

Gendered Military Operations?

Military missions in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo

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It is well acknowledged that women and men, girls and boys are both actors in and victims of war and post-conflict situations. Military and peace operations reflect these gender dynamics and gender equality less in their missions.

Governments around the world send their armed forces on international military operations through, for instance, the United Nations, NATO and the African Union. Their tasks in these operations are usually more demanding than pure combat roles. For instance, the armed forces are supposed to report on gender-based violence in war and post-conflict situations, as well as protect and preferably prevent such violence from occurring in the first place. Moreover, gender mainstreaming is increasingly acknowledged in these operations, that is, the idea that both women and men and their respective perspectives on peace and security should be included equally in all approaches and strategies related to military operations. In practical terms, for instance, this should mean that the armed forces are supposed to have a good overview of the situation for the *entire*

civilian population, meaning men, women, girls, and boys, as well as their specific insecurity concerns. However, women appear to be symptomatically missing or severely under-represented when it comes to participating in international operations, voicing insecurity priorities and taking part in peace negotiations. Instead, women have often been placed in the category of 'women and children', thus giving women a largely passive and victimized role. In order to respond to these and other gendered concerns, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, which specifically addressed the impact of war on women, as well as women's contribution to conflict resolution and ensuring sustainable peace.

Although the adoption of Resolution 1325 and follow-up resolutions¹ marked a substantial achievement in international politics in respect of women's participation, actual implementation has proved more difficult. There are multiple reasons for this, but one problem with Resolution 1325 is particularly relevant to this study. There is a basic problem with the concept and explanation of 'gender' in the Resolution, as gender is used interchangeably with women/girls (Henry 2007: 75). This means that there is a lack of understanding regarding the interconnected lives of men and women and the power relations of men and women in post-conflict situations, as well as the fact that men's lives also need to be understood in order to develop better policies for improving women's conditions (ibid: 76). In focusing on the implementation of gender perspectives in international military operations, this article provides indications that this one-sided understanding of gender as women only seriously inhibits discourse and actions in the armed forces. I would argue that it is precisely the masculine discourses that exist within the military, the international operations and the dilemmas of security that are central to

the analysis of gender mainstreaming and gender perspectives.

This study is therefore a contribution to understanding the barriers to integrating so-called gender perspectives in international military operations. Two empirical examples are chosen for the analytical exercise: the Norwegian contribution to military operations in Afghanistan, and the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A focus on peacekeepers, (male) soldiers and some of the substantive staff in these operations can illustrate the challenges of implementing political demands regarding 'gender mainstreaming' into a masculine security environment. Before starting the discussion of these two cases, however, I will provide some theoretical clarification regarding what is meant by 'gender' and 'gender perspectives' and why these two cases are relevant.

Gender in the analytical approach applied to these case studies is understood constructively as what it means to be a man and a woman in a given society, where there will be different and multiple perceptions of what male and female gender identities entail. In relation to the analytical framework presented below, this means that gender, represented by women and men, is not an empirical category but rather a system of meanings that shape the way we think (Reeves 2013: 1). For instance, any society or subculture may have 'its' own normative prescriptions of masculinities and femininities (Burr 2003: 3), but quite commonly meanings of femininity and masculinity may often be associated with a certain power imbalance reflected in weaker or stronger social statuses.² Talking of 'gender', rather than 'women', allows analytical studies to be made of power relations in particular contexts, such as military operations in relation to a post-war society (see also Henry 2007: 64). What in the case studies are interpreted as 'conservative societies' is a simplified term for societies that associate

the meanings of femininity with lower social status – weak, subordinate, peaceful – vis-à-vis masculine characteristics such as strength and being a warrior and a protector. ‘Liberal societies’ are in turn associated with norms of equality, including the equal status of women and men, and democracy. However, interpretations regarding so-called liberal norms and women’s status, skillfully discussed by authors such as Ann Towns (2010), deserve much more debate than is possible within the scope of this article. The rationale in this article concerning these labels – conservative and liberal – is that, whereas the normative *ideals* of social status are interpreted unequally, the former is associated with the unequal status of women and men and the latter with equality regardless of characteristics such as sex, ethnicity and religion.

Gender perspectives are seen here as women’s and men’s perspectives on different issues as a reflection on how they have been socialized and are filling different roles in the society. For instance, women may occupy a greater decision-making role in raising children and men in shaping political decisions, which in turn affects their views and knowledge about these areas in a society. When it comes to practical implementation in the armed forces and in military operations more broadly, gender perspectives may often be interpreted simply as increasing the number of women in uniform, as the armed forces are often a masculine space. This is a narrow definition, however, and implementing the perspective will require deeper discussions of a traditionally male-dominated organization in which norms and action are shaped by typical masculine characteristics such as warring, protecting and killing. ‘[T]o be manly means to be a potential warrior’, as Enloe (1993: 52) states. It should also be underscored that the armed forces are *not* the provider of gender equality in any society. Rather, this

article looks into how military operations have integrated gender perspectives into their day-to-day work, meaning how are gender and gender perspectives understood, interpreted and put into practice among the staff in the armed forces? The article’s findings indicate that gender is interpreted as women working with male staff and that there is little or no reflection on how the internal and external environments are ‘gendered’ in favor of masculine conceptions of security and protection.

Two case studies have been selected for this purpose: the UN operation in South Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and Norway’s participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Maymaneh, Fayab Province, in Afghanistan. These operations are very different, but their mandates both include a commitment to Resolution 1325. The emphasis in MONUSCO mandate is on using all necessary means to protect civilians, especially women and girls, against sexual and gender-based violence, among other things. In the Afghanistan case, the Norwegian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Justice (2009) have made a commitment to Resolution 1325 in their activities in Fayab Province and more broadly in their contribution to the viability of a sustainable and *inclusive* peace in Afghanistan. Furthermore, these two cases both represent a space where there is a significant emphasis on the protection of women against insecurity and the inclusion of women in restoring the country, in conjunction with the fact that foreign, male-dominated institutions are both interpreting and ensuring security and protection. This makes it particularly interesting to discuss the challenges of interpreting what gender perspectives mean in the society and the way in which the masculinized armed forces put it into practice. However, the Afghan case represents a space in which there is a greater degree of

awareness among soldiers in interpreting more gender-balanced approaches to their activities. Yet, and as will be demonstrated, both cases provide examples where gender is interpreted as something ‘other’ and separated out from the daily activities of the soldiers.

This article continues with a brief presentation of the methodology employed and the analytical framework. After an introduction to trends within NATO concerning Resolution 1325, there follows a case study of Norwegian experiences from Fayab province in Afghanistan in integrating gender perspectives into their organization and practice. Similarly, there will be an introduction to UN peace-keeping and Resolution 1325 preceding the MONUSCO case study. The article concludes with a discussion on the problem of integrating gender perspectives when the security realm is defined in a masculine space and the very idea of gender is understood as women and in terms of a sense of otherness and exclusion from the main tasks of the peacekeepers’/soldiers’ day-to-day activities.

METHODOLOGY

This study has involved a combination of desk studies, interviews, focus groups and fieldwork in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the case of MONUSCO, I was based in Bukavu, South Kivu, and made visits to all the peacekeeping units in the surrounding areas. In addition, interviews with the substantive staff from the gender unit and the sexual violence unit were undertaken, in addition to participation in a sexual violence sensitization training session for officers. The selection of informants from among the Norwegian ISAF staff was undertaken by the foreign affairs section of the Norwegian Defense Personnel Service, which made possible access to these central individuals. The ten personnel interviewed (five men and five

women) had all served various functions in the Norwegian Provincial Reconstruction Teams and had all recently returned from Afghanistan, some having had experience of previous Afghanistan missions as well. For practical reasons, some were interviewed in a focus-group setting and others reached by telephone. In addition, informants were found in the Oslo-based network, especially the Gender Project at the Norwegian Defense University College, among previous gender field advisors and others working on similar topics.

The Norwegian Ministry of Defense funded the research, resulting in a report (Solhjell et al. 2012) on which the empirical section of this article is based.³ Questions focused on pre-deployment and in-country training, the operational and tactical mandates of the troops, rules of engagement, familiarity with Resolution 1325, contact and interaction with local communities in the area of responsibility, and the protection of civilians, including of women and girls. Emphasis is placed on the challenges, lessons learned and recommendations from the respondents.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This article draws inspiration from the milestone report, *Operational Effectiveness and UN Resolution 1325: Practices and Lessons from Afghanistan* (Olsson and Tejpar 2009). Olsson’s analytical framework for evaluating the representation and integration of Resolution 1325 at the internal and external levels of NATO and UN-led operations also offers a meaningful approach to studies beyond Afghanistan, and it has been used to analyze the findings of this study. In discussing the integration of gender perspectives at all levels of an operation within an organization, as well as barriers to implementation, the framework by Olsson is the best available model found by the author for this purpose. The model is specifically aimed at the operationali-

zation of gender perspectives within a military context, taking into account *all* aspects, from the participation of women and men in the armed forces to the more demanding aspects of how security analysis is gendered and on what basis mandates are chosen and executed.

This is, however, also a weakness, as the framework is broad and demanding. Olsson (2009) distinguishes between Resolution 1325 understood respectively in terms of representation (male/female participation) and integration (use of the content of the Resolution to achieve the desired outputs). In turn, these topics can be analyzed internally – how the UN and NATO are organized internally; or externally – how the operation (led by the UN or NATO) handles the situation in the area of responsibility to obtain the desired output. Use of this model in the present case studies is limited to the empirically available data these studies provide on 1) female and male participation in the armed forces, 2) the limited interpretation of gender relations in the host society, 3) the interpretation of gender perspectives within the armed forces, and 4) how the soldiers act in their daily tasks of patrolling and reporting in relation to gender perspectives.

NATO AND RESOLUTION 1325

NATO is first and foremost a military alliance focused on defense against external threats. The alliance has thus been heavily preoccupied with military technology, planning and the specialized training of combatants. With regard to the feminine gender dimension, until recently this has not received much attention, but changes have taken place recently. In September 2012, Mari Skåre became NATO's special representative for women, peace and security, which, in the words of Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "demonstrates how much NATO values the unique contribution of women to our armed forces and

operations and their important role in conflict prevention and resolution." However, critics have argued that Rasmussen's interest ended when Hillary Clinton stepped down as US Secretary of State. Other examples of this include the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, established in May 2009, which serves as an advisory board to the Military Committee, and the ISAF operational plan, which contains a mandate to implement gender perspectives in the planning and execution of its operations. However, due to the alliance's more covert style of operating, it can be difficult for researchers outside NATO circles to follow internal processes and their actual impacts on missions. Nevertheless, we will now turn to a case study of one of its members, namely Norway and its contribution in Afghanistan.

FROM BROTHERHOOD TO TEAM? EXPERIENCE OF THE NORWEGIAN CONTRIBUTION IN MEYMANEH, AFGHANISTAN

This is a matter of modernizing – of transitioning from brotherhood to team. The military is no playground for masculinity. It is modern teams of highly competent professionals.

Former Defense Minister Espen Barth Eide,
11 June 2012, Oslo, Norway⁴

Eide's statement reflects the changes that are starting to take place in the Norwegian armed forces in moving away from traditional combat roles and towards the multidimensional military operations that require a range of specialized skills (see e.g. Andreassen and Ingalls 2009). Through the Norwegian Action Plan for Resolution 1325 (2006), Norway has made commitments to contribute to the implementation of the Resolution both at home and in the global context. One key area identified in

the Action Plan is to increase women's participation in NATO-led operations in order to reach the female population in places like Afghanistan, where religious and cultural factors place constraints on male–female interaction. More broadly, the 2006 Action Plan and the follow-up strategy (2011) have declared a commitment to gender-sensitive approaches at all levels of these international operations, from planning activities and operational practices through to evaluation. As outlined by the Norwegian government (2009: 3), 'the main aim of the Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan is to support the Afghan authorities in their responsibility to ensure stability, security and development.' Here, a commitment to Resolution 1325 is made in order to ensure an inclusive and sustainable peace situation for both Afghan women and men. We will now look at gender relations in the Norwegian contribution and in the society in which they have been deployed, as well as, finally, how the Norwegian armed forces have interpreted the mandate to integrate gender perspectives in their area of responsibility and how they are executing this mandate.

REPRESENTATION AND RESOLUTION 1325

Internal Representation of Women and Men in the Norwegian Armed Forces

This aspect relates to the issue of the equal participation of men and women in the armed forces. The team in Afghanistan consists of approximately 93% men (Ellingsen 2012). This is a percentage higher than the NATO average and means that Norway does not have enough women in professional military positions. Disregarding the lack of women, at higher political and military levels it has been suggested that a Female Engagement Team or Mixed Engagement Team may offer a

better approach to reaching the female population in countries where establishing contact with women can be difficult. Though all the informants were positive regarding female participation in the armed forces, it was held that women should be present because of their function in the team, for example, as intelligence officers and interpreters, and not as women per se. Due to the need for quick political results, there seems to have been a practice of sending off teams of women because they are women and with no specifically mandated goal in the overall ISAF contribution, which in turn may cause unnecessary risks for the parties involved.

One Gender Field Advisor argued that the paucity of women in Norway's armed forces has its origin in the initial period of military service, which has traditionally recruited only men, as this is often the first step into a professional military career. In addition, women in specialized units cannot be taken out of their original teams to form a female-only team, as that would lead to a gap in their original unit. In addition, female personnel are not necessarily interested in joining female-only teams, as these might be viewed as subordinate positions or roles in the armed forces. Finally, it is argued that maintaining gender perspectives is not the sole job of women in uniform and that women should not have the sole responsibility for implementing Resolution 1325 at the operational level.

External representation: understanding gender perspectives in the local context?

Fayab Province is found in the far north, bordering Turkmenistan, and is considered multi-ethnic (the major ethnic groups are the Uzbek, Tajik, Pashtun and Turkmen) and rural. The provincial capital, Maymana, where the Norwegian base is found, is predominantly agricultural and livestock-dependent. Maymana was subjected to

Taliban rule in 1997, which lasted until 2001, when the Taliban government fell. Taliban military units have sometimes been present, but the bulk of the Norwegian reconstruction team's work has been to restore and support the state's authority (police, army, government) in the area. Informants, including gender advisors, were asked about their understandings of the local contexts. Veterans who had participated on different occasions since ISAF's intervention in 2003 argued that the situation of women had indeed improved in the post-Taliban period through the Western-supported Afghan government. In particular, these informants argued that there were more women and girls attending school, which was seen as essential for re-integrating women into society. One factor that these informants also pointed out and that could distinguish intra-group gendered differences was the generational differences among Afghan men and women. One example, as an informant pointed out, was that older men might hold views that were far more liberal than those of younger Afghan men. In his view, this was because the older generation had experienced the times before the Taliban. Another factor that could determine gender roles in the society were the differences between ethnic groups and their areas: there was significant variation in how 'conservative' or 'liberal' the Uzbek, Tajik, Pashtun and Turkmen societies were, as the same informant pointed out. Some of the informants expressed frustration with their lack of information about how women and men from, for example, Turkmen societies could be much more secular and 'moderate' in their beliefs, while some of the men and women in Pashtun villages could have far more conservative and strict practices in respect of religion and of the subordination of women. The veterans in the focus group argued that this type of intelligence information could have been fed into a planning phase, as well as pre-

deployment and in-mission training courses for soldiers on gender roles in Afghanistan. In another study, Holo and Andreassen (2010: 21) found that the average soldier in the Norwegian armed forces going out to Afghanistan only received four hours of classroom lessons in cultural understanding and the local context from a civilian advisor. This was not, however, linked to the overall understanding of security challenges, as the authors argue. This little knowledge on the very complex, multi-ethnic, rural and semi-urban environment makes the soldiers less prepared for what they will meet and how they should act accordingly in relation to the local societies.

The overall contact between the Norwegian forces and women's organizations and other female representatives appeared to be limited to the personal initiatives and engagement of the Gender Field Advisor. There seem to have been a mentality of 'hands off' in relation to the female population, as this field was 'too complicated' for the male staff of ISAF and male-dominated Afghanistan. Here the question arises whether the ISAF has a broader mandate at all and an operational side beyond the responsibility of the individual gender advisors to reach women in order to include them in the peace and reconciliation work in Afghanistan. As one informant stated, 'There is no operational success if you are able to reach only half of the population in the area of responsibility.' Such a situation – one, often civilian advisor being responsible for reaching Afghan women in a military operation – is *a major barrier* to mainstream gender perspectives at the operational level, as well as in the mandate for a sustainable and inclusive security and peace for the Afghan population.

INTEGRATION AND UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

Internal integration: including gender perspectives in the Norwegian armed forces?

As the overall strategy for including gender perspectives in the Norwegian contribution seems to be the deployment of the Gender Field Advisors, this section will begin the discussion with some of these advisors' views and experiences. Moreover, it will discuss the limitations of interpreting gender perspectives as a sole (female) representative's job, as well as the armed personnel's views of the work on gender perspectives in the armed forces.

When the former advisors were asked to reflect on their role in the armed forces as responsible for ensuring gender perspectives in the mission, they all expressed frustrations with their position. For one thing, there was no clear job description, but rather a broad interpretation of their role as responsible for ensuring gender mainstreaming in all activities, for example, development projects, security analyses etc. Secondly, the advisors also felt the lack of a professional environment on the topic of gender perspectives and of a superior to turn to for advice. This was contrasted with how skillfully the armed forces dealt with the prevention of convoy attacks and steps taken afterwards, and how they lacked such an environment to plan and act accordingly. One exception is the assistance that some gender advisors received from their contact with the Norwegian Gender Project, an ad-hoc reference team working on gender perspectives at the Norwegian Defense College, as well as the pre-deployment training of these advisors at the Swedish Armed Forces International Centre. On the latter, one held that the Swedish armed forces have been much better at taking gender perspectives seriously and that in Norway there remained too wide a gap between political goals and the tactical/operational level.

Another argued, however, that the training the Swedish Centre provided put too much emphasis on ideals of gender equality based on the 'Swedish model' and that this was not the right way to deal with military personnel in other parts of the world. As mentioned initially, the job of armed forces personnel is *not* to act as a provider of gender equality in any society. One of the gender advisors argued for a focus on the cultural aspects of the society the mission was deployed to and on the operational effectiveness of gender perspectives in reaching mandate goals, especially in attempting to reach the entire population.

Some of the soldiers in the armed forces who were interviewed expressed the need for better operational, scenario-based pre-deployment training in understanding how gender analysis is or should be a part of the operation. There were exceptions, but the general impression was that the pre-deployment training included only a short (two-hour) session on the cultural aspects of Afghanistan, concerning inter alia the position of women, but this was usually not followed up in the scenario training sessions. Many if not all of the informants expressed retrospective views emphasizing that the integration of gender perspectives should have taken place at the planning stage of ISAF – that is, the stage of mapping, information gathering and operational goal setting. For example, the idea of talking to women leaders was not originally seen as anything relevant, either in information gathering or as an inclusive political strategy. After years of operation, this was *politically enforced* by the Norwegian government, but the reasons *why, how* and *who* were not made clear. By including Resolution 1325 at a much later stage and with unspecified operational tasks, the attitude among the staff responsible for executing the mandate was that this was an unnecessary 'add on' and was being met only half-heartedly.

External integration: the mission and the inclusion of gender perspectives from the local context

In respect of the actual execution of plans and the operational aspects of the mission, both the soldiers and the gender advisors were asked to reflect on their actions based on the different gender roles in Afghanistan, as discussed above. One of the gender advisors who engaged daily with 'local communities' argued that women's and men's security issues were not necessarily radically different, though there could be differences in emphasis and nuances on the subjects that should be considered in order to understand the situation of the civilian population better. For instance, moving around safely without fear of being attacked was considered important by everyone, but what sorts of fears and how these could be addressed were different for women and men. In other cases, there were radically different perspectives between women and men on key priorities. This could, for instance, relate to what was needed to improve the security situation, namely more military training and arms to fight the Taliban, or providing access to education and jobs to avoid young men being recruited by the Taliban. Moreover, one of the soldiers argued that there was a need for female military staff to conduct check-point searches of Afghans. There had been several incidents around the country where suicide bombers had exploited the 'hands-off' policy regarding female Afghans dressed in burkas to detonate bombs, as the male representatives of ISAF or the Afghan security forces could not search them.

Overall, the mandate to support the reconstruction of state institutions in Afghanistan and the long-term goal of reconciliation and development has, at least more recently, involved empowering women's organizations as well as women in the police and the armed forces in the Norwegian-based mission area, Fayab

Province. However, as Abirafeh (2009) has shown in her studies, the language of 'gender' and 'women's empowerment' is just as much a language rapidly adopted in Afghanistan to attract donor funding. She (p. 50) quotes an Afghan female NGO representative who suggested that the aid agenda of empowering women has led to a belief in the aid apparatus such that 'We are here to save the poor victims, and [as a result, Afghan women] are so good at playing the victims.' This empowerment agenda can to some extent show how poorly gender roles are understood in both planning and executing operations, as well as in the larger political landscape of – what gender issues mean, like the interconnected roles of men and women, and in turn the failure of policies to improve women's conditions.

UN PEACEKEEPING AND RESOLUTION 1325

We will now turn to the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo and first introduce UN peacekeeping and gender perspectives more generally. Throughout their existence, the various UN missions have focused on ensuring that peace treaties are complied with, on providing safe passage for humanitarian aid, on providing protection for vulnerable groups in conflicts including women, children, the elderly and disabled, and sending patrols into insecure areas and around refugee camps (see Bellamy et al. 2004 for a thorough discussion). In other words, it is almost implied that the missions have or should have an understanding of gender-sensitive peacekeeping and protection. Yet, and as this study will show, the problem of interpreting gender as women separately from the main daily tasks of the military is evident in the organization. Moreover, the mission's mandates often reflect the role of women as victims, especially of sexual and gender-based violence, and as in need of

protection (Whitworth 2004: 132). In turn, there is rarely a conflict analysis reflecting on gender roles and the effects of war and post-conflict situations. I would argue that the peacekeeper's role as preventers and protectors against highly stigmatized issues like sexual violence require intensive local analysis and information gathering, and most likely the close cooperation of community-based groups and civilian experts from the substantive part of the mission. In the following, some of the experiences of peacekeepers based in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be presented.

EXPERIENCES FROM THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION STABILIZATION MISSION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

There will never be enough resources... this is why, for example, we are trying to understand the communities better.... We need to recognize that protection is more than just having military boots on the ground. It's about how you use them, and how you can connect with your civilian staff. Former Special Representative of the Secretary General Alan Doss, May 2009

The UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, or MONUSCO, has as its priority to protect civilians and facilitate a safer environment for the humanitarian personnel operating in the area, as well as supporting the professionalization of the Congolese armed forces and police. In many ways, the protection mandate fits well with the masculine ideals of protector, especially when the mandate often refers to "women and children", meaning vulnerable groups in need of (masculine) protection. Moreover, the largest component of MONUSCO is the military, consisting of approximately 17,000 military personnel, the majority from India,

Pakistan and Bangladesh. Despite Doss's statement above, the issues of protection, security, stabilization and peace are thus often interpreted and executed by the armed forces. In the mission context in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there is little reflection on the masculinized, male-dominated approach to these matters, and simultaneously there is a very poor understanding of the communities, especially what it means to be a Congolese male (see Baaz and Stern 2010). Hence, as argued in the introduction, when gender both within the organization (MONUSCO) and in its operational environment is so poorly reflected upon, insufficient strategies are the result. We will now look in greater detail at this case study.

REPRESENTATION AND RESOLUTION 1325

Internal representation of women and men in the UN operation

Generally speaking, MONUSCO military units do not have women in professional military positions; they are present mainly in civilian roles as translators, nurses, in administrative posts, etc. This is, in other words, a masculine environment. There are some exceptions, such as the Uruguayan contingent, where there are a few women serving in the armed forces as officers. As one informant explained regarding the Pakistani contribution, the largest in the Bukavu area: 'the Pakistan army does not have women in the more traditional battalion roles, as they are not supposed to fight in a war.' The first barrier in this case is thus that there is no female representation in the military. This means that the mandate – protect civilians and improve national capacities – is carried out solely by men. Again, this does not mean that gender mainstreaming is the women's responsibility. The point to be made is that priorities when it comes to insecurity and

appropriate measures are defined by men and may not be sensitive to perspectives from the other half of the population or indeed the community at large.

External representation: the mission and the inclusion of gender perspectives in the local context

South Kivu province in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where the mission I worked with is based, is largely rural, dependent on agriculture and with ongoing conflicts over land and ethnic belonging. The most famous of these conflicts is that between the Rwandan Tutsi Banyamulenge groups, who own livestock and the more 'native' Hutu ethnic groups. Some of the areas like the Shabunda area are almost completely cut off from the outside world, apart from a few landing strips, and the situation for many of the Congolese civilians whom MONUSCO tries to protect from its base is dire. As the commander of the South Kivu brigade argued, 'There is no clear separation between friends and foes,' which makes any operation more complex. Women, men and children all experience severe hardship on a daily basis. What was repeatedly mentioned when I asked the MONUSCO peacekeepers how they see the situation of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the response was that it was terrible how women had to work so hard for their livelihood and families, while the men did nothing. Many of the Pakistani informants added that, in their home country, they respect women and protect them from daily hardship. They see women as anyone's mother or sister, and feel that they should be respected in every sense. During previous work on the gender perspectives of women and men in the Democratic Republic of Congo, however, similar arguments were made about women as 'anyone's mother and sister.' What may distinguish Congolese society from the

society of the major troop-contributing country, Pakistan, is that women are more visible in everyday life. Congolese customs are in many ways conservative, suggesting, as stated in the introduction, a simplified term for cultures that associate the meanings of femininity with traits of lower social status, like weakness and subordination, even though women are clearly present and form a significant part of the socio-economic backbone of the society. This also affects women's levels of insecurity, as they must walk long distances to reach markets, fetch water etc., in highly insecure areas where they are harassed by the local police, army and armed groups, who may demand sexual services to let them pass. Patrolling areas where women walk and work is thus an operative, gender-sensitive peacekeeping activity in the area of operation.

However, there are some barriers acting on the peacekeepers in relation to the insecurity issues mentioned above. First, the peacekeepers and the Congolese do not have any international language in common, and the availability of translators is limited. Secondly, peacekeepers have a large geographical area to cover and thus are less able to establish good contact with local communities. Thirdly, and linked to the former, peacekeepers tend to establish a connection with the chief of the village to decide the topics and areas on which the village requires help. Insecurity in Congolese societies is thus seen primarily from the viewpoint of older men, thus severely limiting the inclusiveness of other gender perspectives and the goals of Resolution 1325.

INTEGRATION AND RESOLUTION 1325

Internal integration: including gender perspectives in MONUSCO?

MONUSCO has firmly established the importance of Resolution 1325 in its

mandate mission. However, levels of understanding in terms of gender perspectives and the prevention, protection and reporting roles of peacekeepers generally appeared low. Gender was not seen as something the peacekeepers could ‘help’ the researcher with, as ‘there were no women here’ or perhaps even ‘our men do not do sexual exploitation and abuse.’ I had few if any good discussions with peacekeepers on the prevention of and protection against gendered violence and the reporting of these crimes committed by armed groups or the Congolese army. There were views and some understandings of the positions of men and women in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but no reflections on how this affected the peacekeepers’ day-to-day activities. This was exemplified when I observed one of the training lessons for officers regarding protection against sexual violence. One of the officers became highly appreciative when the trainers explained how peacekeepers should be present at water points where women came regularly, as they are often sexually harassed and even assaulted by armed men. He had never considered this to be a security concern, though he had seen women going to and from these water points many times.

Among the main challenges for the UN in including gender perspectives at all levels seems to be active leadership by the section chiefs, coordination between civilian, military and national bodies, and concrete short-term and long-term objectives achievable with the limited resources and capacities available. The goals of prevention, protection, participation and relief/recovery are demanding and require specific goals to be set by the military, but also overall cooperation with affected parties in the civilian, police and military spheres. In the future, the expertise of the gender affairs office, the sexual violence unit and the Congolese Ministry of Gender, Family and Children need to be

used more systematically in the missions of the various peacekeeping units.

External integration: gender perspectives in the execution of the MONUSCO mandate?

The informants were asked how they had used or could imagine including gender perspectives in the mandate to protect civilians, as well as in security sector reform. One peacekeeper maintained that the best way to carry out patrolling and information gathering was to do so together with civilian experts in the substantive section of the mission, experts who were trained in the various humanitarian needs and knew how to best respond to particular situations. The peacekeepers are not necessarily substantially skilled in the specific needs of the Democratic Republic of Congo; in such situations, there are great advantages in having a team leader like a civilian expert who knows what to ask and how to respond, as one of the peacekeepers argued. The Joint Protection Teams – civilian experts working with peacekeeper protection – and other joint missions are good examples of this and could be further improved.

Moreover, as to longer term approaches, a central feature of recent years has been the Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence in Democratic Republic of Congo, led by the national authorities and supported by the UN (MONUC 2009). The military section of MONUSCO plays a key role in the preventive, responsive and reporting aspects of cases of sexual violence, as well as in reform activities. Moreover, the Congolese Ministry of Defense has developed a training manual on the issue of sexual violence to sensitize the Congolese army against such behavior (Mandjangu and Apanze 2011). In addition, the Ministry has distributed handbooks to their soldiers that emphasize visually and textually the codes of conduct that should be followed as regards civilians.

Actual implementation of these codes, however, will entail fundamental changes to the structure of the armed forces, as well as to the political, economic and social situations of the military and the country more broadly (see Baaz and Stern 2010). Some peacekeepers expressed frustration at the level of competence of the soldiers, as well as their own levels of understanding the deep workings of the political and military hierarchies in the country. As one stated, 'Isolated achievements do not achieve the higher goals of peace and security in the country.' There seemed to be in general a very poor understanding among the peacekeepers when it came to Congolese gender roles and how they in turn affect security and development dilemmas.

CONCLUSION

The lack of reflection on gender roles and relations in Resolution 1325 also seems to be symptomatic within military operations in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The default gender role seem to be military male, while protection of the vulnerable is understood as applying to women and girls, and that there is a poor understanding of war-affected male roles in relation to female roles in both Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Including gender perspectives when it comes, for instance, to protecting civilians and restoring and supporting national capacities in military operations requires good contextual understanding of the societies where the soldiers are based. Given the armed forces' limited knowledge of Afghan and Congolese societies and little interaction with women, they were poorly equipped to do anything about gender perspectives in their daily tasks. Moreover, there is a major shortcoming in the way 'mainstreaming' is channeled through one (civilian) gender advisor or a small, separate

(civilian) unit outside the main activities of the military operation. This signals both a disinterest in the topic of gender perspectives and a sense of 'otherness' rather than inclusiveness. Masculine ideals – strong, warrior, protector – appear to be the favoured gender perspective in military operations and will in turn affect strategic choices and the (lack of) interaction with women and their views.

Overcoming the lack of interaction between the female and male members of the society and the operation at large would thus be a potential first step in employing a more inclusive and restorative approach to security and stability. Before achieving this, however, there is a need to reflect more thoroughly about the warrior culture in any armed force and what Whitworth (2004:166) calls 'militarized masculinity', that is, that becoming a soldier means overcoming emotions that are perceived as 'feminine' and demonstrating a willingness to use violence – what Gilder (in Whitworth, *ibid.*) calls 'to kill the woman in them'. The political goals of ensuring inclusive peace and security and of gender-sensitive armed forces on the one hand and militarized masculinity on the other thus form a major barrier to achieving more balanced gender perspectives and the inclusion of Resolution 1325 in military operations.

NOTES

1. UNSC Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010).
2. Gender is certainly not the only characteristic that 'defines' social status. Other issues may include ethnicity, class, nationality etc.
3. The other authors of the 2012 report worked on the case studies of the Haiti UN Mission (Marcela Donadi, Juan Rial and Renata Giannini) and on the Liberian UN Mission (Ancil Adrian-Paula and Niels Nagelhus Schia).

4. Original speech given in English, downloaded 2 May 2013 from

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/fd/whats-new/Speeches-and-articles/minister/speeches-and-articles-by-minister-of-d-2/2012/masculinity-and-the-military.html?id=685175>

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SUMMARY

This article discusses the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 and the barriers to including and mainstreaming gender perspectives in international military operations. One limitation of Resolution 1325, which seems to be a broader symptom of military operations, is that gender is simply understood as meaning women, rather than reflecting on women and men's roles in war and post-conflict settings.

The two cases studied in this article are focused on the United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Norwegian contribution to the NATO operation in Afghanistan. Both NATO and the UN have taken an active stand to promote the inclusion of women and gender perspectives internally in their organizations and externally in their activities. The study addresses soldiers' day-to-day work in these missions and the protection of civilians in the light of gender concerns in these contexts. There seems to be very limited knowledge of

what gender perspectives entail, both internally within an organization and externally in the area of operations, and soldiers are thus not equipped to conduct gender sensitive operations. A first step for the armed forces is to reflect upon the prevailing masculine approaches to security dilemmas.

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