Towards a Gendered Understanding of Conflict

Bridget Byrne

1 Introduction[1]

The increase in conflict and violence over the last 20 years, and the fact that the end of the Cold War has prompted an escalation rather than a reduction in conflicts, provides a real challenge to development thinking and practice. It is becoming clear that the assumption of a universal, linear, global path to economic development, social justice and peace is not happening and possibly will never be achieved. The post-colonial heritage has often been one of discord and fragmentation whilst economic development is only won at a cost. There is also a growing awareness that development itself, or at least uneven and unequal development, contributes to conflict (Duffield 1994: 37; Adams and Bradbury 1995, African Rights 1995). Feminists and those involved in gender and development have been well aware for some time that the modernist model of linear development does not match the experience of women across the world. That frequently social and economic progress has been achieved at the cost of increasing women's workloads and their marginalization. Thus at a time of increasing concern over conflict in the Third World, and increasing recognition of the importance of gender analysis in development, it is an opportune moment to examine conflict from a gender and development perspective.

In the modern 'total war' situation, there is no 'theatre of war' or a delineated front-line. Whether it be through the use of long-range missiles or fighting carried out in villages and homes, 'ordinary' people are directly under attack. This means that the stereotyped image of men going off to battle while women tend the home fires has to be radically revised (Segal 1987: 189; El-Bushra and Piza Lopez 1993). Both men and women are victims of war - whether directly as war fatalities or casualties, or through the effect of dislocation on their livelihoods and social networks. However, neither men nor women are merely passive victims of conflict. They are also actors in supporting or opposing violence and in trying to survive the effects of conflict.

Most analyses of conflict are largely ungendered and fail to recognize the ways in which the international and national structures of power and patterns of resource allocation are based on gender inequalities as well as inequalities between regions and social or ethnic groups.[2] The social divisions along ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic or national lines which underlie conflict situations are cross-cut by gender divisions. The militarization of societies affects definitions of masculinity and femininity and the allocation of men and women's gendered responsibilities (Enloe 1983). A gender analysis can illuminate how men and women are caught up in different ways in struggles over power and resources, through their different identities, differential access to and control over resources, and through changes in gender ideologies. A gender analysis also involves questioning notions of 'peace'. Even where there may be an absence of fighting, women frequently face not only structural disadvantage in economic, political and social terms but also high levels of violence which are often overlooked because it takes place in the private sphere (Longwe 1995: 6; Dalby 1994:608).

Feminist writings on conflict, peace and gender ideologies are one resource for the construction of an analysis of conflict from a gender and development perspective. This article, whilst not attempting to provide a comprehensive overview of feminist thought on war and conflict will seek to draw out the potential relevance of some feminist thought for a gender analysis of conflict. It challenges essentialist views which equate women with peace. Instead, it proposes that a more useful avenue is to explore the ways in which masculinity and femininity are re-defined in processes of conflict and in ways which serve state military and nationalist objectives. It will also address the question of intervention, arguing that gender analysis is an essential, albeit usually neglected, tool for development and relief agencies in conflict situations.

2 Essentialist Notions of Gender and Violence

Male dominance of the initiation of conflict and fighting during wars, and the active role of many women in seeking peace (from Lysistrata to Greenham Common and the Women in Black), lend weight to ideas which view aggressiveness as inherently male, in contrast to women's 'nurturing' nature. Within this position, there are tensions between those who regard men's aggression and women's nurturing as natural/biological tendencies, and those who regard them as the product of patriarchal structures (Segal 1987: 162). Olive Schreiner made the link between women's reproductive roles and their abhorrence for war:

> 'There is, perhaps, no woman ... who could look down upon a battlefield covered with slain, but the thought would rise in her, 'So many mothers' sons ... So many months of weariness and pain while bones and muscles were shaped within' ... On that day, when the woman takes her place beside the man in governance and arrangement of external affairs of her race will also be that day that heralds the death of war as a means of arranging human differences'.
> (quoted in the Cambridge Women's Peace Collective 1984: 81)

For Andrea Dworkin, men and violence are inextricably tied together:
> 'male aggression is rapacious. It spills over, not accidentally, but purposefully ... Men develop a strong loyalty to violence. Men are distinguished from women by their commitment to do violence rather than to be victimized by it'
> (Dworkin 1981:51).

Whereas Vandana Shiva emphasizes the 'feminine principle', which is potentially found in both men

and women and which she regards as a non-patriarchal, non-gendered category of creative non-violence (Shiva 1989) For those who see wars as largely fought in defence of patriarchal interests, particularly as embodied by the nation state, it follows that women have little to gain from wars or conflicts and will have common interests in opposing war. War cannot be eliminated without eliminating patriarchy and there can be no true or lasting 'peace' or 'security' until the underlying patriarchal social structures and relations of female subordination are transformed (Carroll and Hall 1993: 16, Longwe 1995: 7).

These positions are valuable because they highlight the interconnections between the structures of female oppression, violence against women and the origins of conflict. However, they have a tendency towards an essentialist understanding of men and women, setting in stone ideas of masculinity and femininity.[3] In reality, gender identities are variable over time and context. The image of conflict as intrinsically male masks the ways in which women are affected by, and involved in, conflict. It is particularly problematic to have unquestioning and fixed notions of masculinity and femininity at a time when gender identities and relations are, as a result of conflict, in a considerable state of flux. The view that women have common interests and will always be able to unite across the 'male-defined' barriers of class, race and nationality can be seen to deny women agency. Women are not seen as actors within the social, economic and political structures like men but are somehow 'above' these forces, remaining in their 'natural' states of nurturance and peacefulness.

3 Gender Identities in Times of Conflict

Moving beyond essentialist views of gender, feminist analysis of gender identities can contribute to the understanding of shifting gender relations in times of conflict and under militarization. Gender identities - the roles and behaviours which are designated to one gender or the other - are one way in which the distribution of power between the genders is expressed. Gender identities are largely culturally created and are subject to shifts, changes and manipulations. They are 'ideal' models for the genders which actual individuals may not live up to. Masculinity and femininity, whilst they may change, remain in oppositional relation to each other - to be feminine is to be that which is not masculine (Zalewski 1995: 341). In addition to being oppositional, masculinity and femininity are intimately tied up with the subordination of women. Those qualities which in a given situation are power-enhancing are those which tend to be defined as masculine and associated with men. It is important to recognize that there may be multiple and competing notions of masculinity and femininity in any given time and context. In conflict situations, gender identities become intensely politicized. For example, the process of militarization can be traced in the reforming and restating of gender identities, through legal reforms, changes in employment patterns, propaganda and cultural discourse, education and the socialization of children (Hooper 1995: 4; Segal 1987).

Most commonly, in situations of militarization, traditional gender ideals are stressed. Men's 'masculinity' is called on to encourage them to take up arms in defence of their country, ethnic group or political cause - and in defence of 'their' women. Women become the bearers of the culture that the men are fighting to defend. What is 'feminine' and considered appropriate behaviour for women may be redefined. For example, in the former Yugoslavia, women are assigned the mythical roles of 'Mother Juvoica' (the mother who sacrificed nine sons and her husband to the homeland without tears) and 'Daughter of Kosovo' (the daughter who tends injured soldiers) (Cetkovic 1993: 2). It can be argued that the exaggeration of sexual difference which is characteristic of many warfare situations is a reassertion of patriarchy. This may be the result of threats to the basis on which patriarchy is functioning at that particular time.

Feminist researchers have done considerable work on militarization and on the dependence of the military on polarized notions of gender identity (Enloe

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[3] It should, of course, be emphasized that essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity are also popularly held by many who do not share a feminist perspective.

1983; Enloe 1989; Richters, n.d.; Cock 1994; Howes and Stevenson 1993).[4] Notions of masculinity are bound up in the military which is almost always defined as male. Generally, women who are employed directly by the military undertake 'feminine' auxiliary roles of nursing or clerical work. There are also often taboos against women taking up arms (Zalewski 1995; Segal 1987). Where women take more active roles are often 'de-sexed' and no longer regarded as feminine women. However, the masculinity demanded by armies and the military does not come easily: 'Wars do not occur because men are eager to fight, on the contrary, military aggression always requires carefully controlled and systematic action at the state level, which plays upon public fears, vulnerabilities, prides and prejudices' (Segal 1987:178). The training of men in armies involves the drilling into men of a particular notion of aggressive masculinity which is intimately related to misogyny. The language of armies often reflects this construction of masculinity as the most common insults are those that suggest that a soldier is homosexual or feminine. The misogyny of armies is intertwined with both homophobia (as seen by the opposition to allowing open homosexuality in the military in both Britain and the US) and racism. Both women and members of ethnic minorities who enter the military are frequently subjected to sexual and racial harassment (Enloe 1983).

The relationship between militarization, misogyny and the oppression of women should not be confused with the idea that all men will necessarily benefit from the making of war, or that women will have no room to renegotiate the formation of gender identities. In one very obvious way, men are the primary losers in war in that they make up the majority of casualties in situations of conflict. Even though conflicts increasingly affect civilian populations, men are often those primarily targeted. The dominance of refugee populations by women is a reflection of men's specific vulnerability in situations of conflict. This is most starkly seen in the former Yugoslavia where tens of thousands of men are missing having been selected for death or imprisonment purely on the basis of gender (Jones

1994: 119). Men, or particular men, may also lose out in the assertion of a specific notion of masculinity, possibly replacing multiple and more fluid notions of what masculinity is and how men should behave. As was mentioned above, the military ideal of masculine identity does not come naturally. For example, many men, such as older men who cannot live up to the masculine ideal of combat, may find an erosion in their power and influence as a result of the constrictions in the definitions of masculinity. Equally, as a result of wars, men may be unable to fulfil roles which are expected of them, such as the protection of their families and may lose self-esteem and respect as a result.

Women can also lose out through the political manipulation of gender ideology as part of the process of militarization. This can lead to the erosion of women's human rights and restrictions on their mobility. Women become the bearers of the cultural heritage of a nation or community. As a result there may be a restriction in the modes of behaviour which are acceptable for women. Women's reproductive rights may be particularly under pressure as high levels of fertility are sought in the lead up to, and during conflict. The holding up of women as symbolic bearers of caste, ethnic or national identity can expose them to the risk of attack. The widespread occurrence of rape in times of conflict has attracted particular attention and has been seen as directly related to the position of women in communities as bearers of cultural identity. The rape of women in conflict situations is intended not only as violence against women, but as an act of aggression against a nation or community (Seifert 1993; El-Bushra and Piza Lopez 1993: 10).

Just as the development of an idealized 'macho' identity for men in times of conflict should not be taken to represent reality, equally it should not be assumed that women are caring, nurturing and largely passive people. Widely reported cases in Rwanda show that women are capable of participating in horrific acts of genocide (African Rights 1995b). Women may be inspired to act by similar

[4] Whilst the phenomenon of nation-state building and its relation to patriarchy has been extensively explored through feminist perspectives, there is, as yet, little

feminist research and analysis on the situation in an increasing number of conflicts where the nation state appears to be disintegrating.

political, economic, religious, nationalistic, or racist motivations that lead men into battle (Segal 1987: 31; Richters n.d.: 42). How they express their desire to defend their cause, however, depends to some extent on the nature of gender identities and what behaviour is considered appropriate for them. Inflicting violence on others, the use of weapons and participation in armed forces are all power-enhancing activities which, with some exceptions, are considered 'masculine' and thus reserved for men. In Rwanda, African Rights (1995: 1b) claim that the involvement of women in the genocide was the result of a strategy of the political, military and administrative hierarchies to ensure that all sections of the population - men, women and children - would be complicit in the killings.[5] It is more frequent for women to be active combatants in liberation armies. Whilst this may have the effect of promoting wider notions of appropriate female behaviour, women have often found that fighting for their country's liberation and achieving more prominent public roles is not a guarantee that a real commitment to gender equality will follow victory. (see Glavanis 1992; Hensman 1992; McFadden 1992.)

Women, however, may gain status from encouraging the perception that they are the guardians of cultural identity for their society and may find that, in times of war they may gain some power over men. For example, they may be in a position to accuse men of not being 'manly' enough to defend their nation or community. In the First World War, middle class women handed out white feathers to humiliate men who refused to fight. In Chile, female supporters of Pinochet surrounded barracks chanting 'chicken' at soldiers inciting them to join the coup d'État. In contradiction to the heightened femininity offered by militarized gender ideologies, conflict situations offer women the opportunity to expand the roles available to them. By necessity, war may become 'women's passport into the experiences and world of men' (Segal 1987:171).[6] It may be partly as a means to fulfil their aspiration for entry into new spheres that women embrace the militaristic ideologies and nationalism.

However, there may be high costs to transgressing the culturally imposed boundaries between masculine and feminine behaviour. Men who refuse to fight risk being ridiculed, imprisoned or even killed for their lack of 'courage' or masculinity. Equally women who contradict female stereotypes by killing are often regarded as much more deviant or unnatural than men. Women in the Shining Path of Peru provoke both fear and anger and are described - much more readily than their male counterparts - as monsters, killing machines and crazed automatons (Richters, n.d.: 43). In this situation, rape becomes a punishment for those who have been seen to transgress traditional gender boundaries. In contrast to this vilification of female killers, African Rights (1995b: 5) claims that it is because women are considered unable to commit the acts involved in the genocide in Rwanda, that many women guilty of atrocities are able to go free.

4 Gender Analysis of Interventions in Conflict Situations

Beyond the level of ideology, the processes of conflict clearly involve immense social, political and economic disruption. A gender analysis should be an automatic element in the planning and practice of external interventions in situations of conflict. This would ensure that those who are frequently the most vulnerable (women, and also the elderly, young disabled and minority ethnic groups), and who often have a crucial role in the rebuilding of their societies, are not further marginalized by inappropriate interventions. A gender and development analysis would seek to trace the ways in which these changes impact on gender relations. In particular, it would look at the extent to which women's social, political and economic marginalization are increased during and after conflict as well as whether there are opportunities for improving women's position as a result of the changing situation.

[5] African Rights at times falls into an essentialist trap by suggesting that female violence in Rwanda is so unnatural that it requires special investigation and explanation. This is the implication of their publication which is solely devoted to the phenomenon of female killers (African Rights 1995)

[6] A classic example of this is seen in the film 'Rosie the Riveter' which portrayed women entering into factory work as part of the US 'war effort' during the Second World War and the challenges their participation this presented to social constructions of gender.

External interventions in conflicts, particularly internal conflicts, are the subject of increasingly heated debate and this paper will seek to draw out some of the gender implications of this debate. No intervention by an aid agency can be said to be neutral. In situations of scarcity, the distribution of resources will always have a political, social and economic impact. Equally, no intervention can be regarded as gender-neutral. Interventions in any sector are likely to have an impact on gender relations. Distribution of resources, capacity building or services delivered, either to men or women will affect gender relations, to the extent that it changes or reinforces the status quo. In conflict situations, the politics of intervention, what should be done, when it should be done and with whom it should be done are particularly complex. Conflict is, by its very nature, a situation of change and it is important to assess how interventions will affect both those forces which lead to an escalation of conflict and those which tend towards stability (El-Bushra and Piza Lopez 1993).[7]

Concern has been raised about the dominance of NGOs and also the rise of 'military humanitarianism'. Both have been interpreted as part of a tendency by the North to reduce its response to political crisis in the South to the provision of relief (Duffield 1994; African Rights 1994; Borland 1993; Adams and Bradbury 1995). There is a recognition that such intervention can prolong wars by providing material assistance, including food, directly or indirectly to the army or other forces controlling a particular area. The toleration of the diversion of aid resources to military forces in return for the loan of vehicles, premises or staff and by the payment of fees and taxes may feed violence. Strategic protection is also provided when the military or political objectives of the controlling authority coincide with the logistical requirements of the humanitarian operation, such as keeping roads, airfields and ports open, and maintaining supplies to garrison towns-cum-relief shelters. In this way a synergy can be developed between relief and violence. Negotiated access programmes can sustain the war economy and weaken alternative civil structures (African Rights 1994: 4 13; Duffield 1994: 42). This is particularly significant for gender

considerations. War economies are largely run by men and the civil structures which are undermined include those most likely to address women's gender interests. In addition, as has been documented in Somalia, Cambodia and Bosnia, the introduction of military forces - even those which are mandated to protect civilians - contributes to the processes of militarization of a society leading to the further exploitation of, and increased violence against, women. (Byrne, Marcus and Power-Stevens 1995)

Relief initiatives lacking gender analysis may also result in worsening gender relations. For example, women, who are usually responsible for household management in 'normal' times, are often sidelined in relief distribution procedures and thereby suffer a diminishment in their spheres of influence. Reducing women's control over food may also increase the likelihood of food being siphoned off to militias (Marshall 1995: 6). As a result of the large-scale movements of population which conflict often produces, much relief aid is delivered in the context of refugee camps. There is a tendency in many refugee situations to speed up processes of registration of beneficiaries by registering only male heads of households. This has serious implications for women who, as a result, lack legal protection and direct access to resources (Forbes Martin 1992). However, distributing food or other aid to women is not enough if there is insufficient security within camps to ensure that women maintain control over the resources they receive (UNHCR 1995).

The delivery of relief is often carried out in a high-speed, top down fashion (Buchanan-Smith 1990: 29). Whilst speed may be a high priority, failure to consult the refugee population, particularly women, on issues such as appropriate camp layouts may result in future crisis. For example, where women's access to water and sanitation facilities have been restricted by inappropriate siting (such as too far away from residences, or too near areas where men congregate) there is a risk of serious breakdown in conditions of hygiene and sanitation. Mistakes made in haste may be expensive to remedy, thus it is important to establish mechanisms of

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[7] Of course, it is important to remember that the transformations which conflicts bring about are not necessarily negative and that conflict may be a product of a situation which is untenable.

consultation as soon as possible. Relief can also contribute to violence if it is provided on the basis of 'misguided neutrality' and where solidarity and human rights are given a low priority. (Duffield 1994: 43) African Rights argues for a distinction to be made between 'operational neutrality', as practised by the ICRC - which is rooted in the refusal to take a stand supporting one side or the other - and 'human rights objectivity', which requires passing a judgement in favour of one side or the other (African Rights 1995a).

The prioritizing of relief over human rights also has important gender implications, particularly as abuse of women's human rights is commonly given a much lower priority than other forms of human rights violation. As a result, with the focus on humanitarian assistance, there is unlikely to be any serious attempt to prevent violation of women's human rights.

Rape and sexual violence appear to be a universal and widespread characteristic of warfare. Sexual violence against women in times of conflict appears to be both a result of the general breakdown in law and order, and as part of a policy to demoralize the community (Seifert 1993) . It is likely that men also suffer from sexual abuse in conflict situations. This has been documented in situations of imprisonment and torture. As with women, the rape of a man can signify the ultimate expression of power, and in many cultures a man who perpetrates a rape on a man is not considered homosexual. There is, however, very little documentation on this subject, which is likely to be the result of the even greater social taboo against men talking of being raped.

Rape and sexual violence have severe, long-term effects on women's and men's health and emotional, economic and social future. Women are exposed to unwanted and highly traumatic pregnancies, and as a result may risk high-risk abortions. They are also exposed to infection by HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The health consequences are particularly severe for women who have already undergone female genital mutilation. Women who have been raped frequently find that they are unable to find marriage partners. Rape and abduction by the military may have serious social consequences for women as they face being rejected by their communities for seeming to have

changed allegiances (El-Bushra and Piza Lopez 1993).

Whether or not the rape of women is officially sanctioned by military or government authorities, they are complicit in the violation of human rights if they do not take action to prevent it or punish the perpetrators (Vickers 1993: 21). Equally, the international community has an obligation to prevent and punish violations of human rights. Although there is increasing attention given to the incidents of sexual violence in times of conflict, and despite government and UN commitments to the protection of women's rights, there has, as yet, been little progress on the protection or enforcement of women's human rights in times of conflict. A reflection of this is the lack of women on the Bosnia war crime investigation panels. Without women members it is unlikely that the panel will be able to fully investigate abuses against women (El-Bushra and Piza Lopez 1993: 27). There are also examples of sexual abuse of women by forces representing the international community and who are supposed to be peacekeeping or protecting the population. The militaristic ideology of misogyny and aggressive masculinity often overrides the remit of protection under which these forces work. Large-scale military operations frequently result in an increase in prostitution and sexual harassment. (Byrne, Marcus and Power-Stevens 1995) Sexual violence is also widespread in refugee situations, yet there is insufficient attention to protection issues in the design of camps and the distribution of resources (UNHCR 1995).

Women are largely excluded from high-level negotiations and diplomacy aimed at bringing an end to conflict and their gendered concerns are almost always entirely neglected, despite women's prominent participation in peace movements. A recent example of this is the Dayton, Ohio negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict in the former Yugoslavia: despite the many organizations representing women in the former Yugoslavia, there were no women involved in the negotiations. In the Somalian conflict, it was only through the pressure of the President of Ethiopia and the Life and Peace Institute that Somali women were able to gain entry to a peace conference in Mogadishu and even then only as observers (El-Bushra and Piza Lopez 1993).

The exclusion of women from high-level peace processes is a result of their frequent exclusion from positions of political decision making in general but is also a result of the structure of international law and diplomacy with its emphasis on the abstract entity of the state. The effect of the structures with which the international community works can be to give legitimacy and increased power to leaders of particular militias who have no accountability to the community they are said to represent (Obibi 1995: 46). The question, therefore, is not simply one of including a few women in the high-level negotiations. This alone would raise many questions, such as whom these women represent and whether they could be said to represent gender interests. What is important for meaningful peace making, is for wider processes of representation to be developed which would include women's organizations.

Many women who remained in their home areas during the conflict may have expanded their activities due to the absence of men. Women may benefit from changes in the gender division of labour and responsibility, despite increased work loads. However, this is only to the extent that an increase in responsibility is accompanied by an increase in control of resources. The end of conflict often heralds a period of transition, where gender relations and identities are renegotiated. This period can offer opportunities for women to formalize their increased participation in public life and assert new roles for themselves. However, it can also be a time when women are made more vulnerable. As international aid is withdrawn and the competition for power and resources continues, women can be further marginalized. The need for men to assert particular masculine identities may lead to women being forced to resume submissive identities and cede power and influence to men. Intervention at the time of reconstruction and rehabilitation after the conflict can have important gendered implications. The policies followed by international agencies and NGOs will be crucial in determining how repatriation occurs, whether social networks are allowed to remain intact during the process of repatriation and to what extent women gain or retain control over resources. The distribution of crucial inputs of seeds and farming equipment, if given to men, could further weaken women's position. Property rights is often an area of crucial

importance, particularly in cases, such as Rwanda where there are large numbers of female headed households with very limited land rights.

5 Conclusion

There has been relatively little work done on conflict from a gender and development perspective. This article has examined the potential contribution of feminist writings on war and peace to building a gender analysis of conflict. Whilst essentialist understandings of masculinity and femininity have been critiqued, it is argued that feminist research on gender identities, in particular in the process of militarization, is an important element of any examination of conflict situations from a gender perspective. However, from high level diplomacy to the nuts and bolts of food distribution, international agencies involved in conflict situations are largely blind to their impact on gender relations. Consequently, it is likely that power, both at the household and national level, will be further concentrated in the hands of men, or those with the force of arms behind them.

It is important, at this stage of nascent interest in gender and conflict, to examine the constraints which face integration of gender concerns into international interventions. Many of these are the same as those identified by the linking relief and development debate (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994). Perhaps the most important of these are the institutional and staffing obstacles which result in a 'culture clash' between those who work in development, and particularly on gender, and those who work in relief and conflict situations. Relief operations are driven by a sense of urgency which tend to favour top-down, donor dependent expatriate-run operations, reliant on a narrow range of indicators (Buchanan-Smith 1990). On the other hand integration of development and gender concerns requires a fuller understanding of gender relations and more bottom-up, participatory methods. In the culture of speed, gender considerations can seem to be an unjustifiable luxury. In addition, in situations of conflict, there is a reluctance to undertake actions which may be perceived as challenging traditional norms and structures or as politically contentious. The provision of contraceptives to women in situations of conflict between ethnic groups may, for example, be seen as a highly

political act. There is also the concern that interventions may increase gender conflict at times of community stress and vulnerability. In addition, staff within organizations may be hostile to the implementation of gender policies, which may challenge deeply held personal beliefs.

Whilst some of these concerns may be fully understandable and indeed justified, it is important to remember that, at its most basic level, a gender approach is seeking to ensure that the position of women does not worsen, rather than necessarily promote change. Gender analysis can also simply ensure that interventions are effective, through enabling better distribution of resources to those who need them most. It is here that the culture of speed needs to be challenged if neglecting to ensure consultation procedures results in ineffective, or even dangerous interventions. However, it is also important to emphasize that the failure to recognize gender-specific needs of women and to act to fulfil them can severely compromise women's human rights. It is also important to view conflict as a process in which change is inherent. In this context, no intervention is neutral and the key analysis is to determine to what extent increasing women's access to and control of resources and increasing their influence in society will contribute to long-term stability and positive change.

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