Beyond Engaging Men:

Masculinities, (Non)Violence, and Peacebuilding

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Cover: A protester flashes the peace sign during a protest near the Presidential palace in Manila on asking for an end to hostilities in Mindanao island. February 18, 2009.
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Executive Summary

More than two decades ago, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The resolution was a historic recognition of women's unique experiences of conflict and an acknowledgment that gender equality is an integral part of international security and peace. Global support for the WPS Agenda has delivered nine additional resolutions, making it a cornerstone framework for international activists, policymakers, and researchers working to mainstream a gender perspective in peace and security efforts worldwide.

However, the transformative potential of the WPS Agenda has not been fully realized. Women remain severely underrepresented in peace processes. Between 1992 and 2019, women accounted for only 13 percent of negotiators, 6 percent of mediators, and 6 percent of signatories in peace processes globally.[1] Violence also continues to disproportionately affect women. The World Health Organization estimates that 30 percent of women globally have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence.[2] In crisis contexts, this rises to an estimated 70 percent.[3]

Several factors contribute to stalled progress, including a lack of meaningful buy-in from UN member states,[4] insufficient financing,[5] and a failure to engage with women other than as victims and survivors of conflict.[6] A growing body of research also highlights how the effectiveness of WPS efforts has been hampered by another obstacle: a failure to engage with men and masculinities.[7]

In policy circles, "gender" has often been synonymous with "women,"[8] and WPS work, in particular, has been reluctant to directly address the topic of men and masculinities.[9] Seeking to correct women's historic exclusion from security and development programming, this approach to gender-transformative work can, however, be problematic, as it places the responsibility (and risks) of achieving gender equality solely on the shoulders of women, who are asked to overcome, by themselves, the systems of power that marginalize them. It also impedes structural change because it treats gender as a feature of individual people rather than as a system of power that is deeply embedded in the everyday workings of institutions, organizations, and states.

Future WPS work needs not only to address how men and boys can be agents of change for gender equality and peace but also to engage with how narratives of masculine strength and superiority are used to justify gender inequality, violence against women, and participation in armed conflict.

To sharpen the effectiveness of WPS efforts in a global environment characterized by worsening conflicts, a resurgence of patriarchal authoritarianism, and backlash against women's rights, it is critical for the WPS Agenda to develop new approaches. Future WPS work needs not only to address how men and boys can be agents of change for gender equality and peace but also to engage with how narratives of masculine strength and superiority are used to justify gender inequality, violence

against women, and participation in armed conflict. The evidence showing how WPS goals are hampered by the failure to address men and masculinities is growing rapidly, but the policy world lags behind in terms of both awareness and action.[10] While United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2106 and 2242, the sixth and eighth of the ten WPS resolutions so far adopted, mention men and boys as agents of change,[11] most WPS efforts, including many WPS National Action Plans (NAPs), do not engage more substantively with masculinity.[12]

The research presented in this report contributes to bridging the gap between, on the one side, current WPS practices that focus mainly on women and, on the other side, a growing body of research that explores how efforts to improve the status of women are strengthened by engaging with men and masculinities.[13] Our report is based on a survey conducted in three conflict-affected contexts in Southeast Asia: Aceh and Maluku in Indonesia and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the Philippines. The report identifies the kinds of masculinity norms that are playing out in our three cases, how these masculinity norms are related to peace and violence, and how they shape women's ability to access power.

Our key findings have several important policy implications:

1. **Violence does not appear as a core quality of men's understanding of or investment in masculinity. Across all three cases, men consider being capable of violence the least important quality for being a man.**

    - Programs—whether working with men or with women or focusing on violence reduction in general—should not assume that all men are violent.

    - Local peacebuilding initiatives should leverage men's preference for nonviolence to increase men's participation in their programs.

2. **Men value being a protective family man who is strong but nonviolent, religious, and an economic provider.**

    - While these may appear to be "good" qualities, these norms often create, rely on, and legitimize inequalities between men and women. For instance, situating men as primary breadwinners for the family reinforces women's economic dependence on men. In their marketing materials, program goals, and funding decisions, programs should be careful not to reinforce norms and behaviors that may appear positive but ultimately rely on and reproduce women's subordination to men.

    - Programming around women's economic empowerment may be particularly susceptible to provoking backlash from men who value the role of economic provider and, consequently, may require additional safeguards. Incorporating a masculinities perspective in program design can make gender-transformative work possible by helping to anticipate how men are likely to react to changes in women's status and which changes will likely be perceived as more or less threatening.

3. **Women and men have similar attitudes toward patriarchy and gender roles across all three cases.**

   • Postconflict recovery and development programming should not assume that gender differences alone determine beliefs around patriarchy and violence. Such programming should also focus on how local institutions and intersectional conditions such as local religious, economic, and security factors shape and constrain individuals' beliefs, values, choices, and behaviors.

   • Policies and programs designed to tackle discriminatory gender norms cannot focus exclusively on men and, instead, must engage with such discrimination as a system of power and gendered relationships. Specifically, they must investigate and consider the reasons and incentives for women to uphold patriarchal structures.

4. **Women, especially in their roles as mothers and wives, play a significant part in shaping expectations of masculinity.**

   • Violence prevention programs need to work with men *and* women. Wives and mothers can be key allies in programs seeking to change men's beliefs and behaviors.

   • Gender-transformative interventions should include both community- and family-focused angles, taking care, however, to avoid burdening women with additional labor obligations.

5. **Male respondents express a desire for different expectations of masculinity.**

   • Participatory programs should engage with local men and boys to identify what different roles and responsibilities they desire and explore how these can support gender equality and sustainable peace.

   • Participatory programs on masculinities should also include women and girls because they, too, shape expectations of masculinity.

6. **In peacebuilding contexts, men and women agree that they cooperate in building peace, but both consistently identify men as leaders and women as more passive beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts. Similar trends exist with regard to public authority at large; men and women see many positions of power as meant for men, or for both men and women, but never for women alone.**

   • Gender-sensitization training should be mainstreamed in all peacebuilding programming and provided to male political leaders and decision-makers.

   • Increasing women's participation in peace and political processes is not sufficient to achieve gender equality because men and women default to men as leaders. Programs should elevate grassroots women, identify the political changes that they desire, and amplify the places where they already exercise power.

We emphasize that this research is exploratory. Our findings are meant to be read as general comments about how the WPS Agenda can more productively engage with the complex links between masculinities, (non)violence, and gender equality. They are intended to highlight areas of interest, chart directions for future research in the field of WPS, and illustrate the policy implications of integrating a masculinities lens. Our findings should prompt policymakers and practitioners to reconsider how to engage with men and masculinities in WPS programming. For researchers, our findings present a starting point for further research on masculinities, peace, and conflict, especially in Aceh, Maluku, and the BARMM.[14]

Engaging Men and Masculinities in Women, Peace and Security

More than 20 years ago, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The resolution was a historic, unanimous recognition of women's unique experiences of conflict by the UN Security Council[15] and an acknowledgment that gender equality is an integral part of international peace and security.[16]

The WPS Agenda, established by UNSCR 1325 and expanded through nine subsequent resolutions, is organized around four pillars: (1) the *participation* of women in all aspects of conflict resolution and peacebuilding; (2) the *protection* of women from sexual and gender-based violence (GBV); (3) the *prevention* of conflict and violence; and (4) *relief and recovery*, focused on women's agency and needs in postconflict and postdisaster spaces.[17] Over the last several decades, the United Nations (UN), individual member states, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society organizations have taken steps to implement these pillars and broaden and deepen women's participation in peacebuilding efforts. As the recent G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué stressed:

> We are committed to championing, advancing and defending gender equality and the rights of women and girls in all their diversity, at home and abroad, and will work together to thwart attempts to undermine and reverse hard-won progress in this area. In this regard, we commit to advancing, implementing and strengthening the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda including its application to disaster risk reduction.[18]

Given that women's participation in peace negotiations is associated with more durable peace agreements[19] and gender inequality is associated with a greater risk of violence and conflict, these efforts represent a crucial step toward achieving a more sustainable (and more inclusive) peace.[20]

Notwithstanding the growing attention globally, the transformative potential of the WPS Agenda has yet to be fully realized.[21] Women remain severely underrepresented in peace processes. Between 1992 and 2019, women accounted for only 13 percent of negotiators, 6 percent of mediators, and 6 percent of signatories in peace processes globally.[22] Violence also continues to disproportionately affect women. The World Health Organization estimates that 30 percent of women globally have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence.[23] In crisis contexts, this rises to an estimated 70 percent.[24] These figures, alongside stories emerging every day from conflict-affected contexts such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Sudan, and Ukraine, indicate that there is still progress to be made in achieving the goals of the WPS Agenda.

Several factors contribute to stalled progress, including a lack of meaningful buy-in from UN member states,[25] insufficient financing,[26] and a failure to engage with women other than as victims and survivors of conflict.[27] A growing body of research also highlights how the effectiveness of WPS efforts has been hampered by another obstacle: a failure to engage with men and masculinities.[28]

Working with Men and Masculinities

In policy circles, "gender" has often been synonymous with "women,"[29] and WPS work, in particular, has been reluctant to directly address the topic of men and masculinities.[30] There have been concerns that broadening WPS work to encompass men and masculinities would dilute the Agenda's aims, create more competition for already limited funding, and ultimately reaffirm rather than challenge men's privileges.[31] However, gender-transformative work that focuses only on women and girls is problematic because it places the responsibility (and risks) of achieving gender equality solely on their shoulders, asking them to overcome, by themselves, the systems of power that marginalize them.[32] It also impedes *structural* change because it often treats gender as a feature of individual people rather than as a system of power deeply embedded in the everyday workings of institutions, organizations, and states.[33] This common tendency to individualize gender fails to address how gendered *structures* unequally and systematically shape life chances for men, women, and gender-diverse individuals (see box 1).

Box 1. Key concepts: gender, masculinity, and patriarchy

Gender as a structure: "Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. . . . These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context-/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context."

Masculinity: "The term masculinity refers to the social meaning of manhood, which is constructed and defined socially, historically and politically, rather than being biologically driven. . . . Masculinities are not just about men; women perform and produce the meaning and practices of the masculine as well."

Patriarchy: "This term [patriarchy] refers to a traditional form of organizing society which often lies at the root of gender inequality. According to this kind of social system, men, or what is considered masculine, [are] accorded more importance than women, or what is considered feminine."

Note*: All three definitions are taken from UN Women, "Gender Equality Glossary," accessed August 2, 2023.* https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=.

The evidence showing how WPS goals are hampered by the failure to address men and masculinities is growing rapidly, but the policy world has yet to act on this knowledge.[34] While UNSCR 2106 and UNSCR 2242, the sixth and eighth of the ten WPS resolutions, mention men and boys as agents of change,[35] most WPS efforts, including many WPS National Action Plans (NAPs), do not engage more substantively with masculinity. Nevertheless, as Duriesmith argues,

> Including a masculinities perspective is . . . crucial for the success of the WPS agenda more broadly. We know men's involvement in peace and security institutions is shaped by how they are socialized as men. Therefore, delivering on the goals of the WPS agenda requires policies that target harmful articulations of masculinity as a key source of gendered insecurity.[36]

To sharpen the effectiveness of WPS efforts in a global environment characterized by worsening conflicts, a resurgence of patriarchal authoritarianism, and backlash against women's rights, it is critical for the WPS Agenda to develop new approaches. Future WPS work needs not only to address how men and boys can be agents of change for gender equality and peace but also to engage with how narratives of masculine strength and superiority are so often used to justify gender inequality, violence against women, and participation in armed conflict.

A comprehensive review by the International Center for Research on Women found that "most male engagement programming focuses [on] the individual level—with some work also being done at the community level—without addressing the broader structures of patriarchy within which individuals and relationships operate."[37] Similarly, in the field of WPS, efforts to "engage men and masculinities" have largely focused on recruiting men to be allies and champions of gender equality efforts, a tendency particularly apparent in the NAPs that do reference men and masculinity.[38] These approaches frequently define the attitudes of individual men as the primary target of change and pursue these individualized transformations through educational materials, marketing campaigns, group sessions, and the provision of male-sensitive health services—many sharing the aim of creating "good men."[39] Evidence suggests that, while these kinds of interventions can change some attitudes and behaviors,[40] they do not deconstruct broader patriarchal structures.[41] In other words, while a few men might act "better" and adopt more gender-egalitarian views, these individual attitudinal changes do not alter the *systematic* ways by which notions of masculinity serve to legitimize inequalities between men and women in the family, in the workforce, and in politics. By not engaging with masculinities at the societal level, WPS efforts will only be able to give women the tools to cope with oppression; they will not be able to transform the fundamental conditions of inequality.

Benefits of Integrating a Masculinities Lens for the WPS Agenda

Based on our findings, we argue that integrating a masculinities lens in WPS work would produce overarching benefits, as well as specific benefits for each of the pillars.

Overarching Benefits

- Using a masculinities lens is a useful tool for breaking free from the assumption that "gender" means "women." Among other things, this will enable the provision of a wider range of services to survivors, including men, of GBV and conflict-related sexual violence.

- Bringing in men and masculinities avoids burdening women with the primary obligation of achieving gender equality. While the primary focus of WPS efforts has rightfully been women, it has also resulted in women being cast as the primary agents responsible for achieving immensely difficult structural change.

- A masculinities lens can be leveraged to mobilize men to challenge patriarchal norms and demonstrate how more gender-equal institutions and policies would benefit them as well. For example, research shows that policies such as paid care leave that increase gender equality benefit both women and men.[42]

Pillar-Specific Benefits

- **Participation:** Addressing masculinities can improve the effectiveness of efforts to expand women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and political institutions. Even when women are allowed to participate, there are still barriers to their voices being heard and their contributions implemented. Because many peacebuilding and political roles are seen as traditionally belonging to men, requiring masculine traits, and demanding experience that, in practice, men are more likely to be given the opportunity to acquire (e.g., having a military background), women are often delegitimized even when they hold these positions. Using a masculinities lens uncovers the informal barriers to women's meaningful participation by identifying how and why their contributions are undervalued.

- **Protection and prevention:** Using a masculinities lens allows us to engage directly with the causes of violence. Understanding which men are violent and under what conditions will allow WPS interventions to target the roots of violence against women, as well as violence more broadly. Although the WPS Agenda is centrally concerned with preventing conflict and violence against women, WPS work often features a lack of clarity about which prevention mechanisms are actually effective.[43] By using a masculinities lens, it becomes possible to ask questions about why violence occurs and thus mitigate it at its root. Preventing violence also bolsters the protection pillar, as it allows programs to complement efforts to help women cope with and recover from violence with efforts to eliminate violence entirely.

- **Protection and prevention:** A masculinities lens can be used to understand and minimize backlash from men. Many WPS programs are acutely aware of the backlash that women often confront when they organize and advocate, become empowered in decision-making, and receive support and resources. By using a masculinities lens, programs can account for *why* men feel threatened by improvements in women's status and build in safeguards to mitigate these risks.

- **Relief and recovery:** Leveraging a masculinities perspective can bolster the efficacy of postconflict recovery programs such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); security sector reform; and economic recovery by revealing how patriarchal structures are often embedded in them. Despite efforts to include women, recovery programs often reinforce existing gendered inequalities and create new ones by channeling resources almost exclusively to men. For instance, DDR processes commonly do not recognize women who participate in armed groups as "combatants" and, hence, provide DDR payouts only to men.[44]

The Goals of This Report

This report contributes to bridging the gap between, on the one side, current WPS practices that work mainly with women and, on the other side, a growing body of research that explores how efforts to improve the status of women are strengthened by engaging with men and masculinities. In this report, we

- demonstrate the value of a masculinities lens for policy, programming, and research in postconflict contexts by highlighting key findings that can bolster efforts to achieve gender equality;

- explore the relationships between masculinity, violence, and peace in Aceh, Maluku, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), charting key similarities and differences; and

- elaborate the policy implications of our findings and suggest avenues for further programming and research.

Methodology

To explore the relationships between masculinity, violence, and peacebuilding, in 2022 and 2023 we conducted research focused on three conflict-affected areas: Aceh and Maluku, both of which are in Indonesia, and the BARMM in the Philippines.

Two factors guided our case selection. First, while these three cases are all conflict-affected contexts that share many similarities, they also feature important differences, a fact that allows us to examine how masculinities vary in relation to different factors. For instance, Aceh and Maluku have been formally at peace for much longer than the BARMM has, enabling us to observe whether masculinities significantly change over time after conflict. To take another example, the WPS Agenda has had a larger footprint in the BARMM than in Aceh and Maluku, and, consequently, the presence of strikingly similar patterns in Aceh, Maluku, and the BARMM highlights areas where WPS engagements in the BARMM have not (yet) been impactful.

Second, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), our Japan-based partner, is a leading gender equality and peacebuilding actor in Asia, operating a substantial research and programmatic portfolio concerned with WPS mainstreaming, women's economic empowerment, and women's participation in peacebuilding and politics throughout the region. Together with SPF, we designed a collaborative project with local academics, researchers, policymakers, and activists in Aceh, Maluku, and the BARMM. Because there is little existing English-language research on masculinities in these cases, this project also contributes to an underdeveloped body of evidence.

Our research consisted of both desk research and a survey. The desk research phase consisted of an internal review of over 150 academic articles, reports, and books on the topics of masculinity, violence, and peacebuilding, as well as literature specific to each case. We consulted both subject-matter and local experts to illuminate additional sources and guide survey design. We also traveled to Aceh and the BARMM to meet with our local partners and gain firsthand insights into the cases.

Our survey design was closely informed by our desk research, and it aimed to capture a nuanced picture of how masculinity norms are playing out in each of our cases and explore how these norms are related to both violence and peace. Our questions were written in collaboration with local partners and experts, who identified which questions were too sensitive and which themes we should tease out further. It should be noted that the figures in this report use the wording of the survey questions exactly as they appear in the English translation of our survey. Consequently, in our discussion, we use the generic terms "violence" and "peacebuilding" when these match the language of our questions, and we use more specific phrases such as "participation in peace negotiations" when the questions allow.

Local partners collected data from September 2022 to March 2023 in Maluku and Aceh and until May 2023 in the BARMM.[45] Around 2,000 participants were randomly sampled in each case, with men and women roughly equally represented (see table 1 for a demographic breakdown). Throughout the report, when referring to our three cases, we use "men" interchangeably with "male respondents" and "women" interchangeably with "female respondents." We do not intend to make claims about men and women beyond our samples.

Table 1. Survey demographics by case

	Aceh	**Maluku**	**The BARMM**
Sample size	1,014 men; 1,030 women	947 men; 1,055 women	1,005 men; 1,036 women
Districts	Aceh Besar, Bener Meriah, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, and Central Aceh	Buru Island, Central Moluccas, Southeast Maluku, Tual City, and Ambon City	Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao
Age	*Men:* Median: 43 Range: 18–87 *Women:* Median: 43 Range: 18–87	*Men:* Median: 40 Range: 18–90 *Women:* Median: 40 Range: 19–90	*Men:* Median: 35 Range: 18–88 *Women:* Median: 37 Range: 18–90
Religion	Muslim: 99% Other: 1%	Muslim: 72% Christian: 27% Other: 1%	Muslim: 70% Christian: 17% Indigenous belief: 9% Other: 4%
Marital status	*Men:* Single: 16% Married: 77% Other: 7% *Women:* Single: 8% Married: 66% Widowed: 19% Other: 7%	*Men:* Single: 16% Married: 75% Other: 9% *Women:* Single: 11% Married: 70% Widowed: 12% Other: 7%	*Men:* Single: 14% Married: 78% Other: 8% *Women:* Single: 10% Married: 73% Widowed: 11% Other: 6%

Case Studies: Context and Background

In this section, we provide a brief background for each of our cases, focusing specifically on their conflict histories, their peace processes, and the current state of gender inequality in each area.

■ Aceh, Indonesia

The province of Aceh, located in the northernmost part of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, was the site of a separatist war between the Government of Indonesia (GoI) and the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM) from 1976 to 2005. Seeking full territorial sovereignty, GAM presented its fight against the GoI as an ethnonationalist struggle against an illegitimate and economically exploitative national state.[46] The 2005 Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which formally ended fighting between the two parties, has been criticized for lacking a gender perspective, prioritizing the interests of the predominantly male GoI and GAM elites,[47] and ignoring both combatant and civilian women's conflict experiences.[48]

Founded in 1976, GAM initially operated mainly in the district of Pidie, focusing on ethnonationalist consciousness-raising and outreach. Consisting of only approximately 70 members,[49] the group did not attract serious attention from the GoI until it attacked Aceh's nascent oil and gas industries in 1979. Subsequently, the Indonesian Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) quickly suppressed the group, driving many GAM leaders and fighters into exile abroad.

Over the next decade, however, GAM fighters gradually infiltrated Aceh and, in 1989, launched new attacks on military targets.[50] The resurgence prompted the authoritarian President Suharto to declare Aceh a "military operations area" (daerah operasi militer, DOM) and launch what one scholar has termed a "campaign of terror."[51] Although exact numbers are unknown, it is estimated that between 1,000 and 3,000 people were killed and between 900 and 1,400 were disappeared during the DOM period, which lasted until 1998.[52]

When the Suharto regime collapsed in May 1998, there seemed to be an opportunity for the two sides to reach a political settlement, but the TNI's abuses during the DOM period had deeply alienated many Acehnese,[53] who came to support GAM despite its own human rights abuses. Capitalizing on this newfound support and the general political disorder, within a few years, GAM had extended its control over much of the Acehnese countryside.[54]

On December 26, 2004, a tsunami struck Aceh, killing more than 165,000 people and leaving vast physical destruction in its wake.[55] The devastation and the international attention that followed catalyzed peace talks that had been stalled for several years. Occurring in Helsinki, Finland (and hence inaccessible to the Acehnese public), and involving only GAM and GoI representatives, the peace process deliberately excluded Acehnese civil society actors,[56] and no women were among the negotiators.[57] Signed on August 15, 2005, the Helsinki MoU paved the way for the cessation of conflict, the normalization of GAM as a political actor, and the creation of a special autonomy agreement for Aceh. However, the MoU neither acknowledged the gendered impacts of the conflict nor laid the groundwork for a robust, inclusive peace.[58]

Acehnese man and children after ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of the Helsinki peace agreement. August 15, 2015.
Photo: CHAIDEER MAHYUDDIN/AFP via Getty Images

Indonesian woman students shout slogans against the killing of Muslims in the riot-torn city of Ambon.
Photo: WEDA/AFP via Getty Images

Gender, however, radically shaped the conflict. As a rule, GAM and the TNI perceived any man of fighting age to be an actual or potential combatant.[59] Consequently, to escape the violence of recruitment or retaliation, many men fled Aceh, while those who could not were trapped between two hostile forces.[60] With men absent or immobilized—either abroad, at camps in the mountains with GAM, or unable to work—women took on expanded responsibilities in the public sphere to find income-generating opportunities while keeping their families safe.[61] They faced many risks. For example, civilian women whose relatives were suspected of being GAM members were often targets of beatings, kidnappings, and sexual violence by the TNI as a strategy of war.[62] After 1999, when GAM expanded throughout Aceh, an estimated 2,000–2,500 women joined GAM's women's military wing (known as the Inong Balee), serving in combat and support roles.[63] However, because the MoU did not recognize them as combatants, and because DDR funds were eventually channeled through male-dominated patronage networks,[64] the Inong Balee have, to this day, received almost no postconflict assistance.[65]

While Aceh has a rich history of matrifocal traditions, which granted women cultural authority and extensive inheritance rights, numerous scholars have pointed out that Aceh's more recent history has been characterized by increasing patriarchalization.[66] After the peace settlement, women were encouraged to return to the domestic sphere;[67] programs favoring men for tsunami relief and recovery often rendered women invisible and,

in many cases, effectively shifted property ownership from women to men;[68] and the implementation of sharia law has particularly affected Acehnese women.[69]

Women are profoundly underrepresented in Aceh's governance structures. No woman has been elected as provincial governor, and women are rarely elected as district heads. Further, across Aceh's over 6,000 villages, fewer than ten women were village heads as of 2011.[70] Since 2010, women have not constituted more than 16 percent of legislators in the provincial parliament.[71]

■ Maluku, Indonesia

Located in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago, the province of Maluku has been home to communities of Christians and Muslims since the Dutch colonial era in the late 19th century. From 1999 to 2002, Maluku was the site of a large-scale horizontal conflict (i.e., a conflict between local entities)[72] that was rooted in long-standing political and economic divisions between the religious communities. Before the violence subsided with the signing of the Malino II Declaration in 2002, the Moluccan conflict claimed an estimated 5,000 lives and displaced a third of Maluku's population.[73]

During the colonial period, Dutch policies divided Christians and Muslims socially, economically, and geographically, positioning Christians as educators

and government administrators and Muslims as traders and businesspeople.[74] When Indonesia won its independence in 1949, Christians in southern Maluku launched a rebellion to establish an independent state, and while this was swiftly quashed by the GoI, Christians' dominant positions in Maluku's civil service, media, and universities remained largely unaffected.[75] Several developments in the 1980s and 1990s began to threaten their privileged position, however. Moluccan Muslims began to gain expanded access to higher education[76] while, under Suharto's transmigration policies, Muslims from elsewhere in Indonesia were relocated to Maluku,[77] altering the region's religious composition and introducing further economic competition.[78] Additionally, with Suharto's attempt in the 1990s to shift his political base of support from secular to Islamist elites,[79] all district headships in Maluku passed from Christians to Muslims.[80] Amid these changes, Moluccan Christians felt increasingly threatened.

On January 19, 1999, an altercation between a Christian bus driver and a Muslim passenger in the provincial capital of Ambon broke open these underlying tensions, setting off riots.[81] Initially, Muslim *migrants* were the main targets, because their dominance of certain lucrative labor markets had generated local grievances, but very quickly violence spread throughout Maluku and became more definitively organized around religion rather than a local-migrant divide.[82]

In January 2000, the conflict escalated dramatically when members of Laskar Jihad, a Java-based Salafi-jihadist group, began relocating to Maluku, claiming they would protect Muslim enclaves from Christian persecution. Over the next two years, Laskar Jihad's aims shifted from protecting Muslim populations to offensively persecuting Christians and then to imposing sharia law on other Muslims.[83] Male-dominated youth militias became commonplace, and both these groups and Laskar Jihad militants leveraged narratives of masculine protection.[84]

On February 11, 2002, representatives of the GoI and delegates from rival Christian and Muslim groups signed the Malino II Declaration, formally ending the conflict. Women's ability to influence the terms of the agreement was markedly limited. During the Malino II process, three of the Christian delegates were women, but no women were among the Muslim delegates. Furthermore, none of the articles in the peace settlement addressed gender issues.[85]

Most of the English-language research on the Moluccan conflict has focused on ethnicity and religion, and consequently information about how gender shaped the Moluccan conflict is limited. Some sources spotlight how, during the fighting, many Muslim and Christian women served as intercommunal mediators and peacebuilders;[86] there are other reports, however, of women being directly involved in the fighting and the making of weaponry.[87]

Our research begins filling in these gaps. In conversations between SPF and local partners, stakeholders spoke about how, after the conflict, women were forced by economically difficult circumstances to search for income-generating opportunities outside of the home. They also shared how women have been extensively involved in conflict mediation efforts, although, according to them, government-funded peacebuilding programs have focused almost exclusively on infrastructural development. Stakeholders touched less frequently on the theme of men and the conflict, but they noted that many men are still grappling with conflict-related traumas and that when communal violence does occur, it is typically carried out by small groups of men under the influence of alcohol.[88]

The need for further gender research in Maluku is highlighted by women's continued underrepresentation in governance structures. As of 2014, women accounted for only 31 percent of legislators in Maluku's district and local parliaments,[89] and other research found that less than 2 percent of all villages in Maluku were led by women.[90]

■ The BARMM, Philippines

The island of Mindanao, located in the southern part of the Philippine archipelago, is home to 13 Islamic ethnolinguistic groups (known collectively as the Moro), more than 18 other Indigenous peoples (Lumad), and Christian Filipinos.[91] The island has been the site of the world's second-longest internal conflict, with multiple separatist groups fighting at different points for independence.[92] Since 2019, part of the island has operated autonomously as the BARMM under a peace agreement between the Government of the Philippines (GoP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).[93] Although progress toward peace has been made in the last four years, the island as a whole continues to confront endemic conflict drivers. The region remains economically and politically peripheralized within the Philippines; education, healthcare, and utility services are chronically underfunded; and the security environment is delicate, as political competition and unresolved land disputes frequently lead to sudden outbreaks of horizontal violence and as numerous armed organizations not party to the peace agreement continue to operate in the region.[94]

Because Mindanao is home to the largest Muslim community in the predominantly Catholic Philippines, the numerous, evolving conflicts between the GoP and a series of armed groups in Mindanao have been frequently (though inaccurately) framed as a religious struggle between Muslims and Christians.[95] The roots of the conflict, however, go back to Spain's colonization of the Philippines in the 16th century, which created center-periphery tensions that fell along religious lines.[96] These tensions were cemented in the 20th century when the American colonial government forcibly annexed Mindanao into the Philippines and implemented policies that systematically dispossessed Muslims of their land and further marginalized Moros and the Lumad through the state-facilitated internal migration of Christian Filipinos.[97] The Philippines' independence from the United States in 1946 exacerbated these inequalities. Muslims in the southern Philippines actively petitioned the US government not to incorporate them into the newly formed country,[98] asking to remain under US rule until they were ready to establish an independent state.[99]

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, escalating violence and political repression by the GoP dramatically

Protesters convene at Plaza Miranda in Manila City for a Walk for Mindanao.
Photo: Gregorio B. Dantes Jr./Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images

sharpened separatist sentiments, and, by 1973, war had broken out between the GoP and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).[100] The MNLF led the armed Moro separatist movement until 1996, when it agreed to demobilize under a peace agreement that did not, however, adequately address the Moro demand for self-determination.[101] Subsequently, the MILF succeeded the MNLF as the main vehicle for armed separatist aspirations.

It was not until 2014 that the MILF and the GoP signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, which laid the groundwork for the BARMM—a special territorial and political entity that, by devolving many powers from the central government, would more substantively address Moro demands for autonomy. In 2019, a plebiscite ratifying the Bangsamoro Organic Law was passed, formally establishing the BARMM and taking a significant step toward more durable peace. Since then, the BARMM's interim government has passed a new electoral code, launched economic development programs, and built new healthcare and community infrastructure.[102]

The MILF-GoP peace process is frequently hailed as a success story for gender-inclusive peace,[103] with women representing 50 percent of the government's negotiating team and 25 percent of the signatories.[104] However, this emphasis on women's numerical representation has been criticized for overlooking the many roles that women played during the peace process, as well as the ongoing gendered impacts of the conflict.[105] Although the agreement contained specific provisions for women combatants, women from civil society and the MILF's all-women unit have criticized the agreement's failure to address preexisting gender inequalities, including women's disproportionately high household labor obligations, lack of control over their own income, and unequal access to capacity-building opportunities.[106] The persistence of these inequalities means that women in the BARMM continue to confront profound obstacles to their full and meaningful economic participation.

Gender relations were substantially affected by the conflict. Restrictions on men's mobility during the conflict created new opportunities for women's leadership and economic participation in the public sphere.[107] However, because these new kinds of labor were not offset by any reduction in women's household responsibilities,

women often identified this extra labor as exhausting rather than empowering.[108] Military threats restricted male combatants' geographic mobility, generating a sense of physical and social paralysis and a feeling of failure for not being breadwinners for their families. In a study by Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam, the BARMM men acknowledged that fighting brought with it illness, poverty, and psychological distress; they also felt that fighting was a way for them to achieve idealized notions of masculinity. When discussing these topics with women, Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam discovered the repercussions of these dynamics: increased rates of domestic violence due to rage and frustration and a resurgence of polygamy as men attempted to prove their masculinity through displays of sexual desirability.[109]

Women in the BARMM are not equally represented in politics. As of 2022, only 13 of 80 parliamentarians were women,[110] though several women served in important roles, including as the attorney general.[111] Of the women who hold political office, most come from elite backgrounds or have secured their positions through personal or familial ties to the MILF.[112] Other political and social institutions also seem to be less accessible to women than to men. Concerns have been also raised over how women are being neglected in the decommissioning process[113] and how expanding political and economic opportunities for women have not been accompanied by decreases in domestic responsibilities.[114]

Masculinity: Protector and Provider?

In this chapter, we present our survey data on men's and women's expectations about what an ideal man should be (i.e., their expectations of idealized masculinity). First, we show what men across our three cases identify as important qualities of manhood. We find that men value being a protective family man who is strong but nonviolent, religious, and an economic provider. We also find that women in their roles as mothers and wives are critical in shaping expectations around ideal manhood. Second, we outline how this understanding of manhood often relies on and legitimizes unequal relationships between men and women. We also show how and where women in our surveys affirm (and, in some cases, challenge) the legitimacy of the existing patriarchal order. Third, we illustrate that many men hope that the next generation will have different expectations about what it means to be a man, which presents an opportunity for the WPS community to engage men in working toward a more equitable world.

Core Qualities of Masculinity

Men value being a protective family man who is strong but nonviolent, religious, and an economic provider. Across the three cases, we asked men to indicate, on a scale from one to ten, the importance of various qualities for being a man. As figure 1 shows, many qualities attract widespread support as critically important (i.e., ratings of nine or ten) ideals of masculinity, and men rate particularly highly qualities related to familial roles: being a father, a husband, a protector, and an economic provider. The significant rates of agreement that we observe across the board indicate that what it means to "be a man" does not hinge on any single quality. Instead, living up to masculine ideals spans several dimensions of men's personal, public, and professional lives.

In line with these ideals of masculinity, we find that, in all three cases, the vast majority of men report that they are married (more than 75 percent), have children (more than 76 percent), and engage in paid work (more than 80 percent). Further, we find that the majority of the men who report not being married, a father, or engaging in paid work *still* consider these qualities to be critically important:

- 78 percent of men in Aceh and Maluku (but only 52 percent in the BARMM) who report being single/never married still rate "being married" as a nine or ten.

- In every case, approximately 80 percent of men who report not having children still rate "being a good father" as a nine or ten.

- In every case, between 68 percent and 76 percent of the men who report that they are not currently engaging in paid work still rate "being employed" as a nine or ten.

Figure 1. Qualities rated 9-10 by male respondents for the question, "How important are the following qualities for being a man?"
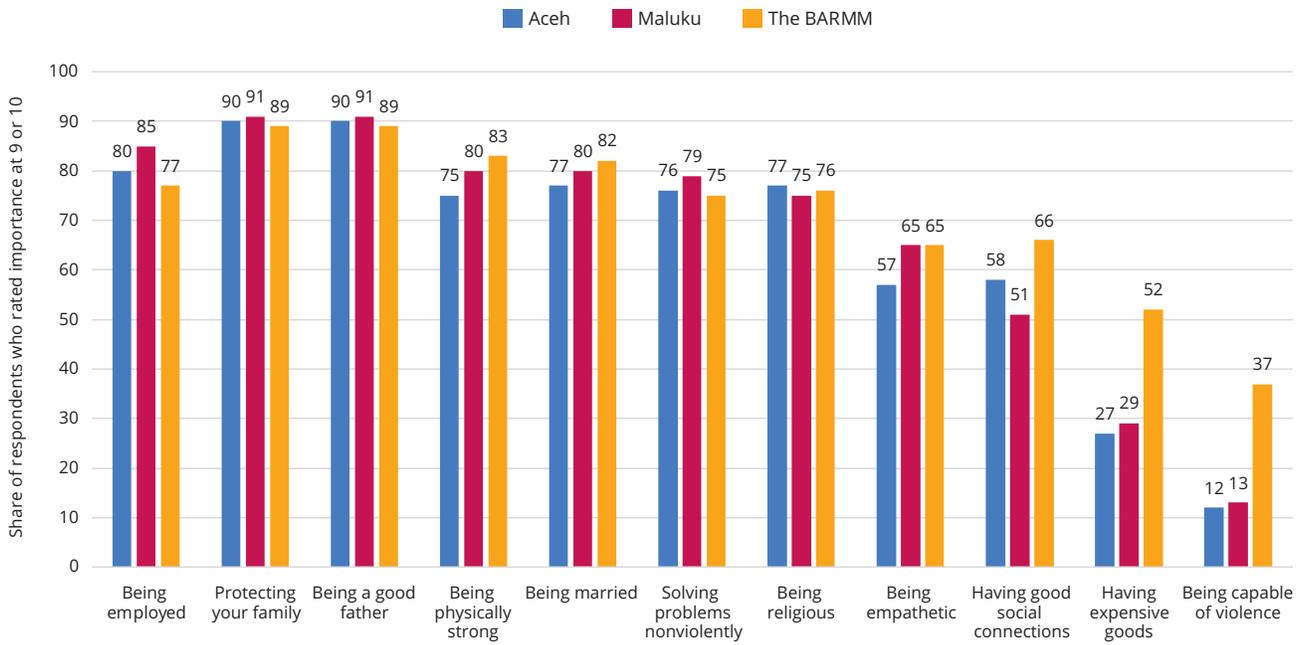
In other words, the ideals associated with these hegemonic masculinities (see box 2) are embodied by the vast majority of men, and they are upheld even by those who do not embody them—patterns that demonstrate the strength of these norms.

Box 2. Key concepts: hegemonic masculinity

The term "hegemonic masculinity" is commonly used in masculinity studies to describe the most dominant and socially desirable way to be a man in a given context.* This means that, while there are multiple ways in which masculinity can be performed, these are arranged hierarchically within patriarchy. Hegemonic masculinity is the method of "doing" masculinity that resides at the top of that hierarchy.

Note: * Connell, R.W. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Creating ideals of manhood constrains both men and women. While being strong, married, religious, a provider, and a protector might appear to be "good," it is problematic to create any single ideal for what men should be. If there is only one acceptable way of being a man, it severely limits men's ability to seek different paths (e.g., choosing not to become a father). The pressure to conform to rigid

and inequitable masculine norms negatively affects men's mental and social well-being,[115] and the social stigma associated with failing to live up to masculine ideals can contribute to men's perpetration of domestic violence, as documented in the BARMM and other conflict-affected contexts such as Rwanda.[116]

Norms that situate men as breadwinners and household leaders frame women as weak and dependent on men. If men must be protectors, then women must be protected, and if men must be providers, then women must be provided for. These norms entrench unequal relationships that limit women's social, political, and economic opportunities.

Women's Roles in Shaping Masculinities

Men and women across the three cases largely agree that men should be leaders in the private and public spheres. In all three cases, men express support for a patriarchally organized household (see figure 2), and women generally hold the same views (see figure 3).

Majorities of men and women agree that "men should be the leader of the household" and that "men should work outside, and women should take care of the household." This widespread agreement among men and women positions men as income providers in the public sphere and women as nonpaid laborers in the private sphere—a gendered public/private divide that activists and scholars have long identified as a critical obstacle to women's empowerment and more equitable societies.[117] This cross-gender support is a significant finding because it indicates that both men and women uphold patriarchal structures and that transforming them requires working with both groups.

Figure 2. Male respondents' rates of agreement with statements about the patriarchal household
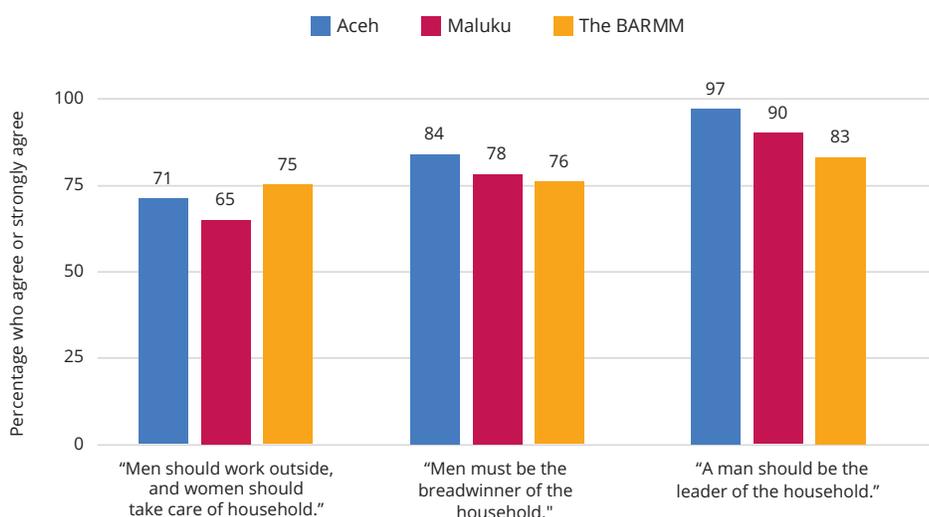
Figure 3. Female respondents' rates of agreement with statements about the patriarchal household

Legend: ■ Aceh ■ Maluku ■ The BARMM

Y-axis: Percentage who agree or strongly agree (0, 25, 50, 75, 100)

"Men should work outside, and women should take care of household." — Aceh 69, Maluku 52, The BARMM 69

"Men must be the breadwinner of the household." — Aceh 79, Maluku 64, The BARMM 71

"A man should be the leader of the household." — Aceh 91, Maluku 85, The BARMM 77
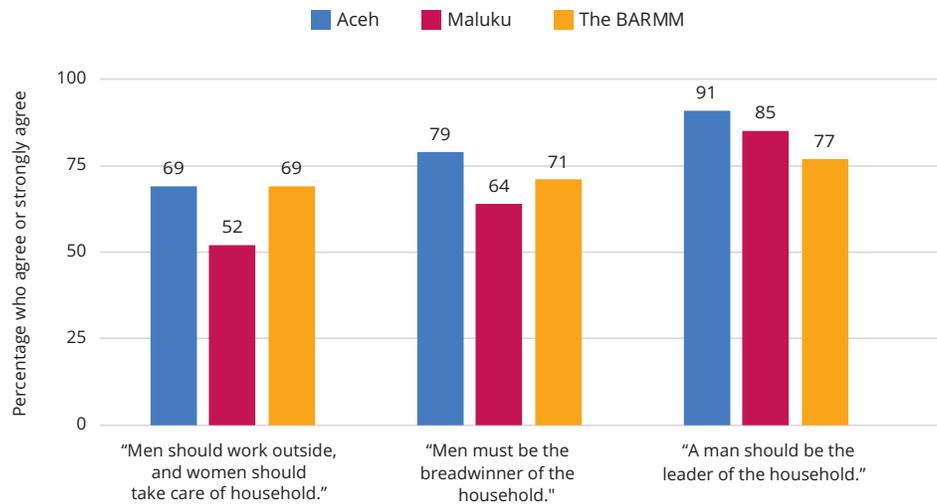
Women's apparent support for the status quo should not be interpreted as blanket support for patriarchy. In all three of our cases, women exhibit slightly lower levels of agreement than their male counterparts regarding men's roles, and Moluccan women are particularly less likely than Moluccan men to support a public/private divide that designates men as the exclusive breadwinners. However, in every case, the majority of women support men's position as leaders, breadwinners, and protectors.

While one might assume that women would be interested in changing the patriarchal structures that disadvantage them,[118] there are often no viable alternatives for women to seek physical and economic security than through men. This concept is called the *patriarchal bargain*, which describes how women often face concrete incentives to support patriarchy. For example, if women are not allowed to work, they are forced to rely on men to provide, or, if there is persistent community violence, women might need to rely on men to protect them. We can interpret women's support of the public/private divide as a reflection of how patriarchy forces women to play by its rules.[119]

Thus, the apparent consensus among men and women regarding the gendered public/private divide should not deter the WPS community from seeking to challenge patriarchal norms. Instead, it demonstrates why interventions must consider how existing power structures shape women's decision-making calculus, because even well-meaning programs will not transform patriarchal systems if those programs fail to account for women's incentives to maintain these inequalities.[120] For example, in Nepal, research on intergenerational power dynamics in patriarchal households has shown that, in many cases, increased financial autonomy for a daughter-in-law represents a threat to her mother-in-law's household status, which is predicated on the mother-in-law's control over and management of household finances.[121]

Women play significant roles in shaping expectations of masculinity. Our survey finds that women in every case hold similar attitudes to men about ideals of manhood, and this is the case even when these ideals legitimize women's subordination. Further, despite a popular tendency to focus on how men shape other men's beliefs and behaviors,[122] our survey finds that mothers, wives, and fathers are all more important figures in setting expectations for men than are other groups (figure 4). The prominence of wives in particular suggests that men learn about what it means to be a man throughout their lives and that gender socialization is not limited to a formative period during their youth.

Further, while the masculinities literature suggests that male friends are important in shaping masculine norms,[123] our data shows that, in our three cases, friends are far less consequential than the literature suggests. This has important policy implications because it indicates that peer-focused interventions will probably be less likely to succeed than family-focused interventions that include women. Overall, these patterns underscore the importance of working with both men and women to transform patriarchal structures, empower women, and build more equitable and peaceful societies.[124]

Figure 4. Roles rated 9-10 by male respondents for the question, "Who teaches you what it means to be a man?"

Legend: Aceh (blue), Maluku (red), The BARMM (orange)

Y-axis: Share of respondents who rated importance at 9 or 10

Role	Aceh	Maluku	The BARMM
Mother	84	80	88
Father	83	78	90
Wife	62	62	82
Religious leader	73	60	78
Community leaders	56	48	64
Male relatives	46	43	61
Female relatives	38	42	55
Male friends	35	35	50
Female friends	24	29	45
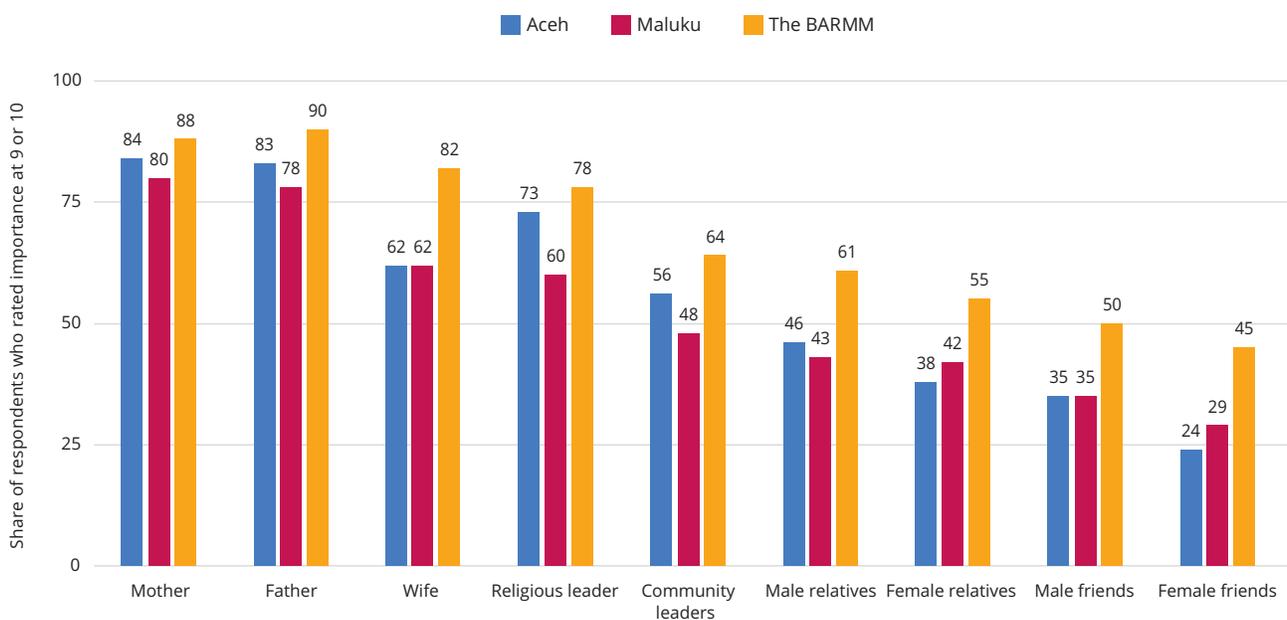
Men's Desire for Different Masculinities

Male respondents express a desire for different expectations of masculinity. Although the majority of men feel they are able to achieve the qualities of an "ideal" man, at least 61 percent of men in every case hope that the next generation will have different expectations around ideal manhood (figure 5).

Figure 5. Male respondents' rates of agreement with the statements, "I feel that I am able to achieve the qualities of ideal manhood" and "I wish that the next generation will have a different expectation of being a man"

Legend: ■ Aceh ■ Maluku ■ The BARMM

Percentage who agree or strongly agree

"I feel that I am able to achieve the qualities of ideal manhood."
- Aceh: 66
- Maluku: 74
- The BARMM: 86

"I wish that the next generation will have different expectations of being a man."
- Aceh: 61
- Maluku: 63
- The BARMM: 84
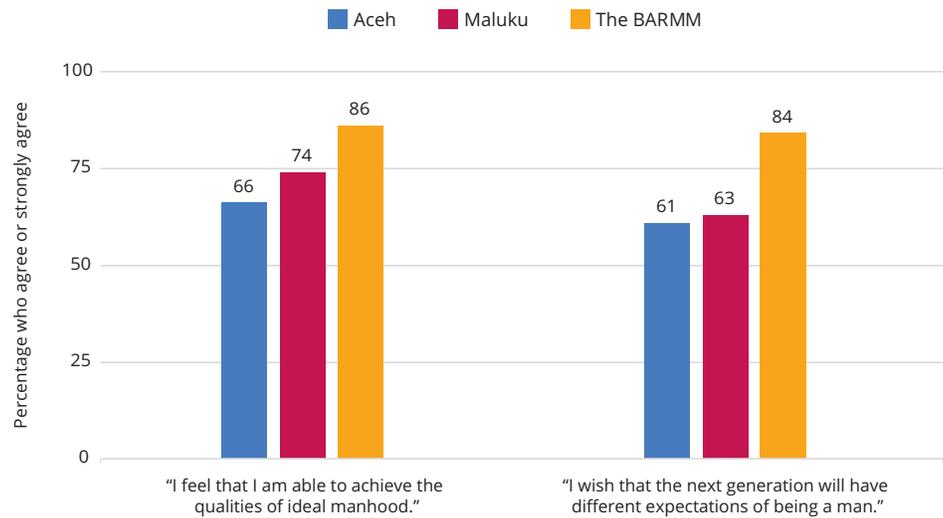
The limitations of our survey data mean that we are not able to examine why these men desire change, which expectations they would most like to see changed, or why so many men who indicate they can fulfill current expectations still want different expectations.[125] Nevertheless, the fact that this desire is so strong suggests that Aceh, Maluku, and the BARMM present opportunities to engage men in participatory gender-transformative programs.

(Non)Violence and Masculinity

In this chapter, we present our findings on (non)violence and masculinities. First, we lay out the cross-case patterns in attitudes toward violence. We show how, in every case, men consider being capable of violence the least important quality of ideal manhood. Second, we explore the similarities between men's and women's attitudes toward violence. Third, we offer an explanation for the cross-case patterns by looking at the different macro-dynamics of (in)security currently affecting our cases.

Research on masculinity in conflict-affected contexts has focused on "violent masculinities,"[126] documenting how conflict can foster men's violence and vice versa. Interrogating how and why men carry out violence during conflict and what factors influence the persistence of violence after the cessation of armed warfare, this research has illustrated how violence can benefit (some) men's reputational, political, and economic standing. Conflict frequently disrupts employment,[127] and so economically marginalized men might turn to violence in the absence of other well-established avenues for performing masculinity. Further, some men use violence as a means to reassert dominance over women who took over traditionally male roles during the conflict.[128] Given that insecurity, domestic and intimate partner violence, and limited socioeconomic opportunities often persist in postconflict periods, violent masculinities can outlast the formal end of a conflict and impede the achievement of an inclusive, lasting peace.[129]

In light of this research, we expected that our survey would find that violence is closely tied to manhood ideals and that men support violence at much higher rates than women. To our surprise, however, neither expectation is justified. In all three cases, only minorities of men identify violence as a key component of ideal manhood, and, among both men *and* women, support for violence is either extremely limited (in Aceh and Maluku) or closely related to perceptions that violence is necessary for security (in the BARMM).

> In all three cases, only minorities of men identify violence as a key component of ideal manhood, and, among both men *and* women, support for violence is either extremely limited (in Aceh and Maluku) or closely related to perceptions that violence is necessary for security (in the BARMM).

Nonviolent Masculinities

Violence does not appear as a core quality of men's understanding of or investment in masculinity. Across all three cases, men consider being capable of violence the least important quality for being a man. Furthermore, more than 75 percent of men in every case say that the ideal man should solve problems nonviolently (see figure 1), and significant proportions of Acehnese and Moluccan men actively reject violence, with 49 percent and 48 percent respectively rating "being capable of violence" as a one or two on a one-to-ten scale. These findings

challenge the common assumption in research and practice that violent forms of masculinity are the most prevalent.[130]

Although only a minority of men express support for violence, that opinion is more common among men in the BARMM than men in Aceh and Maluku. In the BARMM, however, we find a more complex story about violence and nonviolence. While three out of four men in the BARMM indicate that men should solve problems without violence, they are polarized about whether or not men should still be *capable* of violence, with 38 percent rating it as critically important (nine or ten) and 23 percent rating it as not at all important (one or two). We do not find a similar divergence in our Acehnese or Moluccan samples. Further, as figure 6 shows, men in the BARMM also support the use of violence to defend their communities (44 percent), families (43 percent), and reputation (26 percent) at substantially higher levels than do men in Aceh and Maluku.

Figure 6. Male respondents' rates of agreement with statements relating to the acceptability of violence

Legend: Aceh, Maluku, The BARMM

Statement	Aceh	Maluku	The BARMM
"We need to intervene if violence is being perpetrated against another person, particularly women."	68	70	59
"Violence is not justified in any circumstance."	52	55	62
"We need to resort to violence to keep our communities secure."	17	19	44
"We need to resort to violence to protect our families."	21	17	43
"I need to resort to violence to defend my reputation."	13	15	26

Y-axis: Percentage who agree or strongly agree

Perceptions of Violence

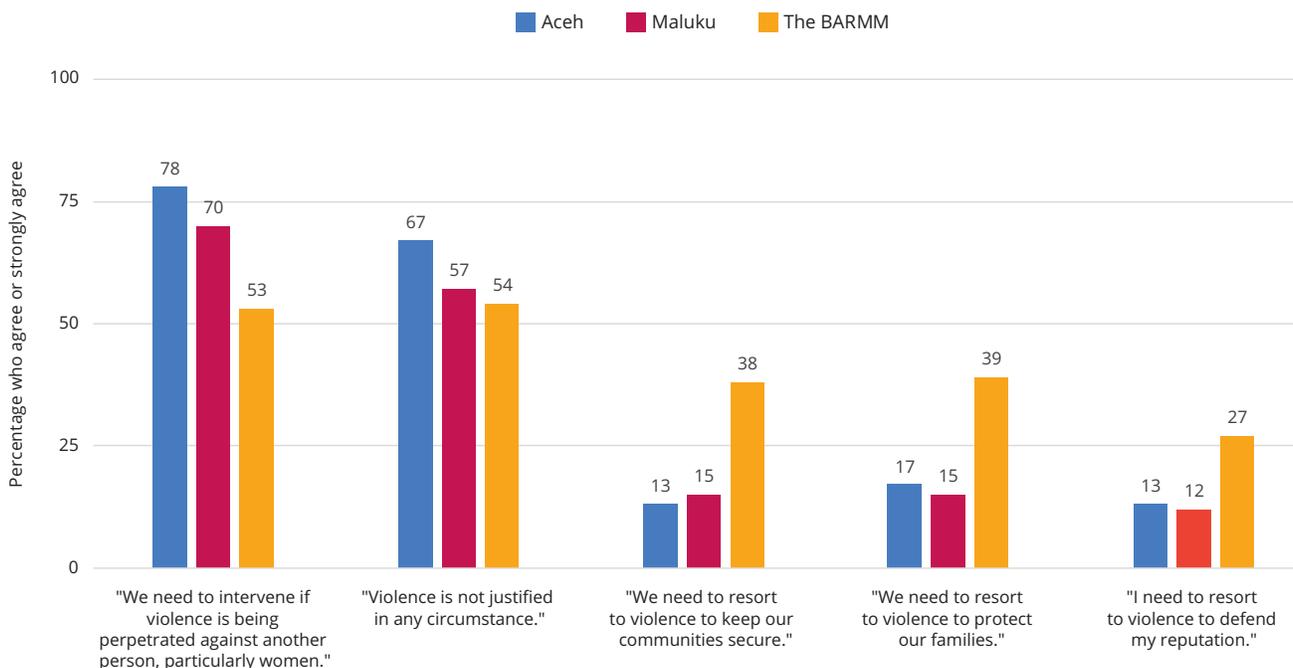**Women's attitudes toward violence are similar to men's.** As figure 7 depicts, very few Acehnese and Moluccan women, like Acehnese and Moluccan men, support the use of violence to defend their communities, families, and reputations, whereas BARMM women, like BARMM men, are relatively more likely to express support. For only three questions do we find gender gaps of over 6 percent.[131]

The minimal differences between men's and women's responses in each case underscore how violence is not an exclusively "male" phenomenon and how nonviolence is not an exclusively "female" phenomenon. Concretely, we see this in the BARMM when mothers charge sons to be violent to protect their family's honor in feuds.[132] Similar dynamics have been observed in South Sudan, where "women sing songs to shame men who have not gone on a cattle raid or who have failed to bring back cattle."[133] This should prompt WPS researchers and practitioners to more closely examine the roles that women play in socially legitimizing *and* delegitimizing violence, as well as the roles that men play in socially legitimizing and delegitimizing *non*violence.

The similarities between men and women within cases, when combined with the consistent differences that emerge across cases (BARMM vs. Aceh and Maluku), suggest that intercase rather than gender differences are driving attitudes toward violence in our three cases. Below, we explore these intercase differences in more detail.

Figure 7. Female respondents' rates of agreement with statements relating to the acceptability of violence

Legend: Aceh, Maluku, The BARMM

Y-axis: Percentage who agree or strongly agree

Statement	Aceh	Maluku	The BARMM
"We need to intervene if violence is being perpetrated against another person, particularly women."	78	70	53
"Violence is not justified in any circumstance."	67	57	54
"We need to resort to violence to keep our communities secure."	13	15	38
"We need to resort to violence to protect our families."	17	15	39
"I need to resort to violence to defend my reputation."	13	12	27

Macro-level Insecurity and Violence

A heightened state of insecurity seems to contribute to the general acceptability of violence. Ongoing forms of organized violence in the BARMM can help explain why we find relatively higher rates of support for using violence to defend one's community, family, and reputation among both men and women there. Although the 2014 peace agreement formally ended fighting between the GoP and MILF, the BARMM is not at peace. The MILF was only the largest of dozens of conflict actors operating in the region, and many of these other armed groups are still active.[134] Many MILF members are still actively participating in horizontal armed conflict; as of 2019, there were 13 clan feuds involving MILF-affiliated actors,[135] and, in early 2023, there were reports of ongoing violence in areas where MILF base commands are located.[136]

Similarly pervasive conflict-related insecurities do not currently exist in Aceh and Maluku. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, since 2015, the Indonesian military has been involved in only six incidents in the province of Aceh and three incidents in the province of Maluku, which resulted in six and one fatalities, respectively. In contrast, since 2016, the Philippine military has been involved in 1,018 incidents in the BARMM, which resulted in 2,878 fatalities.

Rido (feuding) is another persistent source of insecurity in the BARMM. Characterized by violence between families, kin groups, and communities retaliating for real or perceived affronts or injustices, *rido* produces "chain[s] of reciprocal murders" that can stretch across generations.[137] While much of the research on violence in Mindanao has focused on government-insurgent conflicts, a 2021 report notes that, "[a]part from governance problems, *rido* or clan feuding is the most common source of insecurity in Moro communities."[138] The lack of similarly pervasive forms of horizontal conflict presently affecting Aceh or Maluku helps explain why we observe lower levels of support for using violence to defend one's community, family, and reputation among both men and women there.

Together, these findings of perceptions of violence are relevant to WPS work for two reasons. First, they show that violence is not a universal feature of ideal manhood and that support for violence seems to be conditioned on external sources of insecurity. This suggests that interventions attempting to prevent individual men from behaving violently are less likely to succeed at significantly reducing rates of violence than programs that work toward alleviating the structural conditions of insecurity—such as the presence of armed groups, the presence of state forces and their use of violence, and community-level violence—that create a perception among the local population that violence is both necessary and unavoidable. Second, the fact that women's rates of support for (non)violence are consistently indistinguishable from their male counterparts' highlights the importance of engaging with women's attitudes to violence and men's attitudes to nonviolence. Because violence is not an exclusively "male" phenomenon, and because nonviolence is not an exclusively "female" phenomenon, programs aimed at eliminating violence and promoting nonviolence should include both men *and* women.

Gendered Peacebuilding, Leadership, and Public Authority

In this chapter, we present our survey data on how male and female respondents are assigning gender to particular peacebuilding, leadership, and public roles. First, we present our survey results for questions examining how men and women perceive their "gender-appropriate" roles in peacebuilding efforts. We find that, while men and women consistently agree that women should participate in peacebuilding efforts, both also tend to indicate that men should lead them. Second, we demonstrate how these beliefs about men's leadership permeate roles of public authority in Aceh and the BARMM (but not Maluku). Lastly, we explore how men and women are identifying many forms of political power as belonging primarily to men.

"Gender-Appropriate" Peacebuilding Roles

Although 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. In all three of our cases, men and women agree at high rates (more than 84 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 8).

Figure 8. Male respondents' rates of agreement with statements relating to the gendered division of peacebuilding roles
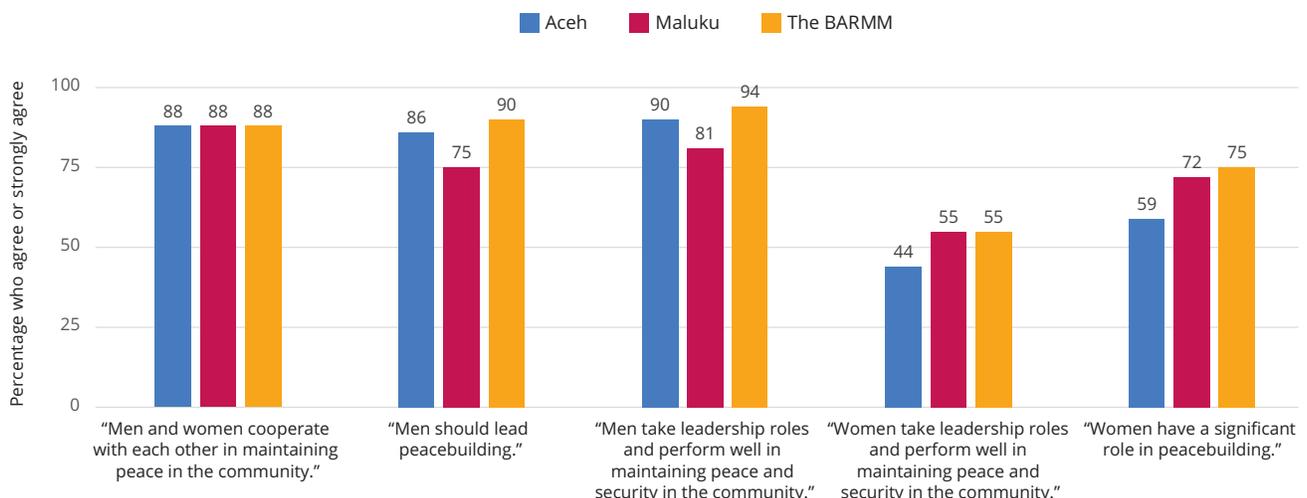
For instance, while large majorities of male respondents (88 percent) agree that men and women generically "cooperate" to keep peace and security, slightly (Maluku, 72 percent; the BARMM, 75 percent) to substantially (Aceh, 59 percent) fewer male respondents say that women should play a significant role in peacebuilding efforts. And far fewer affirm women's capacity for leadership roles specifically (Aceh, 44 percent; Maluku, 55 percent; the BARMM, 55 percent).[139]

Further, not only do most male respondents in Aceh (86 percent), Maluku (75 percent), and the BARMM (90 percent) agree that men should lead peacebuilding efforts; they also affirm men's leadership at rates far higher than they do for women's leadership. No less than 81 percent of men in any case say that men do well in leadership roles, while no more than 55 percent in any case say the same for women.

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 (figure 9). This illustrates how, even when women are recognized as having a right to be present, leadership roles can easily continue to default to men. The implication for WPS efforts is that it is not enough to bring women into the room. Even after they have access to previously exclusionary spaces, programs must address the barriers that continue to inhibit women's meaningful participation, including their perceptions of themselves as leaders, and ensure women have the resources and support they need to build the capacity and confidence to lead.

Figure 9. Female respondents' rates of agreement with statements relating to the gendered division of peacebuilding roles
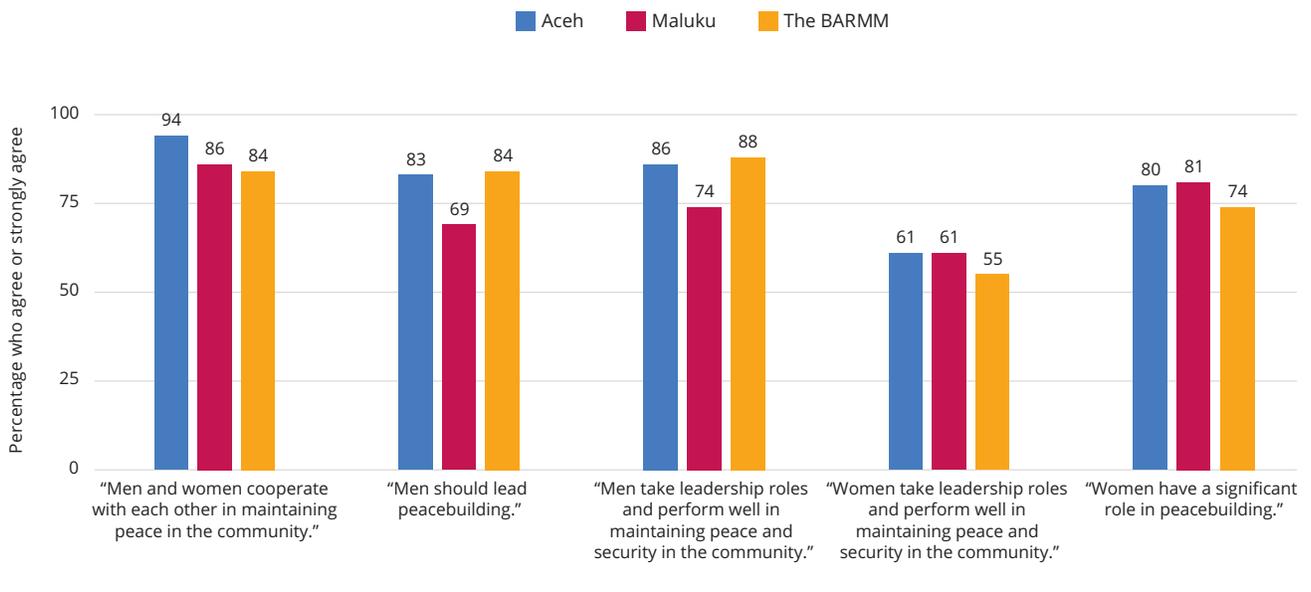
Men appear to find it easier to envision women as beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts than as leaders of them. No less than 80 percent of men in any case agree that "peacebuilding efforts should improve the security and welfare of women and girls" (figure 10), but these rates of agreement are strikingly higher than men's rates of agreement for our questions about women's *active* participation. The differences between women's rates of agreement for these agent/beneficiary questions tend to be smaller than the gaps 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.

Figure 10. Male and female respondents' rates of agreement with the statement "Peacebuilding needs to improve the security and welfare of women and girls."
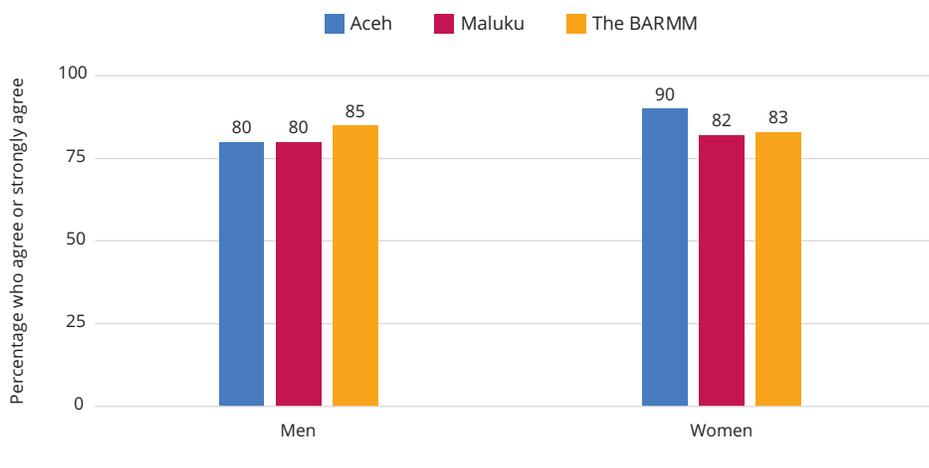
Masculinized Public Authority

In Aceh and the BARMM, men characterize most spheres of public authority as more suitable for men than women. In Maluku, however, men see almost all roles as equally suitable for men and women. In Aceh and the BARMM, significant proportions of men see almost every seat of public power as men's domain (see figure 11). This trend emerges most strongly in Aceh, where men are seen as significantly more suitable for community, executive, and religious leadership. BARMM men, though slightly less male-biased than Acehnese men, also indicate that leadership roles, and security roles in particular, are most suitable for men. Very few Moluccan men, however, indicate that any of these roles are more suitable for men than women. Why these differences exist is a question beyond the scope of this report, but it is an interesting starting point for further research.

Women's and men's responses are similar in all three cases. As figure 12 depicts, with only a few exceptions,[140] women's responses trend the same way as their male counterparts', often favoring male suitability for public authority. The minimal differences between men and women within cases underscore how notions of masculinity and femininity operate not only at the level of individual behavior

Figure 11. Male respondents' rates of agreement that roles are more suitable for men than women ("MSME" stands for "micro-, small, and medium enterprises")

Legend: Aceh, Maluku, The BARMM

Percentage who answered "more suitable for men than women"

Category	Aceh	Maluku	The BARMM
Military and law enforcement	54	17	50
Judiciary	44	10	24
Rural employment	28	13	41
MSMEs	15	5	12
Members of parliament	42	10	29
Executive (e.g., governor)	70	16	42
Religious figure	63	11	11
Community leader	74	16	46
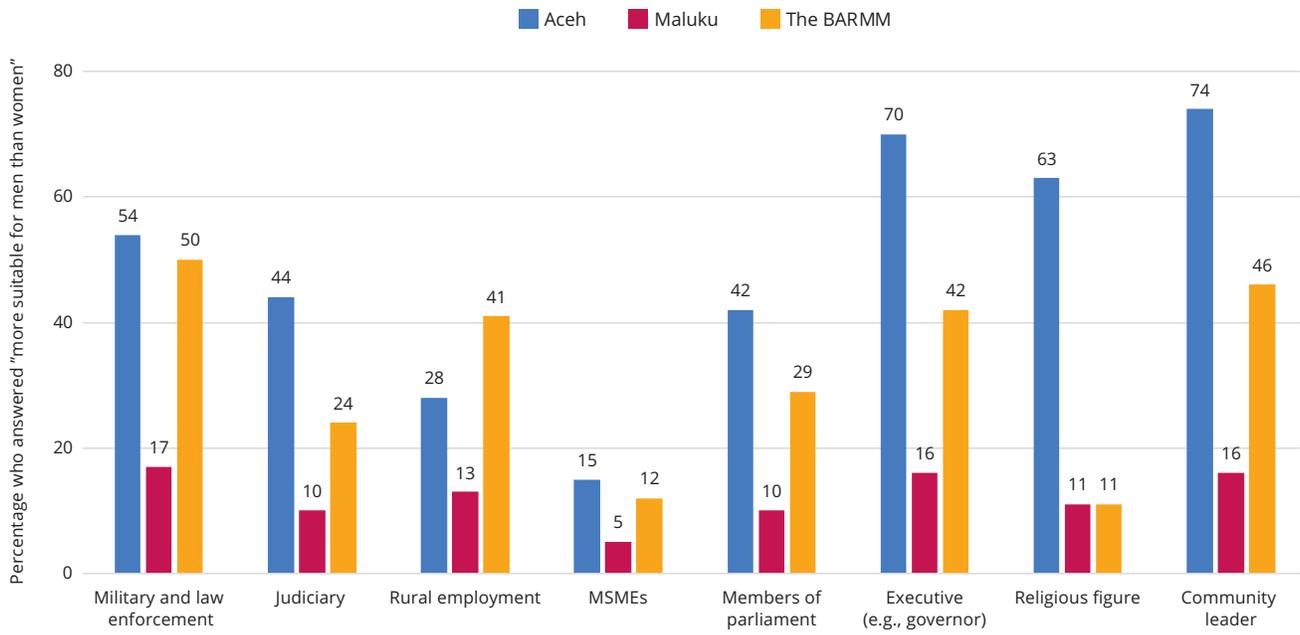
Figure 12. Female respondents' rates of agreement that roles are more suitable for men than women ("MSME" stands for "micro-, small, and medium enterprises")

Legend: Aceh, Maluku, The BARMM

Percentage who answered "more suitable for men than women"

Category	Aceh	Maluku	The BARMM
Military and law enforcement	48	16	45
Judiciary	36	11	17
Rural employment	17	12	35
MSMEs	9	5	6
Members of parliament	36	11	24
Executive (e.g., governor)	58	16	41
Religious figure	37	9	10
Community leader	57	15	38
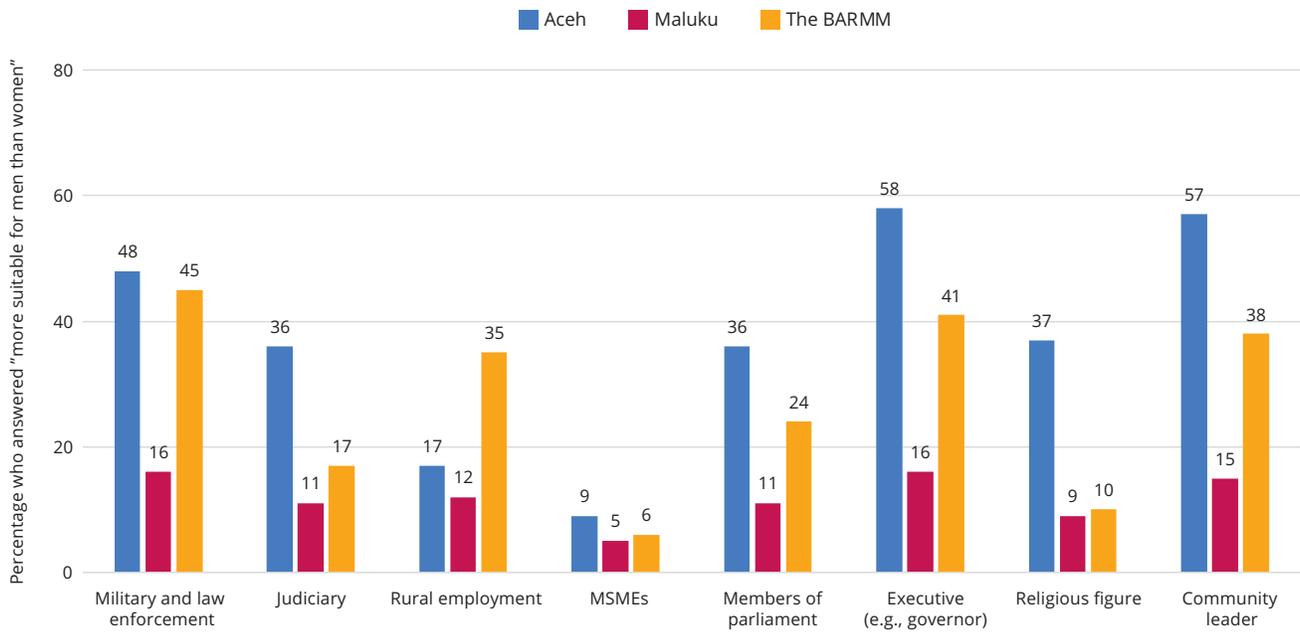
but also within and through *institutions*, which systematically define certain roles as "masculine" and "feminine."[141] Because the roles stereotyped as "feminine" are typically less valued and more poorly compensated (e.g., teachers and nurses), and because the roles stereotyped as "masculine" are typically those invested with the most political and economic power, such gendered divisions frequently disadvantage women and ensure that men maintain a monopoly on public power.[142] These gendered divisions often persist even when women begin to establish a physical presence in places from which they were previously excluded. For example, even as political parties adopt gender equality mechanisms or comply with legislated quotas, men often still exhibit discriminatory attitudes and threaten or intimidate women to preserve men's dominance.[143]

This is significant for WPS work, as it highlights how merely placing women into peacebuilding, political, or economic roles does not do enough to overcome structural gender inequalities. While WPS actors, grassroots peacebuilders, and gender equality activists regularly draw attention to how women take on leadership roles in their communities, our data shows how many positions of public authority can still remain inaccessible to women despite their significant grassroots influence. Programs must deal with how gender norms and biases are embedded in and perpetuated by institutions and consider how these systematically police women's access to power. Transforming these gender norms and biases cannot be done without a masculinities lens.

> While WPS actors, grassroots peacebuilders, and gender equality activists regularly draw attention to how women take on leadership roles in their communities, our data shows how many positions of public authority can still remain inaccessible to women despite their significant grassroots influence.

Positions of public power are seen as for men alone or for both men and women, but never for women alone. We presented respondents with a variety of occupations ranging from law enforcement to community leadership and asked them whether each role was (1) more suitable for men than women, (2) more suitable for women than men, or (3) equally suitable for men and women. Tellingly, respondents did not indicate that any role is more suitable for women than men. This is an important finding because it means that men retain a socially legitimized prerogative to exclude women from certain domains of formal politics, while women do not have a similar prerogative to exclude men. This basic asymmetry of power imagines politics to belong to men by default, and there is no role for which women occupy a similar asymmetry of power over men.

Policy Implications and Conclusion

This report has explored the complex relationships between masculinities, (non)violence, and peacebuilding in Aceh, Maluku, and the BARMM. Our findings shed light on how including a masculinities perspective in WPS work can advance, not detract from, WPS goals, and they serve as a starting point for future research that wants to examine how engaging men and masculinities can strengthen efforts to achieve gender equality and sustainable peace.

The following policy and programming implications are based on the report's key findings. We conceive of these implications as general prompts for practitioners, policymakers, and funders that require localization and contextualization in their application.

1. **Violence does not appear as a core quality of men's understanding of or investment in masculinity. Across all three cases, men consider being capable of violence the least important quality for being a man.**

   - Programs—whether working with men or with women or focusing on violence reduction in general—should not assume that all men are violent.

   - Local peacebuilding initiatives should leverage men's preference for nonviolence to increase men's participation in their programs.

2. **Men value being a protective family man who is strong but nonviolent, religious, and an economic provider.**

   - While these may appear to be "good" qualities, these norms often create, rely on, and legitimize inequalities between men and women. For instance, situating men as primary breadwinners for the family reinforces women's economic dependence on men. In their marketing materials, program goals, and funding decisions, programs should be careful not to reinforce norms and behaviors that may appear positive but ultimately rely on and reproduce women's subordination to men.

   - Programming around women's economic empowerment may be particularly susceptible to provoking backlash from men who value the role of economic provider and, consequently, may require additional safeguards. Incorporating a masculinities perspective in program design can make gender-transformative work possible by helping to anticipate how men are likely to react to changes in women's status and which changes will likely be perceived as more or less threatening.

3. **Women and men have similar attitudes toward patriarchy and gender roles across all three cases.**

   • Postconflict recovery and development programming should not assume that gender differences alone determine beliefs around patriarchy and violence. Such programming should also focus on how local institutions and intersectional conditions such as local religious, economic, and security factors shape and constrain individuals' beliefs, values, choices, and behaviors.

   • Policies and programs designed to tackle discriminatory gender norms cannot focus exclusively on men and, instead, must engage with such discrimination as a system of power and gendered relationships. Specifically, they must investigate and consider the reasons and incentives for women to uphold patriarchal structures.

4. **Women, especially in their roles as mothers and wives, play a significant part in shaping expectations of masculinity.**

   • Violence prevention programs need to work with men *and* women. Wives and mothers can be key allies in programs seeking to change men's beliefs and behaviors.

   • Gender-transformative interventions should include both community- and family-focused angles, taking care, however, to avoid burdening women with additional labor obligations.

5. **Male respondents express a desire for different expectations of masculinity.**

   • Participatory programs should engage with local men and boys to identify what different roles and responsibilities they desire and explore how these can support gender equality and sustainable peace.

   • Participatory programs on masculinities should also include women and girls because they, too, shape expectations of masculinity.

6. **In peacebuilding contexts, men and women agree that they cooperate in building peace, but both consistently identify men as leaders and women as more passive beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts. Similar trends exist with regard to public authority at large; men and women see many positions of power as meant for men, or for both men and women, but never for women alone.**

   • Gender-sensitization training should be mainstreamed in all peacebuilding programming and provided to male political leaders and decision-makers.

   • Increasing women's participation in peace and political processes is not sufficient to achieve gender equality because men and women default to men as leaders. Programs should elevate grassroots women, identify the political changes that they desire, and amplify the places where they already exercise power.

In addition to supporting these specific recommendations, our research demonstrates the utility and necessity of using a masculinities lens more broadly in gender programming and peace and security efforts. Our findings illustrate that it is not enough to empower individual women and change individual men; it is necessary to contend with masculinities and patriarchy more broadly to achieve gender equality. Accordingly, we recommend that future WPS NAPs should engage more substantively with masculinities. While several NAPs reference men, they address them primarily as perpetrators (and, occasionally, as victims) of conflict-related sexual violence. Furthermore, very few NAPs engage with masculinity, and those that do offer only a unidimensional conceptualization of how masculinities are related to peace and security. For example, the United Kingdom's 2023–27 WPS NAP ties GBV perpetration to "a harmful interpretation of masculinity and power dynamics."[144] We encourage the WPS community to engage with masculinities beyond these simple associations. Understanding masculinities in terms of "good" and "bad" masculinities creates a rigid way of thinking about how men live within and experience their gender and, further, encourages international donors to advocate for replacing "bad" masculinities with "good" ones. Setting a single standard for what men (or women) should be, regardless of what that standard is, will always function to exclude and marginalize those who do not meet that standard. For example, calling on men to be better fathers will marginalize those who do not want to be fathers and, by imposing a single definition of what "good fatherhood" is, will almost certainly erase fatherhood practices that do not conform to the Western model of the nuclear family.

> **Our findings illustrate that it is not enough to empower individual women and change individual men; it is necessary to contend with masculinities and patriarchy more broadly to achieve gender equality.**

To grapple with patriarchy as a system that creates inequalities of power among men, among women, and between men and women, we should focus first and foremost on the social, economic, political, and legal structures that perpetuate these gender inequalities. However, efforts to recruit men to pursue these structural transformations risk creating new inequalities, exclusions, and marginalizations (and, hence, defeating their own transformative goals) if their recruitment messages are based on asking men to be "good" or "real" men, as this invariably creates new hierarchies among men. To avoid this dead end, programs should prioritize dismantling inequality-producing structures and recruit men not on the basis of what a good *man* would do, but, rather, on the basis of what a good *person* would do.

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Filipino peace activist prepare to release a white doves while a fellow activist (R) holds a manifesto bearing the portraits of former military chief General Hermogenes Esperon (L) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chairman Ebrahim Murad (R). September 1, 2008. Photo: JAY DIRECTO/AFP via Getty Images

Our findings demonstrate the necessity and added value of addressing men and masculinities in the WPS Agenda. Since its inception in 2000, the WPS Agenda has understandably focused its efforts on women. However, it is abundantly clear that the effectiveness of efforts to achieve gender equality will be severely limited if such efforts do not also include men.

Ensuring progress on women's empowerment and gender equality requires paying close attention to unequal relationships and preventing backlash. Successfully managing the risks of backlash and transforming gender inequalities will require programs to systematically incorporate a masculinities lens and involve men. The WPS community has rightly raised concerns that adding men and masculinities as a new line of effort could divert funds from already underfunded programs for women and compromise safe spaces.[145] It is important to take these concerns seriously. Nevertheless, engaging men and masculinities is not the zero-sum issue that it is commonly made out to be. Projects that involve men can still primarily benefit women, and, indeed, their effectiveness can be greatly enhanced *because* they involve men. Nevertheless, men's inclusion should not come at women's expense; it should be for women's benefit, as an addition to programs and policies working to achieve gender equality and sustainable peace.

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140 We observe the largest gender gaps in Aceh, where female Acehnese respondents are slightly to significantly less likely than their male counterparts to say that the executive (-12 percentage points), community leadership (-17 percentage points), and religious leadership (-26 percentage points) are more suitable for men than women. As figure 12 depicts, however, relative to other female respondents Acehnese women exhibit the *most* conservative attitudes regarding women's appropriateness for executive, community, and religious leadership.

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