

Of course it has to be recognised that SSR is eminently policy-oriented and the SSR literature focuses on policy advice to major institutions and donors, making it difficult to state the case for broader transformations. Nevertheless, given that SSR programmes, especially in post-conflict situations, are viewed as critical junctures with the potential capacity to have a lasting impact on societal development, it would seem important to widen the debate on gender in SSR. The question is not merely how to guarantee women's participation in the security sector, but also how far the security institutions reflect and reinforce specific understandings of masculinity that contribute to a culture of violence and tend to exacerbate human insecurity. To give some examples: engendering police reform would imply not only setting up special units to deal with violence against women and encouraging female applicants to join the police, but also looking to see how far a

macho gun culture within the police encourages a militarised style of policing that puts the lives of citizens at risk. Or, more generally: what ideal of masculinity is transmitted within the armed and security forces and how does this impact on gender relations within society as a whole? How far are men negatively impacted by dominant conceptions of masculinity in that they are required to conform to a specific understanding of what masculinity entails? In recent decades, feminist-inspired peace research literature has generated a wealth of insight into the nexus between constructions of masculinity and the state security institutions, focussing mainly on the armed forces as a crucial locus of the construction of gender identities. The incipient debate on gender in SSR could usefully build on these findings to broaden the understanding of how a gender perspective on security could contribute to societal transformation and a culture of non-violence.

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