

**Norm Entrepreneurship in International Politics:
William Hague and the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict
*Foreign Policy Analysis***

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Abstract

Norm entrepreneurs challenge existing understandings of significant societal problems and seek to bring about political change. International Relations theories of norm diffusion implicitly rely on accounts of entrepreneurial action - almost exclusively identified as non-state actors and civil society activists - who often have to persuade or resist powerful states to effect international normative change. In this paper we argue that powerful state agents can be moral norm entrepreneurs and we explicate the acts that makes them significant agents of international socialisation. We examine a prominent case, namely former British Foreign Secretary William Hague's promotion of an international norm prohibiting use of sexual violence in conflict-affected environments – the Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI). We analyse Hague's leadership in the framing of sexual violence in conflict as a threat to international peace and security in British foreign policy, and trace how PSVI came to mobilise public commitments from states to prioritise the prevention of sexual violence in conflict-affected situations. This case serves to illustrate the importance of state leaders as norm entrepreneurs who can leverage their gendered identity and position to promote transformative normative change by reframing the moral prerogative of 'national interest' in foreign policy.

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Over the past twenty-five years International Relations scholars have built a research field studying how certain ideas attain the status of norms bringing about change in the behaviour of states and other actors in international politics. They have argued that inter-subjective normative construction and contestation affects the way national and international interests are defined and pursued. These interests therefore, cannot be seen as merely derivative of the structural power wielded by dominant states (Reus-Smit 1994; Weldes 1996). Rather, material interests are shaped by dynamic processes of contestation through which norms emerge and continually evolve, sometimes changing entirely in form and content (Krook and True 2012). But which factors most drive normative change, how and why? Theories of norm diffusion have tended to have a structural, mechanistic quality to them expressed through models and metaphors such as the boomerang effect, the norm life-cycle, norm cascade and the five phase spiral model that neglects to interrogate the actual *agents* of diffusion (Bucher 2014). Many scholars have emphasised the role of international organisations, NGOs, and social movements in setting the normative agenda (Florini 1996: Finnemore 1996). Other scholars have argued that the growth of transnational networks linking these actors with states is the critical factor promoting normative change (Keck and Sikkink 1998; True and Mintrom 2001).

Much of the enquiry has sought to trace how moral and human rights movements have persuaded states to commit to moral action (e.g. Busby 2007; Risse and Sikkink 1999). Examinations of the agenda-setting process, whether understood as spiral, network or boomerang process, all tend to focus on specific actors - usually individuals, civil society and non-governmental groups - who take advantage of windows of political opportunity to

persuade states to agree to new standards of behaviour (Carpenter 2014; Price 2012). Rarely are states or their agents identified as leading any of these moral agendas. Typically the state is treated as the “authoritative decision-making” actor whose role is to transform the new norm into law or policy commitments. However, in very few cases is the state itself identified as “a champion for new norms” (Bob 2009: 20). In this paper we ask under what conditions can the state be a normative champion and what is significant about the promotion of normative change by a state-led norm entrepreneur? In addressing this research question, we consider the case of former British Foreign Secretary William Hague’s promotion of the international norm prohibiting use of sexual violence in conflict through the UK’s Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative. We seek to explain the recent momentum in international policymaking on the prevention of sexual violence in armed conflict considering the role of state norm entrepreneurship. In particular, we ask how and why did the United Kingdom and William Hague devote the significant attention and resources of the foreign policy apparatus to further this norm established more than a decade earlier in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and by gender justice advocates?

Global awareness of the problem of sexual violence in conflict and the need to stop it has evolved at least since the 1907 Hague Convention Respecting the Law and Custom of War on Land (Askin 1997: 42). However, international legal recognition of rape and other widespread and systematic sexual violence as international crimes is very recent. This recognition was achieved in the 1998 Rome Statute, after decades of struggle by women’s and human rights movements around the world, led by Women’s Caucus for Gender Justice (WCGJ) (Copelon 2003). In 2000, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted its first resolution on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Resolution 1325, to address the particular impact of armed conflict on women and girls, and the need to promote their rights to protection and participation in peace, security and the prevention of armed conflict. Eight

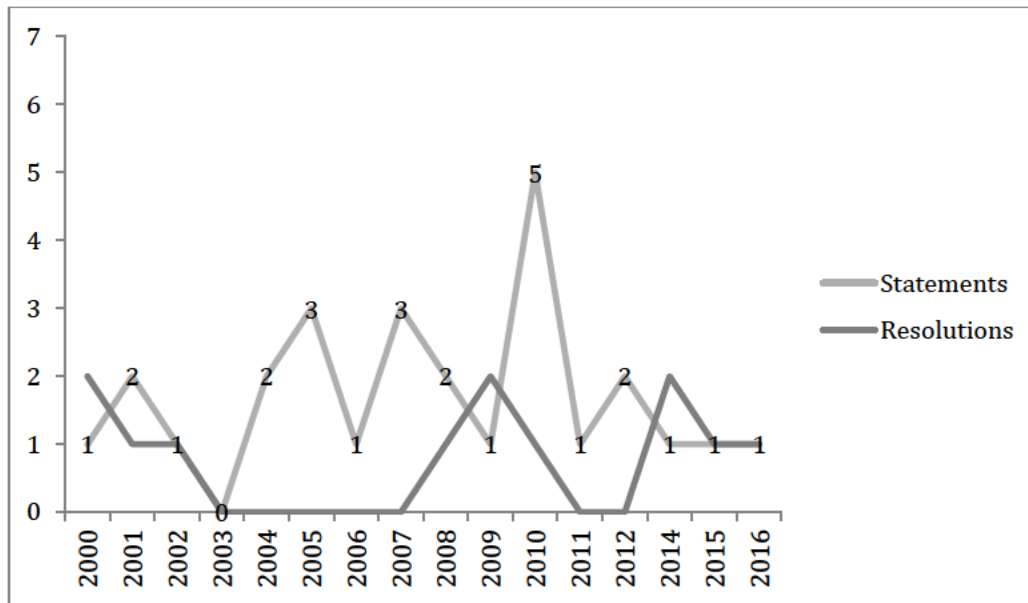
years after UNSCR 1325, Resolution 1820 (2008)¹ the first resolution to recognise sexual violence in armed conflict as a threat to international peace and security was adopted.

In marked difference to the relative silence that marked the WPS agenda on the Security Council and in the wider international community between 2000 and 2008, in recent years there has been dramatic escalation of international engagement and discussion on conflict-related sexual and gender based violence. Between 2010 and 2015 there were four more WPS resolutions adopted with specific reference to action required of the UN Security Council to hear reports on situations where sexual violence is occurring.² Thus, as Figure 1 shows, since 2008 there has been a significant upturn in UNSC resolutions and presidential statements, all of which attend to sexual violence in conflict inter alia.

¹ See United Nations Security Council, *Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) [on acts of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflicts]*, June 19, 2008, S/RES/1820. Two resolutions on implementation of Resolution 1820 followed a year later: *Security Council resolution 1888 (2009)*, September 30, 2009, S/RES/1888, and *Security Council resolution 1889 (2009)*, October 5, 2009, S/RES/1889.

² See United Nations Security Council, *Security Council resolution 1960 (2010)*, December 16, 2010, S/RES/1960; *Security Council resolution 2106 (2013)*, June 24, 2013, S/RES/2106; *Security Council resolution 2122 (2013)* October 18, 2013, S/RES/2122; *Security Council resolution 2242 (2015)* October 13, 2015, S/RES/2242. A sixth was introduced in March 2016 on addressing and reporting sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers: *Security Council resolution 2272 (2016)* March 11, 2016, S/RES/2272.

Figure 1: UNSC Resolutions and Presidential Statements on Women Peace and Security 2000-2016



Source: UN Documents for Women, Peace and Security.

At the same time, the second Chief Prosecutor for the ICC, Fatou Bensouda, presented the Office of the Prosecutor's first report on investigating crimes of sexual and gender based violence under the 1998 Rome Statute (Office of the Prosecutor 2014); and the UN General Assembly adopted the first Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in September 2013.

What accounts for the issue of sexual violence in conflict suddenly commanding diplomatic attention not only in the UN Security Council, but also in the General Assembly, the G8, and the thirty odd conflicts around the world now identified as 'situations of concern' to the international community? Foreign Secretary William Hague's promotion of an international norm prohibiting use of sexual violence in conflict-affected environments, the PSVI, is a theoretically compelling case that illustrates the unique positioning of a state foreign policy actor to promote international political and normative change (Hudson 2005: 15). Hague's promotion of the norm against sexual violence in conflict sought to build on the

international attention achieved by women and human rights groups to generate action and commitment from recalcitrant state actors to adopt and implement the norm.

The paper examines the foreign policy actor as a norm entrepreneur in three main parts. First we explore contemporary scholarship on norm and policy entrepreneurship to understand the parameters for state-led norm entrepreneurship. We explore to what extent the surge in attention to sexual violence in conflict can be attached to Hague's personal association with the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (UK FCO) Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) from 2012-2015. In the second part of the paper we examine how the PSVI highlights four "conditions" of norm entrepreneurship drawn from the policy diffusion scholarship: 1) the compulsion to reframe the national self-interest; 2) the positionality of the norm entrepreneur; 3) the harnessing of policy machinery and networks to further promote the norm; and 4) the capacity to seize political windows of opportunity to establish the norm. In the final part of the paper we return to the question of why and how PSVI is an important case of state-led norm entrepreneurship. We identify that gender matters in this foreign policy case study in a counter-intuitive way. Hague's foreign policy leadership as a white male engaged with the women, peace and security agenda demanded new forms of diplomatic engagement within and across states and a broad range of stakeholders including non-state actors and international organisations, to make commitments to end and address sexual violence in conflict.

The Significance of Sexual Violence in Conflict as a Global Normative Challenge

Policy entrepreneurship has been the subject of interest to public policy scholars for some time (Mintrom and Norman 2009). Informed by studies of how domestic policy change is promoted by entrepreneurs - IR scholars also began to pay attention to the significance of the advocacy of individuals and their association with rise and spread of new international

norms. One of the earliest IR scholars to highlight the importance of “norm entrepreneurs”, Ethan Nadelmann (1990: 496), asserted that “norms do not appear out of thin air – they are actively built by agents with strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior.”

Examining the evolution of a range of prohibition norms (against slavery, piracy, trafficking, the killing of whales and so on), Nadelmann (1990: 482) argues that the presence of an entrepreneurial actor with an organisational platform is a major factor explaining why some norms and not others achieve global reach. He describes transnational entrepreneurs as those who engage in “moral proselytism” to create alternative perceptions of appropriateness of behavior and (national) interest. These agents are essential because as Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 897) argue “new norms emerge in a highly contested normative space” defined by prior norms “where they must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest.”

Who can be norm entrepreneurs? In their influential article on international normative change, Finnemore and Sikkink primarily conceive norm entrepreneurs as individuals that exercise moral leadership to promote a new norm. Analyzing intergovernmental environmental negotiations, Oran Young (1999: 807) argues that, “entrepreneurs may be representatives of states, so long as they do not come from protagonists or, in other words, states capable of wielding significant structural power.” He contends that the norm entrepreneur is a rare breed who is able to work across various constituencies. What defines the norm entrepreneur, for Nadelmann and Young, is their non-interested, moral agency rather than their affiliation or bureaucratic location in global politics. Thus, an individual or group, representing a state or non-state actor, can successfully exemplify norm entrepreneurship.

Norm entrepreneurs challenge existing understandings of significant societal problems and seek to bring about political change. IR theories of norm diffusion implicitly rely on accounts of entrepreneurial *action* but how does one become an entrepreneurial *actor*? In IR norm theory literature, states are rarely identified as the usual suspects for norm entrepreneurialism (Bob 2009). Rather, states are usually identified as the recalcitrant actors that have to be convinced to change the status quo (Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999). Their positioning outside of conventional power is precisely what enables non-state actors to connect existing interests and resources with a moral prerogative, establish strong organisational platforms, and leverage networks to harness international political opportunities for consensus-building (Carpenter 2014). In contrast to the networking and agenda-setting skills of non-state actors, as Marsh and Jones (2014: 2) argue, understanding the role of individual Secretaries of State or Foreign Ministers in foreign policymaking processes is rather limited.

Particularly intriguing in the UK led PSVI are the counterfactuals of this case compared to the 'usual' norm entrepreneur in IR. The deliberate identification and positioning of Hague – the Foreign Minister of a country that is one amongst five permanent members on the Security Council - promoting a reconfigured understanding of the 'real' threats to international peace and security. Hague articulates his leadership of the PSVI as a signifier of the issue as an international peace and security imperative, its incorporation into British foreign policy is geared to mobilise a global public to persuade most states, including past perpetrators, to identify with ending sexual violence in conflict as a responsibility of all states.

In contemporary foreign policymaking, the distinctive role of norm entrepreneurs contra other foreign policy actors is that they continually reframe existing understandings of a problem to resonate with key audiences (Hudson 2005: 15; Charnysh et al 2015); and

they work to build cohesive teams and organisational platforms around them to promote their ideas. For powerful states, and their leaders, “the need for entrepreneurship [only] arises from the occurrence of bargaining impediments that threaten to prevent parties from realizing joint gains” (Young 1999, 807). Ingebritsen (2002) and Price (2008), however, have challenged this narrow appreciation of state-led norm entrepreneurship as one motivated (solely) by strategic gains. Whilst others have argued that the idea of an unethical foreign policy is almost impossible for most democratic nations (Bulley 2014) and cases from Canada’s role in banning landmines to Britain’s ethical foreign policy under former Prime Minister Tony Blair are cited (Smith and Light 2001; Williams 2002).

We contend that the combination of Hague and the PSVI is compelling in itself, but what adds to the theoretical interest is whether the entrepreneurial foreign policy actor, as masculine or feminine defined specifically with respect to class, nation and religion, *inter alia*, is significant where the norm affects the symbolic order structured by gender. Gender and power are integral aspects of the process of construction as feminist and constructivists scholars have emphasized (Locher and Prugl 2001; Barnett and Duvall 2005, Carpenter 2006). The juxtaposition of the identity of the entrepreneur with the idea they are promoting, whether in terms of gender or other forms of productive social power, is expected to be a significant factor in foreign policymaking processes especially the agenda-setting phase. Our analysis leads to a nuanced understanding of when state leaders as norm entrepreneurs are significant in international diffusion. It opens up new research agendas exploring individual foreign policy actors as norm entrepreneurs on issues such as climate change and human rights, which are similarly controversial and global as conflict-related sexual violence. The PSVI provides, we contend, an important case of state-led norm entrepreneurship that should be seriously considered as a challenge to future foreign policy leaders (cf. Marsh and Jones 2014).

In the tradition of norm and policy entrepreneurship, the PSVI was a conscious choice by Hague and strongly associated with his gender, his Cabinet power and bureaucratic position as Foreign Minister. Hague deployed a purposeful use of his own narrative as a white, male Tory to talk about a crime rooted in deep-seated structural gender inequalities. This was a deliberate effort to generate attention and proliferate 'unconventional' allies for the women, peace and security (WPS) cause that underpins PSVI. Hague was an unlikely but important broker with the 'resources' (i.e. status and a Foreign Affairs department) to effect change and be messenger in the evolution of the preventing sexual violence in conflict norm (Goddard 2009). Hague's state-to-state level engagement tapped into a source of state power that had have proven difficult to crack for some usual suspects – such as women's movements, feminist and peace organisations and groups (Rees and Chinkin 2015). Aligning the PSVI with these advocacy networks has served to deepen and extend state level commitment to the prohibition norm.

This paper explores how the gendered identity and structural position of the norm entrepreneur matter in successful norm socialisation and diffusion. These attributes of the agent are part of the norm entrepreneur's toolkit when reflexively used to frame problems, build teams, lead by example and seize political opportunities in order to promote normative change. The Hague case reveals that norm entrepreneurs play a crucial role in accelerating the cascade of norms precisely due to their state office, their position and their identity. Hague's position as a norm entrepreneur was complimentary to the position of activists on ending sexual violence in conflict. Given the United Kingdom's permanent membership of the UNSC however, Hague could promote prohibition as well as call for the responsibility of states to prevent these crime(s) and demand compliance with the norm. The 'great power' diplomacy and reach of the UK FCO meant that Hague was uniquely

positioned to promote this thematic agenda beyond the UNSC to consensus build with recalcitrant states. Moreover, as a male foreign minister from a socially-conservative political party, Hague challenged the stereotype of who should advocate on 'women's issues'.

Re-framing the Problem

To understand how William Hague successfully framed the prerogative to end sexual violence in conflict and located action to support the prevention initiative within but also beyond the UNSC, we need to know how and why Hague became attached to this cause in the first place. Krook and True (2012, 107) contend that exploring the origins and transformation of norms through norm entrepreneurs' social learning and framing efforts is essential to explain how norms are built. It is not enough to merely state that they come into being through the acts of entrepreneurs through "human agency, indeterminacy, chance occurrences, and favorable events" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 896). We need to know the origins as they determine how the norms came to resonate with broader audiences and spread across the globe (Legro 1997). How did Hague frame sexual violence as a 'problem' that could be prevented through his foreign policymaking?

Hague could have taken up other causes, seemingly more closely aligned to the UK's national interest or other humanitarian causes he expressed an interest in, such as, expanding country investigations and prosecutions on the ICC, the Responsibility to Protect principle, the ongoing protracted displacement of refugees and internally-displaced persons in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and now Middle East, the situation of children living in armed conflict, and so on. He could have demonstrated the UK's moral leadership on any number of issues in international policymaking venues. But he choose to lead a globally-transformative shift in attitudes to sexual violence with the conviction that changing this

norm would be the catalyst for addressing other humanitarian causes which would create greater stability and peace in the world (*The Economist* 2014).

In a speech in November 2013 Hague recalled some personal encounters with victims of conflict-related sexual violence showing empathy with their plight:

I will never forget meeting young women in a hospital in Goma so damaged by rape that they required surgery; or the woman in a refugee camp there who said they were being “raped like animals”; or male survivors in Sarajevo, who twenty years on still live lives shattered by trauma; or meeting women in refugee camps in Darfur who were raped collecting firewood. What they all had in common was that, unjustly, they bore the stigma and shame and loneliness, while their attackers walked free and unpunished (Hague 2013b).

David Cameron appointed William Hague as Shadow Foreign Secretary in 2005, after a period of ‘political exile’ following his resignation as the Conservative leader in 2001 (and the loss of two national elections). While Hague was Shadow Foreign Secretary, 2005-2010 no specific reference was made to the prevention of sexual violence in conflict as part of Conservative foreign policy. However, during this time in opposition Hague had experiences, such as those he cites in the above speech that led him to see sexual violence in conflict as a significant concern for the UK government. Hague describes his personal transformation after his first visit to Abu Shouk, a camp for internally displaced persons in Darfur in early 2006. He recounts his horror at the atrocities committed against civilians in Darfur, especially on hearing the experience of women who had been raped within the camp. He shared his amazement at observing how people attempt ‘normal’ lives within the camp. He also explained his own transformation from scepticism that aid money makes a difference before this visit to feeling ‘pride’ at the work of the aid agencies stationed there

during the visit (Hague 2006). The Darfur experience is one that Hague continually referred to when formulating the prevention of sexual violence in conflict as an initiative that his Office could address (Hague 2012a). One could interpret these accounts as consistent with a 'male protector' role that conforms to gender stereotypes, yet Hague went on to strategically use this perception to challenge the normalization of sexual and gender-based violence during war.

As well as encountering horrific humanitarian situations, Hague came to redefine his own views of political power as he worked on the biography of William Wilberforce, the individual most famous for leading the movement in Britain to abolish slavery in the nineteenth century (Hague 2008). Asked about the power of politicians who do not become Prime Minister, Hague said "the great thing and inspiring thing about William Wilberforce, is that as someone who never held executive power but was an active legislator, with the goal of entrenching for centuries to come certain values and certain enactments" (Simon 2008).

During his time in opposition, Hague began to re-frame his conception of the United Kingdom's identity and purpose in the world, prefiguring changes to British foreign policy (Hague 2009; Hague 2010a). Just prior to becoming Foreign Secretary (May 2010), in a speech on what the Conservative foreign policy would look like, he again turned to the Wilberforce legacy: "It was British people who led the campaign to drive the slave trade from the seas...We will not turn our back on the suffering of others and it is not in our character to have a foreign policy without a conscience" (Hague 2010a).

Once he was Foreign Secretary Hague gave a series of speeches that laid out his vision for a foreign policy "that promotes our national interest while recognising that this cannot be narrowly or selfishly defined" to extend Britain's global reach and influence (Hague 2010b). Hague spoke of the power of global networks cutting across traditional

sovereignties, changing the nature of foreign policy and the challenges that it must address. He argued that contemporary global politics demands greater not less focus on Britain's core values and standards: '[t]he networked world requires us to inspire other people with how we live up to our own values rather than try to impose them' (Hague 2010b).

Two strongly held convictions are salient in the evolution of Hague's focus on the cause of ending sexual violence in conflict and his eventual advocacy of a norm emphasizing prevention. First, his conviction that women must be equal participants in realizing peace and security; and second, his belief that the prevention of conflict should be prioritized by the international community. Hague was not the first to imagine British state identity as connected to moral leadership and to promote a foreign policy that should be tethered to humanitarian causes (Williams 2002). Crucially, however, he was the first British Foreign Secretary – and the first amongst the permanent members of the UNSC – to expressly adopt the prevention of sexual violence in conflict as a major foreign policy agenda

In a speech at a "No Women No Peace" campaign early in his tenure as Foreign Secretary, Hague argued that, "no society can address its problems by drawing only on the talents of one of the sexes". "With the active support and diplomatic engagement of governments around the world" he argued, "we can ensure that women are written into the future as they deserve, and that our ability to avert and address conflict worldwide is enriched and improved" (Hague 2010c). This conviction about women's rights to equal participation is joined with obligation to prevent conflict in Hague's statement at the UNSC Summit in September 2010. Referring to the protracted violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the continued failure to prevent attacks on women and children, Hague argued that the UN needed to prioritize conflict prevention. In October 2010, the UK with Australia and Mexico held an Arria Formula Meeting between UNSC members and civil society to discuss the tenth anniversary of the adoption of SCR 1325 (2000) and how to

maximise its “impact on the ground” (Ban 2012, 3). In December 2010, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1960, which called for the development of further detailed reporting processes within the UN on situations and perpetrators of sexual violence, to be monitored by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict and permitted this role to bring situations to the attention of the UNSC. After the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1960, UK Permanent Representative to the UNSC Mark Lyall Grant stated the British Government supported the resolution as part of a shift to align the WPS agenda, the prevention of sexual violence in conflict-affected situations with the elimination of violence against women. He also stated that that the British government was committed to “translat[ing] political commitments into tangible lasting action on the ground” and with this in mind, had appointed a minister with special responsibility for combating violence against women overseas.³ In 2010 also, as Figure 1 above shows, the UNSC issued the highest number of UN Presidential statements (four out five were adopted in September, October and November) on the implementation of 1325, participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building, and protection of civilians, particularly women and children.

Nearly 18 months after the adoption of SCR 1960, William Hague launched at the the FCO the PSVI. The launch took place at a screening of US actress and Special Envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Angelina Jolie’s film ‘In the Land of Blood and Honey’ on 29 May 2012. In his speech at the launch, Hague spoke of being “unable to ignore” the international inaction to violence and abuses against women. Hague said that the inspiration for PSVI came to him after watching the movie. He described his shock that only 30 individuals have been prosecuted when at least 50 000 rape crimes were committed during the Bosnian war and identified the prevention of sexual violence as central to the

³ UNSC, *6453rd meeting*, S/PV.6453, December 16, 2010.

achievement of his foreign policy goals and of international peace and security (Hague 2012a).

William Hague argued that egregious sexual violence persists in conflict areas *despite* international law and UNSC resolutions prohibiting it because it had yet to be seen as a major threat to international peace and security by states. Hague's ambition was to prioritize sexual violence as one of the gravest and most pressing issues for the international community. At the 24 June 2013 UNSC Open Debate on Resolution 2106, presented by the President of UNSC for that month, United Kingdom, Hague stated that the international community should, "confine the use of rape as a weapon of war to the pages of history".⁴

Activists, including the 1325 NGO Working Group, argued that this highlighting of conflict-related sexual violence pushed issues of domestic violence and peacetime practices of violence to the background. Sexual violence is either grafted on to the category of 'war' or it is rendered invisible again thus limiting a fuller understanding of the unequal gender dynamics in conflict and peacebuilding processes, as well as in diplomacy (Taylor 2013). Moreover, scholars argued that the UNSC Resolution 2106 passed in June 2013 reinforced the slew of previous resolutions positioning women as victims rather than as agents of peace and security (Engle 2015, 25-26).

However, Hague consistently drew attention to sexual violence as a major barrier to women's agency in peace. All the subsequent UNSC Resolutions on sexual violence in conflict refer to their implementation depending on the full implementation of SCR 1325. Hague stated at the launch of the PSVI that, "we will not succeed in building sustainable peace in conflict areas unless we give the issue of sexual violence the centrality it deserves;

⁴ UNSC, 6984th Meeting: *Women Peace and Security. Sexual Violence in Conflict*, June 24, 2013, S/PV.6984, 10.

alongside the economic and political empowerment of women and their vital role in peace-building” (Hague 2012a). Moreover, he identified structural gender inequalities as key causes: “Until sexual violence is understood as the by-product of women’s economic and political disempowerment, these crimes will continue with impunity” (Hague 2012a).

The PSVI under Hague’s leadership in the FCO set in motion three actions in 2012. First, it created a UK team of experts to be deployed to armed conflict areas to prevent and respond to sexual violence, working with UN agencies and international humanitarian organizations to treat survivors, collect evidence and assist with developing justice systems to prosecute perpetrators. Second, it integrated the PSVI across the work of the FCO to inform all diplomatic relationship. Third, it mobilised British leadership to build momentum around the initiative by “running a year-long diplomatic campaign on preventing sexual violence in conflict” in advance of its G8 Presidency (Hague 2012a).

The prevention of sexual violence was framed to become the “main focus of attention, even in countries like our own, in international affairs” (Hague 2012c). Messaging was deliberate to change attitudes in foreign policy, and expose the apathy and impunity for state and non-state perpetrators behaviour. Rape is described as a threat to international peace and security: “Sexual violence is used to destroy lives, tear apart communities and achieve military objectives, in just the same way that tanks and bullets are”.⁵ Angelina Jolie at the same UNSC debate that resulted in SCR 2106: “Every country in the world is affected by sexual violence in one form or another, from domestic abuse to female genital mutilation. All countries therefore have a responsibility to step forward, but the starting point must be the UNSC, shouldering its responsibilities and showing leadership.”⁶ Moreover, Hague

⁵ Hague in UNSC, *6984th Meeting*, 9.

⁶ Jolie in UNSC, *6984th Meeting*, 6.

aligned the call to eliminate sexual violence in conflict with past advocacy of human rights-related international norms:

Earlier generations shattered similar assumptions about slavery in the 18th and 19th century. We mustered effective international action against use of landmines and cluster munitions. And we are arguing now for the International Arms Trade Treaty. When we act resolutely, we can as an international community tackle issues that go to the heart of human rights in conflict. And we must do the same now to help eradicate the terror caused by sexual violence against women, children and men” (Hague 2012b).

Within the first year of PSVI, Hague regularly connected the PSVI’s emphasis on the prevention of sexual violence with the defence and positive achievement of women’s rights and empowerment. “Sometimes people say, ‘Why is it about rape and not every aspect of women’s rights?’ *I feel on this issue, rape in war, we can make a difference, which might help to unlock progress on other issues. If we change this, it will change how women are regarded*” (Hague in Stylist 2013). He specifically mentioned social and economic rights for women in his statement to Parliament in November 2013: “There is no greater strategic prize for this century than the attainment of full social, economic and political rights for all women everywhere, and their full participation in their societies” (Hague 2013b; Hague 2014a). Fundamentally, PSVI was a central part of Hague’s ambition to re-frame UK state identity and national interests to accord with human rights values.. This reframing required the use of Hague’s position as Foreign Secretary to create PSVI teams within the UK FCO and across its diplomatic offices in other countries. As well as being able to set the agenda in way that resonates with audiences, a key attribute of the norm entrepreneur is building a team to help advance their normative ideas.

Leveraging Positionality

The willingness of Hague to dedicate his Foreign Secretary role to the PSVI has been regarded with a mix of incredulity (Cohen 2015), and applause (Pamment 2014; Rees and Chinkin 2015). We are interested in why Hague invested so much of himself to this particular Initiative and the impact that his leadership by example has had – a second aspect of the act of norm entrepreneurship. We contend that Hague's approach not only makes him an interesting case of a norm entrepreneur, it enhances our understanding of how and when individuals can serve as powerful figures in international normative change. First and foremost Hague did not merely court unlikely allies in the international PSVI campaign, he himself is an unlikely advocate of the norm as a Tory, white male foreign minister. To play the role in traditional character, Hague would have most likely embraced conventional statecraft approaches to hard security and national interest. But Hague's support of PSVI challenged these conventions, which in turn served to disrupt established gender norms and conventional security norms at the same time (Chakelian 2014). Hague understood the importance of male leadership in this area (Waugh 2014; Urwin 2015). He described the experience of discussing sexual violence with other foreign ministers: "There was some surprise this would be a subject the British Foreign Secretary was bringing up routinely. Hague gave these foreign ministers the language they needed to see sexual violence in conflict as a security issue (Urwin 2015). A lot goes unsaid with respect to gender norms and that is precisely their power (Sjoberg 2012). Hague knew this well never explicitly acknowledging his masculine elite power but deploying it deliberately to transform the gender hierarchy wherein issues associated with women or femininity in traditional discourse cannot be 'real' security issues.

The PSVI campaign gained traction precisely because the Foreign Minister of a powerful “Permanent 5” UNSC member state, also a privileged white male, stated that sexual violence was a threat to international security that required commitment from Foreign ministries. Aware of the power of his position and his masculine identity, Hague used them to the advantage of the normative cause bringing on board a slew of other Foreign Ministers including privileged men across global regions to champion PSVI.⁷ These champions made independent statements of support for eradicating sexual violence perpetrated in many conflicts around the world. For example, Shinzo Abe the Prime Minister of Japan stated that he stood “in solidarity with the [UK] Prime Minister’s objective and commitment of creating a ‘global society in which women shine’” (UN 2013). He presented the PSVI as a ‘moral’ obligation. The foreign ministers of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste, released a statement in support of the Declaration, and detailed seven steps to realise the Declaration in full (Natalegawa, Del Rosario and Luis Guterres 2014).

Hague understood the normative influence that can come from promoting a cause that is ‘taboo’. A particular practice, place, person or thing is said to be taboo when social or cultural custom restricts association with it. The power of taboos is that they prohibit any action to question the custom, obscuring its social construction and making change especially difficult. Like Wilberforce on the subject of slavery, Hague believed the fact that sexual violence was still a ‘taboo’ subject in the 21st century was exactly why it needed to be discussed at home and in the international community (FCO 2015c). Hague’s engagement was complementary to the decades of prior activism on sexual violence in conflict; but it extended the discussion beyond equally committed actors. States who had never been

⁷ The PSVI champions named in June 2014 came from a diverse range of conflict, post-conflict and non-conflict countries, male and female: Australia, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Liberia, Malawi, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Senegal, United Arab Emirates & the United States. More joined on in 2014: in Asia there was Philippines and Timor Leste; in Africa there was Tanzania; and in 2016, i.e. Sri Lanka.

directly asked what they were doing to prevent such violence were now being asked by a leader of a powerful state.

Hague's association with dominant identities of maleness, whiteness and conservative political power enabled him to overcome the taboo association – a woman leader could hardly have done this because it is women who are traditionally dishonoured and shamed by rape and other sexual violence given the patriarchal assumption that they should be pure virgins before marriage and are sullied by sexual relations outside of the family (Gavey 2005; Henry 2010).

Harnessing Policy Machinery and Networks

Norm entrepreneurs have typically been defined as individuals through the organisational platforms from which they act. Nadelmann (1990: 900) argues that different organization platforms provide different kinds of tools for entrepreneurs “to persuade state actors to put the new norm on their agenda.” The conscious efforts by norm entrepreneurs to build a cohesive team effectively create platforms for norm socialisation and diffusion (Goddard 2009). Hague's organisational platform was the FCO supported by personal and professional networks (Ganesh 2014; Neville 2014). His inaugural speech as the new Foreign Secretary recognised the prerogative of operating collaboratively in a networked world in order to have power and influence not your typical masculine ‘realpolitik’ take on international politics (Hague 2010b). The coalition of networks he went on to build included special advisors, Arminka Helic and Chloe Dalton, Head of PSVI civil servant Emma Hopkins,⁸ who oversaw the engagement of the human rights and multilateral sections of FCO in London and across embassies and consulates, supporters across government and

⁸ See “About Emma,” in *FCO Blogs*, 2015, <http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/emmahopkins/about-emma/>.

party lines. It also included prominent but unlikely international allies such as Angelina Jolie, his US counterpart Hillary Clinton, and women's rights international NGOs leaders, Madeleine Rees and Brigid Inder. This breadth and diversity of support for the PSVI was crucial – in giving it legitimacy through the inclusion of respected activists and in deflecting opposition. Baroness Helic, had a demonstrable influence on Hague's decision to establish the PSVI and the coalition he built around it (Pitle 2014). Prior to his appointment as Shadow Foreign Secretary, Hague had worked closely with Helic, a Bosnian Muslim from Bosnia-Herzegovina, who fled the war in 1992. Ms. Helic originally worked for the Houses of Parliament Library, and came to act as a special advisor for the Conservative Party apparently after providing analysis to MPs on the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, particularly then Shadow Conservative Leader William Hague during the mid 1990s (BBC 2014). Helic returned as Hague's chief advisor when he accepted Shadow Foreign Secretary position in 2005. She was an advocate of the US and UK's obligation to promote democratic and human rights values and gave a first-hand account of the experience of living through the Yugoslav atrocities. She apparently suggested Hague watch the Angelina Jolie directed film, 'In the Land of Blood and Honey' in late 2011. Together with Chloe Dalton, Hague's FCO speechwriter, she reached out to Jolie not only because of the film itself but also because of her existing relationship with the UN as Special Envoy for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Jolie brought substantial global media attention to the cause of sexual violence in conflict and the PSVI. As a UNHCR envoy Jolie stated that it was a personal frustration to talk to survivors of sexual violence and see little international action on the consequences of this violence (Borger 2013). Jolie set clear expectations of Hague and the PSVI to have a practical impact on the lives of survivors (Hague 2014a). She initially refused to join Hague and the FCO in the PSVI because she didn't want this to be just 'a lot of talking... when

something very practical that had to be done' (Borger 2013). Working with a celebrity who was also committed to the cause magnified the global public and media attention to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, which was inevitably shaped by gender stereotypes of the male foreign minister and the beautiful actress (Bergmann Rosamund 2016). But this attention was strategically used to increase the potential for the critical stage of norm cascade (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 895).

As well as Jolie, Hague also reached out to activists in the international NGO community, establishing close relationships with Madeleine Rees, Secretary General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Brigid Inder, Executive Director, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, both of whom have been awarded UK Honours in recognition of their work with PSVI (FCO 2014a). Hague's involvement of gender and human rights experts such as Rees and Inder opened the PSVI to diverse perspectives from those who had worked with survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Rees argues that her mission had been to ensure that ending structural gender inequality was addressed in PSVI as integral to prevention (Rees in Chakelian 2014).

As well as building relationships with these key leaders in his team, William Hague elevated the power and role of the FCO in part through its ownership of the PSVI. The renewed morale and influence of the FCO was evident in the removal of the requirement to seek Cabinet Office approval before issuing directives on foreign policy and the FCO's successful leadership on the PSVI and the Arms Trade Treaty (*The Economist* 2015). Even those who criticised Hague for not doing enough to stem cuts in FCO, acknowledge he sought to address the low morale in the FCO after the 'blood-letting' under the later Blair and Brown years of the Labour government (Pamment 2014; Stacey 2014; Watt 2010).

The engaging social media campaign *#Time to Act* rolled out in unique ways by and across various FCO embassies around the world in the lead up to the Global Summit on PSVI

in June 2014 and contributed to the momentum building for the prohibition normative movement. The creation of the @end_SVAC hashtag revealed 100s of tweets reporting on the engagement of PSVI from British offices around the world. And during the hosting of the Global Summit, there was an 84-hour live summit blog where in the lead up, British embassies around the world participated in promotional events (*FCO* 2014b).⁹

The PSVI coalition extended further than the FCO and diplomatic offices to across the UK government and political parties, supported by a cross-government plan for integrating the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda within policies and programmes, and a revised 2010-2013 WPS National Action Plan by Department for International Development, Department of Defence and FCO (*FCO* 2012a, 11, 13). At the same time, there were specific initiatives formed to build collaboration around PSVI. The DFID and FCO launched a new £25 million Research and Innovation Fund to address violence against women in conflict settings (Hague 2013b); the PSVI campaign team created across the FCO and DFID were instructed to work with the UN Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality and to align activities with international goals and commitments (*FCO* 2012b; *FCO* 2015a).

Beyond these networks, the PSVI team included the new ‘Team of Experts’ – composed of specialists and experts in the care and protection of survivors and witnesses – who could be deployed on the ground to prevent sexual violence, assisting UN agencies and local organizations (*DFID and FCO* 2015).¹⁰ The UK also publicized its support for UN agencies such as £1 million pounds to fund the Special Representative for the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict in September 2012 and a further £500 000 for the ICC’s Trust Fund for Victims in addition to previous funding (*FCO* 2013a). As Foreign

⁹ See also *FCO*, @end_svc, SexualViolenceInWar, https://twitter.com/end_svc.

¹⁰ To date the UK Team of Experts have deployed sixty-five missions in seventeen locations including Syrian borders, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Libya, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Secretary, Hague encouraged other countries to make similar pledges. He argued that the importance of supporting the UK and UN Team of Experts was to “ensure that preventing sexual and gender-based crime in conflict and post-conflict situations is an urgent priority for the international community” (Hague 2012b).

Notably, as UK Foreign Secretary leading the PSVI, William Hague’s norm entrepreneurship enabled an entire team of, diplomats and civil servants as well as activists to advocate for a new norm to end the impunity for sexual violence in conflict. He also self-consciously led by example with demonstrable impacts on norm diffusion.

Seizing Political Windows of Opportunity

A fourth dimension of norm entrepreneurship is seizing the moments and political venues available for persuading others to adopt the norm. William Hague recognised this: “My experience as a politician leads me to believe that this is the moment to mobilise global public opinion and to rally the efforts of nations, in the same way we have mustered the will to ban the use of landmines and cluster munitions, and are on the verge of securing an international Arms Trade Treaty.” (FCO 2012b).

In his first speech on PSVI, Hague detailed his plan for promoting the PSVI at the international forums where the UK would be leading in the year to come, namely the Presidency of G8 (Hague 2012a). Placing the issue of sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security on the G8 Summit agenda was unprecedented. Such summits were generally focused on the global economy and traditional barriers to growth and prosperity. With his novel framing and personal embrace of the issue, however, Hague was able to generate a statement of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict by G8 leaders (FCO 2013b). He also took advantage of the UK’s penholder role on the UNSC WPS

agenda to advance PSVI putting forward a successfully adopted UNSC Resolution 2106 in June 2013 focused on holding perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict accountable.¹¹ Hague and the PSVI team created their own political opportunity in organising the Global Summit to Prevent Sexual Violence in Conflict in June 2014. At the Summit, a Documentation Protocol for collecting and record cases of conflict-related sexual violence was launched (*FCO* 2014c). The Protocol addressed reporting and evidence-gathering measures, such as detailing the elements of sexual violence crimes, international standards for reporting and forensics, state level requirements for legislation and persecution. These were detailed in the Protocol to persuade states of the feasibility of the PSVI. Professional training of experts in the appropriate documentation of SGBV in conflict has been a vital form of norm socialization facilitating the cascade of PSVI.

The development of the PSVI advocacy team, the mobilising international events and agreements, and the individual leadership of Hague have together built momentum for the prevention of sexual violence norm that required reciprocal action from states, international organizations and civil society. The pace at which more and more states came to join the PSVI over eighteen months between May 2012 and December 2014 demonstrates the norm cascade. A clear outcome of Hague's entrepreneurship was the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) adoption of the UK-sponsored Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. The parties to the Declaration "pledge to do more to raise awareness of these crimes, to challenge the impunity that exists and to hold perpetrators to account, to provide better support to victims, and to support both national and international efforts to build the capacity to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict".¹² They commit to 12 actions, which while not legally-binding, have significant

¹¹ S/RES/2106, June 24, 2013.

¹² UNGA. Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, Sixty-Eighth UN General Assembly, 24 September 2013. See

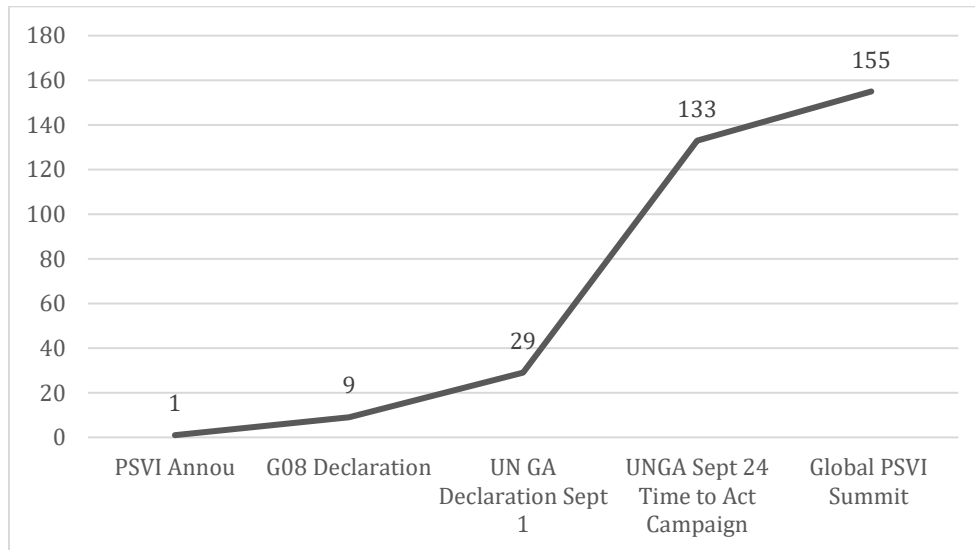
normative power given that they were debated at the UNGA and required signatures of commitment by the leaders of states. To date, the Declaration has informed the work of the UN Special Representative of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict in representation to individual countries, specifically in the area of security sector reform (UN 2015), and new signatory states continue to endorse the Declaration (Myanmar Government 2014; Sri Lanka Government 2016). The Declaration has also been linked to both enhancing donor obligation to meet their pledged PSVI funding, and created momentum for civil society actors and the UK to demand action from states in line with the Declaration (Patrick 2015; Phan 2015). Dalrymple (2015) points to combined effect of the PSVI Summit, the Declaration and Communiqué (in November 2013 there was a DFID-led Call to Action on Protecting Women and Girls in Emergencies and Conflict). Between 2013 and 2014, donor funding to SGBV increased from US\$93 million in 2013 to US\$107 million.¹³

When presented to UNGA on 24 September 2013, the Declaration had endorsements from 22 friends or 'Champions'. By December 2013 a further 113 states had signed onto the Declaration of Commitment. Following the June 2014 Global Summit a further 20 states joined the Initiative, culminating in 155 state endorsements - an overwhelming majority of the total 192 UN member states as Table 1 shows. The Global Summit got more than three quarters of all UN member states on board (Rees and Chinkin 2015). At the Summit itself, there were 80 Ministers, 123 countries had sent delegations and 900 civil society organisations, experts and activists attended.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274724/A_DECLARATION_OF_COMMITMENT_TO_END_SEXUAL_VIOLENCE_IN_CONFLICT.pdf

¹³ It should be pointed out this amount is less than a third of the total pledged by donors following the November 2013 Communiqué (over US\$41 million).

Table 1: International PSVI Cascade



Sources: UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office; UN General Assembly

Over 20 million pounds has been allocated to PSVI related initiatives since 2012 including specific program delivery for local grassroots and human rights organisations, as well as large international initiatives the ICC Trust Fund for Victims. In the last two years, the UK has developed local initiatives with NGOs in Colombia, Nepal, DRC, Syria and Iraq to implement the Protocol. The PSVI and the Protocol were included into bilateral donor programs with Somalia, Nepal, Myanmar and DRC governments. At the 25th African Union Summit in South Africa, June 2015, Hague and Jolie were invited to speak on a panel on women and conflict to the 54 heads of state attending the Summit (France 24 2015). Following this Summit the FCO announced new funding to support the African Union's Gender, Peace and Security programme (FCO 2015a). PSVI Team Experts have been deployed to Syria, Mali, DRC, Libya, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and CAR (DFID and FCO 2015). The UK has given grants to support advocacy such as *Track Impunity*, which

prosecuted a landmark criminal case providing reparations to a Bosniak woman survivor and setting a precedent for future criminal proceedings and more survivors to come forward (Borger 2015). Further, in June 2015, the UNGA agreed to increase international effort to prevent sexual violence in conflict by naming 19 June as the international day for the elimination of sexual violence in conflict (UN News Centre 2015). In 2015 alone over £6 million was dedicated to PSVI programmes (*FCO* 2015a).

Baroness Joyce Anelay replaced Hague as the new PSVI lead when he stepped down from his position as Foreign Secretary and from politics following the UK 2015 national election. She stated her commitment for the Initiative in the strongest terms: “Change will not happen overnight but the UK will never shy away from defending those in need. Our commitment to tackle this scourge is unwavering”. Baroness Anelay’s appointment is not the only indicator of the sustainability of PSVI and Hague’s normative agenda setting actions. The integration of FCO and Department of International Development (DFID) funding streams to support the PSVI is a further indication that the changes set in motion during Hague’s tenure continue to evolve catalysing changes in government departments and policy agendas beyond the FCO (see *DFID and FCO* 2015). Similarly, there has been discussion of combining WPS and PSVI training and engagement with the UK’s own military to ensure equal participation becomes an intrinsic part within UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) operations (*FCO* 2015b).

In March 2016, the House of Lords Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict presented their report on the progress of PSVI (House of Lords 2016: 21-24). The report argued that the PSVI had helped shine a “spotlight on sexual violence in conflict and prompted states to take action...but there remains much more to be done” (House of Lords 2016: 3). The Committee’s call in June 2016 for a strategic operational plan for PSVI across the FCO, DFID and MOD was rejected by the Cameron government, but the creation of an

Inter-Ministerial Group on PSVI is under consideration. Meanwhile, the FCO and DFID are seeking to align PSVI with DFID WPS priority countries with an annual commitment of \$1 billion from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund to the PSVI (UK Government 2016: 11). Beyond the UK Government's institutionalisation of PSVI, the PSVI has deepened bilateral and multilateral relations on WPS. The UK and Japan have held Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meetings calling for UK-Japan cooperation on women, peace and security and the PSVI. There are plans to develop multiple joint projects on this theme in cooperation with the International Committee for the Red Cross, and with regional partners such as the African Union (UK Government 2016: 6, 22; News Ghana 2016).

Conclusion

The case of William Hague and the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) demonstrates how a foreign policy leader can reframe an issue on the margins of the national interest as a normative cause in foreign policy. In the span of his first 18 months as Foreign Secretary Hague had the opportunity to select and pursue a broad range of foreign policy agendas but he came to devote the UK FCO to the PSVI. His commitment was the first foreign policy drafted to address the sexual violence that UN Security Council labelled a 'threat to international peace and security'. Importantly, this foreign policy developed an international regime that has set in motion actual consequences for perpetrators in the form of criminal prosecutions, and for survivors in the form of recognition, justice and practical support.

Our analysis of Hague's leadership to end impunity for conflict-related sexual violence joins theories of norm entrepreneurship with actor-specific foreign policy analysis contributing two major insights. First, we highlight how the identity of the entrepreneur or foreign policy actor – in this case as white, male and Tory – can facilitate the diffusion of the

norm. The identity and positionality of the norm entrepreneur matters, particularly when it challenges conventional foreign policy decision-making and action. A male Foreign Minister of a P5 member state led the call for states to prioritize the prevention of sexual violence, he encouraged bilateral diplomacy on this issue from his embassies and consulates around the world, and incorporated the advice of international activists into UK foreign policy. Hague was aware of the power of his gender and how his engagement with a 'women's issue' challenged the stereotype that women's peace and security is a 'soft' or non-security issue. Second, we show the positive momentum that leaders from powerful states can generate when they reframe state identity and harness its moral purpose to bring about international political change. We reveal how Hague's prioritization of sexual violence in conflict was dependent upon his continued reframing of UK state identity and national interest. The UK FCO was instructed to involve a diverse membership of member states, civil society and international organizations in building a PSVI advocacy network. This engagement was a positive challenge embraced by FCO staff and the PSVI was legitimised by the inclusion of key women's rights activists. Together they contributed to and revitalised the broader WPS agenda at the same time as the PSVI persuaded a diverse range of states to adopting the UN General Assembly Declaration.

It must be acknowledged that the struggle by women's rights activists to recognise rape in war as a crime is ongoing and extends back at least a century. Against the backbone of this activism, Hague's introduction of a prevention-focused foreign policy agenda to end the impunity for conflict-related sexual violence introduced practical steps that have extraordinarily sped up the progress of international change. The test of the prohibition norm in the future lies in its implementation and this depends upon states taking their responsibility to prevent seriously. Hague's position and status forced recalcitrant states to engage. Norm violations can be concealed through impunity, through amnesties, and

through non-reporting of sexual violence linked to gendered political oppression and cultures of shame. However, the legacy of Hague's global PSVI campaign will no longer permit exceptions to the rule that all acts of sexual violence in conflict receive international scrutiny; no state or non-state actors' justifications for acts of sexual violence and brutality will now go unchallenged.

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