

Situating Gender in a Postnational Military

An Analysis of Changing Gender Attitudes in Peacekeeping
Operations

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations and sees how the centre constructs its own identity to align with the discourse of postnational defense, and how it evaluates NATO's peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan. Through this, the thesis aims to analyse the hegemonic struggle between the discourses of traditional military structure and the cosmopolitan postnational defense. The thesis identifies several points of contestation, including the themes of peace & conflict, and gender internally as well as externally in the organization. Through a feminist poststructural perspective, this study argues that while there has been some superficial and contemporary changes that may appear as a right way towards equality, there is a risk that the underlying structures in the military organizations that has been analyzed has not changed as much. Rather, the increase in women in the armed forces and the deployment of what is seen as traditional feminine traits are strategic and of value to the operation, that may very well vanish as conflicts and the way peacekeeping operations are structured change. The hegemonic struggle between the two discourses is seen in this result, as any attempts to change the fundamental identity of armed forces are met with resistance and an unwillingness to change.

Keywords: NCGM, SCR 1325, WPS, peacekeeping, security, Afghanistan, ISAF, NATO, conflict, gender

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Acronyms

ALP	Afghan Local Police Force
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AOG	Armed Opposition Groups
AU	African Union
BI-SCD 40-1	Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1
CST	Cultural Support Team
EU	European Union
FET	Female Engagement Team
FOI	Totalförsvarets Forskningsinstitut
GENAD	Gender Advisors
GFA	Gender Field Advisor
GFP	Gender Focal Point
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MET	Mixed Engagement Teams
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCGM	Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan
SWEDINT	Swedish Armed Forces International Center
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Research Question and Purpose	1
1.2	Disposition	3
2	Theory	4
2.1	Peacebuilding/Postnational Defense	4
2.2	Critical Security Studies	7
2.2.1	Human Security	7
2.2.2	Feminist Security Studies	8
2.3	Masculinity/Femininity	10
2.3.1	Masculinity Within Military	10
2.3.2	Femininity Within Military	12
3	Methodology	14
3.1	Poststructuralism and Poststructuralist Feminism.....	14
3.2	Discourse Analysis	16
3.2.1	Discourse Theory	16
3.2.2	Lene Hansen’s Discursive Framework	17
3.2.3	Laura Shepherd and Feminist Discourse Analysis.....	18
3.3	Material	19
3.3.1	Interview.....	20
3.4	Researchers Position	20
4	Background	22
4.1	Evolution of peacekeeping missions	22
4.2	Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda	24
4.3	Gender Advisors.....	26
5	Analysis.....	27
5.1	Themes	27
5.1.1	Peace and Conflict.....	27
5.1.2	External Gender.....	34

5.1.3	Internal Gender.....	37
5.2	Discussion	41
6	Conclusion	45
7	References.....	47

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Question and Purpose

This thesis aims to examine how the shift in discourse has impacted gender in the organization that will be researched. The thesis specifically looks at the NATO-led ISAF operation in Afghanistan through the work of NCGM to identify this shift in discourse, but also to identify the position of gender within the organization and operation. I argue that there is currently a hegemonic struggle between a traditional, state-centric military institution and that of the more cosmopolitan postnational defense, and that this struggle can be observed by looking at how a gender perspective is implemented in national military institutions and peacebuilding operations.

The thesis will be limited to looking at the Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), a center run by the Swedish Armed Forces and works with implementing a gender perspective in armed forces and peacebuilding operations all over the world. This thesis focuses on NCGMs involvement in the ISAF force and operations in Afghanistan, but also how its own identity is constructed and presented.

By examining how the NCGM presents itself, as well as how it works with and evaluates the ISAF and NATO in extension, it will be possible to deconstruct certain discourses and reveal how the struggling hegemonies treat gender, if the move towards a more cosmopolitan tradition indeed does break down gender barriers and move towards a genuine gender equality, or if the older gender constructions remain but is now deployed in the field.

The main research question for the thesis is as follows:

How is the hegemonic struggle between traditional military structures and postnational defense visible in NCGMs self-representation and its evaluation of NATO's peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan?

Additional questions will help guide this thesis in the right path to answer the stated research question above. I want to look at postnational defense and how it shows itself in major peacebuilding operations the international community has partaken in.

How is the topic of gender situated in the hegemonic struggle between state-centric military and postnational defense?

How is the ISAF operation in Afghanistan framed, and how do they relate gender to other justifications for taking action?

What other areas besides gender is contested? On the topic of gender, the thesis will look at how gender is seen internally as well as externally. How is it seen and treated within the organization, and how it is used in, for example, Afghanistan and the Afghan society? Are gender roles questioned and broken down along with the shift to a postnational defense, or do they remain unchallenged but instead strategically deployed?

The thesis is based in a poststructuralist perspective, and will be theoretically and methodologically shaped accordingly.

Postnational defense is used extensively in the analysis, since it represents and justifies one of the main discourses being examined. The theory argues that military institutions are moving away from old, state-centric structures where the military defends the nation or attacks another state, and instead moves into a more cosmopolitan state of mind, where the soldier gets a wider and more diverse role as a peacebuilder. State armies become defenders of not only the nation state, but also humanity at large, as they are deployed in other parts of the world and are expected to defend fellow humans that are not part of their nation.

Theories on masculinity and femininity, and especially their presence and their expression within the military are an essential part of the thesis as it plays a part in the later analysis.

The methodology used in this thesis will be that of a discourse analysis, in the shape of Discourse Theory. The framework presented by Lene Hansen in her book "*Security as Practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian War*"¹ will provide some additional guidelines and content to the execution of the analysis. Laura Shepherd provides additional guidelines and inspiration on how to perform a feminist discourse analysis where gender is involved and under the lens with her book "*Gender, Violence & Security*"².

Furthermore, a gender advisor that works at the NCGM has been interviewed, and will be used as material for the discourse analysis. Other material includes a welcome letter in a the NCGM course guide that describes the NCGM and its values and goals, and a report cowritten by NCGM regarding the progress of implementing UNSCR1325 in NATO operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo. In this thesis, the part of the report regarding Kosovo has not been included in the analysis.

¹ Hansen, Lene, 2006, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*

² Shepherd, Laura, 2008, *Gender, Violence and Security: Discourse as Practice*

1.2 Disposition

This thesis will be divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 will present the theories used in the analysis, including the theory behind the discourse of postnational defense.

The presentation of postnational defense will be tied to the wider discussion on human security and the wider security concept, as well as cosmopolitanism and peacebuilding. The discourse of the traditional military structure will be represented by the concept militarism.

A discussion on masculinity and femininity specifically in the military will follow acting as an introduction to the position gender takes in the hegemonic antagonism between the traditional military structure and postnational defense.

The methodology chapter will further introduce the ontological, epistemological, and methodological standpoints this thesis takes, and will present the way in which the analysis will be shaped and performed in order to answer the research question. The position and reflexivity of the author will be presented here.

A presentation of Poststructuralism and discourse theory will be the main points of the chapter. In this section, the frameworks of Lene Hansen and Laura Shepherd will be presented in order to give further substance to the discursive analysis. Their contributions are chosen in order to provide practical tools for how to perform the discourse analysis and look at the texts.

The material will be shortly presented and discussed, what kind of material that has been chosen and the context around the choice are the points of discussion.

In chapter 4, relevant backgrounds are presented, including the evolution of peacebuilding/peacekeeping and the presence of gender perspective in NATO. This presents the background regarding the two discourses that are being analyzed later on. UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions that are included in the WPS agenda are presented. One way the resolutions have been implemented is in the form of gender advisors that will be introduced and shortly discussed.

Chapter 5 will use the theories and methodology presented and analyzes the chosen texts according to discourse theory. The analysis will be divided up in several themes that represent nodal points that are all present in the texts and play an important part in the two discourses. Following that is a discussion on the readings done on the texts and will be out in a larger context of the discursive antagonism that can be observed between the two discourses. The implementation of UNSCR1325 and the WPS agenda within NATO and its operations will also be discussed, in the context of the analysis and the points made there.

The final chapter concludes the thesis with a summary and conclusion of the questions raised in the introduction and points made throughout the thesis.

2 Theory

This chapter will present the theoretical framework that the thesis will rely on. The theory of postnational defense will be presented in detail, as it will be used extensively in the analysis as one of the competing discourses analyzed in the discourse analysis.

Critical security theories will discuss the concept of human security and feminist security studies. These theories are important in both the discourse of postnational defense and cosmopolitanism, and in the research that constitute the basis for this thesis.

Discussions of masculinity and femininity, both in general and more specifically in the military, will finish off this chapter. These discussions will further present the gender situation in traditional military structures in order to set the tone for the discussion in the analysis.

2.1 Peacebuilding/Postnational Defense

Since the end of Cold War, and in particular after the start of the war on terror, armed forces of states and intergovernmental organizations have seen the need to change their structure and purpose. The importance of a standing army that guards the national borders against other conventional armies is no longer the clear alternative.

The need of a national armed force is not diminished; it has just moved its borders beyond the geographical boundaries of the nation state. Cosmopolitan ideas have become increasingly influential in the international community, and there is a vision of collective responsibility for creating and maintaining global peace. Armed forces are restructuring to take on the role of not just a defender/invader of states, but instead the multifaceted role of peacebuilder³.

These cosmopolitan military operations are justified by the international community and are tasked with upholding human rights; they are considered “forces for good”⁴ that not only protect their own population, but instead mainly other people. Peacebuilders become not protectors and defenders of their nation, but instead protectors and defenders of humanity at large. Cosmopolitan values

³ Kronsell, Annica, 2012, *Gender, Sex, and the Postnational Defense: Militarism and Peacekeeping*, p. 70 ff

⁴ Bergman-Rosamond, Annika, 2011, *The Cosmopolitan-Communitarian divide and the Swedish Military*, p. 57 ff.

include a solidarity and care towards your own population and group, as well as to the global community. It aims to transcend nation borders and group identities. The idea of universal human rights and the existence of the UN are examples of this⁵.

Peacebuilding troops must be prepared to tackle varied assignments, as they have to be trained for both combat and peacemaking. The use of violence that should be deployed is something that needs to be considered carefully. Using violence to create peace is not an uncontroversial concept, and the distinction between being a peacebuilding force and that of a foreign invading one is not always clear.

The more diverse role of a peacebuilder does not mean that the threat is decreased for the deployed troops. Despite the general feeling of demilitarization of their role and profession, there is still an inherent risk to be in a conflict zone, and the role of the peacebuilder does not exclude the use of force⁶.

Kronsell writes that “*the focus is on human security and human rights, and this requires constant political judgment in the face of violence*”⁷. When and where should violence be used by peacekeeping forces? The accountability for these troops is seemingly at a much higher level. A famous example is the massacre of Srebrenica, where Dutch peacekeeping troops did not intervene to protect 8000 men as they were killed, as their mandate were strictly to use violence in self-defense⁸. A similar case happened in Rwanda, where the UN did little to prevent the genocide that happened in 1994, but instead decreased the presence of UN troops in the area and tasked them with evacuating foreigners⁹. The logistics around some of the peacekeeping operations where international forces are involved have been heavily burdened by complicated chains of command, mandates and organizational problems¹⁰.

The idea of postnational defense is closely linked to the widening of the security concept. As the ideas of Human Security and Responsibility to Protect gains in influence, there is a perceived need for military structures and traditions to change in order to properly accommodate the increasingly diverse tasks they are assigned to¹¹. This is met with resistance from the organization and from the troops. The soldiers that are deployed are still soldiers, and have trained for that role, the role of fighter and actor of violence.

The shift to postnational defense structures can be seen by moderate to small nations as a chance to increase their international reputation as well as their power and influence. It also becomes a reason for state militaries to remain relevant¹².

⁵ DeGroot, Gerard J. 2001, *A Few Good Women: Gender Stereotypes, The Military and Peacekeeping*, p. 33

⁶ Kronsell, 2012, p. 78

⁷ Kronsell, 2012, p. 77

⁸ Kaldor, Mary, 1999, *Nya och Gamla Krig: Organiserat Våld Under Globaliseringens Era*, p. 128

⁹ Whitworth, Sandra, 2004, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*, p. 33-34

¹⁰ Whitworth, 2004, p. 24

¹¹ Kronsell, 2012, p. 4

¹² Whitworth, 2004, p. 34-35

For some countries it is a source of financial and logistic aid as they provide troops to missions and get compensation and experience for it. It is a chance for nations to rebrand themselves and participate on the global stage more than before. For some states, participation in peacekeeping becomes a central pillar in the national identity, reinforcing the images of a nation as selfless and caring, even internationally towards other states and people that are not citizens¹³.

For some military organizations, peacekeeping operations become the only available option for them to train soldiers in the field and provide the organization with experience¹⁴.

As peacekeeping has gained importance in the international security agenda, the UN is no longer the sole actor in the matters. Other interstate organizations such as the EU or the AU have peacekeeping forces as well that they are prepared to deploy should the need arise.

With cosmopolitan ideals, an important obstacle for the armed forces to adapt to a postnational defense is the democratization of the organization. Traditionally, military organizations were extremely hierarchical structures with very little democratic values imbued in the structure¹⁵. With postnational defense, that needs to change as it needs to represent and promote cosmopolitan values during missions. If the organization itself does not partake in those values, it cannot act as a good representative of said values. The armed forces as representatives must reflect the values they are promoting and they need to reflect the society they represent. Some say this change is not taking into consideration the operational efficiency of the military and that by adopting these new values and restructure the organization; they put lives at risk and decrease the effectiveness of the operations, while at the same time betraying the tradition of the organization.

Postnational defense can also take form as liberal peacebuilding, a collection of ideas and theories regarding peacebuilding that share the notion that promoting liberal democracy and a market economy in the institution building process is the most effective way of building a stable and sustainable peace¹⁶. The argument supporters for liberal peace make is that liberal democratic countries are more peaceful and do not go into war or armed conflict as often as states that practice other systems. Liberal democracies with a market economy become more integrated in the international community and have a better relation with other nations, decreasing the risks of conflict¹⁷.

In the book written by Newman, Paris, and Richmond, postnational defense is mentioned under another name, as a post-Westphalian approach¹⁸. This is described as an approach that argues the need for a “*multifaceted approach, with*

¹³ Kronsell, 2012, p. 73

¹⁴ Kronsell, 2012, p. 74

¹⁵ Kronsell, 2012, p. 82

¹⁶ Newman, Edward; Paris, Roland; Richmond, Oliver, P. 2009, *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding*

¹⁷ Newman, Paris, Richmond, 2009 p.11

¹⁸ Newman, Paris, Richmond, 2009 p.7

attention to a wide range of social, economic and institutional needs”¹⁹. This is the same concept as the postnational, just under a slightly different name.

2.2 Critical Security Studies

2.2.1 Human Security

The concept of human security disagrees with the state-centric approach that puts the nation state as the main concern to make secure. The concept shifts focus to the individuals that make up the state, and on the individual security of the population²⁰. It is also not limited to security within conflict, but has expanded to incorporate such as natural disasters and other crisis that is not caused by warring parties²¹

Human security is a part of the larger field of critical security studies where security is not limited to only military and interstate, but also include several other causes for insecurity for individuals²². What threat and source of insecurity should be focused on is a matter of debate, with some focusing on different forms of violence and protecting people from oppressive governments. Other forms of insecurity are derivative of violence, which is the root of the problem²³. Others have a broader perspective and argue that everything that causes insecurity should be addressed. They further argue that there is value in inclusion, and that is worth the possible criticism of begin vague and not rigorous enough²⁴.

It connects conflict and development studies, and makes the argument that it is all interrelated, and not isolated events that can be treated separately²⁵. As conflicts in the post-cold war period has for the most part been intrastate conflicts in developing nations²⁶.

The concept includes any source of insecurity that can have a negative effect on the society and peoples lives. The term originated in a UNDP report in 1994 which identifies seven insecurity factors that should be focused on; economic, food, health, environment, personal, community, and political security²⁷.

Human security has also influenced the creation of Responsibility to Protect, where the international community has agreed that it is their responsibility to

¹⁹ Newman, Paris, Richmond, 2009 p.7

²⁰ Kerr, Pauline, 2010, *Human Security*, p. 122

²¹ Thakur, Ramesh, 2006, *The United Nations, Peace and Security*, p. 72

²² Kerr, 2010, p. 124

²³ Kerr, 2010, p. 124

²⁴ Thakur, 2006, p. 80-82

²⁵ Kerr, 2010, p. 122

²⁶ Kerr, 2010, p. 122-123

²⁷ Thakur, 2006, p. 72-73

protect the world's populations from insecurity and violence, even from their own governments²⁸. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions, and the International Criminal Court are all sharing the same motivations as Human Security, to protect vulnerable groups from persecution, violence and insecurity, and increase stability and welfare to people's lives²⁹.

2.2.2 Feminist Security Studies

Gender has been getting significant amount of attention and space in contemporary peace and conflict studies, where researchers analyze and evaluate any activities related to the topic with gender lenses. The idea is that there is plenty to gain by applying and including gender in any processes, both in peace and in conflict. With the widening of the security concept, gender and feminist theory has had a prominent role in critical security theory.

Criticism against previous established security and conflict theories that they were too state-centric and even outdated when it came to certain contemporary conflicts were accompanied with criticism from feminist researchers, that argues that the established theories were highly gendered to align with masculine ideas and ignores or downplays the struggles women and other marginalized groups experience, while blaming other groups and making already marginalized groups the enemy³⁰. The established theories and notions on the topic of peace and conflict, and International Relations at large, have historically missed any gender perspective and have been dominated by white men, meaning that their world view has affected and shaped the theories they have created and worked on³¹. Feminist scholars argue that gender perspectives and feminist theories can compliment them well and make for a more inclusive and diverse academic field, while also producing more inclusive theories that reflect reality and the communities affected in a better and more complete way.

Laura Sjoberg argues in her article³² that feminist critiques can contribute to renew the established theories and update them in order to be relevant and reflect the contemporary world and the current conflicts.

She explains the method of feminist gender based-critique of said theories as looking through gendered lenses to identify any gendered subordination and ways to address them. She gives an example of her article as "*a feminist critique of the just war tradition, then, looks for locations for gender subordination within the foundations of just war theory, and then uses gender as a category of analysis to search for emancipatory alternatives*"³³.

²⁸ Kerr, 2010, p. 123

²⁹ Kerr, 2010, p. 123

³⁰ Peterson, Spike V; Runyan, Anne Sisson, 2010, *Global Gender Issues in the New Millennium*, p. 151

³¹ Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 148

³² Sjoberg, Laura, 2008, *Why Just War Needs Feminist Now More Than Ever*, p. 5

³³ Sjoberg, 2008, p. 5

One of the major points of criticism is that women have historically been categorized as innocent victims that are unable to perform violence and are at the same time made into symbols for the nation or the group, a prize to be won or conquered³⁴. This notion of “beautiful souls” strips women of any agency in conflict and international relations and despite the idea that women should be protected at all costs, women are instead among those that suffer the most from conflict, whether from abuse and sexual violence, or from the need to escape and flee as a refugee.

Men on the other hand are seen as “just warriors” whose purpose is to perform violence in order to defend the nation and protect women³⁵. They are disregarded as victims and seen only as perpetrators, and those who do not conform to the militarized hypermasculine identity is shamed and rejected.

By having a homogenous group which is involved in the decision making process and in the academic field related to it, it disregards the perspectives of the other groups that are affected differently and makes their struggles invisible. It contributes to the idea that male and masculine experiences are the norm, while others are the outliers³⁶.

Annika Björkdahl writes about gender-just peace, and how liberal democratic peace and its gender dynamics need to be confronted³⁷, and that by applying a gender perspective in peacebuilding, there can be significant gains to be had. This ties in with the need for increased participation for women in the political processes in conflicts. A gender-just peace is a positive peace that not only includes women in the peacebuilding process, but also a peace that changes the former structures of power so that women are no longer confined to the private sphere, but have agency and equal opportunities at participation³⁸. Gender-just peace can further the argument that what is done now in international peacekeeping operations is not enough in terms of including a gender perspective. Adopting resolutions such as 1325 can only get you so far if they are not implemented by all participating countries. The liberal peacebuilding concept is flawed and cannot become the unchallenged norm. Implementing gender in peacebuilding is just one part of filling in the ‘peace gaps’ and creating a self-sustaining peace, but it is a significant part of it. By having the goal of creating a just peace with focus on gender, hopefully it will help in reveal the gender bias that exists in the current peacebuilding and political system, a bias that paints women as the only gender and as victims without agency.

Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan draw a parallel to Poststructuralism and claim to be of the view that security is not something that can be fully estab-

³⁴ Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 146

³⁵ Sjoberg, 2008, p. 4

³⁶ Sjoberg, 2008, p. 6

³⁷ Björkdahl, Annika, 2012, *A Gender-Just Peace? Exploring the Post-Dayton Peace Process in Bosnia*, p. 286

³⁸ Björkdahl, 2012, p. 287

lished and pinned down, but is always “elusive and partial”³⁹. Any possible absolute security would be achieved with violence and conflict, fueling an eternal cycle of conflict to achieve peace and security.

2.3 Masculinity/Femininity

This section will be vital in the analysis, since the different identities and the perceptions of them in the military organization is a clear indicator of which discourse is the strongest. They are also the strongest indicators at how gender within the organization is treated.

Below, masculinity and femininity specifically in the military will be presented problematized. How women are being received in the organization, and what and how are the identities built upon, as well as highlighting the masculine ideals that has previously been normalized to the point of near invisibility will be the content of this section.

2.3.1 Masculinity Within Military

Military organizations have historically been governed by men and have been central locations for the development of what is called ‘hegemonic masculinity’⁴⁰. Certain ideals and values have been heavily promoted while other values have been repressed and vilified. Heterosexuality and masculinity have been made the norm, and even compulsory in historical and contemporary cases, while anything deviating from this norm is looked down upon and made ‘the other’⁴¹.

Because of the very central role military organizations have played in nation states over history, the masculine norm developed in the military becomes normative in general society in a sense that it creates an ideal and cater to masculine fantasies, despite existing in a special and distant reality compared to an average civilian male⁴².

As a hegemonic masculinity dominates military organizations, men and their gender and sexuality are silenced and made invisible. Heterosexual masculinity is not seen as gender or sexuality, but as the norm which everything else deviates from⁴³. As will be shown in later chapters of this thesis, the topic of gender is regarded as a woman issue, and something that should be applied to others, not the self. For example, as Annica Kronsell writes in her book⁴⁴, there is not a distinc-

³⁹ Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 149

⁴⁰ Kronsell, 2012, p. 44

⁴¹ DeGroot, 2001, p. 34

⁴² Kronsell, 2012, p. 45

⁴³ Connell, R.W; Messerschmidt, James W. 2005, *Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept*, p. 832

⁴⁴ Kronsell, 2012, p. 46

tion between female and male soldiers, but instead female soldiers and simply soldiers. The introduction of female soldiers was seen as disruptive by many as it was challenging the cohesion based on hegemonic masculinity. As women joined, it forced the gender and the norms of the organization to become visible by contrast⁴⁵.

The reinforcement of heterosexuality is a big part of the hegemonic masculinity prevalent in the military, as it aims any sexuality outwards from the organization at the same time as any relations within have been strongly discouraged. This was believed to enhance cohesion and effectiveness⁴⁶. As sexuality is aimed outwards, it supports the 'Othering' of groups outside of the own military. When the presence of women in the military challenged the heterosexual and masculine norm by being in 'masculine spaces' and performing 'masculine tasks', men used sex and sexuality to reassert the masculine hegemony and their position within the organization⁴⁷. It also challenged the 'homosociality'⁴⁸ of the military as it was no longer the case that the group was as homogenous in terms of gender and sexuality. The homosociality in place makes it very difficult for women to join the group as there is a historic bias against them from the very start that is institutionalized and ingrained in the very organization⁴⁹.

The role of the peacebuilder and the cosmopolitan military organization is transforming the armed forces and are therefore countering some of the traditional masculine creations of identity. The more diverse role the soldier is meant to inhabit includes several traits that are considered feminine, including communicating more with locals, being in a supporting role, and in general not focusing so much on the perpetration on violence⁵⁰. The military has always been a bastion of hegemonic masculinity, and a very strong influence on the rest of society. When that source falters, men may feel an identity crisis as they cannot perform the necessary actions to maintain their masculine identity⁵¹.

⁴⁵ Kronsell, 2012, p. 49

⁴⁶ Kronsell, 2012, p. 56

⁴⁷ Connell, Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 844

⁴⁸ Kronsell, 2012, p. 59

⁴⁹ Kronsell, 2012, p. 59

⁵⁰ Kronsell, 2012, p. 82

⁵¹ DeGroot, 2001, p. 35

2.3.2 Femininity Within Military

Women have historically been shut out of military organizations as active members. They have instead been allowed to act as supporting staff that inhabits 'traditional feminine' values such as healthcare, cooking, cleaning, logistics etc⁵².

As men joined the army they have historically gained certain value in society, such as citizenship and agency while women have not gotten access to those and have therefore been unable to gain such rights⁵³. Instead they have traditionally been cast in the role of the victim, whom male soldiers are supposed to protect and fight for. This division is still in place in many military organizations in present time where women are restricted to certain positions within the organization⁵⁴.

Once women were allowed to join military organizations, it was usually on the terms of the organization based on their need, not on actual notions of equality⁵⁵, for example when there has been a lack of qualified manpower within a certain field, or that women are allowed to join but only in certain positions and are then given more leeway or on a voluntary basis.

Despite attempts to recruit more women and increase gender diversity, the numbers have been consistently low, as there is still resistance from the organization to the change that creates a hostile and very difficult environment to work in⁵⁶.

When women that Kronsell wrote about joined the armed forces, they felt the resistance and reluctance to fully accept them, as femininity and women were still considered deviant from the norm and made an 'Other'. Faced with this resistance from the hegemonic norms, some tried to change it and resist the norms, while others accepted it and adapted to the situation⁵⁷. That women have to adapt their own identity and femininity to make themselves acceptable to men in the organization further shows that there is a bias against non-masculine traits and identities.

Women are not allowed to be too feminine, but still feminine enough to differ themselves from men. Hegemonic masculinity also incorporates sexuality, and is heavily reliant on heterosexuality as the norm in its construction. Women that are too feminine are classified as sex objects or too weak, and are not taken seriously⁵⁸. They are blamed for their sexuality and seen as dangers to the cohesion of the group. Women that are too masculine threaten the hegemony as well as they disrupt the gender dichotomy by crossing boundaries and even challenge hetero-

⁵² DeGroot, 2001, p. 23-24

⁵³ Kronsell, 2012, p. 45

⁵⁴ Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 156

⁵⁵ Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 156

⁵⁶ Kronsell, 2012, p. 48

⁵⁷ Kronsell, 2012, p. 49

⁵⁸ Haaland, Torunn Laugen, 2012, *Friendly War-Fighters and Invisible Women*, p. 83

sexual norms as the sexualized female body clashes with masculine traits⁵⁹. Balancing their femininity is a difficult task for female soldiers. This balanced femininity is required in order to construct the masculinity, and by showing traits of either too much or not enough femininity, women are blamed for disrupting the masculine identity as well⁶⁰. The pressure to balance their femininity is not only external from male soldiers and officers, but it is also internalized. Many women serving in the military do not express any feminist ideals as they have other reasons for joining, or because they support the conservative traditions of the organization⁶¹.

The perceived threat of women in the armed forces against unit cohesion and the bonding deemed necessary for better combat readiness or morale has been a widely used argument against opening up the organization to include all genders and sexualities. Homosociality and its perks were argued to only be available to heterosexual men⁶² and vital to the organization in general. Women's bodies become distractions, and awaken the male need to protect, and other arguments rise from this, putting the sole blame on the woman and the other, instead of the norms of the organization⁶³.

There has been research done that opposes the idea that the homosociality in the form of heterosexual men is most effective and that the inclusion of women are detrimental to the overall effectiveness of the military organization. Quite the opposite, as the attitude towards the initiation to the group that can include harassment and bullying affects it even more negatively⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 157

⁶⁰ Kronsell, 2012, p. 50

⁶¹ DeGroot, 2001, p. 29

⁶² Kronsell, 2012, p. 59

⁶³ Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 154

⁶⁴ Kronsell, 2012, p. 61

3 Methodology

This chapter will present the methodological tools that will be utilized to perform an analysis of the topic. The presentation of Poststructuralism will be how to perform research and analyze texts in accordance with the concept, and the chosen approach for the discourse analysis, in the form of discourse theory, will be presented. Discourse analysis with a discourse approach will be presented after, as it has close ties with poststructuralist thought. As discourse theory in large is aimed towards theory production, it will be supplemented with Lene Hansen's post-structural framework for discourse analysis. That will be presented in the discourse section.

The methodology of interview are presented next, and more in detail in the immediate context of this thesis. The material used in the discourse analysis is then presented briefly, and a short discussion of the thesis's analytical strategy will end the chapter.

3.1 Poststructuralism and Poststructuralist Feminism

The thesis will be using Poststructuralism as a framework that guides the choices of theories and methods, and shapes the analysis.

There is no completely unified definition of what Poststructuralism actually is and what its ideas encompasses, as the theory does not deal with absolutes and fixed meaning in words⁶⁵. Although, generally poststructuralism argues that there is no fixed, essential identity for subjects⁶⁶. Rather, subjectivity (and the subject) is constantly formed and transformed in relation to the reproduction of the social and how subjects engage with discourse.

Language is a key component in poststructuralist thought. It represents how subjectivity and identity forming can behave in established structures. Through the use of language, things are imbued meaning. Things do not have meaning before they are named, and do not have inherent qualities before being identified. So it is a matter of naming and producing things, instead of labeling already existing things⁶⁷. By naming and producing things, they are positioned in a power structure, and nothing can exist outside of these power structures.

⁶⁵ Kelemen, Mihaela L; Rumens, Nick, 2008 *An Introduction to Critical Management Research*, p. 85

⁶⁶ Hansen, Lene, 2015, *Ontologies, Epistemologies, Methodologies*, p. 21

⁶⁷

Regarding gender, poststructuralists subscribe to the idea of gender as being performative, instead of it being biological with essential values. Gender is seen as a discursive effect, and therefore depend on its context and position in a network of power⁶⁸. No subjects can exist outside of these networks of power, which has been made invisible through the use of dichotomies and competing discourses. In the case of gender, the masculinity that is represented by straight white cis-male norm is made the standard and made invisible. Instead the opposite, the feminine, is focused upon and constantly put in the spotlight. When discussing race or sexuality or gender, the hegemonic 'norm' is always invisible, and instead mace equals people of colour, sexuality is LGBTQ+, and gender is about women and femininity. But the categories in the dichotomies are still reliant on each other to exist, despite having an unequal status and value. Femininity is defined as everything masculinity is not. The hegemony needs an outsider to define itself against in order to exist.

The military structure, even the postnational one that is described by Annica Kronsell, are inherently masculine structures. This has been taken for granted and become such a powerful hegemonic stance that stretches across history and geography. By uncovering the inherent masculinity, specifically the masculinity found in the military, and look at several other dichotomies that are positioned in the militaristic power structure, it is possible to analyze how gender is constructed both within the peacebuilding forces, but also how they contribute to gender construction in the society affected by conflict.

In poststructuralist thought, as identity and policy are inherently linked together through discourse, where neither exists without the other, but is produced and reproduced from one another, looking for a causal connection is meaningless. The ruling epistemology is instead that knowledge is confined to a particular context that is historically and politically situated⁶⁹.

Poststructuralist analysis should instead be focused on, for example, looking at how texts construct acceptable knowledge⁷⁰ and what discourses lies behind it. As language is inherently social and political, and that through language things are imbued meaning. The act of naming things is a productive one, and not simply a matter of labeling. Inscribing meaning is constructed through the act of structuring two dimensions of it, one that is, and one that is not. The first dimension is privileged and offers a set of qualities that are preferable and gives the sign further meaning. The other dimension is oppositional, and is considered the opposite of the privileged sign. It is needed to further identify and give meaning to the privileged sign. It is identified on what it is not.

⁶⁸ Kelemen, Rumens, 2008, p. 92

⁶⁹ Hansen, 2006, p. 10

⁷⁰ Hansen, 2006, p. 8

3.2 Discourse Analysis

3.2.1 Discourse Theory

A discourse analysis through a discourse theory approach will allow this thesis to study the clash between the two discourses of traditional military institutions and that of the post-national defense, and their struggle for hegemonic status.

Discursive theory subscribes to the same idea as poststructuralism in that discourse is never closed and defined, but is in an ever changing state. Different discourses compete for a hegemonic status through a discursive struggle⁷¹.

The same thing applies with *signs*. Signs are given meaning through differentiation and in relation to each other, and these relations are in constant motion and therefore give signs different meanings as language is used⁷². A discourse analysis is the process of mapping out the constant attempts to give these signs a fixed meaning in particular relation to each other⁷³. Some attempts succeed to such a length that the fixation of a particular meaning becomes almost natural and made invisible.

Jørgensen and Phillips define discourse as “the fixation of meaning within a particular domain”⁷⁴ and the signs within it are *moments*. Some moments are *nodal points*, a privileged sign which other signs form their meaning around. *Elements* are signs that have not become fixed, or that have several meanings⁷⁵. Discourse aims to transform elements into moments by reducing the number of potential meanings until it becomes fixed⁷⁶. The different meanings that are excluded belong to the *field of discursivity*, everything that the discourse and its moments are not.

The discourse creates closure, a temporary fixed meaning of signs that are usually ever changing. It is temporary because the transformation of elements into fixed moments are never completely finalized. The discourse is always open to be transformed and weakened by the field of discursivity⁷⁷. A floating signifier is a element that is particularly difficult to reduce to a fixed meaning. They are actively fought over by competing discourses. The act of giving signs meaning is called *articulation* and it is what binds the different signs to discourses.

⁷¹ Jørgensen, Marianne; Phillips, Louise, 2002, *Discourse analysis as Theory and Method*, p. 6

⁷² Jørgensen, Phillips, 2002, p. 25

⁷³ Jørgensen, Phillips, 2002, p. 25-26

⁷⁴ Jørgensen, Phillips, 2002, p. 26

⁷⁵ Laclau, Ernesto; Mouffe, Chantal, 1985, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 91

⁷⁶ Jørgensen, Phillips, 2002, p. 27-28

⁷⁷ Jørgensen, Phillips, 2002, p. 28

Discourse theory suggests looking at articulations to see what meanings are included and excluded, and what discourses they draw on and reproduce⁷⁸ The nodal points are of particular interest in discourse analysis, as they can also be elements and floating signifiers.

By identifying key signifiers (nodal points), one can examine how a discourse is organized.

3.2.2 Lene Hansen's Discursive Framework

Lene Hansen provides a more practical framework for using discourse theory in an actual text analysis. Laclau and Mouffe present their ideas as more theory crafting and development and it could be argued that they do not provide enough practical tools for conducting a complete discourse analysis⁷⁹.

Hansen is a Poststructuralist scholar and her employment of discourse theory is closely tied to language as constitutive and inherently social. Through the use of language we construct reality and give things meaning⁸⁰. The structure that is language has in turn been developed over time and within its own context, and is not above being discursively affected by changes. Language is also political as it can be used to actively promote some identities and ideas, while excluding others. Meaning is established through linking and differentiating, while at the same time valuing some elements above others.

The discursive epistemology presented in Hansens book "*Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*" is informed by the assumption that identity is both constitutive of, and a product of policy, and how these identities and policies are articulated in discourse⁸¹. Language does not need to be spoken or written down, but includes everything that can be coded and read, including non-verbal language and other material objects. Hansen's recent work, for example, centers on iconic photographs⁸². She further states that identity needs to be articulated through language in order to have any meaning and significance, and rejects the idea of a pre-social identity⁸³. The ontological and epistemological positions described by Hansen are closely tied to the stances taken and described by discourse theory and Poststructuralism. By having these clearly stated standpoints, they can act as a starting point from which to move onward with the analysis.

Hansen writes a great deal on intertextuality and its importance in discourse analysis, as texts, similar to signs, in discourse are connected and relational to each other. No text is written in a vacuum, but has either explicit or implicit refer-

⁷⁸ Jørgensen, Phillips, 2002, p. 29-30

⁷⁹ Jørgensen, Phillips, 2002, p. 24

⁸⁰ Hansen, 2006, p. 18

⁸¹ Hansen, 2006, p. 23

⁸² Hansen, Lene, 2014, *How Images Make World Politics: International Icons and the Case of Abu Ghraib*

⁸³ Hansen, 2006, p. 24

ences to other texts that came before a particular text⁸⁴. Any intertextuality can be seen as a exchange of legitimacy, as older texts gain their legitimacy from being referenced and having their ideas reproduced, and new texts gain legitimacy from the act of referencing the old, trusted texts⁸⁵.

Hansen presents several intertextual models, each with different analytical focus, objects of analysis and goal of analysis. The model used in this thesis has the analytical focus on political leaders and others that have the authority to change and implement official policy, such as heads of state and governments, senior civil servants and high ranked military, or heads of international institutions⁸⁶.

The goal is to investigate constructions of identity within discourse and how intertextual links stabilizes it, as well as how the official discourse encounters criticism.

3.2.3 Laura Shepherd and Feminist Discourse Analysis

Shepherd's contribution is relevant and included in this thesis because it offers a practical implementation on how to perform a analysis of gender-related issues in accordance with feminist poststructuralism and discourse theory. The analytical strategies chapter in her book is presented in an accessible way that run in accordance with this thesis, and can therefore act as a fine example on how to read and analyze the material.

Ahead of the analysis, Shepherd described her stance as deconstructive in accordance with Derrida⁸⁷ and that deconstruction is a result of the analytical strategies used on the texts.

Laura Shepherd describes the analytical strategy for her analysis and mentions three strategies in particular. First a 'double reading' is done on the chosen text, in which the first reading is descriptive in nature and is meant to determine the meaning of the text and accepts what is said at face value, where the reader "*submits to the prescribed limits of the discursive terrain, accepting the hierarchical organization of the texts around the implicitly unproblematic presence of the nodal points*"⁸⁸. The second reading is done in a discursive-theoretical spirit and allows the reader to see the text in an intertextual and dialogic perspective that highlights the importance to see the text as a historical product, and not something that exists in a vacuum⁸⁹.

Shepherd goes on to explain how the first reading is dedicated to finding linguistic structures that organizes the text⁹⁰. Some of these are nodal points/master signifiers. By identifying the nodal points in the text, and overall in the discourse,

⁸⁴ Hansen, 2006, p. 56

⁸⁵ Hansen, 2006, p. 57

⁸⁶ Hansen, 2006, p. 60, 64

⁸⁷ Shepherd, 2008, p. 26

⁸⁸ Shepherd, 2008, p. 28

⁸⁹ Shepherd, 2008, p. 28

⁹⁰ Shepherd, 2008, p. 30

it allows the researcher to see how the discourse is constructed and to reveal the inherent antagonisms hidden in the discourses⁹¹. The nodal points “[conceal] the lack around which the social order is constituted, the antagonism at its heart”⁹². That is the second strategy, to identify and analyze nodal points.

The second reading is dedicated to investigating articulation of subjects and objects as a way to give things, people and identities meaning and representation⁹³, which is also the third strategy. These articulations are relational and are positioned against on another and in relation to each other, much like described above by Laclau and Mouffe. The articulations are not only relational here and now, but also temporally as the subjects are built on previous representations. By analyzing the articulation of subjects and objects it is also possible to see how they are used to change elements and moments within the discourses that they reproduce⁹⁴.

3.3 Material

The material that will be analyzed in the chapters below are taken from publications from NCGM, publications that are unclassified and available for the public through their websites or on request, as well as an interview with a Gender Advisor at the NCGM.

The texts are chosen to be as varied in purpose as possible, ranging from introduction letters in a course catalogue to an extensive review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the NATO operations in Afghanistan, to a description of the center aimed at the public audience. The texts are varied in their target audience, to get a sense of the purpose of implementing a gender perspective, if it is a genuine attempt or if it only to appear to change and follow the times.

The first text is an introduction letter written by the Commander of NCGM, Commander Jan Dunmurray. The text was printed in the SWEDINT⁹⁵ & Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations course catalogue 2016-2017, along with several other introduction letters written by various commanders of different branches and sections within SWEDINT⁹⁶.

The second text is a report written by NCGM and FOI (Totalförsvarets Forskningsinstitut) on the request from NATO, to review the practical implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in

⁹¹ Shepherd, 2008, p. 29

⁹² Edkins, 2002, p. 72, quoted in Shepherd, 2008, p. 29

⁹³ Shepherd, 2008, p. 30

⁹⁴ Shepherd, 2008, p. 31

⁹⁵ Swedish Armed Forces International Center

⁹⁶ Swedish Armed Forces International Center & Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, 2016, *Course Catalogue 2016-2017*, available at <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/siteassets/english/swedint/engelska/swedint/swedint-course-catalogue-2016-2017.pdf> (2016-08-14)

Afghanistan and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Kosovo⁹⁷. The report was published in 2013, and in this thesis focus will lie on the the chapter on ISAF/Afghanistan. The limitation is due to restriction of time and space, and the NATO presence in Afghanistan is present in other texts as well, most prominently the interview. So to keep the thesis focused and structured, the review of KFOR is not included.

3.3.1 Interview

An interview was conducted with a Gender Advisor at NCGM (Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations) in Stockholm. The interview is an in-depth, semi-structured in nature and touch upon the work the NCGM is doing, as well as the training of Gender Advisors and any experiences from the field that the individual can tell. The interview will be discursively analyzed along with the other chosen texts, but will also have a supplementary function to the other material.

The interview follows the guidance rules set by the Science Council (Vetenskapsrådet)⁹⁸ and the interviewee is anonymous and made aware that the recording and information about the person will not be available to anyone else. She also was informed about the project and her right to stop the interview whenever. She gave consent to being recorded and how the interview is used in this thesis.

As a first-hand source, the interviewee was able to discuss more practically and freely about the work of the gender center and the implementation of gender in the ISAF force in Afghanistan.

3.4 Researchers Position

As this thesis use feminist theory and research method to perform analysis of the topic, it is vital to include a discussion of reflexivity and the position of the researcher.

Feminist research ethic highlights the act of producing knowledge, and that it reinforces the construction of our reality. Because of this, the researcher has to be aware of their own position and actions when conducting research and producing knowledge⁹⁹.

As a Swedish male, I have a certain perception of the world and the topics raised in this thesis. For example, on the topic of military organizations, I as a Swedish citizen have been raised with a Swedish perspective and have a perspec-

⁹⁷ Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations & Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2013, *Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conflict of NATO-led Operations and Missions*

⁹⁸ Vetenskapsrådet, 2002, *Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samällsvetenskaplig forskning*

⁹⁹ Ackerly, Brooke; True, Jacqui, 2008, *Reflexivity in Practice: Power and Ethics in Feminist Research on International Relations*, p. 695 ff.

tive of armed forces that has been constructed by the Swedish Armed Forces. I have also not been a part of a military organization and lack a first-hand perspective of any identities and behaviors within such a group.

As a man I have a different perspective of armed forces and military operations, as until quite recently I was expected to do basic training and undergo a common experience for all eligible men in Sweden. Since I was a child military and institutions that have monopoly on violence has been glorified and catered to me to gain my interest and fascination.

With a topic that is so gendered as armed forces and conflict, perspectives differ wildly depending on the researcher. I as a heterosexual white male would not have met the same resistance within a military organization for my gender, sexuality or ethnicity. What I can do is to highlight people and researchers that can and do have first-hand experience with the matters, or that have done extensive research on the matter. Of course, these authors and experts have their own perspectives and are not representative of a single experience women or other marginalized groups have in military organizations.

4 Background

This chapter will shortly present the empirical background for the context in which the discourse analysis will take place. It will present and discuss the evolution of international peacekeeping operations, as well as the context of the analysis, which include NATO and its work on gender, the Swedish armed forces and the position of Gender Advisors and NCGM. UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda will also be presented as it forms a basis of which other countries and international organizations are using to work towards.

The peacekeeping concept will be framed in the work the UN has done during the 20th and 21st century. Likewise, the work towards mainstreaming gender perspective is framed within the UN. Although, as NATO is quite prevalent in the texts being analyzed in this thesis, the organizations work with gender will also be presented in this chapter.

The position of gender advisors might be unfamiliar to most, so it and the NCGM (Nordic Center for Gender in Military operations) will be presented and contextualized ahead of the analysis.

4.1 Evolution of peacekeeping missions

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall has divided Peacekeeping operations into three generations, starting in 1956 and ending with contemporary conflicts¹⁰⁰.

The first UN peacekeeping mission was in 1956 with the intervention in the Suez crisis. The multinational force positioned itself between the two fighting forces and created a buffer between them, preventing them from engaging in conflict¹⁰¹. The intervention from the UN was based on consent from the warring parties and the use of minimum use of force¹⁰². This first generation peacekeeping forces served to monitor agreements and were for the most part involved in interstate conflicts.

During the Cold War in the later half of the 20th century peacekeeping missions were a novelty, not something that was widely deployed but was seen as an interesting and innovative concept¹⁰³. The conflict between the two superpowers

¹⁰⁰ Ramsbotham, Oliver; Woodhouse, Tom; Miall, Hugh, 2011, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, p. 148 ff.

¹⁰¹ Whitworth, 2004, p. 12

¹⁰² Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, 2011, p. 149

¹⁰³ Whitworth, 2004, p. 11

prevented any widespread deployment of peacekeeping missions as any attempts that would interfere with either ones political plans would be vetoed in the Security Council.

As the Cold War ended, peacekeeping missions became more popular as the international community had great hopes of a more peaceful and unified world under the UN. The peacekeeping missions became more frequent and evolved to incorporate more diverse tasks, such as providing humanitarian aid and monitor elections. This is described as the second generation of peacekeeping¹⁰⁴. The peacekeeping project became more and more ambitious as the number of operations across the world increased along with the number of states willing to contribute with troops and other personnel. These operations faced many problems which they were unable to handle. Several tragedies under UN flag such as the genocide in Rwanda, Srebrenica in Bosnia and the intervention in Somalia created doubts that UN would be able to contain and keep the peace of conflicts anymore.¹⁰⁵

The third generation that Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall describe is less clearly defined than the previous ones. Contemporary conflicts are seemingly more complicated, with a less clear pre- and post-ceasefire period and several actors that are involved for various reasons, and for some where maintaining a conflict is actually beneficial. More peacekeeping missions are no longer strictly under UN control, to instead be mounted by regional interstate organizations, such as the African Union, the EU, or NATO¹⁰⁶. One conflict zone may be the target of several different missions from several different organizations¹⁰⁷.

NATO has implemented UNSCR 1325, and has a history with what Wright calls “femocrats”, individuals that on their own act to further the gender issue and promote equality policies within the NATO structure¹⁰⁸. These individuals were vital in furthering the equality agenda and bringing it to attention to the organization as a whole. Gender has been on the agenda since 1961 for NATO, with conferences and creation of posts specifically for supporting the work for further participation and inclusion of women¹⁰⁹.

Wright writes that the femocrats works within a resistant organization, and that despite some progress being made, such as the implementation of SCR1325 and the appointment of high-level posts, there are still some unbalanced gender divisions within the organization. The top level positions are dominantly male, and women are delegated to mainly administrative and civilian roles¹¹⁰. Femocrats

¹⁰⁴ Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, 2011, p. 149

¹⁰⁵ Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, 2011, p. 151

¹⁰⁶ Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, 2011, p. 155

¹⁰⁷ Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, 2011, p. 156

¹⁰⁸ Wright, Katharine, 2016, *NATO's adoption of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*, p. 353

¹⁰⁹ Wright, 2016, p. 353-354

¹¹⁰ Wright, 2016, p. 352

also lack support as gender was seen as a ‘personal’ or a women’s issue and not prioritized¹¹¹.

NATO has created a directive in order to implement UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda into its military structure, that is called the Bi-Strategic Command Directive (BI-SCD) 40-1¹¹². The directive recognizes the gender disparity in how conflict affects victims, and that gender dimensions are an important part in creating a sustainable peace¹¹³. It also recognizes that including women and a gender dimension in its military operations, an added value and increased operational effectiveness can be found¹¹⁴. It covers mainly education and training, and implementation.

4.2 Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

UN SCR 1325 was passed in 2000, along with a number of related resolutions. The general aims of the resolution is to increase protection, participation, and prevention¹¹⁵.

A special focus is put on those that are most vulnerably in conflicts, namely civilian women and children. Gender-based violence, such as sexual assaults and domestic violence during and after conflict is especially focused upon, as well as the use of rape as a weapon of war during conflict¹¹⁶.

Increased participation of women in all relevant institutions is encouraged in this resolution, but first and foremost the increased participation of women in peace talks and subsequent post-conflict rebuilding of society. By including all parts of society in the peacebuilding process, a more sustainable and self-sufficient peace can be produced¹¹⁷.

This also ties in with prevention, as by including all parts of society leads to a more positive and sustainable peace, meaning that it will be less likely for conflict to break out in that region again. By training more personnel in human rights-related issues and encouraging organizing and monitoring within those issues, hopes are that conflict can be intercepted at a very early stage and can be resolved before turning violent.

SCR1325 was the first of several resolutions that directly touches upon women’s position in conflicts. The goal of implementing a global gender main-

¹¹¹ Wright, 2016, p. 354

¹¹² NATO, 2009, Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1

¹¹³ NATO, 2009, BI-SCD 40-1, p. 3

¹¹⁴ Wright, 2016, p. 357

¹¹⁵ Un security council resolutions on women peace and security summary for military, p. typ 3?

¹¹⁶ Bergman-Rosamond, Annika, 2014, *Women, Peace and Security*, p. 18

¹¹⁷ UNSC Res 1325, 2000

streaming process in all peacekeeping actions was signed unanimously by all member states¹¹⁸. Together they are put under the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS).

Resolution 1820 was adopted in 2008 and focused specifically on the widely used strategy of sexual violence against women in conflicts¹¹⁹. The resolution recognizes that civilians are the majority of those affected by war and conflict, and that women and girls suffer from gendered violence in the form of sexual violence, which is recognized as a tactic of war that is wielded as a weapon against the population¹²⁰. It further reiterates the need for further participation and inclusion of women in the efforts for peace and security¹²¹.

This was later strengthened in 2009 with resolution 1888 that reaffirmed and acknowledged the issue, and again with resolution 1889¹²², that focused on the post-conflict and peacebuilding. It reaffirmed the need for member states to implement resolution 1325.

UNSCR 1960 introduced tools to prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity, genocide and other war crimes committed against civilians¹²³, including sexual violence. With this, a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence was appointed¹²⁴.

In 2013, resolution 2106 reaffirms the content of the previous resolutions and provides more details and reminds member states on their obligations to implement adopted resolutions¹²⁵. It also pointed out the importance for men to be involved in the process as well, and not relegating women to be peacebuilders, as well as recognizing men and boys as possible victims of sexual violence¹²⁶.

UNSCR 2122 reiterated all the previous resolutions and called the international community to increase women's participation and power in conflict resolution processes¹²⁷. It widened the security concept by referencing previous resolutions and the importance of offering further services to women post-conflict, such as health, legal, and livelihood services to women affected by conflict¹²⁸.

¹¹⁸ Carey, Henry, 2001, 'Women and Peace and Security': *The Politics of Implementing Gender Sensitivity Norms in Peacekeeping*, p. 50

¹¹⁹ Shepherd, Laura J, 2011, *Sex, Security and Superhero(in)es: From 1325 to 1820 and Beyond*, p. 507

¹²⁰ UNSC Res 1820, 2008

¹²¹ Shepherd, 2011, p. 507

¹²² UN, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/wps.shtml> (2016-08-13)

¹²³ UNSC Res 1960, 2010

¹²⁴ Bergman-Rosamond, 2014, p. 22

¹²⁵ UNSC Res 2106, 2013

¹²⁶ Bergman-Rosamond, 2014, p. 23

¹²⁷ UNSC Res 2122, 2013

¹²⁸ Bergman-Rosamond, 2014, p. 23

4.3 Gender Advisors

Gender Advisors are a product of the need and want from the international community and to implement a gender perspective into military operations. They are to raise awareness and highlight how the actions of the military force have an affect on the local community and how that differs depending on gender. They are also working to increase participation and equality in a post-conflict society according to SCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, as well as increasing equality and participation within the organizations.

Gender advisors are present at different capacities on the different levels of the operational structure.

GENADs (Gender Advisors) are present at the Headquarter both during peacetime and during conflict. They should be able to communicate directly with decision makers through the command group. They also maintain direct contact with other GENADS and gender advisors at different operational levels¹²⁹.

Gender Field Advisors (GFA) are deployed directly in the field of operations. They report directly to the commander and serves as a support in implementing gender in all stages of planning and executing operations¹³⁰.

Gender Focal Points (GFP) further supports the commander in implementing gender perspectives in daily operations. Unlike other Gender Advisors, they report within the chain of command¹³¹.

These different types of gender advisors makes sure that a gender perspective is implemented in the operations their peacebuilding force executes. It can be to plan a patrol route trough a female-only space so that the patrol either includes female soldiers or avoid that space all-together¹³², or to finding new and previously unavailable intel by focusing on interacting with local women on their terms¹³³, or to have gender training with local security forces to change their behaviour in the field to a more gender-aware one that follows international protocols and human rights¹³⁴.

In this thesis, gender advisors will be used a blanket term for all of the above.

¹²⁹ Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, 2015, *Whose Security? Practical Examples of Gender Perspectives in Military Operations 2015*, Available at <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/siteassets/english/swedint/engelska/swedint/nordic-centre-for-gender-in-military-operations/whose-security-2015-low-resolution.pdf> (2016-08-14), P. 11

¹³⁰ NCGM, 2015, p. 11

¹³¹ NCGM, 2015, p. 11

¹³² NCGM, 2015, p. 15

¹³³ NCGM, 2015, p. 32, 36

¹³⁴ NCGM, 2015, p. 52, 57

5 Analysis

5.1 Themes

The analysis is done through identifying three themes that act as nodal points within the discourses. The three were chosen after a first reading of the texts, and are identified as central in both the traditional military structure discourse, as well as the postnational defense discourse. By looking at these, it should be possible to highlight the current discursive struggle.

The themes are Peace and Conflict, Internal Gender, and External Gender. The Peace and Conflict theme identifies articulations that show the shift and hegemonic struggle between the discourses outside of gender. The theme of Internal Gender focuses on gender within the own organization, within NATO, ISAF, and NCGM. External Gender is how gender is deployed and viewed in relation to those outside the organization. How does the organizations work with gender so that it applies to the local communities, the peace processes etc.

These three are chosen because the two discourses have very specific ideas of what meaning goes into them. They are highly contested and are very politically charged when articulated. The Peace and Conflict theme is chosen because they constitute major concepts within security and conflict. They are also points of major changes between traditional military structure and postnational defense. A change in structures are argued to be necessary because there has been a change in the nature of contemporary conflicts, seen in the idea of new and old wars by Mary Kaldor.

5.1.1 Peace and Conflict

Peace and Conflict are two rather obvious Nodal Points in the discourses of military structure and postnational defense, as they are the whole reason of existence for both of them. The very purpose of any military force is to manage conflicts. How that should be done and what this 'conflict' actually entails is where the discourses differ. It is via 'Conflict' that many signs position themselves within military discourses. Although the goal of peace is the same for both military discourses, the position of the nodal point is much more central for the postnational defense. Military forces are sent on peacekeeping or peacebuilding missions, and

capacity building after the end of violence has room on the center stage. Postnational defense directly links sustainable and long-term peace with gender and increased equality while traditional military structure does not in the same capacity. The two Nodal Points intermingle more in the postnational discourse, as focus is not only on the act of violence and conflict, but also post-conflict and implementing a more long-term presence and state-building, and soldiers take on the role as peacekeepers and peacebuilders.

In the introduction letter written by Commander Jan Dunmurray, a reference to ‘Modern conflicts’ is made in the very beginning.

*“Modern conflicts are changing rapidly and security forces experience a considerable challenge trying to assist in building a secure and democratic state, founded on sustainable peace”*¹³⁵.

It is presented as something that is ever changing and difficult for armed forces to pin down and adapt at the same rate. It implies that there has been a significant change compared to previous, more traditional conflicts that armed forces had adapted to manage. In the same text the Commander links security forces with the task of building democratic states and creating sustainable peace.

This can be seen as a step away from the traditional military structures that have not been in the business of institution and capacity building to the same extent as what is required of them now.

The peacebuilding process and the ability to strengthen it by increased participation and the actions of military operations is made clear through several repetitions of the military’s capacity to protect people and give them the opportunity to take part in the peacebuilding processes¹³⁶. When peace is mentioned it is accompanied with discursive markers such as “long-lasting” and/or “sustainable”. By clarifying itself, it excludes non-long-term or unsustainable peace. This in turn makes intertextual references to established academic terms that has specific meanings and ideas. The terms themselves have a reassuring sound that suggests a longer and more involved commitment that does not only involve reaching an end to violence. The terms carry with them a meaning that involve more than military might, but also assistance to civil society and institution building.

The report from NCGM regarding the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in NATO-led missions include many articulations on peace and conflict that suggest that the report is written from the perspective of a wider security agenda that includes postnational defense, human security and cosmopolitan ideas. As the report describes it, the ISAF mission and mandate was more than just maintaining security until the Afghan forces were able to take over the responsibility, it was also included capacity building in the form of training Afghan police and security forces as well as institution building in the form of overseeing democratic elections and lowering the corruption rate in government in order to increase the rule

¹³⁵ NCGM, 2016, p. 5

¹³⁶ NCGM, 2016, p. 5

of law and governmental influence across the country¹³⁷. The NTM-A, The NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, are involved in implementing gender and human rights perspectives in the Afghan Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. The positions of gender advisors that are stationed there are “*in charge of promoting the UNSCR 1325 agenda and of building the Ministries’ institutional capacity as enablers of gender mainstreaming*”¹³⁸. Later in the report capacity building in these ministries are specifically articulated, but does not go into detail about the circumstances¹³⁹.

The described positions are typical for capacity building and promoting human rights and a gender perspective. Capacity building in peacebuilding is a clear indicator of liberal peacebuilding, where the strengthening of state institutions and promoting liberal democratic and market economy is considered to be the best way to achieve a sustainable and long-lasting peace¹⁴⁰. Capacity building of state institutions lead to stronger state, which in turn creates better opportunities for a stable peace and further development.

As the report describes the background behind the ISAF forces and the operations in Afghanistan, only one sentence was dedicated to the US-led invasion after the attacks on 11/9 2001. The rest of the text is dedicated to the subsequent process of capacity and peacebuilding. The central role Afghans themselves play in the rebuilding process is clearly stated and the text positions NATO and other international actors in a supporting role, to be present and contribute with security and training until the country can take over the tasks safely¹⁴¹.

The international involvement in the reconstruction was a “*responsibility to providing security and law and order throughout the country*”¹⁴², the mandate was expanded through UN resolutions, “*participants welcomed the Afghan government’s stated goal that the ANSF¹⁴³ would take the lead (...)*”¹⁴⁴, and “*the Afghan Government and the international community endorsed the plan for the transition*”¹⁴⁵. It is not presented as a military operation, but as a democratic process where the military presence is just one part of it. It can be argued that this focus on cooperation and consent from the Afghan government and the framing of a democratic process is indicative of the multi-faceted nature of the operation, where the military part is not the only part present. It is an international operation with several countries and organizations present and active in the goal to help build a sustainable peace and future for Afghanistan.

¹³⁷ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 30

¹³⁸ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 36

¹³⁹ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 40

¹⁴⁰ Newman, Paris, Richmond, 2009 p.7-8

¹⁴¹ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 30

¹⁴² NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 30

¹⁴³ ANSF = Afghan National Security Forces

¹⁴⁴ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 30

¹⁴⁵ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 30

“Sustainable peace” is linked with joint operations with international and Afghan forces against armed opposition groups, but also in the context of “*improved governance and development in order to protect the Afghan people and provide a secure environment for sustainable peace*”¹⁴⁶. The combination of practice of violence against the enemy as well as in the support of institutions showcases the increased diversity of the role of the armed forces being deployed in peacekeeping missions. The clustering of the various roles implies a need for all of them, the military as well as the capacity building ones. It is all needed to create this secure environment for sustainable peace that is described by the report.

When the conflict is mentioned it is described as armed opposition groups opposing the government and “*the international presence*”¹⁴⁷. The opposition the Afghan government and ISAF is facing are labeled as “*armed opposition groups (AOG)*”¹⁴⁸, making it difficult to conduct official peace negotiations, as there is no unified opposition that can represent all groups. But further sources of insecurity is described in the “conflict analysis” section of the report, strongly showing that the report writes from a wide security concept and the transformation of contemporary conflicts. The sources of insecurity presented are also “*local conflicts, weak rule of law, organized crime and a high level of corruption*”¹⁴⁹. These points of insecurity matches Kaldors identification of a “new war” closely¹⁵⁰. The report writes that “*several factors that are not directly linked to the insurgency are missing, and must be included in order to understand the threats that the population is facing*”¹⁵¹.

Any attempts at increasing female participation and providing women with increased freedom and mobility has been met with violent resistance in Afghanistan, and the report brings this up as a factor for conflict¹⁵². It positions the ISAF and the Afghan government on one side as proponents and defends of women and freedom against the armed opposition groups that are against equality and giving women more political and social rights and freedoms. Together the factors brought up shows a wider definition of security that is related to human security and cosmopolitan values. The report states that just seeing the insurgency and the armed opposition groups as the sources and actors for conflict is to show only a partial picture of the situation in Afghanistan. There are more problems that needs attention in order to build a stable and long-lasting peace, as there is more to it than just the end of violence. More factors for insecurity includes poverty and a lack of employment opportunities, and to address the aforementioned is a “key factor”¹⁵³. This is very much outside of traditional military roles, to combat

¹⁴⁶ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 35

¹⁴⁷ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 31

¹⁴⁸ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 31

¹⁴⁹ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 31

¹⁵⁰ Kaldor, 1999, p. 9-10

¹⁵¹ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 31

¹⁵² NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 32

¹⁵³ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 33

insecurity by focusing on employment opportunities and organized crime and corruption. Though they are still key factors to create a stable peace, and the report felt it was necessary to include them in their analysis, which further shows the presence of support for human security.

The report writes that its findings report that ISAF have not worked properly with ensuring the security of the Afghan population, and urge the need of a careful analysis of the situation in order to rectify the problem.

*“Afghan respondents expressed their view that the efforts of ISAF have done little to increase the security of the population (...) in any substantial way. However, they did say that ISAF’s presence is important for protecting the Afghan government and its institutions”*¹⁵⁴.

This suggests that despite attempts presented earlier, the international security forces still has problem with fully implementing the human security aspect and the wide concept of peacekeeping. Prioritizing the stability of governmental institutions are one way to achieve a stable peace, but the population are still feeling the insecurity. By bringing this up in the report, there is some sense of self-reflection and awareness of this issue. The articulations also showcase very well the difference between the discourses relevant to this thesis, the traditional state-centric military, and the more population-centric and human security-aware postnational discourse.

They further write that ISAF has failed in understanding the local context, and have missed opportunities in finding alternate ways to handle the conflict¹⁵⁵. By bringing up the importance of understanding the local context and the inclusion of women, the report are representing the standpoint of the postnational discourse and the ideas of human security and cosmopolitanism. The criticism is aimed towards the handling of the conflict and the issues in a traditional and militaristic way, which has caused harm to the population and the failure to ensure protection and safety to others besides the capital and the governmental institutions.

As the report says, despite the rhetoric and proclamations that the peacebuilding mission is supporting human security and the Afghan people, it seems that it has failed in that mission and is instead heavily state-centric and is exercising a peacebuilding in the liberal vein. Although postnational peacebuilding can also very much be in the style of liberal peacebuilding, the articulations in this report shows that it may not be the appropriate way to go in terms of peacebuilding, as the insecurities that fuel the conflict has not been dealt with. With the focus on training security forces, combating corruption and focusing on maintaining security in the area around the capital, the general population still faces insecurity of varying kinds. This is evident in the fact that while ISAF and allies are celebrating the Afghan Local Police (ALP) as a success, it has been pointed out by Afghans themselves to be drivers of conflicts and perpetrators of numerous violations

¹⁵⁴ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 45

¹⁵⁵ NCGM, FOI, 2013, P. 46

against the population¹⁵⁶. The report identifies the ALP as “*drivers of conflict*” and refers to the insecurity Afghans report to feel. It further references reports from Human Rights Watch and UNAMA to gain intertextual legitimacy¹⁵⁷. By referring to an established human rights organization and an organization within the UN, the claim gains legitimacy from both civil society and policy level.

Finally, the review writes that many of its interviewees expressed the idea that Afghanistan was “stuck in a previous era”¹⁵⁸, insinuating either that the peacebuilding mission is a lost cause, or that the international presence is a necessity to modernize. The reports further writes that “*that viewpoint rests on the unstated assumption that development towards modernity is an inevitable force that will eventually transform all nations in a similar fashion and in more or less the same sequence*”¹⁵⁹. The linear progress that the report describes is considered to end with liberal democratic states, and the comments that Afghanistan is stuck in a previous era can be interpreted to mean that western liberal democracies have a responsibility to go in and “save them from themselves”. The responsibility that is argued to exist when discussing international interventions can easily be interpreted as western attempts at neocolonialism and a way to spread their ideologies and shape the world in its own image. The report replies to the comment that there is no certain or given way to progress, and certainly not any correct way to progress.

The interview with the gender advisor confirmed what has been mentioned in the other text. This theme connects with the previous one of conflict in many occasions as the role of the military and peace/peacekeeping are inherently linked.

One must be prepared to change and adapt along with the changes in conflict and warfare. Not only has it changed over a longer period of time from the beginning and middle of the 20th century with the world wars, but also in recent years. A coworker of the gender advisor described how the interoperability between military, police, and civil society has become closer than ever;

*“I did some of those courses back in 2009 and I did the same courses in 2015, what I noticed in 2009 and 2015 is that the civilian and military, and police component, are a lot closer together”*¹⁶⁰.

The gender advisor further described how the distinction between peace and war was not as clear anymore, and that the different stages overlap, hence the need for further cooperation between different groups; “*Now we see really that, because a war is not going through those phases and say this is where the military goes out and the peace comes in, that’s not the case anymore, they’re overlapping, they’re working together*”¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁶ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 33

¹⁵⁷ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 33

¹⁵⁸ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 49

¹⁵⁹ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 49

¹⁶⁰ interview

¹⁶¹ interview

The colleague of the gender advisor brought up the phrase ‘Do No Harm’ that is very prevalent within the organization. Instead of trying to help in the best capacity based on your own preconceived ideas of right and wrong, you instead need a more local connection. Because otherwise there is a risk that you are doing more damage than good, regardless of your intentions. This phrase is already academically established by for example Mary Anderson¹⁶². This intertextual reference creates support for the stances made the center in academic circles as well, and not only political authority through their links and references with NATO and the UN. By referencing this concept, he also links conflict and the military with aid and the peace process, and the increasing role of the military. At first glance, Do No Harm sounds like it would very much go against military values and stances. But with the postnational defense and the increasing interoperability between military and civil society and international aid organizations, it all becomes intertwined and highly relevant. The military forces cannot be the destructive force it once was if it wished to fulfill the role it has been assigned. The gender advisor described extensively the supporting role she had, and in extension the military had during her mission in Afghanistan. That realization and adaptation that they are there to support local actors can be hard to get to. She described how she came to realize it and how she faced opposition when she tried to bring it up with her commander, to see that when trying to help, they are in fact creating further risks and therefore does harm.

“So at first I thought hmm, that’s a good idea. But then I stepped out and I was thinking and I said okay, now back to the Afghan society, what can happen, and I talked to a cultural advisor, what can happen in the worst case is that we pick out one and there was 8 provinces, then we have one very happy province and we have maybe 7 women who are stoned, beat up, and why? Because they didn’t have the best project”¹⁶³.

This is in line with what was brought up in the report, that the operation had failed to recognize the complicated local situation and what sources of insecurities to contest. As the gender advisor brings up this, it is evident that the center has a different perspective than what was implemented by ISAF.

The gender advisor talked about the role of support and how it was something that maybe the military commanders was not aware of or familiar with. This supporting role was crucial to commit to and do well, as it is key to capacity building and long-term peace.

“What I also experienced is that it’s not rushing in and rushing out, it’s not a quick fix. [...] So that was also, and they always said that we have the watches and they have the time, and it’s really true”¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶² Anderson, Mary, 1999, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*

¹⁶³ interview

¹⁶⁴ interview

5.1.2 External Gender

‘Gender’ is a nodal point that makes itself very clear in the present texts. It is central to the work NCGM is doing, and the mere existence of the gender centre is point to the fact that gender and gender awareness is an increasingly important part of military forces and organizations.

In the welcome letter, gender and a gender perspective are present in relation to all the points being made. They are present in relation to peace, to conflict and to the aim of NCGM. For example, it is highlighted in the text by the commander that it is advantageous to implement a gender perspective in various situations, and several intertextual references to UNSC 1325 are made that provides legitimacy¹⁶⁵. ‘Gender perspective’ is defined in the text as being aware of how “*men, women, boys and girls are being affected differently by a situation or an operation because of their gender*”¹⁶⁶. It is also linked to human rights in general and sustainable peace, as well as more effective and strengthened military operational capacity.

‘Gender’ is also a floating signifier as it is a point of contestation between the two discourses. ‘Gender’ has a very clear and strong position at the forefront of postnational defense and in the text, while it has been made invisible in the traditional military structure. While postnational defense speaks of gender in terms of increased awareness and participation, traditional military structure is a very masculine institution, with little room for alternative routes or identities.

The report *Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions*¹⁶⁷ is detailed and comprehensive in its mission to showcase the current state of the implementation of a gender perspective and UNSCR 1325 into NATO-led missions.

The report does a conflict analysis of the Afghanistan conflict and focuses on “the gender-conflict nexus”, as the conflict in large has already been thoroughly analysed and researched. It writes that;

*“Conflicts in Afghanistan are closely linked to gender relations and the position of women in the society. It is an issue that can be directly assigned to the social contract between the Afghan state and its citizens, and lies at the very core of Afghan society”*¹⁶⁸.

They further write that attempts to strengthen women’s position on society by the government has led to direct conflict between government and tribes and rural communities. It suggests that women have been sources of contestation and conflict for a long time, and not only in the recent conflict. The making of women as symbols and reasons for conflict is not a new idea, and has been a part of wars and conflicts for a long time. Women are often made symbols for the own identity that

¹⁶⁵ Hansen, 2006, p. 56

¹⁶⁶ NCGM, 2016, p. 5

¹⁶⁷ NCGM, FOI, 2013,

¹⁶⁸ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 32

should be preserved, or as the symbol of the Others identity that should be violated and degraded. Men are traditionally seen as the protectors of women, something that is still prevalent today¹⁶⁹. The report identifies the strong patriarchal structure as an inherent part of the conflict, and a source of insecurity in the country. Ideas of masculinity and femininity in the Afghan context the way the report presents it are deeply entrenched in the opposition groups that is very toxic. That violent conflict arise from attempts to break gender roles and increase opportunities for women shows the extremely established gender power structures.

They write that the situation has gotten better since 2001 and that the presence and pressure from the international community has helped especially women in Kabul, but to a lesser extent women in rural areas as well. Although they reaffirm that the conflict is still to a large extent about gender and the protection and liberation of women as the Taliban threat is still not yet fully gone. The threat of the Taliban ideology and political agenda is presented, while they state that the access to education, health services and increased freedom of movement for girls and women are indicators of mission success by ISAF and the international community¹⁷⁰. They position the Taliban as the Other, with values presented as completely opposite their own and as damaging and dangerous for the Afghan population.

The arguments presented in the Gender-Conflict Nexus argues the success of the mission, compared to the situation previously, as well as brings up implicit references to the rhetoric used in the early stages if the international intervention in Afghanistan, namely to free and protect Afghan women and bring equality. Compared to the Taliban period it may have gotten better, but Afghanistan were still amongst the bottom countries on the UNDP gender index¹⁷¹, and according to the report only marginally successes has been made to make lives better for women in the rural areas, and not only Kabul and other major cities.

The lack of progress in rural areas were explained as several factors. One of the most prominent was the security risk for gender advisors to travel, so that gender advisors were often confined to their bases, being unable to travel out to the different regions. And in return, Afghans were hesitant to visit the centre because of the same security threat. This directly hindered gender advisors in their work, making them less effective. Other factors lack of trust of the central government and its forces and police, as they were identified as perpetrators of violence in parts of the country¹⁷².

As ISAF works with capacity building and support in the rebuilding and reconciliation of Afghanistan, they assist several branches of government, including police, armed forces, and several ministries. Some of this support includes working with the implementation of a gender perspective, meaning increased participation and equality, as well as opening up for more opportunities and freedom for

¹⁶⁹ Sjoberg, 2008, p. 3-4

¹⁷⁰ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 32

¹⁷¹ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 32

¹⁷² NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 33

women in these organizations. While ISAF report some successes within this, Afghan women report that they have little trust in police force and armed forces, as they have been identified as perpetrator of gendered violence across the country. In the reconciliation process, women report that they receive little support or benefit, as attention lies with male fighters and their families¹⁷³. This despite NATO directives state that women are actors as well, and not only victims¹⁷⁴.

The report describes how "Gender enablers" such as female engagement teams and cultural support teams were created for further interacting and liaising with local, and specifically local women¹⁷⁵. The report describes the gender enablers as intelligence assets, where they assist in gaining better understanding of the local security situation and "*obtain information on insurgent activities*"¹⁷⁶. These teams are described as military assets first and foremost, and not so much as capacity building or outreach. The existence of these gender enablers and the reports description of them suggests an awareness of a gender perspective and the need to incorporate it, but there is also a sense of the teams not covering the full picture or living up to its full potential to enable gender. Female engagement teams has been criticized in many ways, and has shows average performance effectiveness. Parts of this can be because of the lack of proper training they receive.

Much of the gender training any ISAF personnel received was in relation to the Afghan society. Increasing gender equality and increased freedom and participation for Afghan women were something that was heavily pushed legitimating the international presence.

It can be argued that the topic of gender in the ISAF context was interesting with race and ethnicity, as gender was focused upon outwards to protect the Afghan women from the local men and show them how it is done in the west, while almost ignoring the own unequal situation for women and interpretation of gender within the own organization. Gender was deployed as a reason for conflict and intervention as it is a big part in cosmopolitan and human rights ideas. The report writes that there were some opinions expressed that Afghanistan was stuck in a previous era¹⁷⁷. That argument hinges on the idea that the international presence is there to show the country forwards, along a track that the participating nations followed, i.e. towards a liberal democracy and moulding the country in a western liberal democratic image. The report counters this opinion with the argument that there is no obvious way to reach "modernity" and that there is not one ideal goal the country has to reach. The report also accuse those with that opinion for putting many other matters over gender, where they are arguing that gender is not a prioritized matter in the road to progress, but merely an afterthought and a luxury¹⁷⁸.

¹⁷³ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 40

¹⁷⁴ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 34

¹⁷⁵ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 37

¹⁷⁶ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 37

¹⁷⁷ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 49

¹⁷⁸ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 49

The interview with the gender advisor did not touch upon the external use of gender for her or the organization. She did mention a case where she was advising a project that was designed to involve and engage local Afghan women in creating projects that would benefit them locally. The gender advisor described how she and the organization first wanted to choose one big project to fund and support, while disregarding the others. But she went on to say how that was a western way of thinking, and that they did not fully understand the impact that would have on the local society or the women participating. Instead of getting an improvement and seeing that the ISAF was there to help their communities, it could instead be interpreted as a contest and everyone else besides the winner going home empty-handed¹⁷⁹. She realized that she and the others saw it from a western perspective and argued against the original idea and for a more local perspective. Including local women is crucial to creating a sustainable and gender-just peace¹⁸⁰, and it is important to listen to them and doing it on their terms, instead of what you think it best.

5.1.3 Internal Gender

Some intertextual references explicitly made in the introduction letter include a reference to NATO's strategic and operational requirements in the context of how the gender centre structures their training.

By linking the centre to NATO in the text, it gains not only legitimacy as a intertextual reference, but also political legitimacy as being the department head of gender in NATO. The presence of gender in the text could be seen as antagonistic because it is situated in the tension between the traditional military structure and notions of postnational defense. The traditional military has over a long period of time formed itself into a structure that thrives in masculinity and has made it essential for its identity. Gender has been made invisible within the structure because masculinity has been so completely dominating and made natural that it has not been put into question until relatively recently. With the appearance of postnational defense and its strong gender perspective, that identity and natural state of masculine dominance is put into question and the two clash. The increasingly wider and more diverse role of the soldier does not necessarily work well within the masculine ideals of the traditional military structure.

While there was a comprehensible framework in place on policy level, implementing it on ground level was proving to be more difficult¹⁸¹. Gender advisors are identified as being essential to implementing a gender perspective on the ground, but many such positions remained unoccupied at the time of the report. General knowledge and interest in existing directives and framework to imple-

¹⁷⁹ interview

¹⁸⁰ Björkdahl, 2012, p. 288

¹⁸¹ NCGM, FOI, 2013

ment a gender perspective was low amongst all levels of the organization, especially in missions¹⁸².

A definition section is written in the report, taking definitions from the BI-SCD 40-1 directive, making a clear intertextual reference and link the report to the NATO structure. Definitions of gender, gender relations, mainstreaming, equality, gender analysis etc. can be found. By defining these concepts, the discursive topic of gender is very clearly defined and temporally stabilized.

*“Gender refers to the social attributes associated with being male and female and learned through socialization; it determines a person’s position and value in a given context. Notably, gender does not equate to woman”*¹⁸³.

By giving this definition of gender, the report, and in extension NATO as a whole, distances themselves against other definitions and notions of gender. Also, by making this clear, it directly opposes previous notions of gender especially within the military, as it specifically clarifies that gender does not equate to women. It aims to make men visible and included in gender as well, breaking the hegemony that has been in place for so long.

Despite this clarification and definition, the report still noticed a severe lack in knowledge and interest in gender issues. Very few have read or were even aware of the directives put in place, such as the BI-SCD 40-1¹⁸⁴, or thought that gender in fact is solely a woman’s issue, making it unnecessary for them to be included. The gender advisors that were deployed had to take initiative themselves and were poorly utilized and not supported enough by commanders. Many reported that they either did not get any gender training before being deployed, or they only received training in culture or gender in relation to the Afghan society and how to behave towards Afghan women¹⁸⁵, suggesting a lack of introspection or critical thought towards the own organization. The idea that gender is solely a woman’s issue is not surprising in a military organization, as gender has been made invisible previously. It was not until women were able to join the military that gender was made visible, so it is easy to draw the conclusion that gender equals women. The report makes it clear though that gender is a issue that encompasses all genders, and not only women.

The interview with the gender advisor naturally contained numerous significant articulations of gender. The name of the center and the position of the gender advisor contains the word and envelops the purpose of their existence. The gender advisor starts by saying that her initial connection with the topic of gender is because she is a woman, but that her perspective has broadened greatly since starting her service. She shortly after reaffirms that the topic of gender also includes and is open to men.

¹⁸² NCGM, FOI, 2013,

¹⁸³ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 24

¹⁸⁴ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 38

¹⁸⁵ NCGM, FOI, 2013, p. 38

The gender advisor gave an example of the placement of a gender advisor in peace establishments, and in it gendered the advisor in question;

*Like in your headquarters here in Stockholm, you have a gender advisor to the Chief of Operations, Commander of Operations. There's specific gender advisors for **him**, so if he's doing all the operations in all kinds of stuff, **she's** going to advise him on the gender perspective”¹⁸⁶ (bolding by author).*

The gender advisor was gendered as a woman while the Commander was gendered as a man. It could be that the interviewed gender advisor know the people in question and therefore refer to them directly, or it could be a case of assuming that the higher ranking military officer is a man while the gender advisor is a woman. High military positions are thoroughly dominated by men and the assumption that the Commander of Operations would be a man follows that trend, while the topic of gender is seen as a ‘woman issue’ and is only dealt with by women, and therefore the gender advisor to the commander would be a woman. As it is also in a supporting capacity, a woman supporting and serving a male commander or supervisor is also often assumed. This example can show that the position of gender advisor is gendered within the organization, despite the work of spreading a gender perspective. Gender is still equal to women and femininity, and the gender advisor said that she was appointed for the position in her mission to Afghanistan because she was a woman, and that that was “*the worst argument to send me to a mission*”¹⁸⁷.

Although the gender advisor says otherwise numerous times in the interview, that it is important to include and get the men and the commanding officer on board and participating, as it cannot be done with only half strength and capacity.

“(…)The women most of the time know about the gender perspective, but it's the male side that needs to be aware. Because the biggest part still of who is making the decision and of course you want to push it and push women participation, but the biggest part is still men, so if they're not willing you're gonna achieve nothing. Yeah, and nothing maybe it's a little bit harsh you say, but I think that it's more difficult”¹⁸⁸.

This work towards including men is done by including gender in everything, and not making it another topic or factor that can just be added on top and implemented easily.

“(…) but most of the time people think about gender as another factor or a different topic. But what – how we see it is that gender is in everything”¹⁸⁹.

The gender advisor that is the most effective way to implement gender consciousness into the organizations and individuals that they deal with, and also not by them going and forcing gender perspective into, but instead working with experts and the organization to do it organically. She reaffirms several times throughout the interview that gender advisers and gender trainers work in a sup-

¹⁸⁶ Interview, bolded emphasis added by author

¹⁸⁷ interview

¹⁸⁸ interview

¹⁸⁹ interview

porting and capacity building role, not only in the field in conflict zones, but also on training missions and education. The center helps countries to create and establish gender training courses based on their national need.

When discussing her experience in the field as a gender advisor, she connects the theme of gender with peace and conflict, in that she describes how it takes time to implement a gender perspective in a sustainable way. The relatively short period of time she was there was not enough to make an effective and lasting change.

The same can be said about military organizations for the gender advisors and they have a similar time pressure and struggle to get used to the context and gain the trust of the commanders and soldiers in the operation. Many operations are multinational, and gender advisors are not always sent to an operation where their nationality operates. In Afghanistan the gender advisor was placed with a German force, with an American deputy. She saw the differences between the different national forces and faced opposition from her commanding officers there, as the American forces have a different way of doing things, and the German forces focused more on cultural advisors for example.

The difference in how the different military forces dealt with gender was something the gender advisor commented on. She acknowledges that she might have been blind to it herself, since she is still a part of the military structure and has adapted to how things are done, but she did not notice a direct difference in work assignments between genders. But she did notice a difference in how gender is included in operations, especially between the American forces and the other ones she was stationed with. American forces had Female Engagement Teams, groups of female soldiers tasked with engaging with local Afghan women. Female Engagement Teams have been criticized for crossing the line between military and civil work, while the gender advisor spoke highly of the concept of civil, military, and police capacities working close together. The concept of interoperability brings the three closer and crossed the previously clear borders between them, and makes it possible for the military to do civil work and increase the implementation of a gender perspective in that way. As they engage with gender on a local basis, they need to implement it themselves in the own organization for it to be successful and meaningful.

The gender advisor criticized the concept of Female Engagement Teams, and instead lifted the concept of Mixed Engagement Teams, where the groups of soldiers are of mixed genders.

The reason for preferring the Mixed Engagement Teams is because it has added value to include all genders, and that by taking both a male and female solution into consideration, you get the best result.

“What I don’t like, maybe that’s a good one, assignments between different genders, the Americans have the FET, the female engagement teams. And that’s for me not the best solution. Because I think if you, because then you’re discriminating men. So for me it’s the Nordic way of working, with MET, mixed engagement teams I think that’s much better. Because then, yeah I always say 1+1=3[.] it’s more added value, if you take a male solution and you take a female solution,

you take the best things out of those two solutions I think you get the best solution”¹⁹⁰.

This implies that there is an inherent ‘male’ and ‘female’ solution to things, and that they are very different from each other. This expression of the gender dichotomy can point towards the fact that despite any changes and the work of the gender center and gender advisors has made towards a more equal and gender aware organization, the military still has a long way to go and has still not dealt with the fundamental view on gender as two inherently different entities where one is more suited for the organization than the other.

The gender advisor brought up the issue with the structural preference to men and masculinity with how work assignments and the structure is formed and defined. As most things in the military have been and are defined by men, most things will prefer men and masculine ideals and traits.

“Because at this moment, most of the time men are defining the task. But if we work together on that one as well so upfront what the definition is of specific tasks maybe then the outcome will be totally different. So it depends on how, when, and where, but also who in the first part defined the tasks. [...] So maybe if I go sit together with the one who is identifying that one and we talk about okay what is really necessary to do this job, maybe totally review it, and say oh okay so if we then need, maybe there is quality, a more female quality, but there is also in men but if you can stereotype that there’s more female qualities to this job”¹⁹¹.

She mentions the structural problem that has infused the entire military organization with masculine and anti-feminine ideals, that is shaping the identity and work assignments of everyone involved. Masculinity and femininity are discussed in the courses, and an outside expert is brought in to have a discussion on extreme and toxic masculinity that in the opinion of the gender advisor is very good. But she also says that some masculine capacities are good and are needed in war and situations of crisis.

“Define problem. I think it will always be there and I think it is also one of the good capacities, the male capacities. I think in some situations in war, crisis, or whatever, you need those capacities of masculinity. Although if you to overemphasize them, then the balance is gone”¹⁹².

5.2 Discussion

The difference between the gender center and the operational example of NATO in the form of ISAF is palpable. While the center works with implementing gender perspective in military operations on every level as well as spreading knowledge and enabling training to countries around the world, the actual imple-

¹⁹⁰ interview

¹⁹¹ interview

¹⁹² interview

mentation is still seemingly far away. Any knowledge of NATO directives and the issue in general was very low, and several gender advisor positions in the ISAF organization were empty.

The issue of gender was seen as a woman's issue, and gender advisors were the only ones that were expected to consider it in day-to-day operational activities. From the texts analyzed, gender is not mainstreamed in NATO and its operations, and the report agrees.

The fact that ISAF sees the situation for women as a barometer on mission success, the access to education and health services as well as an improved freedom of movement, are strong indicators that gender plays a significant role in the identity of peacebuilders and peacekeepers in the international community¹⁹³. A major argument for intervening in Afghanistan was women's situation under the Taliban regime. A sense of responsibility was evoked to create sympathy and support for the international missions that followed. Regardless if it was a genuine care for Afghan women or a convenient argument to pull emotional strings are relevant, but it still shows that the sense of responsibility exists and is prevalent in the international community when discussing peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions.

How gender was presented in the report showed a difference in how it was handled internally within the organization and externally unto the local context. It was of more importance to implement and make a show out of including it externally, with the little training there was offered was dedicated to the local context. Gender was connected to religion and ethnicity as female engagement teams and cultural sensitivity training was put in place in order to approach Afghan women for example. It also became a reason for having an international presence, to free Afghan women from oppressive men and implement western/liberal democratic standards on equality. This was done with apparent little introspection to the own organization, where numerous problematic topics were still not dealt with. There is still in place a femininity and masculinity where the masculine values are favored over feminine ones. What has changed is that women and what is seen as feminine traits have become a strategic asset, and has therefore become valuable and acceptable.

The discrepancy between what is done on a policy level in NATO (in the case of this thesis) and how that is translated and implemented on a ground level further shows the current antagonistic struggle between the traditional military structure that is still very prevalent in military organizations today, and the idea of postnational defense. Organizations, such as NATO or the UN or states such as Sweden construct their identity to align with postnational defense, and highlight their work with gender and increasing equality. By making NCGM head of gender for NATO, they use Sweden and the country's reputation for being very far ahead regarding gender issues and equality, and incorporate into their identity and image outwards. By having a strong policy framework in place to implement the UN resolutions connected to UNSCR 1325 they further that identity. Actually imple-

¹⁹³ NCGM, 2013, p. 32

menting these steps unto the own organization is proven to be more difficult. Despite the work the gender center is doing and the support they have from policy-level, they face heavy resistance, from organizational issues to personal opinions from commanders, to general reluctance or ignorance on the subject. As mentioned, the traditional military structure still has a strong presence on a ground level in military operations.

At the same time, gender advisors and those who work with gender act as points of resistance within organizations and are continuing to question the hegemonic status of the traditional military structure on a ground level, as changes are made on a policy level. To change the status of such an entrenched hegemonic discourse as the traditional military structure requires much more time than what has presently been invested, and much more effort from all levels in organizations.

With the UN resolutions and the effort from NATO and nation states to include a gender perspective in their military organizations, it has been met with resistance from the organization itself. The hegemonic masculinity is still strong, and it has been difficult to change it in order to make women more welcome. As gender centers and gender advisor positions are created to further implement this, focus has been put on implementing a gender perspective and improving the gender situation in the context of the mission, while in the own organization, little is unchanged. This further shows the invisibility of the hegemonic gender discourse that was in place in the traditional military structure, as gender only applied to the Other. It made women the only gender, and focus on equality and women's rights was focused on the context of for example Afghanistan, and improving the lives of women there. While that is very important and much needed as well, at the same time American female soldiers felt like they needed to always move in pairs in the camp for the fear of being assaulted or sexually harassed¹⁹⁴. The share of women in the military differ between different countries and organizations, but for example Sweden, a country that is considered to have come far in the implementation of gender perspective and equality within the armed forces, still have a small percentage of female soldiers and officers. The amount have been consistently small, as the attrition rate keeps women from staying within the organization¹⁹⁵. Despite the attempts at increasing the number, the resistant and hostile environment that exists within the organizations towards women and others that deviate from the norm of hegemonic masculinity is preventing the full implementation of any policies for gender and equality within the own organization.

The stereotypes of women within the military as detrimental to combat effectiveness and inherent peacefulness can in fact be an asset to the current missions the militaries are now involved in. As peacekeeping and crisis management become more common use of military personnel, the traditional values being celebrated by the military becomes outdated and not as wanted or needed, while the

¹⁹⁴ Interview, Peterson, Runyan, 2010, p. 158

¹⁹⁵ Hicks Stiehm, Judith, 2001, *Women, Peacekeeping and Peacemaking: Gender Balance and Mainstreaming*, p. 40 ff.

very ideals and traits that have previously been scorned and pushed away suddenly becomes an asset. The perceived inherent peacefulness of women have become an asset as the traditional gender roles seems to not have been broken down as much as it has been strategically deployed¹⁹⁶.

The hegemonic struggle between the traditional military structure and postnational defense is not only clear when looking at gender-related issues, but also, as seen previously in this chapter, in the topics of peace and conflict. Conflicts have transformed since the end of the Cold War. As nation states involve themselves less and less in interstate conflicts, the public support for what is traditionally seen as “war” has diminished as well. The rebranding of military organizations and military operations in foreign places as peacebuilders/peacekeepers and peacebuilding operations, with the support of international organizations with plenty of legitimacy and goodwill (such as the UN), has somewhat made it possible to move around the criticism and instead gain support. In some cases these peacekeeping interventions are not even considered to be wars. For example, Sweden prides itself with their neutrality and the fact that the country has not been at war in 200 years. Yet the country has provided troops to numerous international peacekeeping operations throughout the 20th and 21st century. Swedish soldiers have seen combat and partaken in armed conflicts, as they are soldiers in a conflict zone.

The rebranding is not only superficial, as the organizations are changing. See for example the PR campaigns from the Swedish armed forces, that shows the profession of a soldier as much more than the traditional idea of what a soldier is and does. Indeed, it has caused military organizations that want to be more cosmopolitan to radically change what it means to be a soldier and to discard some values and traits that traditionally has been the cornerstone in the soldier identity.

¹⁹⁶ DeGroot, 2001, p. 24

6 Conclusion

This thesis has examined how the hegemonic struggle between the discourses of traditional military structure and postnational defense are visible in NCGMs self-representation and its evaluation of NATO's peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan.

Gender in the military is getting more attention in the contemporary organization and missions. As the numerous UN resolutions are further implemented and institutions as the NCGM gain more influence in military organizations, the awareness of gender is slowly gaining traction. Although this happens slowly and perhaps not in the wanted direction. In the analyzed texts, despite the efforts from NCGM and gender advisors, gender still equals women to many, and is for the most part attached to outside of the organization, to the local population of the mission, in the case of this thesis, Afghan women. Women in the own organization are included more, but there is still a long way to go until equality is reached. As it currently stands, it seems like the traditional gender roles of men and women in the military are not so much broken down as they are strategically redeployed. Women are more welcome in peacekeeping operations as they are seen as inherently peaceful and better communicators and have other traits that previously has been deemed unwanted or unimportant but that now are vital to the success of the mission. But the ideas of what the different genders inhabit are still present, and are not in general questioned. The NCGM seem to work towards changing this and emphasize heavily on the fact that gender does not equal women. The official stance of NATO and the directives drawn up that follow the UN resolutions are very specific in this and aligns itself with the idea that gender is performative and socially constructed. There is a lack of knowledge about gender issues and the official stance further down the hierarchy in the organization, and on ground level these "new ideas and values" are not appreciated or understood properly. Ideas from policy level has failed to properly trickle down and establish itself on ground level as they are at odds with each other.

Women are included now because they are considered strategically valuable. But what about when they are not? The core values of the organization has not changed and can easily revert back to the hypermasculine ways of the past if given an opportunity, things have not changed that much. If conflicts change and peacekeeping grow out of fashion for the international community, female personnel and the values they bring is considered strategically obsolete and not of importance, and can be disregarded. A fundamental change in how the organization recognizes and works with gender and gender roles needs to be dealt with, and a more equal perspective is necessary to promote real and long-lasting change, just like it is done in the societies where they are deployed.

This thesis has shown that there is a current discursive struggle over the hegemonic status. There are discrepancies between the policy level and further implementation throughout the organization. The resistance against postnational ideals are strong in the cases analyzed. Furthermore, the policy implementation of a gender perspective can be questioned if it is truly genuine, or if the employment of the NCGM and in extension Sweden as the front figures for gender in NATO is strategic to strengthen the appearance of having a postnational identity.

The gender center itself has a strong postnational perspective, and their work with gender in operations and training have positive results. But as the gender advisor says, they can only do so much without the will to change and the support from the commanders. In the report on the progress of the implementation of UNSCR1325, gender advisors were the main actors for gender in the mission, and were deemed crucial for further progress. But there is a lack of organizational support and resources. Some gender advisors were not able to travel around the country and visit some regions because they lacked transport or the security situation was considered to dangerous, and some took the position on a voluntary basis, without any proper gender training.

When gender is brought up in the missions analyzed in this thesis, it is done in a way that it only applies to women or the Afghan population. A gender perspective is still mainly kept out of the internal organization and it has not yet been mainstreamed in the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan. Gender is still for the “Other”, and the own, still strongly masculine, group are portrayed as defenders of the beautiful souls that are the Afghan women.

The conclusions drawn from this thesis would suggest that there can be further research done on the different levels, on the policy level as well as the ground level in individual operations. The difference in tone and results are worth looking into. Furthermore, Sweden’s position towards NATO and how the two instances interact with each other in relation to identity creation and implementation of gender perspective in security and international relations issues. Further deeper investigations of the individual organizations would be of great interest, and in turn analyze both the internal and external applications of gender and the WPS agenda. A more extensive research project that engages a wider intersectional perspective would be of great contribution to the field.

It has been 16 years since res 1325 was adopted by the Security Council and the United Nations member states. It should be possible by now to evaluate the state of its implementation in various nations and organizations. These entities need to be under scrutiny and criticized for a lack of will to progress forward.

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