

# Women, peace and security



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# Introduction

“The best way to survive a conflict is to be a soldier”

ANONYMOUS SOLDIER

Through all times, women have been victims of war. As armed conflicts increasingly cause civilian casualties, at least as many women as men die during conflicts. But women are also subjected to situations specific to their gender: they lose their combating husbands, feeding their families becomes much harder, women are raped by the enemy and, in the eyes of the nation, lose their honor as they fail to uphold its purity. Furthermore, women’s rights and gender equality issues are often sidetracked when national policies are created in states in post-conflict reconstruction phases. In many cases, the issues of women’s rights even experience a decline. We have heard it before but it is worth repeating; wars’ probable prime victims are women. There is a danger, though, in shackling women to the role as victims when speaking of conflict and peace building processes.

As yet, what we are not as clear on generally is that as long as wars have gone on, women have been working together for peace. From Lysistrata to Women in Black, women have organized themselves for a more peaceful society across national boundaries and ethnic barriers. In other words, women are not only victims in times of war; they are also participants, or actors.

With this publication, we would like to shed light on the difficulties in acknowledging women as actors in peace negotiations and conventions. The first part of this presentation will focus on how masculinity and femininity have contributed to discussions on

conflict and war. We will also offer some examples of how women organize themselves, and give an insight into how Sweden and large international organizations work, within the context of peace and security, to increase women's participation in the political sphere.

# The power sphere, the gender aspect of war and peace

“Instead of letting our honorable and respectable women be raped and sexually abused, it is better to let the soldiers get an outlet for their sexual urges and in the meantime benefit economically from it.”

ANONYMOUS SOLDIER

## Gender

The social-constructive view is the most common definition of gender roles, i.e. that men and women are different not because of biological differences, but because they are influenced into being different. The gender system arranges women and men into roles which they are expected to live up to, generally within a range of activities only open to one or the other gender, with factors such as clothes, language and social positions also being important. Gender roles are often culturally defined and vary over time and space. Before the industrialization, for an example, important factors for men when choosing a wife were the size and strength of her, if the woman was large and strong she was seen as a better wife. Farm work and other traditional occupations for women, such as dairy women, meant heavy lifting and the need for muscle strength. When Sweden was industrialized, women were replaced by machines to do the heavy work and men took over the work tasks of the dairy women. The dairy women themselves described

the work at the dairy farms as becoming far too heavy despite the fact that lifting had become scarcer and lighter. Instead women were said to have nimble fingers and an occupation deemed more appropriate for women now was working as phone operators.

It is also important to note that gender roles are produced and reproduced on individual and structural levels. Men and women have different positions in societal structures such as the business world and in the political sphere, but their positions are also different on a micro level. Within the family structure the man is often referred to as the bread-winner and the women's responsibility is to take care of the household duties. The pattern can be described as structural since the separation of masculine and feminine exists on all levels in society. Furthermore, it is important to note that both women and men are participating in the reproduction and construction of gender structures. To be a woman does not necessarily mean that you are aware of the existing gender structures that are oppressing you.

Furthermore, a hierarchical order is added. The gender system does not only give a definition of femininity and masculinity, but defines the relation between the two, the definition taking its point of departure in heterosexuality. A society where heterosexuality and the heterosexual 'neutral' family is the central cornerstone within the public discourse (e.g. political discussions, media, and a basic assumption that a new acquaintance is heterosexual) is called a hetero-normative society. The hetero-normative society is structured hierarchically so that the men are positioned as superior to women, starting in the family, where men take the self-evident position as representing the public sphere and women the private, this structure then spreads to most other areas within society.

Men's tasks and functions are valued higher within society than the traditional feminine actions. A common assertion is that society is built on a male norm, where men are made to be the norm and the rule when constructing law and customs, women are the exception. Understanding the theory of the male norm is clearer with this mental exercise. The next time you are discussing someone without using gender specific pronouns (for example by using "my colleague") think of what sex that person has in your

mind. Unless the person whom you are speaking about works within healthcare or at a pre-school, the risk is prominent that the unknown person will be mentally pictured as a man. Consider this riddle:

*“A man and his son are out driving. They get into an accident and are brought to a hospital where the father dies. The doctor comes into the surgery ward where the son is lying unconscious waiting for surgery. But it doesn't go well, the doctor refuses to perform the surgery on the young man with the following words “I can't do the surgery, this man is my son”. How does this add up?”*

When people are told this riddle, very few come up with the right answer: the surgeon is a woman. In a society where men are seen as the norm the term ‘women's issues’ is used when discussing topics relevant to approximately 51% of the population; similarly, referring to the national football team never implies the women's football team.

## **Intersectionality**

It is difficult to discuss gender relations and inequalities without mentioning that they are uniform. Women in the East and South are not positioned as equal to Western women and homosexual women are not positioned as equal to heterosexual women. Factors such as gender interplay with ethnicity, class, race, sexuality, age and other factors (such as disability). Black women are subordinated to white, working class women are subordinated to middle class and academic women.

In the context of women, peace and security it is important to point out that European, white women (who within the field of conflict resolution often tend to be middle class) can be hierarchically privileged in areas of conflict because of the parameters mentioned above. The first mentioned group's truth often does not coincide with the second group's day-to-day lives.

## Gender and nation-building projects

A definition of citizenship:

*“A collection of normative expectations defining relations between the nation state and its individual members. These establish members’ rights and duties making visible these expectations in practice”* (Waters in Yuval-Davis)

In creating national identity, and in consequence citizenship, gender plays a central role. As the quotation above implies, citizenship implies belonging to a nation state with rules that have to be obeyed for the citizens to enjoy their rights. These rules may appear to be gender neutral in some nation’s legislation, but on a practical level they relate differently to men and women.

### Language

A nation state is sometimes referred to as symbolizing a large family e.g. everyone within its borders identifies as belonging to the same group of people, positioned in relation to other nations. The family metaphor is clear in expressions such as ‘mother tongue’, ‘sons and daughters of the nation’. As women and men relate to each other, they must also relate to the nation state.

In the 17th century, Napoleon I introduced a legislation concerning the relationship between spouses based on men’s “puissance” (strength) and women’s “incapacité” (incapability). The legislation stated the kind of obligations spouses had to each other. Men were obligated to protect their wives; the women were obligated to obey their husbands. The same pattern was applied on the national level, women had to relate to certain social rules, and in exchange they earned the protection provided by their husbands.

An example of women not earning protection were the thousands of French women who fell in love with German soldiers during World War II. After the war these women had their heads shaved and were paraded through the streets as a punishment for their “horizontal collaboration”. The children who were born out of



these relationships were defamed and excluded by friends, teachers and other adults.

## **Fertility**

Childbirth has been an area where the nation's reproduction of gender roles has been of great importance. National states have, at different times, felt the need to influence women's rates of childbirth. During times of war, women have been encouraged to give birth to more children for the nation, while they, during times of overpopulation, have had to content themselves with having only one child. Women have been forcibly sterilized throughout history. In China you can be economically sanctioned if you have too many children.

Women's undertakings are not only related to their fertility. The concept of the woman's double role is generally accepted, one as child bearer and creator of human capital, the other as symbol of the nation and maintainer of the national borders. Women and girls are even expected to embody the national state through honorable attributes such as fidelity, purity, innocence and caring. There are many concrete examples within some societies where women are victims of murder and torture because they are suspected of having committed adultery, consequently adultery means dishonoring male relatives and the community, hence the severe punishment. The former colonial powers were well aware of the symbolic role women had in nation-building projects, as they often used the indigenous women to justify their presence and their takeover of power. As colonized women were portrayed as sexually loose by the colonizers, consequently the colonizers could define the entire population as uncivilized. In some cases the colonizers also defined the indigenous women as being oppressed by their own husbands and consequently in need of being rescued from them

## **The woman as a symbol for the group**

This phenomenon still exists today; ethnic groups create an identity of 'We', based on the national identity, through the defamation of the 'Others' and their women. Another example is found

in the national beauty pageants, where nations around the world spend a lot of money to find the most beautiful young woman in their country. Then she is sent as a symbol representing the nation, to a world-wide contest that will determine which nation has the most beautiful women. The international media has given this phenomenon a lot of positive attention in its establishment in the so-called third world, as it is seen as a step in the right direction for women's rights. On the other hand, Mr. Universe e.g. the male beauty pageant is about which "guy" has the largest muscles.

Men are also subjected to requirements. Ian Harris mentions some of these requirements in his book *Messages Men Hear*; men are supposed to take high risks, they are adventurers, and they have to be in control over their relationships and their feelings, feelings they never can display in public. Furthermore certain exploitations are central to proving masculinity; men are sexually aggressive, they are in a quest for power and status, they never ask for help since they are self-sufficient. Men are supposed to be driven by competitive lust and yearning for victory, they are supposed to deny pain and never admit their mistakes and they should in the end challenge death to become worthy and be able to identify with war heroes. As fathers of the nation, men's role is to defend the women and children of the nation.

## Gender in war

The upholding of the national group identity is never as important as when the nation or the ethnic group is under threat. This is when it is most important to prove that the men belonging to the group are 'real men' and the women belonging to the group are 'real women'.

In this context, the aspect of gender roles can also be detected in the language discourse. A country that has been under attack is for example said to have been raped. An unknown territory where colonial powers have not previously set foot is called virgin territory.

Men are sent out into the battle field to protect women and children. The concept of 'women and children' is not only used by the media and journalists when they are discussing conflicts, but also by politicians and power holders. This because women are often set in relation to the family, so that they are then easier to depict as victims, but at the same time making their aspiration to become an actor more difficult. Women's entry in the military has naturally made this victimization of women more difficult, but tradition upholds a myth that even when women are working in the military, women need men's protection (thus, some might think, that they need protection from the military).

Joshua S. Goldstein is questioning in his book, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice-Versa*, why, when both war and gender can be expressed in a number of different ways are gender structures in war always construed along the same constant through time and space. Neither men nor women are pre-programmed to kill, but at the same time women in combat are as efficient as men. Why has war up to the present time been organized with practically exclusively male combat patrols? According to Goldstein, biology can only play a small part in explaining the rhetoric. Instead, he emphasizes men's socialization for war and the tendency to demonize the enemy through its feminization.

### **Sexuality and war**

Combating men demonize the enemy by its feminization and at the same time glorify themselves through the affirmation of their masculinity, the dominating masculinity. The masculinity that can defeat the enemy. Cynthia Enloe describes how combat troops are shown pornographic movies before they go out on the battle field. Porn movies are also supposed to give an adrenaline shock, and also enable men to reaffirm their active masculinity by seeing themselves in charge and active in the sexual act. It is not hard to understand that in such a masculine environment, sexual harassment and assault not only towards women belonging to the enemy, but also on women within their own group, are not uncommon. Women in the military are also often subjected to these types of violations and are often not taken seriously by their supe-

rriors because they “are not taking it the right way”; having entered such a masculine arena they can “only blame themselves”.

Prostitution and the prevalence of HIV-infection generally increase in locations where UN-soldiers are stationed. For a long time prostitution has been regulated, directly or indirectly by the military power. In the mid 19th century, the English government regulated prostitution to control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases by subjecting prostitutes to gynecological examination. The prostitutes were described as “the soldiers potential sexual partners” so the legislation was a way of solving the threat to soldiers’ health without jeopardizing sexual relations seen as necessary for ‘real’ soldiers. On the other hand, soldiers were not subjected to mandatory check-ups, as it was deemed humiliating. Women who were suspected of being ‘sexually loose’, not just prostitutes, could expect the same treatment on the home front in the United States during the 1940’s. This was a matter of effectiveness within the military combined with a fear of distorted gender patterns that could arise with women’s sexual liberation.

In a similar manner, prostitutes in Vietnam, desperate after the first Indochina-war against France and its negative impact on the economy were welcomed and hired by Americans at their military bases. The estimated numbers of women working as prostitutes were 300,000 to 500,000 in 1973, just before the Americans left the country. The facts that the women did not speak the same language was a great advantage, as the soldiers could not, then, in a weak moment, confide classified military information, making it clear that the relationship was simply one of sexual satisfaction rather than female companionship.

### **The case of the United States in Vietnam- Not without my friends**

Prostitution did not hinder soldiers from raping local women, and not always in the context of actual battle. The Vietnamese women who worked at the American military bases were not all there as prostitutes, some were hired as cleaners or as civil servants. Nevertheless thousands of these more ‘honorable’ women were raped, despite an unrestricted access to sex. But since these women

were not white, they were not as honorable as they could have been. An American soldier explains:

*"... that's nature's law. There are women at your disposal. Women from another culture, another society, another skin color. You don't want a prostitute. You're armed. Why should you pay for a woman? You just go to the village and take what you want. I saw boys that I'm sure had never been with a woman before. They came back as double veterans."*

The expression 'double veteran' refers to a soldier that first has sex with a woman and then kills her. The soldiers physically abused Asian women to humiliate Asian men or instead of attacking their own officers. Cynthia Enloe tries to explain how men can find themselves in a position where it is impossible to say no to a gang rape. The first reason is, soldiers live 24 hours a day isolated with only other men. The second reason is, they are, indoctrinated within the military, to think that the rest of the world is a very frightening place and in order to feel safe they need 'comrades'. But to be included into the comradeship and to get friends to whom the man can expose his fears and worries, he needs to prove that he can be cold blooded in violent situations and constantly prove that he is a 'real man'.

### **Continued consequences**

Today prostitution in Asia is still increasing due to both sex tourism and militarism. Prostitutes are still hired at American military bases, officially under titles such as 'cleaners', 'civil servants' or, closer to the truth, 'hostesses'.

War is a deeply masculinized phenomenon. Conflict in all its phases is connected to hard masculinity (see above) and the so-called women's issues do not belong within hard politics. Women's issues are soft issues and for a negotiation party, to bring these issues up in a security related context can be perceived as a weakness. This is one of the reasons why women, who we have seen are very strong symbolic elements to the perpetrators in a conflict, are made invisible in discussions on conflicts and its consequences. (More on the reasons for the exclusion of women in positions of decision-making is described below).

## The militarization of society

There are many political theories on the root causes of conflict and war. The theory of the school of functionalism describes that the nation develops a strong belief in its own superiority and consequently sees territorial expansion as a natural part of its success. The Marxist school focuses on social class structures and economic factors, such as the diamond trade in Democratic Republic of Congo or the global oil trade. The feminist theories main focus is on the patriarchal structures that are organizing the nations making the aspiration for power and domination the strongest driving force within foreign politics.

These are only a few of the different theories which attempt to explain the mechanisms of war. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to answer the question of what makes war possible. How does a nation succeed in mobilizing the resources that are required in war times, both economic and human, making people willing to risk their lives for the nation or discard their inner voices and work in the weapons industries?

Militarism is best described as when a society is viewed as best served and at its most efficient when it is run by the military or is guided by concepts that exist within the military culture. This concept is also reflected in societies outside of the military force, for example being found within the school system, business industry, legislation and entertainment industry and does not necessarily need to directly involve weapons. For example a school can be perceived as militaristic if the children are steered by a strong authority and if there is an underlying understanding that the school is positively different to other schools or those students with good grades are indoctrinated to think that they are better than the ones with poor grades (i.e. elitism). Militarization is the process within which a country becomes militaristic.

### **Militarism beyond theories**

In *War, Peace and the Social Order*, Brian E Fogarty describes how he grew up during the cold war in the United States. Students in his school were taught that goods produced in their own country were

larger and better than goods produced in the Soviet Union, or by the Russians. The United States produced more wheat, more steel, more milk and more movies, better sugar and above all American children drank Coca-Cola or Pepsi-Cola whilst the 'Russians' gave their children tea. Every day the television broadcast was interrupted by the Emergency Warning Broadcast System that assured TV audiences that "it was only a test" and every month the sirens called out for children to practice evacuating their school; or "duck and cover", in case of a nuclear attack on the nation. The culture that characterized this society made neighbours build bomb shelters and stacked hoards of tinned food when Yuri Gagarin became the first human being to drift in space around the Earth.

Militaristic nations can often be distinguished by the presence of strong patriotism, nationalism and an exaggerated belief in the own group whilst having the perception that 'the Others' are dangerous, uncivilized, crazy or even evil. During the 1980's Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union an "evil empire" and insisted on a continued commitment to Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), commonly called Star Wars, a defense program under a so called nuclear umbrella using ground-based and space-based systems to protect the United States from armed attacks. In accordance with the definition of militaristic societies, the U.S. put great emphasis on rearmament. This fear of 'the others' makes disarmament impossible.

### **Fear and the security dilemma**

Rearmament is a basic part of militarization. Within political science, the theory of realism is based on militaristic states, suggesting that a sovereign state's primary interest within international politics is to acquire military and economic power or security over other states. Within this school of thought, international co-operation is not taken very seriously: on the contrary supporters of this school claim that international relations often are characterized by a so-called security dilemma where a state feeling threatened rearms and in consequence frightens other states into rearming in defense. Just as this theory states, actual militaristic states often have a political and media discourse suggesting that human beings are fundamentally self-centered and competitive.

In other words, war is not required to define a country as militarized. A country is militarized when a culture of fear is grown, where the population basically sees the world as a dangerous place, a place where we need weapons to protect ourselves. This can be reflected in several different parts of society. As mentioned previously, schools and education are a basic part of educating the population in a genuine military spirit. In the past, so-called fine arts and music have been highly militarized. The 1812 Overture by Tchaikovski is full of cannon shots and rockets and tells the tale of Napoleon's defeat in Moscow. This type of cultural expressions shifted during the First World War into more abstract forms and became separated from the existing reality, instead the entertainment business took over the role of submitting nationalistic propaganda. Worth mentioning is that during the anti-communist cold war propaganda campaign in the US, movies such as *The Manchurian Candidate*<sup>1</sup> and the film *Nineteen Eighty-four*<sup>2</sup> were made.

### **Militarization and culture today**

Movies have been used for more than just nationalistic propaganda it has also contributed to the polarization of societies, they have also contributed to citizens getting over their natural abhorrence for violence in all its forms. Movies and TV-programs are eagerly watched by people looking at human beings subjected to threats they can not escape from, such as torture, rape and cold-blooded murder. Sometimes the audience is manipulated into laughing when terrible crimes are being committed, sometimes to sympathize with cold-blooded serial killers. To mention a couple, *Pulp Fiction*<sup>3</sup> in which the shooting of a young man in the back seat propels the others in the car to start a discussion on how they can avoid grieving for the dead man, despite the fact that the objective was not for him to die, and *Natural Born Killers*<sup>4</sup> which tells the story of how two young serial killers escape from prison and run from the police. The audience is supposed to take the killers' side and sympathise with them. Even if these movies can be perceived as a critique of the cold-blooded, hero worshipping and rawness and mediatization of violence, they nevertheless contribute to people having a far more relaxed attitude towards violence.



Today boys do not have to play with plastic guns and yell “bang” for their friends to fall down and play dead anymore. They can instead sit next to each other without moving anything else than their hands on a joystick, shooting each other on a screen where the effect of the deadly violence is obvious right away, the bodies after the deadly shootings are bleeding in death spasms. In some video and computer games, the aim of the violence is not killing an ‘enemy’ but to perpetrate the worst kind of violence against innocent victims. Action movies and computer games, generally adapted to the entertainment needs of boys and men, contribute to simplifying the world, dividing it into black and white, good and evil, and to the belief that sometimes killing is a necessary measure.

Also far more resources are being invested in military forces. In militarized nations, economic cut backs are made mostly from the social sector, including withdrawing resources from health care and school-budgets in order to benefit the military industrial complex..

### **Militarism in war struck countries**

The militarization process is worse in countries where conflict characterizes the everyday life. In Afghanistan for example, militarization has proven to be a disaster, not only for Afghans in general, but especially for Afghan women. They are subjected to bombings and are forced into exile. Refugee camps can mean something very different to women compared to men. To men the camps are a place providing some breathing space, a place where they can meet their family and recuperate after combat. To women life in camp is unbelievably sad. In their former home in the villages they had work to do in the fields and other obligations to perform outside of their homes, but in the refugee camps they have no reason to leave the temporary and minimal surface that they call home. In the Afghan context, the risk that a woman will be seen by an unknown man, or a man outside of the family’s safety boundaries, is perceived to be much greater in a refugee camp and therefore women are kept prisoners in their homes, like birds in a cage.

But it is worth repeating that a conflict is not required for militarization, and the macho culture it is based on, to be damaging to

everyone. During Swedish battalion exercises in Vaxholm in 2004, two boys died when they had been standing on the deck of a vessel which collided with another vessel. On the second anniversary of the boys' deaths, the 18th of June of 2006, their parents had a letter published in one of the major Swedish daily newspapers (Dagens Nyheter). They suggested that the deaths of their sons' were caused by the incompetence of the other young men driving the other vessel; they lacked knowledge and were driving too fast. There was a lack of respect for the boys' lives within the amphibious battalion. Instead of being protected, high-risk behavior and rule infraction was encouraged. The parents also suggested that war had been turned into a game for those doing their military service. In sum, the parents blamed the military macho culture that seems to be the norm within the Swedish military service for their sons' deaths.

## Human Security

Due to the way armed conflicts have changed over time, the discourse on the concept of security has also changed. During the 1990's the concept of 'human security' was introduced to shift focus from state security to the individual level security within society. The concept, coined by the UN for the first time in the Human Development report of 1994, has two definitions, one broad and one narrow definition. The narrow definition puts forward that human security should incorporate protecting individuals and societies from international violence, whilst the broad definition incorporates "...constant threats of famine, sickness, criminality and oppression". For an individual to be considered secured he or she should not be hindered from sudden or damaging rupture within the daily routine. This should not depend on whether those changes take place in the home, at work, in the local community or in their environment.

Human security later became a recognized concept in both national and international contexts. Famine, poverty and violation of human rights are now seen as a lack of security. But just like the "Declaration of Human Rights" was criticized, this concept was

criticized for its gender neutrality. Behind the idea that all individuals could be included in human security, women's particular needs in conflict torn countries were made invisible. There was no room for the issues we examined earlier i.e. gender-based violence, female unemployment, famine, etc.

An awareness of women's situation is necessary within discussions on human security. It is important to see that the difficulties in providing food for the family primarily affect women and girls, partly because they generally are responsible for providing the family's food and therefore women have to move in unsafe areas, and women will not eat when food is scarce. It is also important to discuss the fact that women are the first to lose their jobs in the unemployment crisis often followed after conflicts; they are overwhelmed with work in their homes and thus lose the freedom to get a source of income that would lessen their obligations. The violence outside the home is often reproduced inside, in the shape of physical abuse and sexual violence.

## Excluding women from power

To understand why women have had, and still have, difficulties in getting their voices heard within the international conflict solving context, we have to go back to our definition of gender roles and especially to the process where dichotomies are created. In defining ourselves, we have to position ourselves in relation to the opposite. If we were all equally tall, no one could be defined as tall or short, but as we all are of different heights, different groups can be created. Through defining ourselves we simultaneously define 'Others', those who are not like us. Women and men are an example of two groups that have been created in opposition to one another. Femininity is all that is not masculine, and since the feminine is deemed inferior to the masculine it would be a step in the wrong direction for a man to adopt feminine qualities.

In, among others, the Western context, men have been representatives for the public sphere: politics, society and the sophisticated culture. Women have been responsible for the private sphere: caring for the home and nursing children, as well as symbolizing

nature, e.g. the wild and untamable. A consequence of this division has been the different attributes given to men and women, men are for example seen as rational and intelligent, women are seen as instinctive and emotional.

It has been a slow process for women to get access to the public sphere and to get decision-making positions that require responsibility, rationality and intelligence. Thus, it was only a hundred years ago that Universities made up allegations that academic knowledge and intellectual stimuli had negative effects on women's uterus and made it shrink, this was made up to keep women away from Universities and make academic access more difficult for them.

Even when women have gained access to power it has been difficult for those who have had some feminist awareness to raise 'women's issues'. Although many women in top positions show 'natural' masculine qualities others have to build up their credibility through 'masculinizing' themselves; they use 'men's talk' and act on men's terms to induce the feeling that they actually belong in the power sphere. It is on these terms that we have seen women who are brought up to neutralize the issue of female representation on decision-making level. Women such as Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi and Jeanne Kirkpatrick are brought forward as deterrent individuals, as to say that nothing would be different if women got more of a say. One might wonder if these women have gained power because they have succeeded in 'masculinizing' themselves enough to play with the big boys`.

## Women as actors in peace and security issues

“On one issue, at least, both men and women agree. They both distrust women.”

H.L. MENCKEN

Cynthia Enloe suggests that women have always participated in conflicts and war, but they have not had decision making roles, but rather had the role of men's care givers, or they have disseminated white hegemony. Examples she gives are female school teachers sent on missions to schools in colonies where they have tried to civilize the local population. As we mentioned earlier, women have also been hired by military forces as cleaners or prostitutes. Women who live with, or are married to men within the weapons industry, the military or the diplomat corps tend to be forgotten. Many are not completely comfortable with their husbands' work but put their body and soul into convincing themselves that they are. Within those types of marriages, silence between the two spouses is not uncommon according to Cynthia Enloe. Previously they could speak with each other about politics and ideals, whether they had the same perspectives or not. But when their husbands then start working within the weapons industry they might not accept the wife's idealism. Women are not born more peaceful and men are not born as warriors, but the social role of women, as passive and care-giving, entail that women often understand war less than men do.

What all these women have contributed to (probably completely unconsciously and often unwillingly) is maintaining and reinforcing the image of the masculinized conflict. There is a pervasive

view when national states are in conflicts with each other, that men are the nation's extended arm, women the nation's bosom and men's role is to protect the fragile, even if strong, honorable and sacrificing women.

But women and girls have also been direct actors within the military. Girls have been part of liberation armies and have been sent out in numerous conflicts; more and more women do their military service and are sent out in areas of conflict with weapons in their hands. How does this affect the masculine culture?

Girls who have actively contributed to liberation wars often experience social stigmatization when they return home; they are, for instance, off-limits to young men seeking to marry a young woman. The consequences for female ex-combatants in their continued day-to-day lives within societies, founded on women's economic dependence on men, are tremendous difficult when these women can not get married. Women within the military are potentially subjected not only to sexual harassment and assault, they are also subjected to ridicule in public media. A lot of energy was put into to destroying the hero image which was first given to Private Jessica Lynch, one of the first American soldiers captured in Iraq. She finally admitted to not having fought for her life, as it was previously said, but that she had voluntarily given up before she had fired a single shot, the efforts in ridiculing her then having succeeded.

There are numerous women who have worked for peace. Saint Birgitta tried to mediate in the Hundred Years' War by writing to Pope Clemens VI. It was a queen, not a king, Queen Margareta of Denmark who succeeded in uniting Norway, Denmark and Sweden during the 14th century. Fredrika Bremer, Ellen Key, Berta von Suttner and Selma Lagerlöf are examples of women who have worked for peace.

## Why are women needed in conflict and peace discussions?

The term human security is now accepted as a replacement of the previous definition of security based on nation states, or at least seen as an important complement. The definition of human security entails that the threat of insecurity is no longer solely directed at just the combating soldiers. War is now seen to be affecting everyone without distinction, including women. But if women and men do not have the same prerequisites in a peaceful society, it is impossible to ignore the fact that men and women are affected differently during conflict. Women experience aspects of war that men do not experience at all. This must be taken into account in all negotiations and discussions during peace processes or the peace will only be obtained for half the population.

At the same time that women are expected to take care of everything and to transfer nationalism to men's offspring, women have in many other ways been hindered from participating in the nationalist struggle. They have been used as symbols in this issue though. Women in Muslim countries for example have had to wear their veils in the struggle against a secularized regime, or in some opposite cases, have had to take their veils off in the struggle against a conservative regime. They have also been praised for their child bearing in times when children represented great potential: a future combatant or a future care-giver (the first one more applauded). When women on the other hand have wanted to act they have not always been applauded.

Women wanting to participate in nationalist meetings have met strong resistance, often from their own spouses. As women have needed to leave their home at night to be present at nationalist revival meetings, their spouses have tried to say no. This would make them look ridiculous in the eyes of other men. The husband could never have imagined that the nationalist struggle would make him lose control over his own family. Sometimes men have become so desperate that they have abused their wives, making them remain at home. As a consequence nationalist women's movements have seldom integrated gender issues into their work.

While women get an outlet for the oppression they experience at home, men complain over the fact that women no longer care for their 'duties' at home.

More women in peace discussions or in nationalist struggles do not per se entail a gender perspective; sometimes it is not even brought up on the agenda, sometimes it is an unconscious decision not to bring it up. But what can be said with certainty is that women are fully capable of acting as peace negotiators. In the traditional Bougainville-societies in Papua New Guinea, kinship and inheritance are matrilineal, i.e. landownership is defined according to the mother's kinship. But, other than that, women's role within the family is very similar to their role in patrilineal societies; women very seldom have any political power.

Despite this, women in Bougainville used their high status in the family to bring their combating sons home and to negotiate with Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA-groups), an armed separatist movement during the ten year long revolts against the government. Through distribution of food, prayer meetings, reconciliation ceremonies, peace marches and petitions as well as correspondence with the international community, women made headway. Two peace marches where women protested led to the first step towards peace: a weapon free zone for the Selau-people. The first march was against BRA:s blockade that hindered soldiers from the Papua New Guinea defence Force (PNGDF) from distributing medication and the second was held for the two groups to put their weapons down and start peace negotiations. This was in 1991. Soon women became conscious of other women all over Bougainville who all shared experiences of war and all demanded peace. Until the Lincoln Agreement in 1998, women made up a strong, even maybe the strongest, group in the struggle for peace. They would not be satisfied with less than an end to the conflict and complete societal disarmament.

After the peace agreement, when the conflict seemed to be coming to an end, women saw a need for them to be represented in the government and for being included in important political positions. They seemed to have accomplished peace in their own society and they were not about to let go of their power at this point. Women



in different women's groups were informed of the content of the peace agreement and prepared themselves fully to participate in national politics. But their illusions were shattered. When the people's congress in Bougainville was appointed only 6 of the 106 members of congress were women and during a debate it was said that the time was not right for a strong women's representation. The question to be asked would then be: when will the time be right?

Cynthia Cockburn has looked at women's organizations in conflict ridden areas, organizations which have succeeded in bridging ethnic and religious obstacles in the name of peace, examining the actions of women from Northern Ireland, the Balkans and Israel/Palestine, Jewish women co-operating with Muslim women, Catholic with Protestant. Sometimes they have had to let go of some of their issues close to heart in order to continue co-operating. A women's organization in Northern Ireland found that abortion was a topic that was too sensitive, so the issue of abortion was not brought up in the common policy. The common factor between all these women was a mutual will, that together with the 'enemies women' end the conflict and to share their common experiences that their own spouses could become a threat to them.

It can be argued that women have in many ways worked for other aims than only for peace. There are female suicide bombers, women's groups during the Balkan war that blocked humanitarian aid, and women who stoned girls in Belfast. But should women who act in a state of conflict and other vulnerable situations be punished by not having access to the public discourse, when vulnerable and powerless men who do the same things are not punished in the same way?

## UN

In 1966 the UN acknowledged women's and children's unique role as victims in war, twelve years after the Declaration of Human Rights. But in the Security Councils resolution 2200 A, a resolution making women's needs known, they were seen as victims in need of help and protection instead of active participants in the

struggle for a more peaceful world. In 1975 the UN's first Women's Conference took place in Mexico City. This was the first time women were recognized as actors and an action plan for gender equality was adopted. This work led to resolution 3519 in which women were seen as active participants in peace processes and women's organizations were encouraged to intensify their work. United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was created as the UN women's decade started off and three years later, in 1979 the women's convention (CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) was adopted by the UN's General Assembly. Sweden was the first country to ratify the convention in 1981, 19 other countries followed and ratified the convention. During the second United Nations Women's Conference in Copenhagen, the strong connection between women's participation in peace- and security issues and real peace was once again in focus. In Nairobi in 1985, during the third Women's Conference the impossibility of creating peace without respecting women's rights was clarified. During the world conference on human rights eight years later it was pointed out that human rights are also women's rights and the United Nations General Assembly adopted a declaration on the elimination of violence against women. In Beijing, in 1995, the participants in the United Nations fourth Women's Conference focused on twelve areas central to hindering discrimination against women, one of these areas being armed conflict. In 1999 the Security Council adopted resolution 1265 on protection of civilians in armed conflicts. The resolution encouraged a gender perspective and one year later, on October 31st, 2000, resolution 1325 was adopted.

Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security is a document in which the United Nations Security Council expresses its concern about the fact that women and children are among the most vulnerable in conflict situations, that women and children are often targeted by combatants since they know what impact this would have on the peace process in a later stage. In the resolution the UN's Secretary General, the Security Council, the member states and other non-governmental actors are encouraged to intensify their work in four main areas:

- **Increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution and peace processes.** With main focus on women

within the military, but also focusing on women's organizations being consulted and included in peace work. It is important for member states to nominate women to higher political positions, and to actually make it possible for them to achieve these positions.

- **Incorporating gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations and in the training of peacekeepers.** The Secretary General is to provide member states with material for efficient gender training on women's security, human rights, needs and HIV/Aids.
- **Taking special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence.** All actors in conflict situations, but also in peace building stages should adopt a gender perspective in their work; enabling them to identify more easily dangers to women and protect them from gender specific abuses that they would otherwise be subjected to. This is particularly important when drafting the constitution and establishing a judiciary and police system in a post conflict setting.
- **The use of a gender perspective in reporting and in mechanisms of implementation.**

Even if resolution 1325 can be seen as a big step in the right direction, it falls short in its document and in its mechanisms for implementation. The structural problems might be hindering its realization. As opposed to other resolutions which have been adopted by the Security Council, there are, for 1325, no clear mechanisms for follow-up or allocation of responsibility. Most other resolutions have an annual reporting system; however in the case of 1325 the Secretary General did not receive a deadline for the report, and it took two years for it to be completed. Officially, there is no topic on the Security Council's agenda called 'Women, Peace and Security'. Therefore the resolution is morally binding but there are no sanctioning mechanisms if it is not followed.

The lack of political will on the part of some of the United Nations member states is also a major problem. Many do not know of the resolution, while others have actively opposed it, as they feel that

women's issues are soft issues and have nothing to do with hard masculine security politics.

The Security Council itself does not follow its own directives. They do not consult women or women's organizations on a regular basis, nor is the gender perspective integrated in the decisions taken in the congregation.

Therefore women's organizations themselves still take the initiative to inform the different parties in a peace process. Here they often are very active and involved but they are seldom successful in being integrated into the decision-making process.

## European Union (EU)

In 2000, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) reported to the European parliament on women's participation in peace building negotiations. They also started off with accounting for women's vulnerable position during war, considering the frequency of mass rapes and trafficking and that women's rights are frequently absent in negotiations or are simply ignored in peace building processes. The Committee also pointed to the positive results achieved when women during the 1990s started to join the peacekeeping troops; the troops got closer contact with the local population which is important for a sustainable peace process.

To implement a gender perspective in the work for peace, FEMM wants the EU member states to work to implement article 147, clarifying rape, forced pregnancies, sexual slavery and forced sterilization as severe crimes against the Geneva Convention. It would also be important for member states to introduce a gender perspective in all initiatives related to peace and security issues and the Commission should use a gender perspective as a parameter when planning refugee camps. But most importantly, member states should make efforts to recruit more women on all levels of diplomatic conflict management. FEMM goes even further in an attempt to 'demasculinise' conflict management according to the classic dichotomy of masculinity and femininity. "Present conflicts

should rely on non-military conflict solving strategies”: this would indirectly lead to an increase of women’s representation as peace keeping personnel.

FEMM also felt that women’s voices are important to be heard as women’s lives are often associated with non-violence, peace and dialogue. If local women are heard in the process, an alternative, peaceful, non-military way of solving the conflict is offered. Another advantage with women’s participation is that they are raised to be more respectful than men and therefore the proposals and solutions made by women might include more people, independent of ethnicity, religion, sex and also sexuality. Women are also expected to be more respectful of the environment.

The committee’s report was conveyed by Maj Britt Theorin almost six years ago but for a long time it was just a ghost in the EU’s archives. But on June 1st, 2006 Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and European Neighborhood Policy, assured her audience that the Commission was determined to keep its commitment to resolution 1325. She disclosed that the Commission had taken a double approach in implementing the resolution, partly through the mainstreaming of gender in all policies and programs, partly through giving economic back-up to projects aiming for the advancement of women.

As Ferrero-Waldner pointed out peace keeping personnel are given gender training which makes it possible to look towards the future with hope that ‘Women’s Issues’ within the EU will be respected.

## Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

*“The full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. We are committed to making equality between men and women an integral part of our policies, both at the level of our States and within the Organization”*  
(Charter for European Security, Istanbul 1999)

The OSCE are, in other words, willing to implement Security Council resolution 1325 in their policy. In a report from the conference on women, peace and security which was held in June 2005, the OSCE points out how violent conflicts are more common in countries with a lower rate of women's representation and higher rate of gender based violence than in 'gender equal' countries. A prolonged peace and security process is not possible without women's participation.

The OSCE works with gender equality in different projects. For example the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) worked in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia with a gender panel composed of activists from different women's organizations active in the region. With the expert panel, women from different countries could teach each other to spread the message that 'women's issues' can not be separated from common policies and issues of human rights. The panel also organized projects to increase women's economic participation through entrepreneurship-encouraging activities and micro credits (smaller loans with no interest rate or very low interest rate to help and encourage people to start investing). The international perspective gives panel members the opportunity to exchange national policy documents with each other and discuss the effects of national legislation. The results have been incredibly positive. In Uzbekistan an increase in women representation in parliament from 8% to 18% was noticed and this was largely a consequence of the panel's work.

## On a national level

Five countries have adopted national action plans to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325, four of which are European: Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The fifth country is Canada.

### **The Swedish National Action Plan**

During the summer of 2006, Sweden released an action plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325. The action plan points

at how the government's work with the resolution rests on an all-compassing vision on security, development and human rights. Therefore resolution 1325 is both an objective in itself, and a means to reach the objectives Sweden has set up for its security, development, and defense and gender equality politics.

Sweden has, since the adoption of the resolution 1325, established a special working group under the Department for Foreign Affairs to implement the resolution. The group will initiate a number of projects, but also gain approval for the national action plan. The action plan points out the following as already having taken place:

- The Armed Forces have started a more conscious commitment to increasing the share of women doing their military service and share of officers that can participate in international deployments. Together with the Swedish Rescue Services they are working with the project Gender Force to integrate a gender perspective in international activities.
- The National Police, the Swedish International Co-operation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy have all made a commitment to gender in their international work.
- A special code of conduct has been prepared for staff in international efforts. Sweden has been a driving force in the implementation of the code and resolution 1325 in the European security and defense politics within OSCE and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
- Strengthening of women's participation, security and protection have been given a great deal of attention in Sweden's work with conflict resolution in Africa. It has been given attention both for Sweden's overall politics and in individual countries, for example Sudan.
- Together with South Africa, Sweden is co-chairing in the global initiative Partners for Gender Justice.

### **The British National Action Plan**

In 2006 the British National Action Plan was presented. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defense and Department for International Development, along with other Government

departments, worked together to produce the document. The National Action Plan links humanitarian, conflict, defense and diplomacy work, all of which are important to conflict resolution and peace building. It is said to demonstrate the commitment of the UK government as a whole to this important work. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Ministry of Defense (MOD), Department of International Development (DFID), and other Government departments are all equal stakeholders in the development of the Action Plan which covers, amongst other action points:

- Ensuring that gender perspectives are included in all Security Councils mandates for peacekeeping and peace building operations;
- Ensuring that planning for UN Peace Support Operations includes gender components;
- Continuing to deploy UK female military and police personnel in peace support operations;
- Auditing of UK armed forces PSO training to ensure that it deals adequately with the areas covered by UN Security Council resolution 1325; and
- Including programming on women's issues in strategies under the Africa and Global Conflict Prevention Pools; for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the UK supports the electoral commission and women's organizations in developing a shared strategy and action plans to ensure women's full participation in the elections as voters, potential leaders, civic educators and election observers.

## WILPF

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was founded in April 1915, in The Hague, the Netherlands, by some 1300 women from Europe and North America, from countries at war against each other and neutral ones, who came together in a Congress of Women to protest the killing and destruction of the war then raging in Europe. WILPF was founded as an internatio-



nal organization to work globally, with its branches in individual countries and towns. Its aims and objectives were and still are “to bring together women of different political views and philosophical and religious backgrounds determined to study and make known the causes of war and work for a permanent peace”. We are not a federation of national organizations or bringing together national affiliates. Two of our founding members, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, both US citizens, received the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1931 and 1946 respectively for their peace efforts.

During the 1980’s women from the Swedish section of WILPF initiated the Great Peace Journey, a project aiming at creating dialogue between civil society and power holders within the member states of the UN. During the journey, representatives from the countries’ governments were asked five questions on their willingness to engage for a more peaceful world: 91 of the asked countries replied yes on all the questions. The results were delivered in July of 1989 to the UN’s Secretary General.

PeaceWomen.org is a project run by the WILPF United Nations Office, in New York City. The PeaceWomen Project monitors and works toward rapid and full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. To meet these ends, PeaceWomen hosts [Peacewomen.org](http://Peacewomen.org), a website that provides accurate and timely information on women, peace and security issues and women’s peace-building initiatives in areas of armed conflict.

PeaceWomen collaborates with UNIFEM through a web partnership on their Women, War and Peace Web Portal. It is coordinating a 1325 Translation Initiative which includes compiling existing translations and calling for new translations of Resolution 1325. Peace Woman is monitoring, advocating and providing recommendations to UN policy processes through our partnerships; exchanging views and strategizing best practices and collaboration on Resolution 1325 implementation processes with civil society, governments and UN officials as well as academics.

# Conclusion

Women and men are victims of war. Women and men are actors in war. It is neither testosterone nor estrogen that causes misery and poverty. It is not the biological drive within the conquering male that up to date has caused billions of war related deaths.

In this publication, the mechanisms behind warfare have been described, how war affects and is affected by the relationship between the heterosexual male and the heterosexual female; the implications of this also affect homosexuals.

But primarily we are not attacking individual males. On the contrary, there are many men around the world both struggling for peace and disarmament and the implementation and realization of resolution 1325. Individual women are, equally, by definition not necessarily peace loving feminists.

What we have tried to put focus on throughout this text is the dichotomy between masculinity and femininity and how this dichotomy is traceable outside of the private sphere. You will find it at the negotiation tables of foreign politics and on the mined battle fields.

A lot remains to be done for a peaceful and gender-equal world. Sweden, the EU, the OSCE and the UN, as you have read above have some understandings of this issue. But much more is required. All individual nations are required to understand the knowledge and experiences that civil society can give them and to see those women that actually possess the competence to uphold the responsibility they could be given through UN Security Council resolution 1325.

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## World Wide Web

WILPF: [www.wilpf.int.ch](http://www.wilpf.int.ch)

The PeaceWomen project: [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)

UN: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

Conciliation Resources: [www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org)

EU: [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)

OSCE: [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Manchurian Candidate is a 1959 thriller novel written by Richard Condon, later adapted into films in 1962 and 2004. The central concept of the book and the subsequent 1962 film is that the son of a prominent political family has been brainwashed into becoming an unwilling assassin for the Communist Party; in the 2004 version, the villain was instead a giant corporation called "Manchurian Global".

<sup>2</sup> Nineteen Eighty-four is a film based on the famous novell written by George Orwell. Directed by Michael Radford and starring John Hurt, Richard Burton and Suzanna Hamilton. The basic plot of the film is after The Atomic War the world is divided into three states. London is the capital of Oceania, ruled by a party who has total control over all its citizens. Winston Smith is one of the bureaucrats, rewriting history in one of the departments. One day he commits the crime of falling in love with Julia. They try to escape Big Brother's listening and viewing devices

<sup>3</sup> Pulp Fiction is an Academy Award-winning 1994 film directed by Quentin Tarantino, who co-wrote the screenplay with Roger Avary. Starring Samuel L. Jackson, John Travolta, Uma Thurman and Bruce Willis. Essentially a black comedy directed in a highly stylized manner and employing many pop culture references, Pulp Fiction joins the intersecting storylines of Los Angeles gangsters, fringe characters, petty thieves and a mysterious briefcase. In keeping with Quentin Tarantino's directorial trademark of nonlinear story telling, Pulp Fiction is written out of sequence, telling several stories concurrently that intersect as the film progresses

<sup>4</sup> Natural Born Killers is a 1994 satirical movie directed by Oliver Stone and starring Juliette Lewis and Woody Harrelson. The original screenplay for the movie was written by Quentin Tarantino and later revised by Stone, Richard Rutowski, and David Veloz. The film intends to highlight the sensationalised way crimes are depicted in the media and the way some killers have been glamorized by the media. Ironically, however, the film was criticized for its excessively graphic and violent content.







Internationella Kvinnoförbundet för Fred och Frihet, IKFF, is the Swedish section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WILPF, whose aim is to contribute to the creation of a global common security. WILPF was established in Hague 1915 and has sections in 40 countries in all over the world. In Sweden the organisation has 1000 members divided into 10 branches around the country.