

Gendered Peacebuilding, Leadership, and Public Authority

Exploring Gendered Divisions of Roles in Maluku, Indonesia

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Introduction

Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda has called for a gender perspective on peace and security. Too often, however, policymakers have used “gender” and “women” interchangeably,¹ which, in practice, has frequently meant placing the responsibility (and risks) of achieving gender equality solely on women’s shoulders. The WPS Agenda has been slow to engage with men and masculinities;² only in 2015 did UNSCR 2242 recognize the importance of engaging men and boys as agents of change.

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continues to hamper WPS efforts. In a global environment characterized by worsening conflicts, a resurgence of patriarchal authoritarianism, and backlash against women’s rights, we see an urgent need for the WPS Agenda to develop new approaches. Incorporating a masculinities lens will enable WPS efforts to mobilize men and boys more effectively as agents of change and counter the recurrent ways in which narratives of masculine strength and patriarchal dominance are used to justify gender inequality, violence against women, and participation in armed conflict.

Since then, several initiatives have demonstrated the utility of incorporating a masculinities lens into gender equality work and peacebuilding.³

However, a failure to more broadly recognize and address the complex links between masculinities, peace, and conflict

This is part of a series of three policy briefs that seek to contribute to ongoing conversations about the most effective ways to engage with men and masculinities to advance the WPS Agenda. Each brief builds on findings from the report published in 2023 by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS), *Beyond Engaging Men: Masculinities, (Non)Violence, and Peacebuilding*, providing additional nuance and insights into key themes.⁴



The series is based on a larger research project on masculinities, violence, and peacebuilding conducted in 2022 and 2023 by GIWPS and local partners in Aceh and Maluku in Indonesia and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the Philippines.⁵ A survey was administered to approximately 2,000 people in each location, with men and women roughly equally represented.⁶ The findings presented in this brief are drawn from responses by Moluccans to the survey and from focus group discussions and key informant interviews conducted in Maluku.

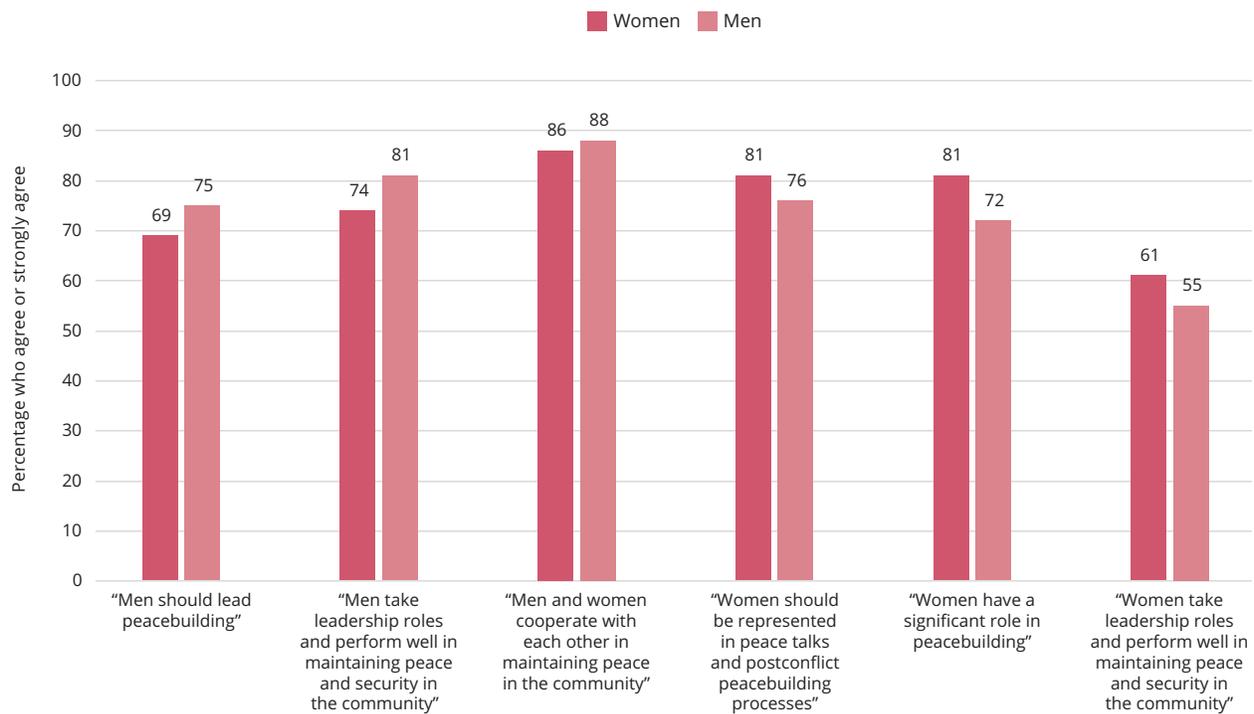
Results show that large majorities of male and female respondents in Maluku believe that men should lead peacebuilding, but both men and women see women as having important roles to play in peacemaking and peacebuilding. Furthermore, more than three-quarters of respondents see men and women as equally suitable for playing a wide variety of roles in society, from working in the rural economy to serving in the judiciary and in parliament. Based on our findings, we offer policy recommendations to governments, civil society organizations, and the designers of gender-focused programming. These recommendations are designed to bolster efforts to achieve gender equality and sustainable peace.

Key Findings

- Men and women agree that they should cooperate in building and maintaining peace, but both groups also tend to define men as leaders of this partnership. While women hold more expansive views of their own roles, they continue to affirm men's leadership capacity at higher rates than their own.
- Men appear to find it easier to envision women as beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts than as leaders of them.
- Men see almost all roles of public authority as equally suitable for men and women.

Men and women agree that they should cooperate in building and maintaining peace. Both groups also tend to define men as leaders of this partnership. While women hold more expansive views of their own roles, they continue to affirm men’s leadership capacity at higher rates than their own. Men and women agree at high rates (88 percent) that “men and women cooperate with each other in maintaining peace in the community.” Many men, however, do not appear to view this cooperation as an equal partnership. As our questions suggested progressively more expansive roles for women, men’s rates of agreement fell substantially (see figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Male and female respondents’ rates of agreement with statements relating to the gendered division of peacebuilding roles



For instance, while a large majority of male respondents (88 percent) agree that men and women generally “cooperate” to keep peace and security, fewer male respondents say that women have a significant role in peacebuilding efforts (72 percent) and far fewer affirm women’s capacity for leadership roles specifically (55 percent).*

Further, most male respondents in Maluku (75 percent) agree that men should lead peacebuilding efforts, and they also affirm men’s leadership at rates far higher than they do for women’s leadership. No less than 81 percent of men say that men do well in leadership roles, but no more than 55 percent say the same for women.

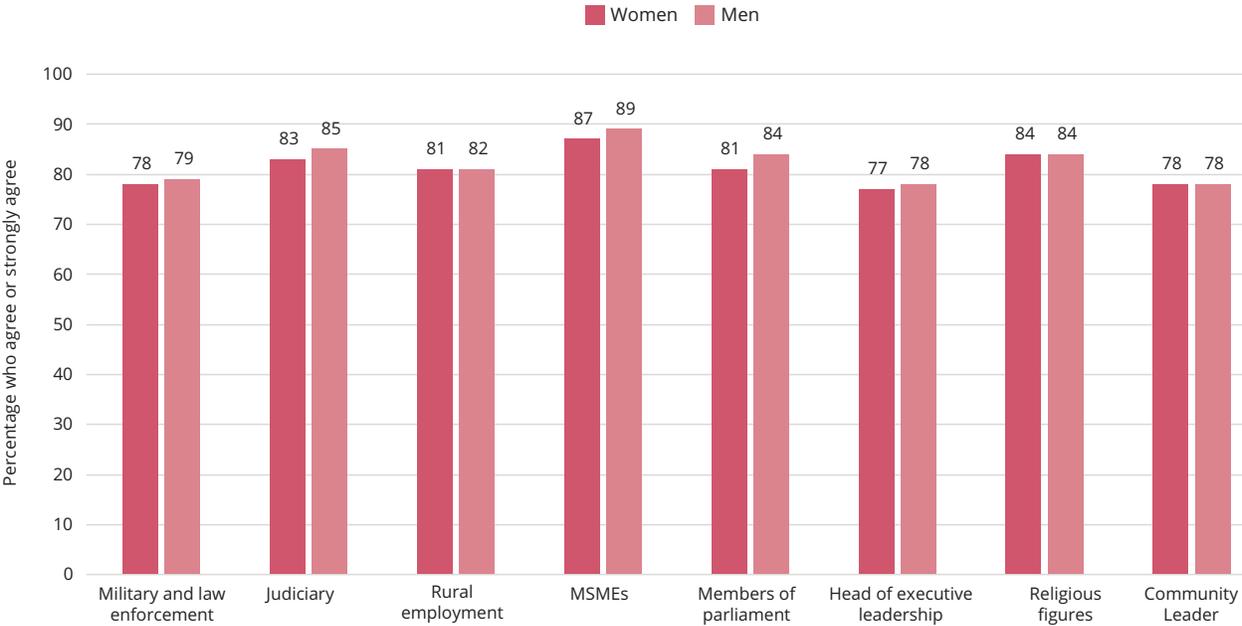
* We note here a caveat related to the phrasing of these survey questions. The questions get at two things simultaneously: whether men/women take leadership roles and whether they *perform* those roles well. Thus, the discrepancy between men’s views about men’s leadership and women’s leadership could be a reflection of women’s actual levels of participation in leadership roles. However, given response patterns across other survey questions, we believe that interpreting this as evidence of unequal gender norms around women’s leadership is legitimate.

While women support women’s leadership at relatively higher rates than men do, they still affirm men’s leadership capabilities at higher rates than their own (see figure 1). This illustrates how, even when women are recognized as having a right to be present, leadership roles can continue to default to men.

Men appear to find it easier to envision women as beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts than as leaders of them. While no less than 80 percent of men agree that “peacebuilding efforts should improve the security and welfare of women and girls,” these rates of agreement are strikingly higher than men’s rates of agreement for our questions about women’s active participation. The differences between women’s rates of agreement for agent/beneficiary questions tend to be smaller than the differences that appear in men’s rates of agreement, which suggests that women, in every case, have relatively more expansive views of women’s “gender-appropriate” peacebuilding roles than their male counterparts.

In Maluku, men and women see almost all roles as equally suitable for men and women. Very few Moluccan men indicate that any public roles, ranging from community leaders to roles in the military, are more suitable for men than women (see figure 2).

FIGURE 2. Male and female respondents’ rates of agreement that roles are equally suitable for men and women (“MSME” stands for “micro-, small, and medium enterprises”)



In fact, women are commonly seen as the driving force in building and maintaining peace in Maluku because their social relationships serve as social capital. In the customary law of the Kei Islands, Larvul Ngabal, women are equal to men despite patriarchal influences that view women as communal property that must be honored and respected.

Policy Recommendations

Our findings inform the following policy recommendations for governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and gender-focused programming.

Governments

- ***Remove formal and informal barriers to women's political participation.*** The survey data shows that even when women are recognized as having a right to be present, leadership roles can continue to default to men. Governments should repeal laws, rules, and procedures that inhibit women's participation as voters, political candidates, and government officials. Specifically, local, district, and national governments should implement quotas for women, strengthen nondiscrimination policies in the civil service, and strive for gender parity in leadership positions.
- ***Support women's political participation at all levels.*** Our research underscores the need to create visible models of women's leadership in the public sphere to counter stereotypes of political leadership as masculine. Governments should provide funding for women's capacity training, scholarships for women's education in politics, and dedicated resources for women candidates.
- ***Expand men's view of "gender-appropriate" roles in leadership and peacebuilding.*** Our research shows that women have relatively more expansive views of "gender-appropriate" peacebuilding roles than men. Gender-sensitization training that increases awareness of masculine biases and mitigates stereotyping should be provided to all political leaders.

Civil Society Organizations

- ***Mainstream a masculinities lens across all peacebuilding programs.*** All peacebuilding programs must account for how patriarchal norms and masculinities centered on ideas of men's superiority recreate unequal gender dynamics. CSOs should conduct internal reviews to understand how existing programs might reinforce assumptions of male authority, followed by efforts to dismantle these assumptions and promote gender equitable policies internally and externally.
- ***Build local women's capacity and draw on local traditions to maintain peace and promote gender equality.*** Women often hold informal leadership roles, and much can be learned from the work they are already doing. Peacebuilding efforts by women in Kei Island, Central Maluku, Buru, and Ambon City receive insufficient attention and support, especially in light of the fact that they offer insights into good practices that could be replicated elsewhere. CSOs should

recognize and elevate women as leaders through additional capacity-building workshops. CSOs should also draw on local traditions and wisdom that support peace and promote gender equality. For example, the Pela Gandong School in Ambon weaves local wisdom into the curriculum to foster understanding and reconciliation and can serve as a model for other schools and programs.

- ***Offer gender-sensitization training to men in peacebuilding programs.*** Almost all peacebuilding programs work with men in some role: as recipients, as participants, and as leaders. Programs should cultivate new allies among these men and build their capacity for allyship through gender-sensitization training. Programs should also promote different forms of masculinities that support gender equality. Gender-sensitivity workshops targeting men should promote women’s meaningful participation by challenging assumptions of masculine leadership and providing resources for inclusive and gender-equitable leadership skills.

Local Wisdom: Ina–Ama

Local wisdom and traditions can also play a role in influencing gender norms and beliefs. In the case of Central Maluku, the traditional wisdom known as Ina-Ama, or “mother and father,” emphasizes the complementarity of men and women. For example, women are seen as the land and men are seen as the sky—between the two, there is cooperation and interdependence. If there is Ina, there is Ama, a view that underscores the relational nature of gender. The local wisdom of Ina-Ama is prevalent in *negeri-negeri* (customary villages) that are within the city of Ambon. Understanding such local traditions, beliefs, and customs is crucial in peacebuilding and gender equality efforts, because they fundamentally shape how individuals view gender, gendered roles, power, and authority.

Gender-Focused Programming

- ***Position women as leaders in peacebuilding efforts.*** Our data indicates that men support women as leaders in peacebuilding at lower rates than women support their own leadership capabilities. Beliefs among men must change. Applying a masculinities lens can facilitate transforming men's beliefs and social norms that undermine women's leadership. Programs should integrate a masculinities lens to identify how best to legitimize women who are already in informal leadership roles and bolster women's participation in formal leadership roles.
- ***Support men and women who already champion women's leadership.*** Providing support and resources to local activists and organizations who champion women is crucial to efforts to empower women as leaders. Programs should provide targeted funding, conduct capacity-building workshops, and facilitate organizational change to enable women to ascend to formal leadership positions. A masculinities lens can help identify potential male allies and how to increase their support for women as leaders.
- ***Incorporate safeguards to mitigate backlash.*** A masculinities lens should inform risk analyses before program implementation to ascertain how men and women in local communities are likely to react to changes in women's status. Programs should only pursue changes that women in the community desire and can be achieved without creating undue risk for them.

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 - 2 Duriesmith, David. "Engaging Men and Boys in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Beyond the 'Good Men' Industry." *LSE Women, Peace and Security Working Paper Series* (blog), December 5, 2017. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/wps/2017/12/15/engaging-men-and-boys-in-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda-beyond-the-good-men-industry-david-duriesmith-112017/>; and Wright, Hannah. "Masculinities Perspectives: Advancing a Radical Women, Peace and Security Agenda?" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22, no. 5 (2020): 652-674.
 - 3 Greig, Alan. "Men, Masculinities, and Armed Conflict: Findings from a Four-Country Study by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom." Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 2022. https://www.wilpf.org/mmffp_documents/men-masculinities-armed-conflict-findings-from-a-four-country-study-by-the-womens-international-league-for-peace-and-freedom-alan-greig/.
 - 4 Nagel, Robert U. Joshua Allen, and Kristine Baekgaard. *Beyond Engaging Men: Masculinities, (Non)Violence, and Peacebuilding*. Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2023. https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Beyond_Engaging_Men.pdf.
 - 5 We are indebted to our local partners: Intersectional Gender Research and Learning (InteGRAL) Asia; Conciliation Resources; the International Center for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS); PASKA Aceh; Mindanao State University; and Pattimura University in Ambon, Maluku. Their expertise was invaluable in shaping the conception, execution, and output of this project.
 - 6 The methodology and detailed case backgrounds can be found in Nagel, Allen, and Baekgaard, *Beyond Engaging Men*.

