area of masculinities**

It is only in the last decade that gender 'experts' in development organisations have really attempted to view gender as a relational issue, let alone make tentative attempts to address issues of masculinity (Oxfam, 1997:2-7). For a whole raft of reasons there is resistance from both men and women to 'mainstreaming' men in gender debates (Chant & Gutmann, 2000:16-21). Despite the explicit recognition in some theory of the role of social power and authority structures in determining masculinities, the debate has been skewed towards discussion of the ways in which masculinities allow men to exercise power over women and away from the power they give men over other men – not surprisingly, given that both feminist women and

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<sup>8</sup> That this vulnerability is deliberately targeted is clear from many descriptions of rape in war situations in which the husband or father is forced to watch their wife or daughter being raped. In other words, it is not merely the sexual act which is gratifying, but the capacity to humiliate another man at the same time.



sexist men stand to lose from an awareness of differentiation among men. This rather two-dimensional vision of masculinity as an inter-sex rather than intra-sex issue has hindered awareness of the many ways in which normative models of masculinity can be manipulated for political ends, particularly for sustaining contexts of conflict.

To the limited extent that present day peace-building and peace education initiatives address the relationship between masculinities and violence, they reflect this lack of theoretical and empirical scrutiny, and fail to situate the link between masculinities and violence within a more complex nexus of masculinity, power, violence and conflict.<sup>9</sup> The findings of this paper suggest a number of key issues which need to be taken into account if that nexus is to be undone:

Firstly, men's lived experiences are heterogeneous. Even if in a particular context they share a model of masculinity, there is a need to differentiate their personal positions by age, marital/social status, class etc.

Secondly, the dominance of a single model of masculinity at the expense of multiple masculinities makes men more vulnerable to acts of violence against themselves and their families.<sup>10</sup> Promoting multiple models of masculinity along less sexist, heterosexist and adultist lines, would reduce the incentives for the use of violence by armed forces.<sup>11</sup>

Thirdly, this dominance can be taken as an indicator of a 'weak state', in several senses: a weak state lacks the political will and/or capacity to provide a context of security and protection of rights within which it would be less imperative to adhere to a normative model, and within which multiple masculinities could emerge. Also, a weak state will actively reinforce a model of masculinity as a political strategy in the absence of the mechanisms of legitimacy available to a stronger one. Interventions to promote alternative masculinities must simultaneously address the role of the state in

undermining these alternatives - in particular in failing to protect its own citizenry, failing to support for non-military solutions to conflict, and linking masculinity to other questions of identity.<sup>12</sup>

Fourth, hegemonic models of masculinity are manipulated by states, notably by linking masculinity with other key markers of identity such as ethnicity and race. Interventions to work with men to develop alternative masculinities should not only challenge sexist, adultist and heterosexist assumptions and stereotypes which underpin the model of masculinity for individuals, but also seek to break the connections with ethnicity and race which provide politicians with so much leverage over individuals and groups.

Fifth, the fact that conflict reinforces a hegemonic model of masculinity both confirms and contests the notion that war results in a 'crumbling social fabric'. It confirms it to the extent that as the possibility of alternative masculinities is reduced so the number of threads which go to make up the social fabric is also reduced. It contests it in the sense that some of the central threads of the social fabric are reinforced - at least as ideas if not in practice.

Finally, and linked to the previous point, the fact that conflict reinforces a hegemonic model of masculinity goes a long way to explaining why the gains in women's emancipation which some have attributed to the social space created by war situations, are largely illusory. Interventions which seek to capture this emancipation are therefore flying in the face of the overall dynamic of post-conflict reconstruction. If anything, given that the coming of peace will be associated with opportunities for civilian men to reclaim their masculinity, we should not be surprised to find ostensibly empowered women pushed back into the kitchen within a very short period. Interventions which hope to secure women's emancipation must also ensure that men have alternative sources of domestic and political power and credibility beyond a position as husband and father.

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<sup>9</sup> For some debate on these questions, see the UNESCO report on 'Male Roles and Masculinities in the Perspective of a Culture of Peace (1997)

<sup>10</sup> As the UNESCO report suggests, 'Humiliation might not happen so easily if it were not for exaggerated ideas of masculine honour' (1997: 9)

<sup>11</sup> Foreman makes a similar argument with regard to the relationship between notions of masculinity and contracting HIV: 'all men are threatened by notions of masculinity that place them at risk' (1999: 25). He also argues 'that there is a close overlap between military and masculine values. To be a soldier is, above all, to be a man - to be strong, brave and aggressive... the language men use to describe sex is often similar to that of conflict and conquest' (1999: 157)

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<sup>12</sup> This responsibility is the basis of the political theories which inform current trends in 'democratisation' and human rights: the state's right to the monopoly of violence derives from its capacity to protect all its citizens, not just in terms of immediate physical security, but also in terms of the ability to fulfil the non-violent expectations those citizens have been socialised into. Persistent state inaction in the face of assaults on its citizenry, and inability to create a climate in which people can live according to their own expectations, in principle disqualifies the state from enjoying that monopoly.

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## Gender and War – a Theological and Ethical Approach

Dr. Theol. Anna T. Höglund, Uppsala University

### Introduction

During the First World War, the British author, Virginia Woolf, made the following observation:

I become steadily more feminist, owing to the Times, which I read at breakfast and wonder how this preposterous masculine fiction [the war] keeps going a day longer – without some vigorous woman pulling us together and marching through it.<sup>1</sup>

*Woolf saw clearly, as have many women before and after her, how gender and war are connected in many ways. In Western tradition the stereotyped vision of war has been persistent: Women are supposed to be the outsiders of war. War is men's business. They go to the front, they do the fighting, they take the risks and make the decisions. Women stay at home, take care of the children and keep the home fires burning, waiting for the soldiers to come home. But gender does not determine whether or not a person is an outsider of war. In different respects, women have always been part of war. We can distinguish different roles, such as camp followers (prostitutes, providing sexual services to the*

*soldiers), nurses in combat, soldiers (in earlier times disguised as men) and, finally, as housewives and sweethearts, waiting for the men back home. Some of these roles, in particular, have served as a support to war and militarism, above all the complementary roles of waiting wives and sweethearts.<sup>2</sup>*

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century we can find examples of how women have formed the majority of the world's peace movements - some of which have been distinctively female, such as Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). But even so, "real" peace making, in the form of summits, negotiations and disarmament conferences have mostly been (and still are) carried out by men.<sup>3</sup> This becomes intelligible through a gender and power analysis. Cultural views of femininity characterise women as naturally peaceful and non-violent. They also assign women to the private realm. Cultural views of masculinity assign men to the public sphere and to positions of power. Hence, men are responsible for all public affairs – in war and in peace, according to cultural gender constructions. Being mostly excluded from high-level politics, women have searched other forms of political action.

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<sup>1</sup> Woolf, Virginia, *Collected Letters*, vol. 2., letter 748, p. 76, ed. Nicolson, N. & Trautman, J., New York: Harcourt Brace and Javonovich 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Enloe, Cynthia: *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. South End Press 1983 p.5

<sup>3</sup> Ferris, Elisabeth: *Women, War, and Peace*. Research Report #14, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala 1993, p. 11.

One example is the women's peace camp outside the US Air Force base at Greenham Common in Great Britain that existed from the 1980s until the beginning of the year 2000.

But most of all, women experience war as victims. What women mostly experience in armed conflicts is loss: loss of property, loss of their means of livelihood, loss of family, loss of home and even loss of country. Furthermore, the majority of refugees after violent conflicts are women and their children. We can also see that after a war the number of widows increases, widows who are often left without any means to provide for themselves and their children. This is related to the fact that women also bear the greatest burden of the world's poverty. Pointing out that these circumstances of violent conflicts fall especially hard on women and children does not imply that men do not suffer from the disasters of war, within or outside the army. Women, too, are part of the structures of domination often seen as a major obstacle to a just and peaceful world. Still, these unequal power structures are clearly, if not solely, connected to gender.<sup>4</sup>

Feminist research on war and peace concerns how gender is constructed in and through war, but also, conversely, how war is constructed by gender. In other words: How warlike values are reinforced through the behaviour normally expected of women and men. A feminist ethics on war and peace analyses whether there is an accordance between gender and the construction of an ethical theory defending military violence. Further, it concerns how patriarchy depends upon military violence, and therefore also on moral justification of its violent structures. Finally, feminist ethics could also concern moral agency; how military violence can be judged morally and how the moral judgement depends on and reflects gender construction in society.

In this paper, I will present the two dominant traditions within Christian ethics of war and peace, the just war doctrine and radical pacifism. I will then proceed by analysing the moral judgement of violence within these theories in relation to gender construction in war. The use of rape as a weapon in war will in my presentation work as the lens through which gendered moral agency is studied.

### **Theological and Ethical Aspects: The Just War Tradition and Radical Pacifism**

Within Christian social ethics the moral justification of war follows traditionally two main lines: the just war tradition and radical pacifism. The argument

concerning justified war includes two main questions: When would it be justified to resort to war? (the so-called *jus ad bellum* tradition) and: How should a war be conducted justly? (the so-called *jus in bello* tradition). Both these aspects of the just war tradition are today codified in international humanitarian law, for example in The Geneva Convention.

The *jus ad bellum* doctrine (which concerns the question of when it could be morally right for a state to resort to war) holds that war could be justified on condition that the following demands are fulfilled: the war is fought for a just cause, ordered by the right authority, fought with the right intention, resorted to as a last resort, and waged for the end of peace. Furthermore, the *jus ad bellum* doctrine holds that the military violence permitted should be in accordance with the principle of proportionality, i.e., war cannot be justified unless proportionality can be established between the political objectives and their price.

According to the *jus in bello* tradition (which concerns the means and methods in a justified war), warfare is justified insofar as it respects the claims for necessity (no violence which is not necessary for the ends in sight is justified) and military proportionality (in the end, more good will be done than undone, or a greater measure of evil will be prevented, through the military efforts). Primarily, though, the *jus in bello* tradition emphasizes the principle of discrimination, i.e., the claim that civilians should be kept outside of combat. A war, to be defined as "a war", is a fight between military forces, with military attacks directed only towards military goals. The civilian population, as well as individual civilians, should not be the object of attack. Indiscriminate attacks, i.e., those which are not directed towards a specific military objective, are prohibited.<sup>5</sup>

The principle of discrimination is the rule in war that is most frequently violated. This could be due to the fact that its interpretation is built upon the so-called "principle of double effect". This principle – developed in medieval catholic theology by, among others, Thomas Aquinas – holds that the death of civilians could be morally accepted in war, provided it was an unintended by-product of a legal military attack.

The just war tradition has had a tremendous impact upon Christian social ethics, but theologians have also renounced military violence on Christian

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<sup>4</sup> Readon, Betty A.: *Women and Peace. Feminist Visions of Global Security*. New York: State University of New York Press 1993, p. 14-15, 63-66.

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<sup>5</sup> For a Christian version of the just war tradition, see e.g. Ramsey, Paul: *The Just War. Force and Political Responsibility*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1968.

grounds. One line of argument is that pacifism is seen as a consequence of Christian discipleship. According to this tradition, the Christian person should follow the moral example of Jesus, of which resistance to military violence is one important part. It is assumed that the teachings of Jesus have direct political implications – they are not, as some non-pacifist theologians assume, merely relevant to private life. The *Imitatio Christi* ideal could be a means for establishing a new world order, based on service to, rather than power over, others.<sup>6</sup>

Christian pacifism could also be articulated on basis of eschatological reasoning. In this case the idea of the “peaceable kingdom” in Christian tradition is used both as a source for critique of society and politics, and as a goal for political and theological work. Finally, theological pacifism could be characterised by an emphasis on the contradictions between the Christian faith and the secular state. Violence is assumed to be contradictory to Christian ethics, and as violence seems to be a necessary part of every society, the Christian person must reject or withdraw from society as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

### Gender Construction In and Through War

How do these examples of Christian ethics reflect gender construction in war? In order to answer that question, we need first to examine the way gender identity is shaped in and through war. I will confirm the construction of gender in war by way of three themes, namely *labour division*, *complementary gender identity making*, and *dichotomous thinking*.

With regard to the labour division, we can state that after biological reproduction, war is perhaps the arena where division of labour along gender lines has been the most obvious. This has also led to the assumption that this division is absolute and natural, as it seems to be connected to the biological sexes.<sup>8</sup> The division of labour in war is rooted in two basic assumptions: first, that there is a clear line between “combatant” and “non-combatant”, and second, that geographically there is a real place called “the front”. The notion of “combatant” and “non-combatant” plays a central role in the construction of masculinity and femininity. Military education is often characterised by denial, suppression and

devaluation of what is culturally regarded as “feminine” characteristics, such as empathy, sympathy, and gentleness.<sup>9</sup> This carries into the second thesis of my argument, namely, that the military system seems to be dependent on certain ideas of masculinity and femininity. Gender identity in war is shaped out of whether you take on one of two complementary roles: as combatant or non-combatant, the protector or the protected, being at home or at the front.

The notion of protector and protected in war must, however, be considered a myth. In the wars of today, with weapons of mass destruction which leave no clear line between combatant and non-combatant, everyone seems to be unprotected, independent of sex. Further, recent research shows that societies with a high level of military violence also have a high level of domestic violence. This definitely damages the image of men using violence to protect women and children. The more militarist a society, the more sexist its institutions and values. This could be observed in e.g. Nazi Germany and Chile under dictatorship.<sup>10</sup> According to women working in women's shelters in Serbia and Croatia, domestic violence in these countries rose by 100 per cent during the war in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.<sup>11</sup>

At the heart of the gender construction in war lies the old war laws, built upon the chivalric code, in which the knight is supposed to adore and protect women. The chivalric conventions of warfare still work to preserve and increase the gender construction in war. They give rise to modern notions of “romantic heterosexual warfare”, where the gendered division of labour and identity construction is central. The soldier is by definition male, whose duty it is to fight honourably (according to war laws and codex) against enemies of similar civic and gender status.<sup>12</sup>

At the very core of the above reasoning lies an important part of the Western tradition and philosophy, namely a dichotomous and binary thinking, in which everything is supposed to be divided into 'A' or 'not A'. The feminist philosopher, Karen Warren, describes this tradition as a “logic of domination”. This logic holds that *superiority justifies subordination*, concerning e.g. race, class, gender and species. A dualism is built up around

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<sup>6</sup> A Christian pacifism based on the *Imitatio Christi* ideal is developed by e.g. Yoder, John Howard: *The Politics of Jesus*. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 1972.

<sup>7</sup> For an example of Christian eschatological pacifism see Hauerwas, Stanley: *The Peaceable Kingdom. A Primer in Christian Ethics*. University of Notre Dame Press 1983.

<sup>8</sup> Cooke, Miriam & Woollacott, Angela (eds.): *Gendering War Talk*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1993, p. ix.

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<sup>9</sup> Seifert, Ruth: “War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis.” In Stiglmeier, Alexandra (ed.): *Mass Rape. The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press 1994, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> Reardon, Betty A., op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Stiglmeier, Alexandra (ed.), op. cit. p. xix.

<sup>12</sup> Allen, Beverly, *Rape Warfare. The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press 1996, p. 114.

dichotomy rather than continuity, exclusion rather than inclusion, and expressed in binary pairs as public/private, war/peace, front/home, combatant/non-combatant. In these pairs the second concept is not only subordinated to, but also in service of, the first one. The logic of domination has contributed to, as well as supported and maintained, patriarchy and its system of structural dominance, of which the war system is one important part.<sup>13</sup>

*If these dichotomies are revealed, one of the pillars of warism is dismissed. It could give rise to a reinterpretation and redefinition of gender roles in war. Warfare in (what we might call) today's post-modern world is beginning to put these spheres into question. Women do take part in wars as combatants today, and technically advanced weapons have eliminated the division of home and front and civilian and combatant. As these divisions can no longer be upheld, I argue, war becomes more difficult to justify. Post-modern wars have changed much of our previous understanding of both war and peace and the role gender plays in it. The conflict in former Yugoslavia can serve as an example. Beverly Allen writes:*

[In this war] where there is no 'front' and death finds you in the breadlines, water lines, and markets, gender roles are being radically redefined. Chores that in a patriarchal gender division of labour are traditionally assigned to women - chores, that is, having to do with domestic work and reproduction - have taken on traditional masculine values associated with heroism, risk taking, boldness, and courage.<sup>14</sup>

The most obvious form of gender construction in war is the frequency of rape used as a weapon in military conflicts. The feminist political theorist, Catharine MacKinnon, argues that women are indeed violated in many ways in which even men are. But women are also violated in ways men are not, or that are exceptional for men. These sex-specific violations are sexual and reproductive.<sup>15</sup>

Rape in war has long been seen as "part of the game"; a component of the unofficial rules of war. Violence against women in the conquered territory is conceded to the victor, according to the ritual rules of the game. Despite its commonality, rape in war has long been an invisible war crime. Gender violence has escaped sanction because it has been shielded in the private sphere. Military and political

leaders have dismissed rape as a private crime, a sexual act, committed by an individual soldier. Therefore, rape has not until recently been characterised as a war crime of the gravest dimension and prosecutable before the International Tribunal in the Hague.<sup>16</sup>

One function of systematic rape in war seems to be to display, produce and maintain *dominance*. Domination by men over women, but also, in some cases, domination by men over other men. The rape of some women sends a message to others: to women that they need protection by men, against other men; to men, as a symbolic expression of humiliation of the male opponents, telling them they have failed to protect "their" women. They are thereby wounded in their masculinity and marked as incompetent males.<sup>17</sup> In other words: According to a constructivist view on gender, rape in war is a way of constituting *superior masculinity for the perpetrator, subordinated femininity for the victim, and deprived masculinity for the male enemy*.<sup>18</sup>

Another purpose of rape in war is to bind warrior rapists to one another. This could be compared to gang rapes in peacetime, which is a mutual demonstration of masculinity and a wish to exercise power. But rape in war has also become a political institution, and as such it has strategic purposes. It is used as a means to break down the infrastructure of a society (where women become "prime targets" due to their central role in civil society); to serve as propaganda in war and, as was the case in former Yugoslavia, as a means of ethnic cleansing.<sup>19</sup>

It is of utmost importance to articulate the role gender identity plays in the dynamics of power that attend the commission of sexual abuses in war. What must be analysed is the relation between gender identity and power. In doing this it becomes clear that "attributes of masculinity always adhere to the perpetrator, whether that person is male or female, precisely because of that person's dominance over another person or group of persons. /---/ By the same token, then, attributes of femininity always adhere to the victim, whether female or male, precisely

<sup>16</sup> Copelon, Rhonda: "Gendered War Crimes: Reconceptualising Rape in Time of War." In Peters, Julie & Wolper, Andrea (eds.): *Women's Rights, Human Rights. International Feminist Perspectives*. New York & London: Routledge 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Seifert, Ruth: "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis." In Stiglmeier, Alexandra, op. cit. p. 58-59.

<sup>18</sup> Höglund, Anna T.: *Krig och kön. Feministisk etik och den moraliska bedömningen av militärt våld. (War and Gender. Feminist Ethics and the Moral Judgement of Military Violence.)* Uppsala Studies in Social Ethics #26, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 2001, p. 230-232.

<sup>19</sup> Seifert, Ruth: "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis." In Stiglmeier, Alexandra, op. cit. p. 56.

<sup>13</sup> Warren, Karen J. in Adams, Carol J.: *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*. Continuum, New York 1995, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Allen, Beverly, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> MacKinnon, Catharine A.: "Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights." In Stiglmeier, Alexandra (ed.) op. cit. p.184.

because of that person's subjugation to another person or group of persons."<sup>20</sup> Stating this is not to close one's eyes to the fact that most rapes, in fact, are committed by (biological) men towards (biological) women.

### Gender Construction and Moral Agency

Ethical and theological theories on war and peace both reflect and oppose cultural gender norms. Theories of justified war construct masculinity in a traditional way, where maleness is associated with violence and the male soldier. Pacifist theories differ in this respect. They reveal how masculinity can be constructed both as accepting violence and as renouncing it. They are thereby an example of what I prefer to name the "optional masculinity" in relation to violence that exists in the Western culture. "Optional masculinity" implies that masculinity could be constructed out of a broader spectrum than femininity; in this case, as both violent and pacifist. Pacifist theories, however, are not as culturally accepted as are the theories of justified war, as they represent a breach against cultural gender norms. This confirms that different masculinities exist in the same context, hierarchically ordered in relation to each other. Femininity, on the other hand, cannot (according to cultural gender views) be as freely constituted as masculinity. There exists a "determinate femininity" concerning the moral judgement of violence, implying that femininity is primarily constructed through renouncing violence. Feminist pacifism based on the concept of motherhood is one example of this.<sup>21</sup>

**To avoid the confirmation of "optional masculinity" and "determinate femininity", I chose not to analyse gender construction in moral agency in war out of the concept of motherhood, but instead to use the analysis of the function of rape in war presented above. From a feminist ethical perspective, rape in war could be used as a searchlight to reveal how ethical theory and moral agency is gendered. Rape in war is rarely discussed in ethical and theological theories. The rules of *jus in bello* could very well be interpreted in such a way, that the principle of discrimination, as well as the principles of necessity and proportionality, prohibits rape as a weapon of war. However, as rape is not explicitly named or discussed in Christian social ethics, even these theories have contributed to making rape "the invisible war crime". Furthermore, the earlier mentioned "principle of double effect", which holds that the death of civilians could be morally accepted in war, provided it was an unintended by-product of a legal military attack,**

<sup>20</sup> Allen, Beverly, op. cit., p. 27-28.

<sup>21</sup> Höglund, Anna T. op. cit., p. 249-250.

**has contributed to the view that rape is an unfortunate, unavoidable by-product of the war situation as such.**

Moral judgements have an impact upon whether wars are started and how they are conducted. In moral agency concerning violent conflicts, gender is constructed and constituted. The goal for a feminist ethics of war and peace, as I see it, is to question the legitimacy of military violence, to condemn abuses in war, but even to challenge cultural gender norms. The identification of masculinity with violence must be opposed, without falling into the pitfall of complementary gender views, where non-violent men should be complemented with violent women.

War can no longer be apprehended as an event. Rape in war shows how violence in times of conflict is related to violence committed in peacetime. Neither gender categories, nor war and peace, are in today's post-modern world as binary and simplistic as they have traditionally been – and as they are mostly reflected in the ethics of war and peace. Postmodernity affects the understanding of war as well as the theorising about it. What characterises a post-modern understanding of gender and war is *fluidity*. Masculinity, femininity, war and peace, front and combat – all these concepts, can no longer be neatly defined, but are highly fluid and constantly changing.<sup>22</sup>

From this follows that the old rules that used to govern how wars were to begin and end, how peace was defined as distinct from war, who was to participate, who was the enemy, how the fighting was to be conducted, and what roles were ascribed to women and men during war time, all these old notions, are now put into question. In post-modern wars, there is no front, or, to put it another way, the front is everywhere. The combatants are everyone, and no one is any longer protected from violence through being a civilian, independent of gender.

*The conclusion we can draw from this is that we need a renewed ethics on war and peace. The old doctrines concerning when and how to fight are not applicable to wars in the post-modern era. The starting point of this new ethics must be women's and men's narrations of violent conflicts. In order to develop the ethical judgement of military violence, and to get an extended view of morality, we need to listen to people's experiences of immoral actions in times of war. Women do have experiences of war,*

<sup>22</sup> Concerning the concept "post-modern war" see e.g. Cuomo, Chris J.: "War is not an Event: Reflections on the Significance of Everyday Violence." In *Hypatia, Special Issue: Women and Violence*. Fall 1996; and Cooke, Miriam: "(Wo)-man, Retelling the War Myth." In Cooke, Miriam and Woollacott, Angela, op. cit., p. 177-204.

*but, as in many questions, women have been silenced also in the question of violent conflicts. It's time we start to listen, both to women's narrations of war and to their arguments for peace.*

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## **GOOD - Gender Orientation On Development**

GOOD started in 1990 during a gathering of gender advisors from European development and humanitarian aid agencies, which work together with the World Council of Churches. GOOD is based on a shared understanding of the importance of transforming development models. GOOD's role is to help the APRODEV agencies put policy into practice by learning from each other.

In April 2000, GOOD was incorporated into the APRODEV Secretariat with which a new phase started. Representatives at the APRODEV Annual Meeting in May 2001 agreed to rename the GOOD Working Group and call it the *Gender Reference Group* on GOOD. The Gender Reference Group has a broader mandate and will work in close cooperation with APRODEV's Policy And Advocacy Group. GOOD activities have now become an integral part of APRODEV's work programme.

An additional component has been added to the GOOD agenda, which is lobbying at the EU level. The aim is to include a gender perspective in the lobbying work of the APRODEV Secretariat on development cooperation policies.

Workshops and Annual Conferences organised by GOOD since 1990:

- HIV/AIDS - Grasping the reality of its gender dimension (2000)
- A GOOD look at Microcredit, Savings and Gender (1999)
- Breaking the Barriers to Dialogue with Partners on Gender (1998)
- Gender perspectives in Conflict Prevention and Resolution (1997)
- Living beyond our means...Gender, Economics and Development (1996)
- Leaving the monuments behind? Gender, Theology and Development (1995)
- Gender Planning Frameworks (1992)
- Initial survey of the gender policies and strategies of agencies (1991)

*APRODEV is the association of the 15 major ecumenical development and humanitarian aid organisations in Europe. Its associated member organizations are ICCO (NL), Global Ministries (NL), EED (D), Bread for the World (D), Christian Aid (UK), Church of Sweden, DIAKONIA (S), FinnChurchAid, DanChurchAid, Norwegian Church Aid, Icelandic Church Aid, Bread for All (CH), HEKS/EPER (CH), CIMADE (F) and Hungarian Interchurch Aid. Globally the APRODEV agencies work within the alliance of churches and humanitarian agencies of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation.*