Consortium on Gender, Security & Human Rights

Masculinities and Peacekeeping
Literature Review

"Gendering peacekeeping" means more than bringing women into peacekeeping military and civilian police units. This literature review surveys the academic literature on masculinities and peacekeeping; it is part of the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Right's larger project on masculinities and armed conflict.

The **Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights** created this Literature Review to provide a guide to the landscape of academic research on masculinities and peacekeeping; the principal research for it was done by Rachel Brown.

This literature review is by no means an exhaustive listing. We have focused on the academic literature, so most of the numerous publications originating from within the policy and NGO communities have not been included here. This bibliography is also limited to articles published in English.

Insofar as possible, entries includes citations, published abstracts, quotations of key sentences (indicated in quotation marks, and followed by page number) and additional annotations by the interns who worked on this bibliography, and URLs for articles that are available on line. Books usually are only briefly summarized, often with the table of contents included.

This literature review is meant to introduce readers to the landscape of academic research and debate in this field, and to help support the reader in her or his own research. Despite the inclusion of quotations and page numbers in the annotations, we strongly advise the reader not to quote directly from this document, but rather to use it to direct you to the literature that will be of use to you.

If you are familiar with resources that you think should be included in this annotated bibliography, please send the citation, or, better yet, an annotation, and we will add it to the bibliography, with your name as reviewer. Resources can be submitted through our website at: genderandsecurity.org/projects-resources/annotated-bibliographies.

Within peacekeeping literature on masculinity, a common argument is that a hypermasculine military culture pervades peacekeeping missions. This culture enables the exploitation of local women as well as the decision of UN and state officials to overlook sexual misconducts. So pervasive is this hypermasculine culture that the increased participation of women within peacekeeping missions will not readily transform this masculinist culture. Indeed, as Baumgartner and Whitworth argue, only a thorough examination of the UN structure and culture will allow a transformation of this pervasive culture.

According to Claire Duncanson, this hypermasculine culture rewards strength, aggressiveness, and heterosexuality (Duncanson 2009), as well as unemotional detachedness towards the enemy (Whitworth 2004). These prized traits facilitate what Whitworth calls a "warrior brotherhood", enabling the dehumanization of the Other and efficient execution of the military's overall goals (Kirby and d'Estree 2008). What is more, because acceptance within this militarist culture is tied to soldiers' perceptions of their own manhood, they may be more inclined to demonstrate their loyalty to the group, and to dissociate themselves from "feminine or individualistic" tendencies (Kirby and d'Estree 2008). In other words, this masculinist culture is perpetuated by defining feminism oppositionally; while peacekeeping is masculine, peacebuilding and grassroots initiatives focusing on human security are feminine. While peacekeeping functions through force, peacebuilding functions through care and nurture (Pillay 2006). Nadine Puechguirbal argues that hyper-masculine peacekeeping operations tend to view women as a group to be 'protected', thereby denying women agency in the peace process (2010). Puechguirbal further claims that male-dominated peace operations tend to define security as cessation of fighting between warring factions while failing for account for the security of women in public and in their own homes. Greener et al., in their discussion of RAMSI in the Solomon Islands, find that police-led peace missions, as opposed to military-led missions, tend to be better at implementing gender concerns because of their institutional associations with domestic order and political values (Greener et al, 2011).

The literature on peacekeeping also highlights the relationship between the hegemonically masculine warrior peacekeeper, and the less masculine racialized "Other." Several scholars examine peacekeeping through the lens of colonialism and imperialism, arguing that this hierarchy among men allows for the neo-colonial exploitation of the local population. Agathangelou, for example, asserts that by racializing masculinity and femininity, peacekeeping preserves a status quo of inequality between the Western, hypermasculine man and the less masculine, racially inferior Native. Dittmer, too, discusses how German and Western peacekeepers may be viewed as "thoughtful" and "European," while local men are characterized by peacekeepers as "backwards" and "uncivilized" (Dittmer 2008). Interestingly, Agathangelou acknowledges that attempts to demonstrate one's hypermasculinity are not only reserved for peacekeepers; in response to the racialization of masculinity by outsiders, local men may also try and demonstrate that they are part of the hegemonically male group. He argues that this process occurred among Indian men in response to British colonizers.

Indeed, often it is not only peacekeepers who view themselves as powerful and hegemonically masculine, but also the local population. As Higate discovers in his interviews with peacekeepers in the DRC, the expensive cars and extensive access to resources that peacekeepers possess create a visible hierarchy between the occupiers and the less powerful locals. One local participant in Higate's study described peacekeepers as "detached and superior—both physically and symbolically" (Higate 2004).

Sherene Razack contributes to this discussion by arguing that peacekeeping can create a boundary between the "normative" members of a nation, and the racialized locals who remain outside the nation. Examining the presence of Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia and the resulting exploitations, she argues that by acting as colonizers, Canadian peacekeepers helped build a superior nation of "men from the land of clean snow" (Razack 2004, 2002). However, in contrast to Ehrenreich and others who rely on compensation theory to explain the violence of angry men, she maintains that minorities within the Canadian peacekeeping mission committed violence against Somalis not because they have more to gain from violence than white Canadian peacekeepers, but rather because they wish, as do white peacekeepers, to help construct a superior nation. In other words, hegemonic masculinity cannot by itself explain the violence that peacekeepers of color committed against Somalis. We must understand their violent acts in the context of colonialism and imperialism. Razack argues that if anything, peacekeepers of color are less inclined to commit violence, as they, themselves may have intimate memories of violence committed against them.

Exploring further the reasons for a hierarchy of masculinities, Whitworth highlights the degree of "uncertain masculinity" that pervades peacekeeping; those at the top do not simply crave power for the sake of power, but rather to compensate for their own inabilities to live up to the warrior ideal of masculinity (Whitworth 2004). This uncertainty, and the resulting intersection between masculinity, femininity, race, class and ethnicity, in turn affect how locals on the ground experience security and insecurity (Henry and Higate 2004).

One reason for better understanding hypermasculinity is to grasp why and how peacekeepers engage in the sexual exploitation of local women. A significant portion of the literature on peacekeeping addresses this topic, and the reasons for impunity and lack of accountability when exploitation does occur. Through her examination of peacekeeping missions in Cambodia and Somalia, Whitworth illustrates how hypermasculinity and prizing of the warrior ideal distort power relations and create a culture of acceptability around sexual exploitation. In the case of Somalia, however, Canadian peacekeepers were not only perceived by locals (and by themselves) as touch warriors; they were also painted as benevolent humanitarians. While they are trained in combat to demonstrate their hypermasculinity, they are also told to only use force in self-defense, as part of a "lesser warrior purpose." This contradiction in their roles creates an "explosion" of hypermasculinity that leads to sexual exploitation or physical violence against the local community (Whitworth 2004).

Despite these abuses, a pervasive silence surrounds sexual exploitation, perhaps

because a "boys will be boys" attitude creates a sense of acceptability (Martin 2005). According to Mazurana, the belief that sexual exploitation is "natural" is the precise reason we should understand the politics of masculinity and femininity (Mazurana, Raven-Roberts and Parpart 2005). By ignoring the politicization of gender, we signal to peacekeepers that they are "entitled to sexual encounters" (Harrington 2003). Yet as Lutz, Gutmann and Brown point out, once we attribute sexual exploitation to "(male) human nature," we have an ever more difficult task of stopping it, for it becomes understood biologically. They suggest, however, that Resolution 1325 may be one vehicle for challenging this biological understanding of sexual exploitation (Lutz, Gutmann and Brown 2009).

In addition to the argument that men engage in sexual exploitation to fulfill their "natural" needs, there is also an argument that they use it to shame women and to weaken men's sense of masculinity (Grady 2010). It is worth noting that this is a common argument in the literature on rape during wartime, yet it appears more rarely in discussions of sexual exploitation by peacekeepers. Perhaps this is because of differing perceptions of agency that are applied to prostitutes versus victims of rape. As Henry and Higate discuss, peacekeepers may state that the women with whom they are sexually involved are their "girlfriends," in effect implying that women have a degree of choice that they may not have (Henry and Higate 2004). Punyarut, too, believes prostitution to be a socially constructed term that attributes more agency to women than they may always have (Punyarut 2006). Regardless, Grady underscores that peacekeepers may engage in sexual exploitation as a form of bonding (Grady 2010), a means of strengthening their commitment to a "warrior brotherhood" and to the masculine ideals of the combat unit.

In contrast to scholars who rely on the catchall concept of military masculinities to explain sexual exploitation, Higate argues that we must understand sexual misconduct through the lens of "social masculinities" (Higate 2007). According to Higate, the cultural and economic inequality that peacekeeping missions elicit interact with gendered power relations to create an environment where sexual exploitation can occur. Socioeconomic conditions, he argues, are as key to understanding this exploitation as military masculinities.

Examining the broader structural reasons for sexual exploitation, Punyarut cautions against viewing peacekeeper misconducts as exceptional (Punyarut 2006). Like Whitworth, she believes we must look to UN policy, structure and assumptions about gender to understand why sexual exploitation occurs.

Another major discussion within the literature on peacekeeping centers around "alternative masculinities," and whether peacekeepers represent a more "civilized" warrior. The general consensus among scholars is that while these alternative masculinities may begin to challenge the warrior ideal, they do not sufficiently transform the culture of military masculinity that pervades peacekeeping missions (see Dudnik
2002, Duncanson 2009, Enloe 2002, Zarkov and Dudnik 2002, Punyarat 2006).

Regardless of its potential to transform military culture and create the cadet of warrior doctors, humanitarians and feminists that Whitworth suggests (Whitworth 2004), alternative masculinities may do little to change the feminization and racialization of the Other (Zarkov and Dudink 2002). The New Man, embodied in the "soft warrior", may thus be little more than a nicer version of imperialism (Higate and Sanghera 2008).

The existence of these alternative masculinities highlight the contradictory roles of peacekeepers, who are supposed to embody "impartiality, sensitivity compassion and empathy" at the same time that they are trained to succeed in a military environment (Henry and Higate 2004). Like Whitworth, Sion (2007, 2009) suggests that this contradiction creates a perpetual frustration among men who must keep their hypermasculinity under control. Within this frustrated environment, the introduction of women to peacekeeping missions may thus constitute a threat, for if "even a woman can do it", the value of the masculine soldier comes into question (Sion 2009). She cites the example of Dutch peacekeepers, who due to their limited role in combat, feel under extra pressure to prove their masculinity by "(exaggerating) excitement and adventure in the most conspicuous and distinct ways that exclude women" (Sion 2009). In such instances of threatened masculinity and the resulting acts of overcompensation, women may only be able to play a limited role. According to Dittmer, women are thus caught in between the "Other" masculinity of third world men and the hegemonic masculinity of Western men (Dittmer 2008).

Just as scholars tend to doubt the transformative effects of alternative masculinities on a masculinized military culture, they also question how much the inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions can change this culture. Firstly, as Valenius asserts, assuming that the presence of women mitigates men's desire to engage in sexual exploitation means placing the burden of change on women rather than forcing men to question their own behavior (Valenius 2007). But even so, most scholars agree that rather than having a "civilizing" effect upon men, women peacekeepers tend to adopt the masculinized culture of missions rather than call it into question (Enloe 2002, Higate and Henry 2004, Olsson 2000). In a series of interviews conducted with Nordic peacekeepers in Bosnia-Herzegovina, women peacekeepers tended to overlook their male colleagues' sexual misconducts rather than attempting to stop them (Valenius 2007). Still, while their presence may not transform this aggressive culture, it may influence it for the better by introducing what could potentially be a non-masculine perspective (Simic 2010).

Challenging the violent aspects of peacekeeping may therefore require questioning the military itself and the assumptions that scholars and UN practitioners hold about gender (Valenius 2007). More broadly, we must not interpret gender mainstreaming as the study of difference between men and women, but rather the "system of femininities and masculinities and power hierarchies between them" (Valenius 2007). According to Hudson, gender mainstreaming is a first step in attempting to challenge what would otherwise be exclusively masculine viewpoints (Hudson 2000).

Gender sensitivity trainings are one way of encouraging peacekeepers to

understand their mission from a non-masculine perspective. Yet as Mackay acknowledges, one of the main difficulties in gender sensitivity trainings is overcoming the "emotional challenge" of asking peacekeepers to question their own male and female identities (Mackay 2003). But as Cockburn and Hubic argue, it is precisely this questioning that will help dissociate the military from that which is masculine, in turn helping reshape peacekeeping missions (Cockburn and Hubic 2002).

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