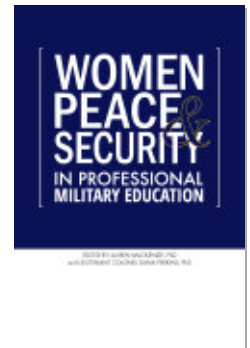# Chapter 5. Conclusion

Published by

Women, Peace, and Security in Professional Military Education.

Marine Corps University Press, 2022.

Project MUSE.   https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/book.102414.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

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The resounding theme of the research and analysis conducted by the authors of the preceding chapters revolved around the value of a gender perspective, one of the global WPS principles. However, it is only one of seven principles that the WPS SFIP outlines: the participation of women in peace and security; the protection of women and girls from violence; the inclusion of women in conflict prevention; equal access to relief and recovery before, during, and after conflict and crisis; the protection of human rights; equal application of the rule of law; and incorporating a gender perspective into peace and security efforts.[278]

These principles are global, however, there are national lines of effort and departmental equities that support the WPS principles within U.S. government and military bodies. WPS is a complex agenda that requires an up-and-out and a down-and-in approach to successfully implement it as directed within the 2021 NDAA within the DOD.

Although the focus of these chapters centers around the utility of a gender perspective, there remain myriad topics to address and research. Moreover, it is essential to state that time is of the essence; September 2025 is not far distant.

So, what is missing from this research? The authors posit more than can be covered in a small research project paper. Future Army War College students must continue to confront the subject to assist with the WPS strategic research to enhance successful implementation. Additionally, during the research it became apparent that the implementation and training of WPS are somewhat disjointed and will require future dialogue. This chapter addresses recommended areas for future follow-on research. The breadth and depth of WPS are vast, and it is to be hoped that future students and leaders throughout the DOD take this topic seriously.

As previously discussed, the authors recognized that to address the entire WPS agenda was impossible and so strategically chose gender perspective because of the topic's complex nature. Therefore, the first item missing from this research dealt with the concept of a disjointed effort on training and implementation. When looking at the GCCs through the Unified Command Plan lens it becomes clear that they are all addressing WPS differently. To implement WPS, there must be a foundation established within the DOD outlining the basic implementation guidelines, which is not

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* The views expressed in this chapter are solely those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Marine Corps University, the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Army, U.S. Army War College, the U.S. Air Force, or the U.S. government.

278 *Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2020), 9.

currently the case. All GCCs are implementing WPS based on their specific missions within their regions of influence. Not having a program of instruction directed by DOD leaves each GCC to implement as they see fit. The problem with this is that when an individual leaves one command for another command, the education gained may not work effectively within the gaining unit. There is a reason why training institutions utilize a program of instruction; it ensures everyone training on a subject gets the same foundational skills needed throughout the Service. GCCs' implementation of WPS should be contextualized for the issues in their specific regions, but that contextualization should be based on a common set of DOD standards and practices as detailed in a coherent program of instruction.

Additionally, GCCs have hired gender advisors to make recommendations to the command teams and leadership within the GCCs. However, they are busy frantically building training packages intending to educate the force on WPS. Again, if each GCC is working to implement and train in a vacuum, it will create gaps that future commanders must overcome to implement WPS across the force successfully.

The authors of the three preceding chapters each defined *gender perspective* slightly differently, and each had a slightly different slant on how to address the problem through their research. In the same way, three different authors writing on the same WPS principle would likely come to three very different conclusions. One can only assume a similar effect is at play among the different DOD commands implementing WPS as they each understand it and achieving different outcomes.

Another reason training and implementation is disjointed is the lack of an executive agent for WPS. *DOD Directive 5101.1, DOD Executive Agent* defines an executive agent as "the Head of a DoD Component to whom the Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary of Defense has assigned specific responsibilities, functions, and authorities to provide defined levels of support for operational missions, or administrative or other designated activities that involve two or more of the DoD Components."[279] Currently, the DOD is the executive agent for all Services to implement WPS, which the authors claim will potentially overwhelm the secretary of defense and their staff. The DOD must consider assigning an executive agent as defined in *DOD Directive 5101.1* to provide direction on training and implementation instructions. Without an executive agent, each Service is left to implement and develop training on its own, which will lead to a less than adequate implementation of WPS by September 2025.

While these chapters briefly touched on effective implementation, they did not address what effective implementation of WPS looks like in the future. In the military, leaders are always asking what success looks like after implementation. The DOD must ask a similar question about WPS and its global, national lines of effort and departmental equities. Is the implementation of all three the only way to succeed, or

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[279] *Department of Defense Directive 5101.1, DOD Executive Agent* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 3 September 2002), 2.

can there be parts of each implemented for success? This is another area that was not explicitly called out in any of the three chapters.

Recommendations for further research within the WPS agenda are a strategic imperative, and the authors make five suggestions with potentially wide-ranging impacts throughout the global, national, and departmental areas of WPS. DOD must concentrate on diversity and inclusion and on recruitment and retention; to seek and support the meaningful participation of women in the military decision-making process, according to the first national line of effort; and encourage and support the participation of women in peace and security.[280] Finally, DOD must address how it operationalizes WPS throughout the force.

The list of topics above is by no means all-inclusive but is more of a starting point for future students to consider. These chapters addressed diversity and inclusion, recruitment, and retention. The authors suggest that improving these principles within the DOD will positively impact WPS across the defense enterprise; however, more specific research is warranted.

Improving the participation of women in the military decisionmaking process speaks to the potential contributions of a gender perspective; however, explicitly researching this area may lend itself to improvements throughout the DOD. The improvements referred to are a complete and thorough course of action, which leads to a more lethal force through the inclusion of women in the process.

Future researchers should also look at the participation of women in peace and security from the WPS principles. The recommendations all speak to how to better include women into the decision process, which ultimately supports the operationalization of WPS within the DOD. The research revealed that the U.S. population is greater than 50 percent female, and if women have a different perspective than men, why wouldn't the DOD want to include them?[281] Again, this is an important research topic for students in next year's academic cohort to address.

Finally, more work must be devoted to including WPS within the military education system, including WPS training for noncommissioned officers and officer professional military education courses, such as the Basic Leadership Course and Basic Officer Leadership Course. It will help set the stage for successful implementation within the DOD. Additionally, it must go even further. It must inculcate WPS into Basic Combat Training, Advanced Individual Training, and officer-producing courses including Officer Candidate School, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and the U.S. Military Academy. With little time left to implement according to the 2021 NDAA, the time to further research how to inculcate WPS into initial entry training and PME courses is now. This will be a significant research project for a future group to analyze and offer potential courses of action.

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280 *Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan*, 9.
281 "Quick Facts, United States," U.S. Census Bureau.

How does the DOD further expand WPS within the Services? Each Service and component is currently left to do it alone and has received little guidance or direction. Further research is warranted in the coming academic years across the PME continuum and is a great resource to further the WPS agenda beyond its current state. The authors hope that the staff at the Army War College find a sponsor and put together a robust integrated research group to ensure this topic garners the attention it deserves.