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CHILDREN PEACE SECURITY

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ABOUT THE COVER ART

"Having been deployed to Afghanistan as a soldier and having seen the reality of children living in war first-hand, the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative resonates with me on many levels. I believe in education and the power of collaboration. I admire the Dallaire Initiative's approach to collaboration with concerned governments, security sector actors, academics, humanitarians and civilian communities to elevate children's rights, well-being, and security in war and conflict zones - especially the direct work with soldiers, police, prison personnel, and private security operators which is critical to the interruption of children's recruitment on the ground."

Interdisciplinary artist Jessica Lynn Wiebe is a former artillery soldier in the Canadian military whose body of work centers on reflections of militarism, military life, memory and commemoration. Her interdisciplinary approach investigates the mechanisms of war, including the complex politics around gender, economy, architecture of war, and the human condition. By engaging and challenging deeply-held beliefs and emotions about the military and war, her work generates dialogue among members of the public, government, and those who serve. Jessica was born and raised in Brandon, Manitoba, and currently practices in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Wiebe participated in the Canadian Forces Artist Program (CFAP) 2018–2019 through the Canadian War Museum (CWM) in Ottawa.

Photo caption: The launch of the Vancouver Principles at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver, Canada on 15 November 2017.
Photo: The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security.

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Photo by Josh Boyter

ABOUT THE DALLAIRE INSTITUTE

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative (Dallaire Initiative) was established in 2007 by retired Lieutenant-General the Honourable Roméo Dallaire, former Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). Our mission is to develop new strategies and tactics to progressively end the recruitment and use of children as soldiers worldwide. As of April 2020, the Dallaire Initiative has now become the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security.

To achieve this important objective, the Dallaire Institute conducts activities on four fronts:

- World-class, interdisciplinary research to build and share knowledge, which in turn leads to new solutions.

- High-level advocacy activities to create and promote the political will to end the use of children in violence as central to the achievement of global peace and security.

- Education and programming to sustain the efforts to make the recruitment and use of children as soldiers unthinkable by inspiring leaders, educators, and policy makers to implement new approaches, conduct research, and actively share their knowledge on the prioritization of the children's rights upfront approach.

- Comprehensive, prevention-oriented training to security sector actors, in the service of broader security sector reform, as well as collaboration with civil society to create and implement tools that protect children from the dangers associated with recruitment.

LGen Roméo Dallaire, Rwanda, 1994.
Used under permission from the National Speakers Bureau.

ABOUT ALLONS-Y: JOURNAL OF CHILDREN, PEACE AND SECURITY

In January 1994, General Dallaire, then the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance In January 1994, General Dallaire, then the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), sent a fax to UN headquarters in New York warning of the impending genocide. He signed the fax with the line "peux ce que veux. Allons-y" – "Where there's a will, there's a way. Let's go." At the time, there was not a will among the international community, with lethal results for nearly a million Rwandans.

Since then, General Dallaire has worked tirelessly to ensure that there is both a will and a way to prevent mass atrocities in the future. However, action must be informed by understanding for it to be effective, and this has led to General Dallaire's focus on preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The creation and adoption of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in 2017, is helping to focus and drive action by the international community to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers through ensuring that security sector actors are trained and prepared to prevent recruitment. Doing so requires learning from experiences and sharing knowledge on all aspects of training, education, research, and prevention in this area.

Published since 2016, the Dallaire Institute journal *Allons-y* now focuses on supporting the implementation of the Vancouver Principles. In this and future issues, commentaries, peer-reviewed research and policy articles will focus on all aspects of the implementation of the Vancouver Principles. The articles provide guidance, policy recommendations, and new knowledge to support the international community's work to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

EDITORS' NOTE

By Catherine Baillie Abidi, PhD, and Dustin Johnson

> *"National and international strategies to protect children must empower and build the capacities of women, families and communities to address the root causes of conflict and strengthen local development." –Graça Machel[1]*

Over this past year we saw events, reflections, and new research on the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. Critical dialogue has continued on the roles of men and women in peacekeeping and gaps remain in our collective understanding of how gender influences peacekeeping practice. The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and Preventing the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, now endorsed by over 100 countries, raises particular attention to the intersections of gender and child protection practice and policy. Principle 11, Contributions of Women, aims "to recognize the essential contribution of women to peacekeeping operational effectiveness, and the distinct and critical roles of both men and women in the protection of children and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers."

Thus, for this 5th volume of *Allons-y*, we called on the international community to consider the interconnections between the Women, Peace and Security and Children, Peace and Security agendas to explore how gender influences the prevention of the recruitment and use of children in violence. The contributors are researchers and practitioners with extensive experience working in the fields of child protection, security sector reform, and feminist scholarship. Together, the contributions in this volume demonstrate the complexities of the humanitarian, development and security nexus, and the importance of understanding the complexities of gender within peace and security.

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1   Graça Machel, "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children" (New York: United Nations, 1996), 59, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/51/306.

In the opening preface, Clare Hutchinson, the NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, reflects on the evolution of formal mechanisms designed to address the gendered impacts of conflict and the importance of enhancing women's meaningful engagement in peace and security. Nidhi Kapur and Hannah Thompson argue that the complexities of gender, beyond a binary perspective, need to be considered in child protection, not least in the context of fragile and conflict environments if peace is to be sustained. Vanessa Brown argues for reforms to military training that prioritize the protection of children affected by conflict and considers an intersectional, gendered analysis as essential to effective military operations. Dustin Johnson analyzes Vancouver Principle 11 – Contribution of Women – in relation to the emerging complexities of a gender transformative approach to child protection. And Anna Mensah writes about the importance of gender mainstreaming for the prevention of the recruitment and use of children as soldiers.

The Vancouver Principles are an important mechanism to prioritize children within peace and security. Recognizing that conflict and conflict prevention are gendered social issues that require a commitment to critical dialogue, reflective practice, and evolving protection frameworks, are essential to a comprehensive approach to protecting children. The contributions in this volume particularly demonstrate the importance of applying theory to practice, and illustrate the value of using critical and feminist approaches in scholarship to tackling the complexities of gender, peacekeeping, and, child recruitment. We hope this 5th volume of *Allons-y* serves to challenge understandings and practices in order to improve child protection and the prevention of the recruitment and use of children as soldiers.

PREFACE

Vancouver and Beyond: Reflection and Revision on Women, Peace and Security

By Clare Hutchinson, NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

On 31 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, women's concerns in relation to peace and security were formally discussed and acknowledged within the Security Council. Resolution 1325 recognises the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and stresses the need for full participation of women as active agents in peace and security.

Building on the earlier UN Security Council resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict and Protection of Civilians, UNSCR 1325 was revolutionary, bringing to global attention the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls.

UNSCR 1325 is a political and operational tool that has changed the conceptualisation of security and reframed the issue of women's rights within this space. Its 3 pillars of prevention, protection and participation remain the bedrock of WPS and, as such, demand that all actors recognize the different impact of armed conflict on women and girls is something for which the global community can find concrete remedies with and for women.

As the UN WPS resolutions have evolved[1] and grown in stature and number, so has the recognition that so-called 'marginal' actors such as women are no longer on the periphery. The Women, Peace and Security agenda collectively recognises that women are not only victims in conflict; often subject to heinous brutality and marginalized politically and economically, but they also make up to 30% of combatants in many conflicts and are sometimes actively engaged in terrorist organisations. The role of women in conflict, like that of men, is complex and layered and a gender lens needs to be applied to the entire cycle of conflict without preconceptions.

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1   There are currently ten United Nations Security Council resolutions on WPS, UNSCRS 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888(2009) 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019)

In November 2017, Canada launched 'The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers'. The 'Principles' are a set of 17 political commitments focused on child protection in peacekeeping, but also specifically recognise the contribution of women to peacekeeping and the critical roles women can play in the protection of children.

Over the last few years the attention to the lack of women in peace operations has become central. Discussions, initiatives and activities have increased in volume in their focus on gender parity and increasing the number of women, for both uniformed and civilian peacekeepers.

For international organisations, including NATO, this has propelled a call for increased attention to the recruitment and retention of women in national forces, as a basis of operational effectiveness. The UN 2028 target for women serving in military contingents is 15%. Currently, NATO is ahead of the global average, with women making up 12% of NATO forces. However, more needs to be done. NATO's strategy has been to encourage our nations to dismantle barriers standing in the way of the full participation of women in the Alliance and national forces. We will continue to push and encourage the deployment of women, not because they are women to match targets, but because they have a right to contribute to the service of their nation and NATO.

We should, however, be cautious about resting the efficacy of the agenda on parity alone. While greater diversity and a broadened skillset can be linked to better decision-making, planning and results - numbers are not enough. It is only in balancing the issues of parity and participation, that equality can be efficiently and effectively actioned.

The Vancouver Principles highlight the 'distinct and critical roles of both men and women in the protection of children and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers'[2] Yet, we do need to be cautious about making assumptions women are innately suited to protection of children tasks – assumptions that are both inaccurate and dangerously essentialist. Where attention needs to be placed is in the gendering of responses to child protection. To what extent can gender perspectives enhance the political framework on children and armed conflict and the operational response to prevention and protection?

Vancouver Principle 11 provides an important political foundation from which to move forward. As we forge a path towards the next twenty years, we must all continue to do our part, to strengthen both parity and participation, to secure a lasting peace for all.

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2   The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers 2017

CHAPTER 11 – CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN

We have decided to reproduce this section from the Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles[1] as it is a central focus of all of the articles and thus an important reference while reading them.

1   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2019), https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2019/igvp-20190614.pdf.

Photo credit: UN Photo/JC McIlwaine

THE PRINCIPLE

To recognize the essential contribution of women to peacekeeping operational effectiveness, and the distinct and critical roles of both men and women in the protection of children and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

UNSCR 2382 (2017) specifically recognizes the **indispensable role of women** in UN peacekeeping operations.[2]

UNSCR 2242 (2015), the UN's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, and the UN Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity all call for the **doubling of women in military and police peacekeeping** roles by 2020.[3]

UNSCR 1820 (2000) encourages Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) to consider steps they could take to improve the responsiveness of peacekeepers "to protect civilians, including women and children, and prevent sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, including wherever possible **the deployment of a higher percentage of women peacekeepers or police**."[4]

WHY IS THIS PRINCIPLE IMPORTANT?

UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security acknowledges the valuable role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict, and calls on the UN and Member States to undertake tangible efforts to increase the participation of women in all aspects of peace and security.[5] For example, women offer important perspectives on communities and cultures, they can often access populations and venues that are closed to men, and they can serve as role models to empower women and girls in the local community to take an active part in peace and security efforts.[6] The involvement of women can improve

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2   UN Security Council, Resolution 2382, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Police Commissioners, S/RES/2382 (6 November 2017), 3.

3   UN Security Council, Resolution 2242, Women and peace and security, S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015), 5.

4   UN Security Council, Resolution 1820, Women and peace and security, S/RES/1820 (19 June 2008), 3.

5   UN Security Council, Resolution 1325, Women and peace and security, S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000).

6   Marta Ghittoni, Léa Lehouck, and Callum Watson, *Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2018); and Canada, Global Affairs Canada, "Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations," last modified 13 November 2018.

peace processes and the negotiation of peace agreements by reducing tensions, building trust, and advancing stability and the rule of law.[7]

Women peacekeepers can also communicate and engage with children differently, and they can offer valuable perspectives on the gender dynamics associated with the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG/CAAC), for example, estimates that girls constitute as many as 40% of the children recruited by armed forces and armed groups.[8] Moreover, girls are used in a wide variety of roles, including as fighters, suicide bombers, and sex slaves. Effective protection and prevention strategies must take into account – and address – the gender dynamics of child recruitment and use.

In her 2017 report, the Special Representative of the SRSG/CAAC referenced over 900 cases of rape and other forms of **sexual violence** against *boys and girls* in situations of armed conflict.[9]

This principle is meant to bring attention to the essential contributions of women to peacekeeping operations, and specifically the distinct roles of *men and women* in the protection of children to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

While evidence indicates that the inclusion of women can improve peacekeeping efficiency and effectiveness, women continue to be significantly and routinely underrepresented in operations.[10] This Principle is therefore intimately tied to the broader objective of increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations. Ultimately, all peacekeepers have a fundamental responsibility to protect children.

HOW CAN THIS PRINCIPLE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Collect gender-disaggregated data on relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations: The persistent underrepresentation of women in peacekeeping operations is likely due to a variety of structural, cultural, and institutional barriers, many of which reside *within* Member States. While work is underway to fully identify and better understand the

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7   Council on Foreign Relations, "Increasing Female Participation in Peacekeeping Operations," last modified 26 September 2018.

8   UN General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict 34/44, Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, A/HRC/34/44, (22 December 2016) 5.

9   UN General Assembly, Report 72/865, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/72/865–S/2018/465 (16 May 2018), 3.

10   UN General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict 34/44, Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, A/HRC/34/44 (22 December 2016) 5.

barriers at play, Member States should, as a starting point, collect gender-disaggregated data on their military, police, and civilian organizations.

Develop strategies to increase the representation of women throughout relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations, including through the development of a National Action Plan: With the baseline data recommended above, informed strategies can then be developed to increase the number of women in relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations, and to ensure that women gain the training, education, and experience required to qualify for peacekeeping deployments. This should be a priority in recruitment and retention strategies, and should permeate policies, doctrine, and decision-making throughout the organization. Among other things, organizations should implement institution-wide education and training for personnel on the benefits of greater women's participation, and identify institutional champions that can foster top-down support for women's increased integration. Efforts can be captured in a National Action Plan, which should articulate the practical national measures that will be taken to implement UNSCR 1325.[11]

Increase the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations, including in senior positions: Ensuring the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations means working to integrate women throughout the architecture of peacekeeping operations, including in senior positions.

It requires fostering a mission environment that is conducive to women's safe and successful deployment (including by tackling sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) within peacekeeping). It also requires supporting women early and consistently throughout their careers, so that they are well-positioned, prepared, and supported to take advantage of deployment opportunities.

Promote gender diversity across the cadre of trained Child Protection Focal Points (CPFPs) in UN peacekeeping operations: Member States must avoid gender bias when it comes to identifying personnel for child protection roles. Both women and men bring unique and distinct contributions to child protection, and therefore both women and men peacekeepers should be nominated to serve as uniformed CPFPs in UN peacekeeping operations.

Deploy mixed engagement teams, gender-integrated formed police units (FPUs), or "Gender Strong Units"[12] to UN peacekeeping operations: The co-deployment of women and men personnel in areas of operations has been found to be preferable to all-women or

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11   See UN Security Council, Resolution 1325, Women and peace and security, S/RES/1325.

12   A "gender-strong unit" is a military unit or a formed police unit (FPU) that includes the substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and has adequate equipment and other materiel to ensure parity of deployment conditions for women and men peacekeepers.

all-men engagement teams and FPUs.[13] With the co-deployment of women and men, military and police units have the potential to be more flexible and adaptable in the face of diverse local populations, including in the context of child protection.

Provide specific training and education for peacekeepers on the gender dimension of the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict: Member States must ensure that their training modules on child protection include specific teaching on the gender dimensions of children in armed conflict, and specifically of child soldiering. Training and education should specifically include information on the realities of sexual- and gender-based violence on children in armed conflict, and consider a gender-sensitive approach to prevention and protection.

Support research on the nexus between the role of women in peacekeeping, and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers: While there is a growing body of literature on the valuable role of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and separately, on children in armed conflict (and on child soldiers specifically), there is very limited research focused on the value and impact of women peacekeepers on preventing and addressing the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Member States could consider funding and/or supporting further research and analysis in this area, including by sharing operational lessons learned in this regard.

EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

"United Nations Police Gender Toolkit": This UN police resource is "a training package of best practices for mainstreaming gender into police activities in peacekeeping operations."[14] The three modules in this toolkit focus on building the capacity of UN police officers on gender mainstreaming and of host state police on promoting gender equality, as well as on preventing and investigating sexual- and gender-based violence. This toolkit is available as a handbook with an accompanying Compendium of Project Tools, as an instructor's manual for in-person Training of Trainers courses, and as an online e-learning course.

Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military: This handbook, produced by the Security Sector Reform Working Group under the leadership of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), aims to improve the capacity of gender experts, military instructors, and educators to deliver education content under the framework of UNSCR 1325

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13   UN Women, "Ready for Peacekeeping Deployment, with a Gender Lens," last modified 29 May 2018; and UN Peacekeeping, "Women in Peacekeeping," accessed 21 March 2019.

14   UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, and Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPKO-DFS-DPET), "United Nations Police Gender Toolkit" (11 November 2015), accessed 20 April 2019.

by providing tools and strategies to integrate gender into Professional Military Education (PME).[15] The handbook may be used to develop the leadership competencies of military leaders and those deployed on peacekeeping operations, as well as to highlight the support required from men to increase women's participation.

Female Military Officers Course: This two-week course aims to bridge the gender gap in UN peacekeeping. It is organized by UN Women and partners, and provides specialised training for female military officers around the world to create a global network of trained women peacekeepers.

Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: The Elsie Initiative is a multilateral pilot project that is developing, applying, and testing a combination of approaches to help overcome barriers to increasing women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations.

Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations: This Fund seeks to accelerate the pace of change towards the increased meaningful participation of uniformed women in UN peacekeeping operations through financial assistance and incentives, in order to support the deployment of more trained and qualified uniformed women. With two financing streams (flexible project funding and paying premiums for the deployment of gender-strong units), the Fund is intended to be accessed primarily by Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs). However, UN organizations wishing to implement and test innovative approaches will also have access as secondary recipients.

The State of the World's Girls Annual Report: Each year, Plan International produces a report on the development of girls around the world, with a unique thematic focus each year. In 2008, the focus was on the impact of armed conflict on girls, including reference to their recruitment and use as child soldiers.[16]

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

To implement this principle, Member States should undertake the following:

- Collect gender-disaggregated data on relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations.

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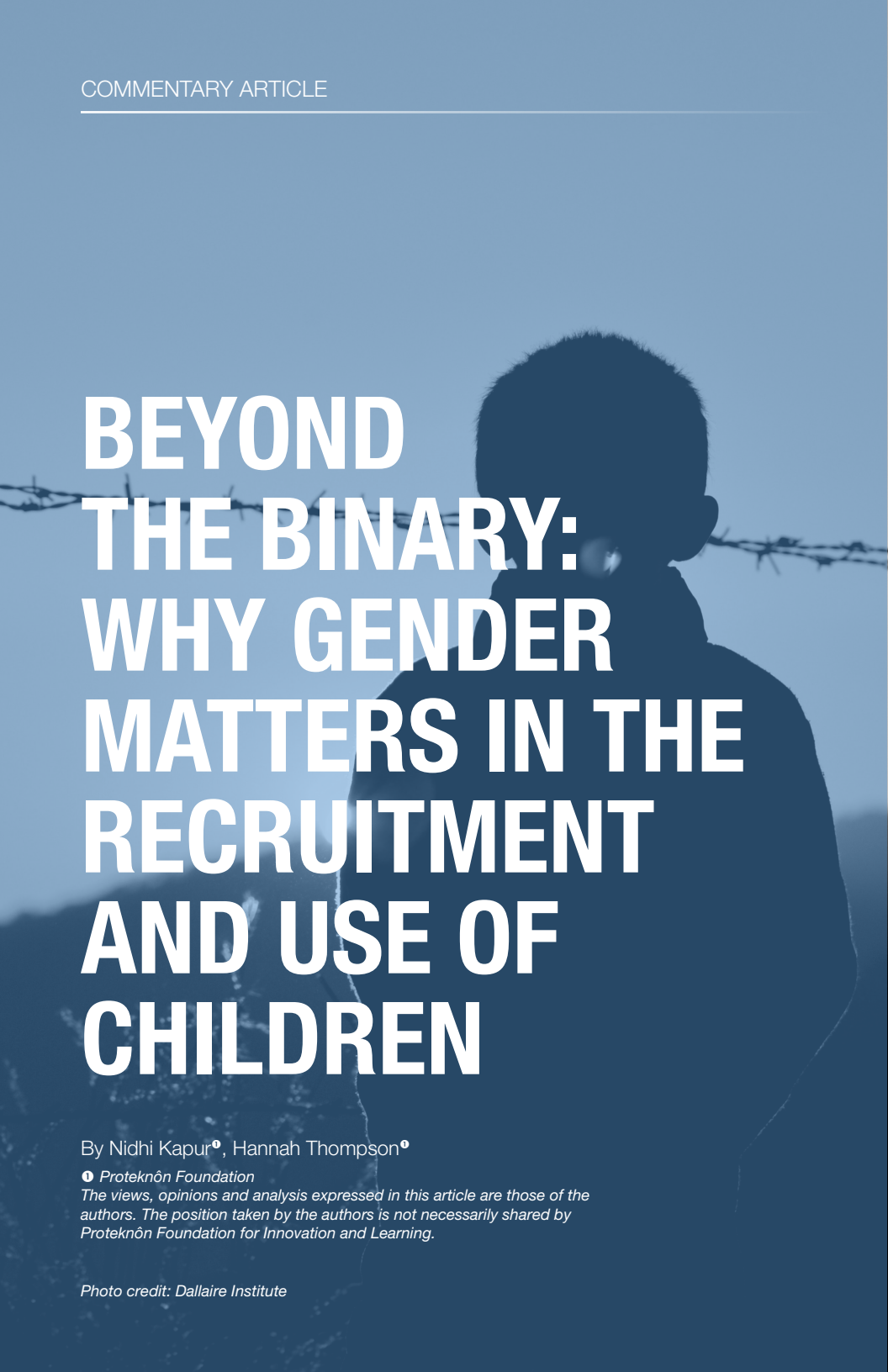
15 Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes et. al., *Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies, 2016).

16 See Plan International, "Reports and Publications," accessed 20 April 2019, and Nikki van der Gaag, In the Shadows of War: Girls in Conflict (Italy: Plan International, 2008).

- Develop strategies to increase the representation of women throughout relevant national military, police, and civilian organizations, including through the development of a National Action Plan.

- Increase the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations, including in senior positions.

- Promote gender diversity across the cadre of trained Child Protection Focal Points (CPFPs) in UN peacekeeping operations.

- Deploy mixed engagement teams, gender-integrated formed police units (FPUs), or "Gender Strong Units" to UN peacekeeping operations.

- Provide specific training and education for peacekeepers on the gender dimension of the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.

- Support research on the nexus between the role of women in peacekeeping, and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

BEYOND THE BINARY: WHY GENDER MATTERS IN THE RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN

By Nidhi Kapur[1], Hannah Thompson[1]

[1] Proteknôn Foundation

Photo credit: Dallaire Institute

ABSTRACT

Gender matters in conflict. Socio-cultural norms, attitudes and expectations related to gender dictate the causes, course and consequences of child soldiering. Despite international commitments, the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups persists. This paper summarizes existing quantitative data from the United Nations Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, in light of complementary qualitative analysis from other sources, to highlight the ways in which gender norms can (a) drive recruitment, (b) determine roles and responsibilities, and (c) influence outcomes for children associated with armed forces or groups. The needs and experiences of girls and boys are explored, and where evidence allows, that of children of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). Recommendations are made on potential actions that can further nuance the gender perspective proposed in the Vancouver Principles. Suggestions are made on how to ensure prevention and response interventions are (1) supported by consistently disaggregated data, (2) cognisant of the gender drivers behind recruitment, and (3) tailored to the distinct needs of children of diverse SOGIESC.

INTRODUCTION

Gender matters in conflict. All children bear the brunt of armed conflict, yet the ways in which they experience egregious violations of their rights are directly tied to socio-culturally prescribed norms, attitudes and expectations related to gender. Conflict can exacerbate pre-existing gender dynamics, rendering them more regressive or restrictive. Yet, conflict can also upend traditional gender norms. As societies shift into survival mode, girls may be forced to adopt roles that would otherwise be deemed socially unacceptable, while boys can take on roles that were previously reserved for adult men. The many and varied ways in which girls and boys are recruited and used by armed actors in conflict is often reflective of these evolving gender dynamics. Although roles can and do overlap, the division of labour amongst boys and girls can mirror stereotypical gender roles and pre-conceived notions of their relative physical strength and personal capacities. Gender can dictate the causes, course and consequences of child soldiering.

Contrary to multiple, mutually reinforcing legislative and normative frameworks aimed at the protection of children in conflict, the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and armed groups persists. Worldwide, at least 61,852 children were recruited and used between 2005 and 2019.[1] When analysed from a gender perspective, available figures indicate that, while girls have been targeted in several contexts, boys appear to be disproportionately targeted in every context in which the recruitment and use of children is observed.[2] Indeed, 91% of verified cases in 2017 and 2018 that were disaggregated by sex involved boys.[3] The incidence data on the recruitment and use of children can, however, be highly context-dependent. Girls can be recruited in larger numbers in some places, and their roles can encompass support, sexual and combat functions.[4] Similarly, boys may be subjected to sexual violence during the course of their recruitment and use,[5] or as a result of their subsequent arrest and detention for their perceived or actual association with armed actors.[6]

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1   Based on meta-analysis of the United Nations Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict, as cited in Nidhi Kapur, *Gender, Age And Conflict: Addressing The Different Needs Of Children* (Save the Children, 2020), https://www.savethechildren.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SC-Gender-Age-and-Conflict-report-final.pdf.

2   Kapur, Gender, *Age And Conflict*.

3   Kapur, Gender, *Age And Conflict*.

4   Marie de la Soudière, *What the girls say: Improving practices for the demobilization and reintegration of girls associated with armed forces and armed groups in Democratic Republic of Congo* (Child Soldiers International, 2017), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017_DRC_Report_-_ENGLISH_-_Online_PDF.pdf.

5   Sarah K. Chynoweth SK, Julie Freccero, Heleen Touquet, "Sexual violence against men and boys in conflict and forced displacement: implications for the health sector," *Reproductive Health Matters 25*, no. 51 (2017): 90-94. doi: 10.1080/09688080.2017.1401895.

6   United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2467, S/RES/2467 (2019), https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2467(2019).

Ongoing violations demonstrate that current frameworks fail to fully protect children from becoming child soldiers. The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers[7] therefore provide an important entry point to introduce a more nuanced approach to the question of gender.

This paper begins by clarifying the meaning behind key terms in order to fully examine the gendered dimensions of the recruitment and use of children. Where evidence allows, it looks at gender disparity in the:

(a) Motives for recruitment;

(b) Roles and responsibilities during use; and,

(c) Resulting short and long-term consequences of child soldiering.

To address gender variance amongst these factors, several suggestions are put forth, including:

(1) Data must be more consistently disaggregated by gender;

(2) Preventive actions need to be more cognisant of why and how children of different genders are recruited; and,

(3) Response and reintegration interventions must be tailored to context and the specific needs of children of different genders.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This article draws on a meta-analysis of incidence data made publicly available through the United Nations Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict between 2015 and 2019.[8] Recruitment and use of children is one of six grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict that have been tracked by the United Nations Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) since 2005.[9] Although the ability of reported incidents to be representative is constrained by limitations in the MRM data collection, documentation and verification process, they are used here to highlight systemic inconsistencies in data disaggregation in records of grave violations and to underscore the ways in which gender matters when it comes to child soldiering.

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7   Government of Canada, *Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers* (2017), https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes-pledge-engageons.aspx?lang=eng#pdf.

8   Kapur, Gender, *Age And Conflict*.

9   This monitoring process was established when UN Security Council Resolution 1612 was adopted in 2005.

THE WEIGHT OF WORDS: A PREAMBULATORY NOTE ON KEY TERMS

Any detailed examination of the influence of gender on the recruitment and use of children in conflict must begin by clarifying the use of key terms. First, an appreciation of the heterogeneity amongst 'children.' They are newborn, infant, pre-pubescent, or adolescent. They may live with disabilities or chronic illness. They come from various social, political, religious, and economic backgrounds. They reside within a broad range of family and social structures. Children's individual characteristics intersect and overlap with all-encompassing socio-cultural norms to determine and influence the roles each child is expected to play, the rights they are able to enjoy, and the abuses they bear in times of conflict.

This paper considers 'gender' to mean the full spectrum of girls, boys, and children of non-conforming gender expressions and identities. It underscores the unique experience of non-heteronormative children by also referring to 'diverse sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC).' In line with the Yogyakarta Principles, 'gender' is neither understood as a male-female dichotomy, nor synonymous with girls. Children can comprise girls, boys and children who fall outside the gender binary. They can self-identify or be perceived as gay, lesbian, transgender, queer or intersex (LGBTQI).[10] Gender identity is separate from sex, which is typically assigned at birth based on physical characteristics. Because data on child rights violations is only disaggregated by sex – if at all – it is not always possible to step outside of the gender binary in our analysis.[11] Nonetheless, reflections on the possible influence of SOGIESC are made on the basis of available – albeit limited – information.

The choice of language in legal and policy documents may also conceal differences. The Paris Principles were intentional in referring to 'children associated with armed forces or armed groups.'[12] This was done to widen the historical misconception of child soldiers – shifting away from the paradigm of armed boys to encompass the diversity of functions (including combat and non-combat positions) both boys and girls occupy during their association. The Vancouver Principles, in contrast, returns to the term 'child soldiers.' To counter potential reductionism, the accompanying Implementation Guidance explicitly states the "…term is used as a shorthand and is interpreted broadly, in accordance with the definition found in the

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10   International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), *Yogyakarta Principles - Principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity* (March 2007), https://yogyakartaprinciples.org/.

11   Kapur, Gender, *Age And Conflict*.

12   UNICEF, *The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*, United Nations (2007), https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/ParisPrinciples_EN.pdf.

Paris Principles." It therefore "does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities."[13] This paper uses the term 'child soldiers' with the same caveat.

THE GENDER-DRIVEN RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN: DATA AND TRENDS

Data on the recruitment and use of boys

Although trends vary across contexts and throughout the evolution of any given conflict, analysis of MRM data from a gender lens indicates that boys face a higher risk of recruitment and use relative to girls. In some cases, the gender disparity is striking. In Somalia, a staggering 97% of child recruits in 2018 were boys. In 2017, all 727 reported incidents of recruitment and use in Afghanistan comprised solely of boys.[14] Even in northern Nigeria – with the second-highest number of verified cases and where Boko Haram is notorious for its targeting of girls – 82% of all incidents involved boys.[15] In Unity State, South Sudan, a mass recruitment exercise at a cattle market resulted in 150 boys being armed, while no girls were reportedly targeted.[16]

Data on the recruitment and use of girls

Deviations from the global norm do exist, and girls are specifically targeted for recruitment and use in certain contexts. A salient historical example is that of Colombia. Between 2011 and 2016, girls made up 30% of children registered and separated from armed groups.[17] On average, the age of recruitment was eight months younger for girls than boys.[18] In Sri Lanka, it was thought that similarly large numbers of girls were linked with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE).[19] More recently, the UN in the Philippines confirmed that 37% of the caseload (for which gender was known) were girls.[20] Girls have also been found in the ranks of

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13   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles*, (2019), https://www. canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/vancouver-principles. html.

14   United Nations, Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, A/72/865-S/2018/465 (16 May 2018), https://undocs.org/s/2018/465.

15   United Nations, Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, A/73/907-S/2019/509 (20 June 2019), https://undocs.org/s/2019/509.

16   United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in South Sudan, S/2018/865 (25 September 2018), https://undocs.org/S/2018/865.

17   United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Colombia (September 2011-June 2016), S/2016/837, (4 October 2016), https://undocs.org/s/2016/837.

18   Ibid.

19   Human Rights Watch, *Living in Fear: Child Soldiers and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka* (2004), https:// www.hrw.org/reports/2004/srilanka1104/2.htm.

20   United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Philippines,

the Syrian Democratic Forces, 51 of whom were formally released in early 2020.[21] In Yemen, at least three dozen adolescent girls served as spies, medics and guards in an all-female force within the Houthi rebel group.[22]

Data related to children of diverse SOGIESC

None of the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict from 2015 to 2020 mention the recruitment and use of children of diverse SOGIESC. Given the dearth of data, it is impossible to ascertain (1) if gender non-conforming and/or non-heteronormative children are being actively recruited, (2) why they may be targeted, (3) what the outcomes would be for them when they are, and (4) how best to prevent their enlistment as well as (5) how to support their release and reintegration in response.

Existing research on children and armed conflict rarely investigates the experience of children of diverse SOGIESC. Human Rights Watch found that gay and bisexual men, boys and transgender women have been subjected to sexual violence within the ranks of the Syrian army.[23] This points to the increased susceptibility of children of diverse SOGIESC in Syria and elsewhere, particularly given the pervasive social stigmatization and varied forms of abuse faced by LGBTQI individuals worldwide.[24] In many contexts, these individuals may not be socially acknowledged or legally recognized – and in some countries, they may even be criminalized, further compounding their marginalization.[25]

Even less is known about children of diverse SOGIESC who are recruited and used. However, the ordeals faced by their adult counterparts have been documented in some countries impacted by war. Testimony of sexual violence – including so-called 'corrective rape,' torture, forced intelligence gathering, killing, and enforced displacement and disappearances have been documented in conflict zones as varied as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Central African

S/2020/777 (4 August 2020), https://undocs.org/s/2020/777.

21   United Nations, Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, A/75/203 (20 July 2020), https://undocs.org/A/75/203.

22   Human Rights Council, *Report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen: Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014*, A/HRC/45/6 (28 September 2020), https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/GEE-Yemen/2020-09-09-report.pdf.

23   Human Rights Watch and Helem, *"They Treated Us in Monstrous Ways" Sexual Violence Against Men, Boys, and Transgender Women in the Syrian Conflict* (2020), https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2020/08/syria0720_web.pdf.

24   UNHCR, *Protecting Persons with Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities: A Global Report on UNHCR's Efforts to Protect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Asylum-Seekers and Refugees*, (2015), https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/566140454.pdf.

25   Ibid.

Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Peru, and Colombia.[26] There is evidence that armed groups have also engaged in anti-LGBTQI agitation.[27]

The same discriminatory gender norms that promote aggressive behaviour by boys and men, and that drive sexual violence against girls and women, denigrates those who identify – or are perceived to be – divergent from binary and heteronormative conceptions of gender and sexuality.[28] The absence of empirical evidence makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the potential vulnerability of children of diverse SOGIESC to recruitment and additional abuses when associated with armed forces or groups.

GENDER NORMS AND HOW THEY IMPACT UPON THE CAUSES, COURSE AND CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD SOLDIERING

Children's experiences of social norms in times of conflict are influenced, among other things, by heightened insecurity and correlated protection risks, as well as, resource scarcity and economic hardship. All children can be instrumentalized by armed actors because of their gender. The division of labour between boys and girls often mirrors context-specific gender roles and preconceived notions of relative strengths and capacities.[29] While roles and responsibilities frequently diverge, there can also be overlap. These norms also dictate the far-reaching secondary harms experienced by children during and after their release and reintegration.

Socio-economic determinants can drive boys to enlist as a means of self-protection and survival. The attitudes and expectations of armed actors, families or communities may pressure boys to engage in the fighting as a means of gaining respect.[30] Once recruited, boys are frequently used as armed combatants, as well as for physically laborious, logistical and tactical roles such as porters, patrols and spies. Amongst Mai-Mai militia groups in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, adolescent boys (not adult men) are accorded the responsibility of communal protection.[31] Boys may rely on substance abuse to withstand the

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26   Alon Margalit, "Still a blind spot: The protection of LGBT persons during armed conflict and other situations of violence," *International Review of the Red Cross 100* (2018), 237-265. doi:10.1017/S1816383119000201.

27   Ibid.

28   UNHCR, *Protecting Persons with Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities*.

29   Kapur, *Gender, Age And Conflict*.

30   Ibid; Emma de Vise-Lewis, Stefano Schwarz and Bavon Mupenda, *Tug of War: Children in Armed Groups in DRC* (War Child, May 2018), https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13862/pdf/tug-of-war_children_in_armed_groups_in_drc.pdf.

31   Nidhi Kapur, *The Gendered Dimensions of Armed Conflict on Children in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Save the Children, 2021), https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/gendered-dimensions-armed-conflict-children-sub-saharan-africa.

hardships confronted during and between battles. They can be coerced into committing other crimes, including killing, maiming, looting, burning, and raping, sometimes violating even their own family members.[32]

Sadly, these roles place boys at risk of possible injury, disease, and death – in addition to arbitrary arrest and detention due to their actual or alleged association with armed forces or groups.[33] Whilst less often talked about, boys do not escape sexual violence during combat.[34] Boys are also at increased risk of torture in detention – including of a sexual nature – because of the higher numbers of boys arrested.[35] Long-term consequences for boys following detention may involve stigma, physical and mental health issues, displacement, separation from their families, and difficulties with social reintegration.[36]

For both boys and girls, there are risks of long-term psychosocial distress and mental health issues.[37] However, the roles and responsibilities of girls may differ because of prevailing gender norms. Girls frequently fill support and sexual functions – working as cooks, cleaners and sexual slaves. In some instances, girls may seek relations with armed men – or be encouraged by others to do so – in order to meet their own basic needs or that of their family.[38] Girls have also been used to incentivize male fighters – men and boys may be promised 'wives' as a reward for their battlefield successes.[39]

Yet the roles of girls are not always fully distinct from those of boys. Girls can also carry arms

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32 Kapur, *The Gendered Dimensions of Armed Conflict*.

33 United Nations, *Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty* (2019), https://omnibook.com/Global-Study-2019.

34 Human Rights Watch and Helem, *"They Treated Us in Monstrous Ways"*; Chynoweth, Freccero, & Touquet, "Sexual violence against men and boys," 90 - 94.

35 Hannah Thompson, *A Matter of Life and Death* (Child Protection Working Group and ChildFund, 2015), https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/9462/pdf/a20matter20of20life20or20death_lowres.pdf.

36 Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict and Human Rights Watch, *Military Detention of Children in Armed Conflict: The Role of Handover Protocols* (2019), https://watchlist.org/publications/military-detention-of-children-in-armed-conflict.

37 Theresa S. Betancourt, Katrina Keegan, Jordan Farrar, and Robert T. Brennan, "The intergenerational impact of war on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing: lessons from the longitudinal study of war-affected youth in Sierra Leone," *Conflict and Health*, 14, no. 62, (2020), doi: 10.1186/s13031-020-00308-7.

38 Emma de Vise-Lewis, Stefano Schwarz and Bavon Mupenda, *Tug of War: Children in Armed Groups in DRC* (War Child, May 2018), https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13862/pdf/tug-of-war_children_in_armed_groups_in_drc.pdf.

39 Kapur, Gender, *Age And Conflict*.

as spies, frontline fighters, and suicide bombers. Girls in Colombia, for example, were forced to engage in sexual relations with government forces to gather intelligence.[40] In the Kasaï region of Democratic Republic of Congo, girls were thought to possess magical powers rendering them impervious to bullets. Girls as young as four years old were sent to the battlefield – ostensibly as human shields – dressed in magical straw skirts and charms, armed with little more than sticks, brooms, mops and kitchen utensils.[41]

Girls in Nigeria have been used as human bombs by Boko Haram. This strategy is predicated on widely held perceptions of women and girls as non-threatening, or as victims rather than perpetrators, allowing female bombers to go undetected. Not only do they arouse less suspicion, female bombers are less likely to be subjected to invasive searches.[42] Evidence also suggests that girls are allowed to move more freely within the wider community even when associated with an armed actor.[43]

The specific consequences of child soldiering for girls include exposure to rape and sexual violence; early or unwanted pregnancies, as well as complications during both pregnancy and childbirth. In some cases, girls may opt to remain with their armed force or group, rather than undergo release and reintegration processes.[44] In many conservative societies impacted by conflict, the likelihood of being a social outcast is greater for girls returning pregnant or with a child born out of marriage.[45] Children born of conflict-related rape face unique risks. They are reported to be at increased risk of later recruitment into armed forces or groups themselves.[46] Children fathered by Boko Haram insurgents can face a lifetime of family rejection and social stigmatization.[47]

40 Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, *Colombia's War on Children*, (2004), http://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/WL-Report-Colombia-2004-en.pdf.

41 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *"All that I have lost" Impact of Attacks on Education for Women and Girls in Kasai Central Province, Democratic Republic of Congo* (2019), https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/documents_drc_kasai_attacks_on_women_and_girls.pdf.

42 Kapur, *Gender, Age And Conflict*.

43 de Vise-Lewis, Schwarz and Mupenda, *Tug of War*.

44 International Alert/UNICEF, *"Bad Blood" Perceptions of children born of conflict-related sexual violence and women and girls associated with Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria* (2017), https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Nigeria_BadBlood_EN_2016.pdf.

45 War Child, *Rethink Child Soldiers: A new approach to the reintegration of all children associated with armed forces and groups* (2019), https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/rethink-child-soldiers-new-approach-reintegration-all-children-associated-armed-forces-and.

46 António Guterres, *Conflict related sexual violence: Report of the United Nations Secretary-General*, S/2019/280 (29 March 2019), https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/report/s-2019-280/Annual-report-2018.pdf

47 International Alert/UNICEF, *"Bad Blood"*.

THE VANCOUVER PRINCIPLES: PURPOSE AND POTENTIAL

At the international level, there have been incredible strides in the global fight for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls everywhere, including in conflict settings. 2020 marked twenty-five years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[48] and twenty years since UN Resolution 1325 and the creation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.[49]

There is a growing understanding of how to protect children in situations of conflict. Graça Machel's 1996 ground-breaking report[50] inspired the UN General Assembly to recommend the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC).[51] Fifteen years ago, the monitoring of grave violations against children began,[52] solidifying a stand-alone agenda for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC). The international community started to recognize children engaged in conflict as victims as opposed to perpetrators.[53] In 2007, the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups were developed.[54] These attempted to recognize and redress the historical invisibility of girls from earlier release and reintegration efforts.[55] Practical approaches to improving gender-sensitivity were outlined in the associated Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), including recommendations for how to better identify and access girls for the purposes of documentation and subsequent release and reintegration.[56] The IDDRS has since gone through an iterative process of revisions based on lessons and best practices from the field.[57]

Launched in 2017 by the Government of Canada, the Vancouver Principles go further, combining the WPS and CAAC agendas by setting out commitments to child protection and

48   United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (September 1995), https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf.

49   United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325 (2000), https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000).

50   Graça Machel, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* (1996), https://undocs.org/A/51/306.

51   United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution adopted by the general assembly*, A/RES/51/77 (20 February 1997), https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/51/77.

52   United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1612*, S/RES/1612(2005), https://undocs.org/S/RES/1612(2005).

53   Kapur, *Gender, Age And Conflict*.

54   UNICEF, *The Paris Principles*.

55   Kapur, *Gender, Age And Conflict*.

56   United Nations, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (2006), https://www.unddr.org/.

57   United Nations, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (2020), https://www.unddr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-IDDRS-four-products.pdf.

promoting the visibility of women in peacekeeping.[58] Importantly, the Vancouver Principles acknowledge the centrality of child protection and the intersectional influence of gender. They note that Member States should account for (1) the "differential impact of conflict on girls and boys" and (2) their "specific needs, including those based on gender, age and other identity factors."[59]

The full potential of the Vancouver Principles vis-à-vis the question of gender is made clear in its accompanying implementation guidance which proposes the need for gender to be taken into account across planning, training, recruitment, deployment and monitoring.[60] It explicitly references the unique contribution of women in peacekeeping operations, citing their capacity to "often access populations and venues that are closed to men…" and to "communicate and engage with children differently."[61] It further suggests that all military, police, and civilian peacekeeping staff should have training on "gender-related aspects of encounters with child soldiers."[62]

Disaggregation of data by gender – in addition to age and disability – can help make visible otherwise hidden biases amongst actors responsible for the protection and the monitoring of rights violations of children in situations of armed conflict. The implementation guidance advises Member States to present "deliberate analysis of gender dynamics…to help dispel some persistent myths around child soldiers, such as the lingering misperception that girl child soldiers are not employed in combat roles, or that boy child soldiers do not experience sexual or gender-based violence."[63] They recognize the need for "national planners [to] have a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of the situation …."[64] Yet, it stops short of stepping outside of the gender binary.

Key stakeholders – including peacekeeping personnel, armed actors, UN Member States and agencies – must recognize and report on the diversity of children that are subjected to recruitment and use. In contexts where discussing issues relating to SOGIESC may place

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58   Government of Canada, *Vancouver Principles*; As of October 2019, a total of 96 countries have endorsed the Vancouver Principles. Government of Canada, The Vancouver Principles, (as of October 1, 2019), https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes.aspx?lang=eng.

59   Government of Canada, *Vancouver Principles*.

60   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles* (2019), https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/vancouver-principles.html.

61   Ibid.

62   Ibid.

63   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles* (2019), https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2019/igvp-20190614.pdf, page 15.

64   Ibid.

staff and/or children's lives at risk, systematic data collection may not be possible. However, capturing anecdotal evidence and using it anonymously to influence policy and practice will enable interventions that are more responsive to the specific needs of non-binary and non-heteronormative children. This would ensure that gender stereotypes are put aside in favour of gender-responsive interventions.

Homogeneity in the staffing of peacekeeping missions the world over can create a narrow field of vision. As acknowledged by the advent of the Murad Code, issues facing girl survivors are harder to report to institutions that are male-dominated and or ill-equipped to appropriately handle the intersectional needs of children.[65] In the same vein, diversification of the peacekeeping workforce in general – with parallel investments to raise awareness of the inherent heterogeneity of children – can pave the way for important shifts in organizational culture. Norm-setting initiatives can open up the necessary space for boy survivors of sexual violence, as well as, gender non-conforming and/or non-heteronormative children to speak to their self-identified needs during documentation processes and other interactions with peacekeeping personnel.

Not only have the Vancouver Principles secured support from key actors in the international political arena, their endorsement promotes the adoption and domestication of these ways of working into doctrine and training for military and police personnel at the national level. This has the potential to generate a normative shift in national practices, even when personnel are not formally engaged in peacekeeping missions overseas.[66] Training of staff – those in management, technical, and administrative positions and also those filling military functions within peacekeeping operations – will strengthen both prevention and response actions. General training on gender, safeguarding, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and psychological first aid would ensure better recognition of the heterogeneity of children, each with unique protection risks and needs. Awareness-raising on the existence of unconscious bias among all personnel supporting efforts to prevent and respond to the needs of conflict-affected children is also essential.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In applying a gender perspective systematically across all aspects of the recruitment and use of children, the Paris Principles already represented an important departure from past efforts.

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65   Institute for International Criminal Investigations, Nadia's Initiative, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Background paper & draft global code of conduct for documenting & investigating conflict-related sexual violence* ("The Murad Code") (June 2020), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eba1018487928493de323e7/t/5efa1554a8553428c9395936/1593447765159/English+Draft-MuradCode%2BBackgroundPaper+June2020+Website.pdf.

66   Kapur, *Gender, Age And Conflict*.

However, the way in which they mainstreamed gender was to highlight the specificity of girls. This was a necessary reflex given the extent to which girls were excluded from previous Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes in Sierra Leone and Liberia.[67] The corollary to this is the risk of obscuring the disproportionate targeting of boys in all settings, the context-specific ways in which girls may be instrumentalized, and the continued discounting of children of diverse SOGIESC.

As the Vancouver Principles begin to move from endorsement to operationalization, it will be important to ensure that the specific needs of boys – including their increased vulnerability to radicalization, recruitment and detention – be considered in the development of tailored prevention and response interventions. Also, interventions must escape stereotypes and address the intersecting realities and needs of diverse children – girls fill roles as combatants; boys experience sexual violence. What is required is an approach that captures the true meaning of gender equality – that is equality for girls and boys, women and men, and children and adults of diverse SOGIESC.

The diversity of what it means to be a child, coupled with socio-cultural and religious norms that are uniquely expressed in each context, leads to a widely divergent range of causes, experiences, and outcomes for children associated with armed forces and groups. Approaches to the prevention and response of recruitment and use must therefore move beyond the binary to capture the full complexity of the context-specific, gendered experience of child soldiers. Actions to protect children from recruitment and use must be grounded in an understanding of all children's distinct and differentiated needs. Implementation would need to be participatory, inclusive, and reflective. The nature of activities would have to be flexible, so that they can be adapted over time as lessons are learnt from implementation and continued consultation with diverse actors.

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67   Kapur, *Gender, Age And Conflict*.

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Hannah Thompson has over twenty year's experience supporting child protection, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and education programmes across the globe. She has lived and/or worked in South and Southeast Asia; West, East, Central and North Africa; and the Middle East. Hannah has: supported children associated with armed forces and groups; led case management support for survivors of SGBV; worked with authorities and communities to re-establish and protect schools during conflict; and worked with refugees who are, or identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex to understand their capacities and support needs. Hannah has contributed to and produced numerous flagship reports, publications, and sets of guidance on issues relating to the protection of children. Hannah has a Masters in Anthropology and Development – with a focus on kinship and gender – from the London School of Economics. She currently works out of her home in South West France.

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN ADVANCING THE VANCOUVER PRINCIPLES IN ARMED FORCES

By Vanessa Brown[1]

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Photo credit: Dallaire Institute

ABSTRACT:

Drawing from United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and the Vancouver Principles, this paper highlights key factors to be addressed in military training and education to ensure that military members are adequately prepared to protect children affected by conflict and to enhance military capabilities to participate in the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Informed by feminist theories and analysis, this paper argues that military professionals are better prepared for the protection of children when they are given the opportunity to explore gender concepts in relation to their own socialization to the military and if they are provided with the right theories and tools to understand and respond to gender and intersectional dynamics of children and armed conflict. The paper suggests that while content that illuminates gender constructs and their relation to the security of children is crucially important, determining the right pedagogic approaches that support the effective training and education of military professionals is equally vital.

INTRODUCTION

The prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers has a critical and enduring relationship to gender dynamics in societies before, during, and in the aftermath of crises and conflict. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and Related Resolutions known collectively as the resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) each describe how sexual violence and conflict are gendered and how in particular, boys and girls can experience conflict differently due to societal gender norms and roles. Academic exploration of these differential (and often disproportionate) experiences relates them to longstanding gender inequities in societies due primarily to the cultural elevation of the status and power of men.[1] In times of societal unrest, gender disparities brought on by systems of patriarchy can be exacerbated, and the functions, roles, and circumstances of girls and boys can shift.[2]

The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers were launched by Canada in 2017. At the time, 54 UN Member States endorsed the Vancouver Principles. Since then, the number has grown to closer to 100 endorsing Members. The Principles comprise 17 political commitments that focus on child protection in peacekeeping as well as the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers.[3] Representatives from Global Affairs, the Department of National Defence, as well as Canada's delegation to the UN worked collaboratively with members of endorsing States and civil society organizations to develop Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles (IGVP).[4] This guidance aims to assist endorsing Member States to apply the Vancouver Principles to national-level policy, plans, and capabilities and to ensure that contributing police and military personnel on UN missions receive clear direction, adequate resources,

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1   Joshua Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).; Joan Grace. "Sending Mixed Messages: Gender-Based Analysis and the "Status of Women"." *Canadian Public Administration*, 40, no. 4 (1997): 582-598; Cynthia Cockburn, 'Snagged on the Contradiction: NATO UNSC Resolution 1325, and Feminist Responses'. Originally presented at the Annual Meeting of No to War – No to NATO Dublin. (15-17 April 2011), Unpublished manuscript. http://www.cynthiacockburn.org/BlogNATO1325.pdf.; Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005).

2   David Duriesmith, *Masculinity and new war: The gendered dynamics of contemporary armed conflict* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017).

3   Government of Canada, "Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers," Government of Canada, https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes-english.pdf.

4   Alan Okros, "Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces Capacity to Address Child Soldiers," *Canadian Military Journal*, 20, no. 1 (2019): 65-69.

and optimal training and education to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers and to respond effectively to children in situations of armed conflict.[5]

While the Vancouver Principles tie the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers to an understanding of gender dynamics, and while the IGVP acknowledges the importance of training and education that underscores this connection, very few training and education programmes for military personnel explicitly foreground the consideration of gender dynamics as integral to military roles in the protection of children and the prevention of child soldiery. This research paper examines training and education courses that are available to military personnel on child protection and the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers based on a review of topics and curriculum available on open-source websites.

Drawing from this review, the paper demonstrates that while most courses speak tangentially to gender dynamics, few place focus on the requirement for military personnel to apply gender perspectives in order to fully understand and address why, how, and under what conditions girls and boys experience conflict and can be differentially forced or enticed into recruitment as well as disparately used by armed groups and forces. Noting this gap in the field of military education and training, the paper explores potential areas for the expansion of gender content in extant programmes, including the development of curricula on gender definitions in relation to children and updated approaches to analysis in these areas such as the incorporation of intersectionality and militarized masculinities. This analysis offers two key insights: first, it presents a review of the implementation of existing commitments to the integration of gender considerations in Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) training; and second, drawing on feminist theories and analysis it provides a series of recommendations to expand existing commitments to better attend to how different axes of power intersect with gender and how gender content and pedagogy could be used to examine internal dynamics of peacekeeping institutions and their culture.

GENDER, CHILD PROTECTION AND UNDERSTANDING MILITARY CULTURES

Literatures attending to peacekeeping more broadly,[6] as well as peacekeeper training more narrowly,[7] have underscored the importance of considering and including gender perspectives

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5   Ibid.

6   Mazurana, Dyan E., Angela Raven-Roberts, and Jane L. Parpart, *Gender, Conflict, and Peacekeeping*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Kreft, Anne-Kathrin, "The Gender Mainstreaming Gap: Security Council Resolution 1325 and UN Peacekeeping Mandates." *International Peacekeeping*, 24, no. 1 (2017): 132-158.

7   Mackay, Angela. "Training the Uniforms: Gender and Peacekeeping Operations." *Development in Practice 13*, no. 2-3 (2003): 217-223; Carson, Lisa. "Pre-Deployment 'Gender' Training and the Lack Thereof for Australian Peacekeepers." *Australian Journal of International Affairs 70*, no. 3 (2016):

in the work of peacekeepers, both civilian and military. They note that inequalities and vulnerabilities, particularly in conflict contexts, are often linked to patriarchal social arrangements[8] and evolving social constructions of gender. They also note that gendered crimes of military peacekeepers, such as rape, gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse,[9] are connected to the development of hegemonic and violent forms of militarized masculinity.[10] Dean Laplonge explains that despite the link between peacekeeper gender-based violence and the institutional construction of militarized masculinity, there remains a striking absence of opportunities to consider the practices of men and militarized masculinity in gender training for UN peacekeepers.[11] Drawing from my analysis of training and education available to military members specifically on CAAC, these opportunities are significantly more limited.

Naming the Patriarchy

Most of the world's societies are patriarchal. Patriarchal societies—those in which social organization is based on men's normative and material control of social, economic, and political power[12] —ascribe in varying degrees to a two-sex system.[13] In a two-sex system, body parts, chemistry, and bodily practices become categorized in hierarchical and binary ways that stand to classify individuals in two distinct and differentially valued biological sexes—male and female.[14] While there is nothing biologically essential about sex, aside from the physical materiality of bodies, each body is understood (or socially constructed) in patriarchal societies through myriad processes of socialization to one or another category of this sex duality.[15] In this way, while sex is generally acquired naturally,[16] gender is learned

275-292.

8   Kaplan, Laura Duhan. "Woman as Caretaker: An Archetype that Supports Patriarchal Militarism." *Hypatia 9*, no. 2 (1994): 123-133.

9   Oswald, Bruce 'Ossie'. "Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Un Peace Operations." *Journal of International Peacekeeping 20*, no. 3-4 (2016): 143-170.

10   Higate, Paul. "Peacekeepers, Masculinities, and Sexual Exploitation." *Men and Masculinities 10*, no. 1 (2007): 99-119; Karim, Sabrina and Kyle Beardsley. "Explaining Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions: The Role of Female Peacekeepers and Gender Equality in Contributing Countries." *Journal of Peace Research 53*, no. 1 (2016): 100-115.

11   Laplonge, Dean. "The Absence of Masculinity in Gender Training for UN Peacekeepers." *Peace Review 27*, no. 1 (2015): 91-99.

12   Goldstein, 2001.

13   Margrit Shildrick, *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries: Feminism, Postmodernism, and (bio)Ethics*, (London: Routledge, 1997).

14   Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*. Translation by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Che-vallier, (New York: Vintage Books, 1949).

15   Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1990).

16   Increasingly aspects of sex can be changed, augmented, removed, or acquired through technological and medical advances, and in some more radical interpretations, questions have been

and acquired socially. This distinction—that sex is biological, while *gender* is social—is the basis of critical gender theory. Understanding socially constructed gender divisions of power in societies is an essential aspect of gender theory. Recognizing gender power is also deeply beneficial to military training and education as gender constructs are key and driving conditions influencing conflict, security, and peace.

Acknowledging Social Construction

Social construction—the process through which societies come to understand the world–happens through the development of 'broadly shared views, definitions, ideas and connotations' about people, things, and events that become dominant overtime.[17] As these ideas and views come to be preeminent in society, they tend to be understood as 'fact' or 'reality' and "often become so deeply embedded in our way of seeing the world that we spend little, if any, time actually thinking about them."[18] Gender, is a social construct as are other systems of social power such as race and class.

Ideas about the roles of women, men, girls, and boys in societies are directly related to each society's specific way of constructing gender. *Gender roles* are social constructs about the different functions, responsibilities, capacities and possibilities for women, men, girls, boys, and non-binary people. In societies with greater disparities between women and men, gender roles tend to be more unequal, often setting social conditions for men and boys to have greater access to power, status, and resources. In conflict contexts, these gender disparities are often heightened.[19] Traditional gender roles in societies can also be disrupted to forward the efforts of particular parties to conflict, as well as to support evolving political, religious, and social agendas. Moreover, gender roles may be constructed differently in the process of a conflict's resolution, with studies showing that gender equality can be advanced or diminished in the process of peacebuilding.[20]

It is particularly important to note that soldiering itself is relational to gendered social constructs about those deserving of power and those who fight. Fighters, warriors, protector, protected, men, women, masculinities, and femininities are each socially constructed in ways that enable cultural visions of the desired path ahead.[21] In patriarchal societies, the

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raised as to whether sex itself has, to a large degree, been socially constructed. For more on the social construction of sex see: Butler, 1990; Shildrick, 1997.

17 Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. "Disrupting Social Constructions in the Profession of Arms," in Krystal Hachey, Tamir Libel, and Waylon Dean Eds. *Rethinking Military Professionalism for the Changing Armed Forces*. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020).

18 Ibid.

19 Duriesmith, 2017; Connell, 2005.

20 Ibid.

21 Sandra Whitworth, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne

path envisioned often reproduces the male-dominant gender order and contains masculinist assumptions. Namely, that the male-dominant order and traditional military ways of solving disputes are inevitable, natural, and good. Feminist critiques of WPS highlight the resounding silence within Security Council Resolutions on confronting the social inequalities resultant of the unquestioned hegemony of men, masculinities, and militarism.[22]

Masculinity and the Military

Indeed, gender roles in societies often associate soldiers, armed forces, armed groups, and gangs as the domain of men and masculinity.[23] In many societies, joining armed forces and armed groups is a primary way for boys to prove their masculinity as a right of passage into manhood.[24] Whitworth explains that these militarized masculinities can be differentiated from masculinities in other social contexts due to the processes and conditions under which ordinary people are made and moulded into soldiers.[25] Johnson and Walsh explain that the "form of militarized masculinity that is often dominant within the armed forces remains during peacekeeping deployments, and has been directly linked to abuses against women and children."[26] Yet, socialization to these militarized masculinities, and militarized gender more broadly, are not considered in UN Security Council Resolutions on WPS,[27] nor are they examined in military training and education.[28] Training and education on the socialization to militarised masculinities could enable military members to reshape and redefine common gender constructions in armed forces by articulating militarized gender in a way that has the capacity to be supportive of gender equality[29] and attendant to the originating feminist goals of WPS; namely, not to simply make war safer for women, but to dismantle the war system altogether.[30]

As gender roles are social constructs, there is nothing innate to men and boys that make them born contributors to conflict and violence. Women, girls, and non-binary people have historically been, and continue to be, perpetrators of violence, combatants, soldiers, and

Rienner Publishers, 2007).

22   Ibid.

23   Goldstein, *War and Gender.*

24   Duriesmith, *Masculinity and new war*; Connell, 2005, 213.

25   Whitworth, 2007.

26   Dustin Johnson and Allyssa Walsh, "Gender, Peacekeeping, and Child Soldiers: Training and Research in Implementation of the Vancouver Principles," *Allons-y 4* (2020): 51-60, 54.

27   Kronsell, Annica. G*ender, Sex, and the Postnational Defense: Militarism and Peacekeeping*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

28   Laplonge, 2015.

29   Claire Duncanson, "Hegemonic masculinity and the possibility of change in gender relations." *Men and Masculinities18*, no. 2 (2015): 231-248.

30   Cockburn, 2011.

supporters of conflict. However, patriarchal norms in societies tend to privilege males as wielders of power, including the coercive powers of violence in armed forces and groups. In this way, the narratives, histories, and experiences of women, girls and non-binary people that participate in armed forces and armed groups are often marginalized or omitted from dominant discourses around the globe.

When teaching military personnel in particular, an introduction to the way their military and other armed forces and groups construct gender roles, behaviours, and practices differently can help to underscore how they come to understand being a soldier in their institution, and how this understanding of gender and the soldier may diverge with other societies and in other contexts. Consideration of how their organization conceives of gender and the soldier in culturally specific ways may assist military personnel to make better decisions when confronted with the fact that girls and boys participate in a variety of roles that may not be traditional to their own conceptions of gender, such that girls and boys play active roles as soldiers, porters, cooks, spies, and sexual slaves. Indeed, military professionals might be better prepared for the protection of children if they are given the opportunity to explore their own socialization to the military.

Socialization to the Military

Military socialization and military culture often construct a particular view of the world for military professionals. This worldview typically presents "male-centric perceptions of conflict" not just within militaries but across the security sector.[31] Socialization to military culture means that ordinary citizens go through the process of learning how to conform to military norms, identities, structures, hierarchies, ethos, and ideals. All of which are usually presented narrowly in masculine and masculinist terms.[32] Understanding social constructions about gender-specific to the military and the norms, behaviours, and worldviews that emerge from certain scripts of militarized masculinity can help military members to better understand how inequalities common to women, racialized and LGBTQ members are a product of institutionalized social systems of power and not due to the innate challenges of individuals.

As Joan Grace articulates "social systems of power and dependence [ ] are the products of the particular way society is structured" through "societal expectations, attitudes and practices."[33] These expectations, attitudes and practices are institutionalized overtime, embedded within organizational cultures, structures, systems, regulations, processes, and practices. As such, the

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31 Johnson and Walsh 2020, p. 58.

32 Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. "Dancing around Gender: Changing Identity in Canada's Post-Deschamps Military," in Breede, H. Christian. *Culture and the Soldier: Identities, Values, and Norms in Military Engagements*. Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2019: 32-56; Whitworth, 2007; Goldstein, 2001.

33 Grace, 1997, 586.

military creates its own specific institutional gender inequalities, and these have a profound and material impact on women and other marginalized groups' access to opportunities and resources.[34] Understanding the construction of the military's gender order can also illuminate the ways in which gender hegemony is developed similarly or dissimilarly in other contexts. A deeper understanding of the development and maintenance of gendered expectations, attitudes, and practices in the military can help members to search for and better identify the push and pull factors faced by children and their complicated relation to armed groups and armed conflict. Moreover, understanding why women, men, girls, boys, and non-binary people experience conflict and crises differently, and identifying how and under what conditions girls, boys and non-binary youth come to be used and recruited in the way they are by armed forces and groups requires military members to learn about and apply *gender perspectives*.

The IGVP defines gender perspectives as a way to "recognize that armed conflict and humanitarian disasters affect women, men, girls, and boys in different ways."[35] It notes that an application of gender perspectives enables understanding about how "activities, policies, and programs have different effects."[36] For military personnel, applying gender perspectives means actively and intentionally seeking out information about gender roles, expectations, and attitudes in societies and how these relate to the differential impacts of conflict on women, men, girls, boys and non-binary people. Yet, applications of gender perspectives without consideration of other intersecting systems of social organization only provides military personnel with a piece of the child protection picture.

MILITARY LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Militaries have made significant efforts training and educating their members in relation to winning contemporary wars, maximizing operational effectiveness in uncertain terrain, and responding to rapidly changing geopolitical security environments.[37] As Persyn and Polson suggest, 21st-century complexities in global security are "changing needs of military learners."[38] Advancing capabilities in the human terrain, such as the protection of civilians

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34   Rachel Woodward and Trish Winter. *Sexing the Soldier: The Politics of Gender and the Contemporary British Army*. London; New York: Routledge, 2007.

35   Government of Canada, Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2019), https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2019/igvp-20190614.pdf, p. 17.

36   Ibid.

37   Charles Allen, "Redress of Professional Military Education: The Clarion Call." *Joint Forces Quarterly 59*, no. 4 (2010): 94100.

38   John Persyn and Cheryl Polson. "Evolution and Influence of Military Adult Education." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education 136* (2012): 516, 16.

and understanding the disproportionate impact of conflict on diverse groups has increased demands within professional military education and training for critical thinking, empathy, and viewing problems through multiple lenses. [39] Several nations, including the United States, have even invested in training that seeks to understand and influence local cultures.[40]

Research on pedagogy in the military context has explored ways to best approach military learning in order to align military thinking and identity with military ethos, doctrine, and ideology[41] as well as to attune military professionals to rapidly changing problems, technologies, communication, complex communities and cultures of people.[42] Some practitioners and academics within military education institutes have illustrated the utility of post-positivist and constructivist approaches to learning as they aim to "influence a shift in thinking within [learners] and those that they work with."[43] Indeed, constructivist approaches to learning in professional military education and training have also been recommended to align militaries to the values and culture of their origin societies in order to achieve civil-military trust and feminist progress.[44] Importantly, Nancy Taber suggests that feminist pedagogy is required for military professionals to understand and address insecurity underpinned by gender constructs and masculinism.[45] There are a broad range of feminist pedagogies, but their central goals are emancipation and liberation particularly in relation to "what is taught and how it is taught," as well as setting conditions for deep self-reflection and insight for educators and pupils.[46] Feminist pedagogies advance social justice by calling attention to and working to dismantle sexism, racism, heteronormativity, classism, and other mutually reinforcing systems of oppression.[47] In this way, education on CAAC could be valuably informed not only

39   Ibid.

40   Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. "New Leaders, 'New Wars': A Reflective Approach to Applying Gender and Cultural Perspectives." In *From "Knowing" to "Doing": International Perspectives on Leading Effectively*, edited by Daniel Watola and Allister MacIntyre: 23590. (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2018).

41   Katherine Brown and Victoria SymeTaylor."Women Academics and Feminism in Professional Military Education." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal 31*, nos. 5/6 (2012): 45266; Nancy Taber. "The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military." *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal 34* (2019): 2736; Brown and Okros, 2018.

42   Stewart Hase and Chris Kenyon. "Heutagogy: A child of complexity theory." *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 4, no. 1 (2007), 111-118.

43   Ibid, 59.

44   Taber, 2009; Aiko Holvikivi. *Fixing Gender: The Paradoxical Politics of Peacekeeper Training*. PhD Thesis. London School of Economics and Political Science, 2019.

45   Nancy Taber, "After Deschamps: Men, Masculinities, and the Canadian Armed Forces." *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health 4*, no. 1 (2018): 1007, 105.

46   Kristine De Welde, Nicola Foote, Michelle Hayford, and Martha Rosenthal. "Team Teaching "Gender Perspectives": A Reflection on Feminist Pedagogy in the Interdisciplinary Classroom." *Feminist Teacher 23*, no. 2 (2013): 105-125, 106.

47   Ibid.

by understanding gender and intersectional theories and tools, but also by applications of feminist pedagogies and constructivist approaches in the military classroom.

Intersectionality & Protection of Children

As described in the approach to feminist pedagogy above, it is also vital for military personnel to recognize that the gendered differences experienced by women, men, girls, boys and non-binary people intersect with other demographic and experiential factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, tribe, caste, income, language, geographic location, education and so on. For example, it may be that girls of a certain age group, of a specific ethnicity or tribe, of a particular socio-economic class, and of a particular region, experience heightened situations of vulnerability to recruitment and use as child soldiers. Illustrations of the intersectional impact of conflict on girls and boys can be drawn from any number of cases, including the armed conflict in Sierra Leone from 1991-2002,[48] the recruitment of ethnic Albanian girls and boys to the Kosovo Liberation Army during the assault on Kosovo by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;[49] and the intersecting motivations behind the recruitment and use of thousands of children by the Sudan Liberation Army.[50] The Colombian conflict serves as another example that highlights how and under what intersecting conditions the recruitment and use of child soldiers varied over time-based on age, evolving societal gender roles, as well as ethnic and geographic disparities in employment.[51] As the Colombian case and others demonstrate, gender norms are rarely constructed equally across diverse groups of girls, boys and gender non-binary youth in conflict-affected societies. As such, in addition to learning about gender perspectives, it is beneficial for military professionals to understand *intersectionality*.

Intersectionality refers to the social construction and differential valuation of categories or 'kinds' of people. It is a theory developed by critical race and feminist scholar Kimberle Crenshaw that ultimately aims to highlight the emergence of inequality through and within multiple and mutually constitutive gender, racial, classed, abled, and sexually constructed kinds, among others. Intersectionality is intended to be used as a descriptive and prescriptive theory, as it first makes inequities visible by mapping the social processes that create them,

48 Valerie Oosterfeld. "The construction of gender in child soldiering in the Special Court for Sierra Leone," in Drumbl, Mark A. and Jastine C. Barrett. *Research Handbook on Child Soldiers*. (Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2019).

49 Dyan Mazurana,, Susan McKay, Khristopher Carlson, and Janel Kasper, "Girls in Fighting Forces and Groups: Their Recruitment, Participation, Demobilization, and Reintegration." *Peace and Conflict 8*, no. 2 (2002): 97-123, 105-106.

50 Christine Ryan, *The Children of War: Child Soldiers as Victims and Participants in the Sudan Civil War*. Vol. 37. (London;New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

51 Virginia Bouvier "Gender and the Role of Women in Colombia's Peace Processes", Background Paper, New York: UN Women, United States Institute of Peace, 2016: 14-16.

and then focuses on the work required to challenge and change these inequities through the redistribution of social value and material resources.[52] Exposing military personnel to intersectionality through applications of feminist pedagogy and by providing opportunities for them to learn about intersectional frameworks and analyses of CAAC can better enable military members to develop the critical thinking skills required for the prevention of the use and recruitment of children in armed groups and armed forces.

The Canadian Approach to Intersectionality

The Canadian government has begun to mainstream an intersectional approach to the use of gender perspectives within departmental policies, plans and actions using Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+). GBA+ is an analytical tool that Canada's federal government uses to advance principles of the WPS agenda and gender equality domestically and abroad. The "plus" in the name indicates that the tool goes beyond common applications of gender perspectives by intentionally including a range of other intersecting identity and experiential factors (such as age, education, language, geography, culture, and income) in analyses and decision making. GBA+ is applied across all of Canada's federal departments to assess the potential unequal impacts of policies, programs, and initiatives on diverse groups of women, men, girls, boys and non-binary people by taking into account gender and other identity factors.[53] Since 2016, the Canadian Armed Forces has been applying GBA+ to advance the goals of the WPS agenda by recognizing and responding to the different situations and needs of Canadian military personnel, Canadians domestically, and populations outside of Canada in operational contexts.[54]

There are critiques about the transformative potential of GBA+ particularly in relation to the extent to which its application can address systematic, structural, and institutionalized inequalities experienced by women,[55] as well as diverse Canadians.[56] Despite the critical race and feminist origins of GBA+, these radical perspectives for change are often balanced against and eclipsed by institutional pressures to maintain the status quo, ensuring organizational reproduction and sustainment. As Scala and Patterson explain "bureaucratic norms and

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52 Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine", *Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics, Stanford Law Review 43*, no. 6 (1989): 1241-1299.

53 Status of Women Canada, Lexicon of Key Terms Related to GBA+ (2018), https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acs/course-cours/eng/global/glossary_glossaire.html

54 Government of Canada, CDS Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions into CAF Planning and Operations (Jan 2016), https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/conduct/cds-directive-unscr-1325.html

55 Grace, 1997.

56 Olena Hankivsky. "The Lexicon of Mainstreaming Equality: Gender Based Analysis (GBA), Gender and Diversity Analysis (GDA) and Intersectionality Based Analysis (IBA)." *Canadian Political Science Review 6*, nos. 2/3 (2012): 171 -83.

principles such as secrecy, neutrality, hierarchy and rule-following, are often in direct conflict with ... calls for the active promotion of women's interests"[57] as well as transformative organizational change. They note also that the way bureaucrats understand and apply GBA+, as well as the way in which institutional culture aids or diminishes the tool's transformative potential requires further attention and investigation.[58] Moreover, criticisms about the mainstreaming of intersectionality, including through descriptive tools like GBA+, has removed its analytical power by distancing intersectionality away from the struggle against historical and mutually constituting oppressions such as patriarchy and white supremacy. GBA+ differs from Crenshaw's original conceptualization as it is removed from the prescriptive goals of critical race and feminist theory.

Indeed, within the context of the Canadian Armed Forces norms and principles of secrecy, neutrality (particularly in regard to meritocratic ideals of gender and racial neutrality), military hierarchy and deference to the chain of command are central to the way the military functions. But these aspects of military social organization may also stand to reify racist and patriarchal systems of oppression in the military, and as such, applications of GBA+ without attending to the struggles of women, racialized personnel and LGBTQ[59] members does little to understand and remove barriers to women's empowerment, intersectional equality, and social justice. Critical reflection on intersectional struggles within military socialization can enable military personnel to consider which aspects of military structures and culture are essential and which might stand to change for the benefit of all members. As I have argued elsewhere,[60] if the military claims to practice gender and racial neutrality (to not factor gender or race within the institutional processes and practices that enable members to progress in their careers), how can the military work to understand the gendered and racialized aspects of military socialization and culture that have been noted to facilitate unequal treatment for women[61], LGBTQ[62] and racialized members?[63] Notably, however, applications of GBA+ by military personnel have begun to force the issue by ensuring that disaggregated data is

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57   Francesca Scala and Stephanie Paterson. "Gendering Public Policy or Rationalizing Gender? Strategic Interventions and GBA+ Practice in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science 50*, no. 2 (2017): 427-442, 430.

58   Ibid.

59   LGBTQ refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer communities of people.

60   Brown and Okros. 2019.

61   Marie Deschamps, External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces National Defence and the Canadian Forces (2015).

62   Ibid.

63   Tammy George, "Be all You can be Or Longing to be: Racialized Soldiers, the Canadian Military Experience and the Im/Possibility of Belonging to the Nation." (2016). ProQuest Dissertations Publishing; Sherene Razack. *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping and the New Imperialism*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

collected and analysed to understand if and how institutional processes, systems, procedures and plans differentially impact women, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities, and members of LGBTQ communities. GBA+ has been used by military personnel to illuminate institutional inequities and address them.

As it is helpful in rendering gender and intersectional inequalities visible, GBA+ is a valuable tool that is worth including in military training on the protection of children. Applications of GBA+ can help military members to better understand the gender and intersectional dynamics that influence the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups. Yet, the success of GBA+ applications to child protection by military members also depends on the extent to which military members are also provided opportunities to think critically about the root causes of inequalities and the ways that inequalities are socially constructed in the military and society.

Throughout this discussion, I have intentionally used italics to emphasise key definitions and concepts that could be incorporated into the training and education of military personnel on child protection and the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers. Each of these definitions are important for military and other security sector personnel to leverage in their work to prevent violence experienced by children in conflict and crisis. However, these concepts are not simply theories or definitions, they are the essential tools of this work. While feminist concepts and frameworks are crucially important for military members to understand and apply in prevention and protection work, it is also essential that such ideas are presented to the military audience effectively using the right teaching approaches.

As demonstrated, there are benefits of applying feminist pedagogy. This teaching approach works intentionally to set the social conditions wherein military members feel more open to and receptive about ideas such as gender and intersectional inequality by creating space for critical self-reflection, collaborative dialogue and an orientation to shift personal philosophies. Drawing on these pedagogic strategies can create an environment where military professionals feel empowered to consider the military's role in supporting social transformations and change, such as its facilitation of prevention and its provision of child protection in conflict contexts. However, as the following sections show, current implementation of military training and education on children and armed conflict may be failing to adequately incorporate approaches and concepts related to gender and intersectionality.

Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles and Gender Perspectives

The Vancouver Principles encourage Member States to prioritize the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers and to take steps that ensure the preparation and appropriate actions of peacekeepers. The IGVP recognizes that the endorsement of the Vancouver Principles needs to be followed by concerted and concrete steps towards meaningful

implementation. It aims to provide a common basis through which policy, doctrine, training and education on child protection and the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers can be understood and expanded upon.[64]

In particular, the IGVP speaks directly to the impact of gender dynamics in the experiences of children in crisis and conflict contexts. The guidance document states that because of the effects of gender dynamics on children, gender perspectives need to be applied to mission plans and actions that address and prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers.[65] The IGVP strongly encourages Member States to incorporate gender perspectives in education and training. It notes that general knowledge of child protection ought to be mainstreamed across professional education curriculum, and that in mission training enhanced awareness of the gender dynamics associated with the recruitment and use of child soldiers is encouraged. The IGVP also notes that Child Protection Advisors and Focal Points as well as senior mission leadership require specialised training that includes viewing child protection and child soldiers through the lens of gender perspectives.[66] They also recommend that Member States strongly encourage the United Nations to develop training modules on child protection and child soldiers "including from a gender perspective."[67]

The IGVP points to a number of areas where the impact of gender dynamics should be identified and where gender perspectives should be applied to analyse mission activities including: specific protection tasks; information gathering; force composition;[68] and operational staff work.[69] Applications of gender perspectives are also noted to be of critical importance to analyses on the prevention of child soldiers and gender-sensitive assessments of early warning risk factors.[70]

These links made within the IGVP can be used to inform priority areas for gender-related curriculum on child protection and the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers. Ultimately the IGVP argues that all "training and education should include specific material on the gender-related aspects of encounters with child soldiers."[71]

The IGVP asks Member States to develop national training and education standards and resources on child protection and the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers

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64   Government of Canada, "The Vancouver Principles."

65   Government of Canada, Implementation Guidance, 16.

66   Ibid, p. 30.

67   Ibid, p. 31.

68   Ibid, p. 15.

69   Ibid, p. 18

70   Ibid, p. 19.

71   Ibid, p. 28.

that is consistent with extant United Nations materials and the materials of other international partners and civil society organizations. The following section draws on my secondary analysis of ongoing work within the Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security by Marion Laurence and Appendix B of the IGVP that traces available training and education for military personnel on child protection and the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers. This analysis explores the ways and extent to which child protection programmes available to military personnel incorporate gender perspectives.[72]

Programming on Child Protection and Child Soldiers with links to Gender Dynamics and Perspectives

To conduct the analysis presented in this section, I drew from ongoing research on available training and education for military professionals on CAAC conducted by Marion Laurence of the Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security.[73] Data about CAAC-related programming in this research was gathered through four methods. First, Laurence identified available courses on CAAC using data I collected in my 2020 research on 'Gender Related Programmes for Defence and Security Professionals.'[74] Gender-related courses that included programming related to CAAC were incorporated in Laurence's analysis. Second, drawing on Laurence's field experience, additional organizations with a history of work on child protection were identified, including international organizations (eg. United Nations Children's Fund) and civil society groups (eg. Save the Children), as well as organizations with interest in professional development for security and defence professionals (eg. United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)). Data was then gathered from the public-facing websites of these organizations about CAAC-related programme offerings. Third, Laurence employed a snowball approach, contacting known subject matter experts to request information about any relevant programming that they or their organization might be familiar with. Fourth, Laurence supplemented this information with an online search for relevant programming drawing from Safari and Google search engines between August 2020 and January 2021. Search terms included: child protection AND training; children and armed conflict AND training; CAAC AND training; child protection AND military training; children and armed conflict AND military training; CAAC AND military training.

Within Laurence's research, courses were incorporated if they met one of more of the following

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72   Ibid, p. 29.

73   Marion Laurence. *Mapping the Field: Programmes for Defence and Security Professionals Related to Children and Armed Conflict*, Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security, (Draft January 2021).

74   I applied a similar methodological approach to this research. See: Vanessa Brown. *Mapping the Field: Gender Related Programmes for Defence and Security Professionals*. National Defence, Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security, (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, 2020).

inclusion criteria: they (1) focused on child protection, broadly understood, in conflict settings OR on CAAC specific topics and they are open to defence and security professionals; (2) they target defence and security professionals specifically, and they include some content related to CAAC or child protection in conflict settings. Laurence excluded courses from analysis if they were found to be duplicate or older versions of a course already included in the analysis (eg. a course offered jointly by two organizations and listed on two different websites).

Drawing from Laurence's research to identify programmes available to military professionals on CAAC, I conducted a secondary analysis to examine if and the extent to which these programmes incorporated gender-related content. I used Google and Internet Explorer search engines to identify outward-facing websites of only those courses with a prominent CAAC focus. I excluded courses which focused primarily on gender and included content on CAAC. The search terms I used in this secondary analysis included: gender AND training; gender perspectives AND training; CAAC AND gender; child protection AND gender; girls AND boys AND armed conflict; CAAC AND girls AND boys.

From my secondary analysis, out of the twenty-nine programmes identified by Laurence, six programmes had incorporated some degree of gender training and education as articulated in outward-facing websites.[75] The specific programmes identified include:

- United Nations Core Pre-deployment Training Materials (CPTM)
- United Nations Specialised Training Materials (STMs) for military personnel;
- UNITAR and Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace & Security E-Learning Course for Security Sector Actors on Child Soldiers;
- Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security's Prevention of the Use of Child Soldiers: A Course for Security Sector Actors;
- United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence Human Security Advisor Course; and
- Centre for Military Ethics and Peace Operations Training Institute's Ethics in Peace Operations Course.

The degree to which gender, gender perspectives, gender roles, gender inequalities and differences were incorporated into these courses' curricula varied. The following paragraphs provide a summary of how these identified CAAC-focused programmes included content related to gender.

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75   The author is aware that what is presented outward facing websites might differ from what is available and/or presented inwardly and/or during the conduct of courses. The analysis of only outward facing websites is a limitation of this research analysis. Additional studies drawing from researchers with access to inward facing websites and full course content would be useful to further validate the findings here.

The United Nations CPTM and STMs for military personnel contain gender-related content. The STMs introduce military personnel to child protection concepts and provide scenarios and examples for military personnel to discuss and apply them. These training materials are available on the United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub. The Hub also contains modules specifically related to gender. The STMs are organized into six modules delivered in person or online. Module one, on CAAC contains content on "gender issues in child protection."[76] The topics of discussion include: the use of girls and boys in armed forces and armed groups; differential vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, rape and sexual violence in different contexts; different tasks assigned to girls and boys due to gender roles in their societies; gender-related methods of recruitment for girls and boys; differential experiences with identification as child soldiers; and disparate access and provision of support in reintegration of girls and boys in civilian society. The course also asks participants to think about 'gender issues in child protection' using short biographical style case studies of a girls' and boys' gender related differential experiences as child soldiers.

While this course makes explicit links to gender dynamics in the use and recruitment of child soldiers, it omits thinking about gender perspectives and in particular, the intersectional differences that can place specific groups of girls and boys into situations of vulnerability. The course does not include definitions on gender or gender roles, though it draws on these concepts throughout. In these ways, references to gender dynamics and how to address them in this course could benefit from exposing participants to these key definitions as a start point for deeper understanding. In addition, participants would benefit from learning about gender perspectives and how peacekeeping personnel can apply these frames of thinking and analysis to their own socialization to the military and military culture as well as plans and actions at the tactical to operational levels. Specifically, consideration to militarized masculinities idealized within armed forces could illuminate the processes through which adults are motivated and recruited to armed forces and armed groups. This broader understanding about gender's relation to militarization could also valuably inform considerations about the gendered motivations for children to join armed forces and armed groups, as well as the gendered motivations for armed groups and armed forces to desire the use of children.

Beyond the United Nations STMs course, Member States can also leverage other existing training and materials from the United Nations' international partners and civil society organizations. Courses that contain a clear and prominent connection to gender dynamics are few. UNITAR and the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace & Security have an E-Learning Course for Security Sector Actors on Child Soldiers.[77] The (2014) publication that describes

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76   United Nations Department of Peace Operations, UN Military Specialised Training Materials (STM) on Child Protection, https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/training/STM/UNMilitaryonCP

77   The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative and UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Child Soldiers: A E-Learning Course for Security Sector Actors, https://www.dallaireinstitute.org/

the course and its modules makes no mention of the gender dynamics that impact the use, recruitment and re-recruitment of child soldiers.[78] Though, Johnson and Walsh note that in light of the Vancouver Principles, a "primary interest are the Dallaire Initiative's efforts" to increase "training content for peacekeepers on how the recruitment and use of child soldiers is gendered."[79] The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security has developed Prevention of the Use of Child Soldiers: A Course for Security Sector Actors. This course contains a module on 'Girl Child Soldiers and Sexual and Gender-based Violence.'[80] It will be important to track the progress of the Institute's efforts as well as the work of the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security in advancing gender considerations in the education and training of peacekeepers on child protection.

In addition to these courses, the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence has a Human Security Advisor Course that is available for international military members. The course aims broadly to enhance understanding of issues surrounding human security, including human trafficking, CAAC as well as Women, Peace and Security (WPS). Topics covered include learning to 'provide advice on child protection and gender dynamics.'[81] Importantly, the course holistically covers concepts that are pertinent for military personnel to know in relation to the use and recruitment of child soldiers such as: 'the dynamics of culture and gender' ; 'gender dynamics in peace and conflict'; 'how to apply gender mainstreaming'; and 'how to integrate a gender perspective in reporting.'[82] While these concepts may be presented separately from the protection of children, they are presented proximally. As such, their proximal presentation could provide participants with enough knowledge to make important connections between gender dynamics and their influence on the use and recruitment of child soldiers. Akin to the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence's Human Security Course, the Peace Operations Training Institute and the Centre for Military Ethics at King's College London offer an Ethics in Peace Operations Course. This course has separate modules on cultural awareness, gender and peace operations, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), and child protection.[83]

publications/child-soldiers-a-e-learning-course-for-security-sector-actors/

78 The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative and UNITAR. Child Soldiers: A E-Learning Course for Security Sector Actors, Child Soldiers and Security Forces: A Joint Project between the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative (2014), www.childsoldiers.org/publications

79 Dustin Johnson and Allyssa Walsh, "Gender, Peacekeeping, and Child Soldiers: Training and Research in Implementation of the Vancouver Principles," *Allons-y 4* (2020): 51-60, 52.

80 Laurence, 2021.

81 United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, Human Security Advisor (HSA) Course, (United Kingdom: Ministry of Defence), https://www.da.mod.uk/course/HSA

82 Ibid.

83 Peace Operations Training Institute, "Ethics in Peace Operations," Harvey J. Langholtz Ed., (2019), https://www.peaceopstraining.org/courses/ethics-in-peace-operations-english-2019/

The delivery of key gender concepts alongside child protection training could help to build military personnel's understanding and capacity to prevent and address the use and recruitment of child soldiers using applications of gender perspectives, yet deeper and practical knowledge about applications of gender perspectives to child protection needs to be explicit. Advancing recommendations in the IGVP that encourage Member States to incorporate gender perspectives in education and training, could mean advancing suggestions in the introductory sections of this paper to further develop learning about gender and child protection for military personnel in ways that move from a tangential focus to a central one.

In addition, the programmes explored here, including the United Kingdom's Human Security Advisor Course could valuably include content on the challenges military personnel may encounter in applying gender perspectives to CAAC contexts due to patriarchal worldviews and norms constructed within their own organizations that may colour their gendered analyses. As Woodward and Winter suggest, the British Army is a masculine organization with noted gender inequities embedded in its personnel policies and cultural issues related to gender such as sexual harassment and misconduct.[84] Woodward and Winter, among others, link institutional gender inequalities in British, Canadian, Australian and U.S. armed forces to the construction of harmful ideas about military masculinity and femininity.[85]

It is also worth noting that gender inequality is visibly demonstrated by the low numbers of women in the armed forces of United Nations Member States, including Canada.[86] Women continue to represent even fewer numbers of military peacekeepers,[87] yet, it is widely acknowledged that women peacekeepers have a beneficial impact in peace operations and are integral partners in the prevention of the use and recruitment of child soldiers.[88] Member States must ensure that women are afforded equal access and opportunities to participate in training and education on child protection. In the same ways for men, having trained and educated women ensures not only that they are well supported and prepared, but that they are

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84   Woodward and Winter, 2007.

85   Ibid.; Andrea Elner. "The Ethics of Inclusion: Gender Equality, Equal Opportunity, and Sexual Assault in the Australian, British, Canadian and U.S. Armed Forces", in *Routledge Handbook of Military Ethics*, edited by George Lucas, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2015); Whitworth, 2007.

86   United Nations. Deployment of Female Personnel Boosts Effectiveness, Says Secretary-General, as Security Council Holds Open Debate on Women in Peacekeeping, Security Council 8508th Meeting (2019), https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13773.doc.htm

87   Government of Canada, (2017). Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/elsie_initiative-initiative_elsie.aspx?lang=eng

88   Ibid; Julia Bleckner, "From Rhetoric to Reality: A Pragmatic Analysis of the Integration of Women into UN Peacekeeping Operations.," J*ournal of International Peacekeeping*, 17, no. 3–4 (2013): 337–60; Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, "Explaining Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions: The Role of Female Peacekeepers and Gender Equality in Contributing Countries," *Journal of Peace Research 53*, no. 1 (January 2016): 100–115, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343315615506

included as equal contributors. Increased support and preparation of women through their participation in these programmes must be the goal, as their preparation could increase the likelihood thereafter of their deployment as peacekeepers. Larger representation of women attending these programmes would help to achieve commitments to the Vancouver Principles and desired goals of effective mixed teams who are better able to identify, understand, and respond to the gendered dynamics of conflict for children. In this way, it is not enough to include gender definitions and concepts in military training and education on CAAC, these programmes must also work to employ the right pedagogic strategies and demonstrate gender equality by creating equitable opportunities for participation.

CONCLUSION

The paper suggests that while content that illuminates gender constructs and their relation to the security of children is crucially important, determining the right pedagogic approaches to ensure the effective training and education of military professionals is equally vital. Drawing from the central tenets of gender equality outlined within United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and echoed in the Vancouver Principles and IGVP, there appear to be gaps in gender related curricula that need to be addressed in military training and education. Populating these gaps through an application of feminist pedagogy and exposing military personnel to gender and intersectional theory and frameworks could ensure that military members are better prepared to protect children affected by conflict and to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

A review of training and education available to military personnel on CAAC demonstrates opportunities to incorporate learning related to gender, intersectionality, military culture, and military socialization. There are significant security implications of knowing versus not knowing about the ways in which gender and other intersecting systems of power relate to child protection. At best, not knowing can lead military personnel to devise ineffective, inappropriate, and inequitable solutions for diverse and differentially affected children. At worst, not knowing sets military personnel on a path that can enable armed forces and armed groups to continue to commit atrocities against entire demographics of children whose suffering may be eclipsed by applying universal approaches to problems requiring tailored solutions. However, knowing about gender's relation to child protection and the capacity to apply gender and intersectional perspectives to the insecurities faced by diverse girls, boys and non-binary youth can enable military personnel to more effectively contribute to the protection of all children and the prevention of harms against them.

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A CRITICAL FEMINIST APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTING VANCOUVER PRINCIPLE 11

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I aim to provide a critical analysis of how Vancouver Principle (VP) 11 on the Contribution of Women to preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers addresses gender and women's involvement in peacekeeping. Critical feminist research on gender and war, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and international relations has examined and critiqued the important ways in which gender underlies, informs, and helps give meaning to matters of international peace and security. I draw on this diverse literature to discuss how VP 11 approaches gender and peacekeeping in a way that is at times problematic and at others nuanced and progressive, and provide concrete recommendations for how critical feminist insights can improve the implementation of the Vancouver Principles. The importance of understanding gender dynamics for peacekeeping in general, and for preventing the recruitment and use of children as soldiers in particular, necessitates more nuanced approaches to gender analysis and women's participation. The implementation of VP 11 can support both of these areas.

KEYWORDS

Gender, peacekeeping, child soldiers, child protection, Vancouver Principles

INTRODUCTION

Vancouver Principle 11[1] sits at the confluence of international agendas on peacekeeping, Women, Peace, and Security, and children and armed conflict, and in this paper I draw on critical literature on these topics to analyze how VP 11 addresses gender and women's involvement in peacekeeping as it relates to preventing the recruitment and use of children. Particularly since the Machel Report[2] on the impact of armed conflict on children in 1996 and the launch of the WPS agenda with Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, a growing body of literature has examined the origins, constitution, and effects of these agendas from a diverse set of theoretical and methodological perspectives. In particular, critical feminist literature has both contributed to the formation of the WPS agenda and critiqued the ways in which the WPS agenda has addressed gender. One major area of focus has been on gender and peacekeeping, particularly on women's participation as peacekeepers and on the gendered (and militarized, racialized, etc.) basis of peacekeeping.

Drawing on this literature and analyzing VP 11 and its Implementation Guidance,[3] I argue that the justification for why women are important for child protection in UN peacekeeping draws on common discourses among the UN and member states that is based on problematic gendered essentializations and stereotypes about women in peacekeeping. Instead, justifications that better reflect women's right to serve and the importance of a gender balance in peacekeeping, and that are more grounded in the literature are preferable for advancing women's participation in peacekeeping in a more transformative manner. The section in the Implementation Guidance discussion the implementation of VP 11 provides a more nuanced set of recommendations that approach the inclusion of women in peacekeeping in a more progressive fashion. However, I argue that this still leaves at least two important gaps: first, the way the Implementation Guidance was written sets up a tension between the guidance and the principle and justification on how gender is understood. Second, the exclusive focus on gender fails to acknowledge the ways that gender is co-constructed with race, class, and other aspects of identity in an intersectional manner. Based on this analysis, I provide some concrete recommendations for how VP 11 can be implemented in a more progressive and gender-sensitive manner.

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1   Global Affairs Canada, "The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers," Global Affairs Canada, February 21, 2017, 4, https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes-pledge-engageons.aspx?lang=eng.

2   Graça Machel, "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children" (New York: United Nations, 1996), https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/51/306.

3   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2019), 55–59, https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2019/igvp-20190614.pdf.

In performing this analysis, the article contributes in two main ways: first, it supports the implementation of the Vancouver Principles by bringing them into conversation with critical academic approaches that all too often do not influence policymaking and practice. Second, it contributes to the literature by applying it to a recent instrument of international peace and security that is only just beginning to receive academic attention. In the remainder of the article, I discuss some key areas of critical feminist scholarship on gender and international peace and security to situate my analysis of VP 11. I then discuss how VP 11 and the Implementation Guidance approach gender and conclude with policy implications.

FEMINIST ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

A central focus of feminist research on international relations is illuminating how gendered identities, meanings, and power structures play a key role in enabling, perpetuating, and organizing armed conflict, and the international system at large.[4] The gendered division of labour in international peace and security is clear in the primarily male makeup of politicians, diplomats, and soldiers who take part in armed conflict.[5] While on the decline in some states, military culture and training continue to draw on a strong connection between manhood and soldiering in a manner exclusionary of and in many cases denigrating towards women or attributes seen as feminine.[6] Protection or the provision of security is understood as a masculine concept,[7] including in UN peacekeeping,[8] and security institutions such as the military tend to be masculine, patriarchal organizations.[9]

4   Cynthia Cockburn, "Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War: A Feminist Standpoint," in *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices*, ed. Annica Kronsell and Erika Svedberg (New York: Routledge, 2013), 19–34; Nadine Puechguirbal, "Discourses on Gender, Patriarchy and Resolution 1325: A Textual Analysis of UN Documents," *International Peacekeeping 17*, no. 2 (April 2010): 179, https://doi.org/10.1080/13533311003625068 referencing Cynthia Enloe (2005).

5   Jeff Hearn, "Men/Masculinities: War/Militarism—Searching (for) the Obvious Connections?," in *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices*, ed. Annica Kronsell and Erika Svedberg (New York: Routledge, 2013), 35–38.

6   Judith Hicks Stiehm, "The Protected, the Protector, the Defender," *Women's Studies International Forum 5*, no. 3–4 (January 1982): 367–76, https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(82)90048-6; Nancy Taber, "The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military," Atlantis 34, no. 1 (2009): 27–36; Sandra Whitworth, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007).

7   Iris Marion Young, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 29*, no. 1 (September 2003): 1–25, https://doi.org/10.1086/375708.

8   Kathleen M Jennings, "Conditional Protection? Sex, Gender, and Discourse in UN Peacekeeping," *International Studies Quarterly 63*, no. 1 (March 1, 2019): 30–42, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqy048.

9   Annica Kronsell, "Methods for Studying Silences: Gender Analysis in Institutions of Hegemonic Masculinity," in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, ed. Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 108–28.

The passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 marked a key milestone in recognition of these gendered dynamics of war, building on a long grassroots struggle by a diverse international feminist movement.[10]

Scholars and activists have devoted considerable attention to the implementation of the WPS agenda in the two decades since Resolution 1325, both to support and expand the agenda, and to critique its shortcomings. In particular, they have identified several problems with the WPS agenda that are relevant to my discussion of VP 11. First, there has been an emphasis on the protection pillar of WPS, particularly from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) while neglecting women's participation in matters of international peace and security.[11] This tends to reinforce the idea of women primarily being victims of armed conflict, rather than political actors with agency. Second, the understanding of gender and gender mainstreaming often used in WPS implementation has been critiqued for removing the political content of these ideas to make them palatable to those in power by not seriously challenging the extent to which the subordination of women underpins the modern international system through militarism, capitalism, and racism. It has also tended to rely on gendered essentializations and stereotypes about women being inherently peaceful. This ignores the social construction of gender, that men also have gender identities, and the diversity of women's experiences, identities, and motivations.[12] Third, implementation of WPS, such as through National Action Plans, has generally failed to engage with the co-construction of gender with race, class, and other aspects of identity, leading to these practices reproducing a global North/South hierarchy with colonial roots.[13]

The participation of women in UN peacekeeping has received some of the greatest attention both programmatically, rhetorically, and academically as part of the participation pillar of WPS. The three relevant issues with WPS discussed in the preceding paragraph also play an important role in research on and critique of UN peacekeeping. The UN and member states are undertaking significant efforts to increase the number of uniformed women in

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10   Soumita Basu, Paul Kirby, and Laura J Shepherd, "Women, Peace and Security: A Critical Cartography," in *New Directions in Women, Peace, and Security*, ed. Soumita Basu, Paul Kirby, and Laura J Shepherd (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2020), 1–25.

11   Basu, Kirby, and Shepherd.

12   Maria Martin de Almagro, "Producing Participants: Gender, Race, Class, and Women, Peace, and Security," *Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations 32*, no. 4 (October 2018): 396; Whitworth, Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping; Hannah Wright, "'Masculinities Perspectives': Advancing a Radical Women, Peace and Security Agenda?," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, November 11, 2019, 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2019.1667849.

13   Martin de Almagro, "Producing Participants: Gender, Race, Class, and Women, Peace, and Security."

peacekeeping missions, such as through the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy[14] and Canada's Elsie Initiative.[15] Due to, in part, the masculine nature of the military and peacekeeping missions, justification is usually needed for why women should be deployed as peacekeepers, while justification is not similarly needed for deploying men.[16] While the importance of gender equity and women's equal right to take part in international peace and security is often noted, this is usually in combination with an emphasis on what "added value" women bring to peacekeeping by virtue of their gender.[17] These justifications tend to be based on a combination of problematic gendered stereotypes and essentializations that see women peacekeepers as inherently more peaceful, empathetic, and approachable by civilians, especially women and children. While these are important skills and attitudes for peacekeepers to practice in their work, they should be fostered through training and professional culture, and encouraged in both male and female peacekeepers.

The evidence for such assertions tends to be anecdotal and not based on systematic research. In existing research, it is difficult to untangle the interactions between a peacekeeper's gender, what training and background they have, and what role they are deployed to in the mission. These factors are then also influenced by their gender.[18] This is not to say that there are not real gendered differences between how peacekeepers perform their duties and how others interact with them, but policy and justification need to be based on nuanced and contextualized research rather than essentializations and stereotypes.

14   Department of Peace Operations, "Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028" (New York: United Nations, 2018), https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/uniformed-gender-parity-2018-2028. pdf.

15   Global Affairs Canada, "Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations," Global Affairs Canada, February 21, 2017, https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_ developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/elsie_initiative-initiative_elsie.aspx?lang=eng.

16   Nina Wilén, "What's the 'Added Value' of Male Peacekeepers? (Or – Why We Should Stop Instrumentalising Female Peacekeepers' Participation)" (Brussels: Egmont: Royal Institute for International Relations, February 13, 2020), http://www.egmontinstitute.be/whats-the-added-value-of-male-peacekeepers/.

17   Gretchen Baldwin and Sarah Taylor, "Uniformed Women in Peace Operations: Challenging Assumptions and Transforming Approaches" (New York: International Peace Institute, 2020); Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic, "Smart Peacekeeping: Deploying Canadian Women for a Better Peace?," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis 74*, no. 3 (September 2019): 405–21, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702019874791; Wilén, "What's the 'Added Value' of Male Peacekeepers?"

18   Marta Ghittoni, Léa Lehouck, and Callum Watson, "Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study" (Geneva: DCAF, 2018), https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/ documents/Elsie_GenderReport_2018_Final.pdf; Kari M Osland, Jenny Nortvedt, and Maria Gilen Røysamb, "Female Peacekeepers and Operational Effectiveness," Research paper (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2020), 3.

The prioritization of these competencies in peacekeeping through a discourse of "added value" based on gender, rather than a discourse of women's rights and proper training, is concerning for several reasons. Nina Wilén argues that in practice the emphasis on "added value" places an added burden on female peacekeepers to go above and beyond what their male colleagues have to contribute to the mission.[19] As Elin Bjarnegård and Erik Melander write, "When gender equality and women's rights are instrumentalized, they are no longer primarily valued as ends in themselves. Instead, they are used as a means of efficiently implementing other policies and reaching other, more desirable, ends."[20] Such an instrumentalization undermines the importance of women's rights as a central component of the WPS agenda. The essentialization of women's contribution to peacekeeping as based primarily on their gender ignores the complexity and diversity of personal identity, including the construction of gender, and the importance of professional skills and experience for women peacekeepers.[21] While the participation of women in peacekeeping does help to challenge the construction of men as protectors and women as victims underlying much of the rhetoric on armed conflict, "there is a risk of essentializing women's capacities and skills, with women being seen as different security providers, with nurturing and caring skills, due to their sex role."[22] Finally, basing the participation of women in peacekeeping on gender stereotypes ignores the diversity among women, "as the assumptions made about women's essential nature and their suitability for nurturing and caring might not be reproduced and appropriated by female security forces."[23]

The emphasis on protection over participation in WPS implementation can also be observed in UN peacekeeping in several ways. First, the focus on prevention of SGBV in conflict, while a critical issue, tends to be conflated with women's participation in peacekeeping in problematic ways. Principally, the presence of women peacekeepers is seen to deter sexual exploitation and abuse committed by their male colleagues. This places the burden on women peacekeepers to control the behaviour of men, rather than on those men, and also essentializes men in peacekeeping as unable to control their own behaviour.[24] Such a justification for the

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19   Nina Wilén, "Female Peacekeepers' Added Burden," *International Affairs*, September 26, 2020, iiaa132, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa132.

20   Elin Bjarnegård and Erik Melander, "Women's Participation and Peace? The Decline of Armed Conflict in East Asia," in *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, ed. Louise Olsson and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (London | New York: Routledge, 2015), 19.

21   Martin de Almagro, "Producing Participants: Gender, Race, Class, and Women, Peace, and Security"; Elina Penttinen, "Nordic Women and International Crisis Management: A Politics of Hope?," in *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices*, ed. Annica Kronsell and Erika Svedberg (New York: Routledge, 2013), 153–65.

22   Martin de Almagro, "Producing Participants: Gender, Race, Class, and Women, Peace, and Security," 405–6.

23   Martin de Almagro, 406.

24   Baldwin and Taylor, "Uniformed Women in Peace Operations"; Laura Hebert, "Analyzing UN and NATO Responses to Sexual Misconduct in Peacekeeping Operations," in *Making Gender, Making*

deployment of women in UN peacekeeping should thus be abandoned in favour of addressing root causes of why some male peacekeepers commit sexual violence.

This view also tends to downplay or ignore the threat of sexual harassment or violence that women peacekeepers themselves face from their colleagues. Instead, women peacekeepers are often seen as *in need of protection* from the mission environment, despite being experienced security professionals, and are less frequently deployed to what are perceived as riskier assignments where their presence might make more of a difference.[25] However, female peacekeepers have reported that they are more at risk of harassment or violence from their colleagues than from the mission environment.[26] Finally, while women peacekeepers are important for working with survivors of sexual violence in mission locations, it is too often viewed that this is by virtue of their gender alone, rather than their gender in combination with their training and professional experience. This view risks women being deployed without the proper training for such sensitive work, or only being assigned to duties such as this, or for instance child protection, that are viewed as gender appropriate.[27]

Finally, the WPS agenda and attention to women in peacekeeping largely views gender as a standalone category of identity, rather than one that intersects and is co-constructed with other aspects of identity such as race and class. Peacekeepers come from a wide range of countries from the global North and South, deployed to countries largely within the South, and operate within a system still heavily influenced by the legacies of colonialism and racial hierarchies. Consequently, an intersectional analysis[28] that sees gendered identity as not separable from race, class, etc. is essential to understanding the gendered dynamics of peacekeeping.[29] For

War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices, ed. Annica Kronsell and Erika Svedberg (New York: Routledge, 2013), 116; Penttinen, "Nordic Women and International Crisis Management: A Politics of Hope?"

25   Baldwin and Taylor, "Uniformed Women in Peace Operations"; Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, "Ladies Last: Peacekeeping and Gendered Protection," in *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, ed. Louise Olsson and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (London | New York: Routledge, 2015), 62–95.

26   Lotte Vermeij, "Woman First, Soldier Second: Taboos and Stigmas Facing Military Women in UN Peace Operations" (New York: International Peace Institute, October 2020), https://www.ipinst.org/2020/10/taboos-and-stigmas-facing-military-women-in-un-peace-operations.

27   Baldwin and Taylor, "Uniformed Women in Peace Operations"; Georgina Holmes, "Female Military Peacekeepers Left Feeling Overwhelmed after Inadequate Training," The Conversation, May 29, 2020, http://theconversation.com/female-military-peacekeepers-left-feeling-overwhelmed-after-inad-equate-training-114887.

28   Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989*, no. 1 (1989), http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8; Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review 43*, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241, https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039.

29   Marsha Henry, "Peacexploitation? Interrogating Labor Hierarchies and Global Sisterhood Among

instance, people living in peacekeeping mission locations perceive the security provided by peacekeepers in different ways based upon both gender and nationality.[30] The assumption that women peacekeepers will relate to and engage better with local women fails to take into account how race, nationality, and class also matter in these relationships, along with how much contact peacekeepers are allowed to have with civilians.[31] The international community's engagement with women in peacebuilding through the WPS agenda, including in peacekeeping and security institutions, is not equal but influenced by racial and sexual hierarchies that include or exclude certain groups of women from the participation called for under Resolution 1325.[32]

It should be noted that, with some exceptions, much of this literature draws primarily on data from peacekeepers from Northern countries, or on analysis of how documents relevant to peacekeeping understand and construct gender. Consequently, in the academic literature there is still insufficient analysis at the level of peacekeeping practice that would provide a more nuanced view. However, my analysis is particularly directed at the way gender is understood in VP 11 and its implementation guidance, rather than on how peacekeepers are actually putting it into practice.

Despite the many challenges, shortcomings, and failures, it is important to draw on this literature to productively engage with peacekeeping practice and transform it. Peacekeeping is effective at ending armed conflicts and reducing violence, and there is need for better research to support improvements in peacekeeping practice.[33] Even the more critical scholars examining peacekeeping argue that it can deliver significant benefits for the people it is supposed to protect, and transforming the gender dynamics present in peacekeeping is a key element of improving its implementation.[34] It is equally important to substantially increase

Indian and Uruguayan Female Peacekeepers," *Globalizations 9*, no. 1 (February 2012): 15–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2012.627716; Marsha Henry, "Problematizing Military Masculinity, Intersectionality and Male Vulnerability in Feminist Critical Military Studies," *Critical Military Studies 3*, no. 2 (May 4, 2017): 182–99, https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2017.1325140.

30   Gurchathen Sanghera, Marsha Henry, and Paul Higate, "Peacekeepers as New Men? Security and Masculinity in the United Nations Mission in Liberia," Working Paper (Bristol: University of Bristol, 2008), http://www.bris.ac.uk/media-library/sites/spais/migrated/documents/sanghere0208.pdf.

31   Henry, "Peacexploitation?"; Kathleen M. Jennings, "Service, Sex, and Security: Gendered Peacekeeping Economies in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *Security Dialogue 45*, no. 4 (August 2014): 313–30, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614537330.

32   Martin de Almagro, "Producing Participants: Gender, Race, Class, and Women, Peace, and Security."

33   Barbara F. Walter, Lise Morje Howard, and V. Page Fortna, "The Extraordinary Relationship between Peacekeeping and Peace," *British Journal of Political Science*, November 24, 2020, 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1017/S000712342000023X.

34   Cynthia Cockburn and Meliha Hubic, "Gender and the Peacekeeping Military: A View from Bosnian Women's Organizations," in *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International*

the proportion of uniformed peacekeepers who are women, and this should be done on a firmer basis of their rights, how gender parity may contribute to peacekeeping effectiveness, and empirical evidence of gender dynamics in peacekeeping. Child protection, especially preventing the recruitment and use of children as soldiers, is a particularly important yet under-studied component of UN peacekeeping where gender dynamics are critical to understand.[35] Consequently, in the next section, I draw on the above discussion to examine, critique, and support the implementation of VP 11 on the contribution of women.

PITFALLS AND PROMISES OF VP 11

Vancouver Principle 11 is "To recognize the essential contribution of women to peacekeeping operational effectiveness, and the distinct and critical roles of both men and women in the protection of children and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers."[36] Further detail is provided in the 2019 Implementation Guidance, which has two sections on each principle: a justification section about its importance, and a section about how it can be implemented. As well, each principle has a box noting connections to key Security Council Resolutions. Several issues are raised in the wording of the principle itself and in the justification section.

Drawing on the previous discussion, the primary issue with the wording of VP 11 itself, and the justification section in the Implementation Guidance, is that they primarily reproduce a discourse that assumes women make a distinct contribution to peacekeeping with certain skills and perspectives that are due to their gender, without attention to how the intersectional nature of identity, and professional training and experience, mediate this contribution. The principle refers to the "distinct and critical roles of both men and women"[37] while the Implementation Guidance refers to the "*distinct roles of men and women*"[38] (emphasis in original) in child protection in peacekeeping. While it does not explicitly state what roles in child protection are distinct between men and women, the Implementation Guidance states that women "offer important perspectives on communities and cultures, they can often access populations and venues that are closed to men, and they can serve as role models to empower women and girls

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Peacekeeping, Bosnia and the Netherlands, ed. Cynthia Cockburn and Dubravka Žarkov (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2002), 103–21; Claire Duncanson, *Forces for Good? Military Masculinities and Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq*, Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Whitworth, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*.

35   Dustin Johnson and Allyssa Walsh, "Gender, Peacekeeping, and Child Soldiers: Training and Research in Implementation of the Vancouver Principles," *Allons-y: Journal of Children, Peace and Security 4* (2020): 51–60.

36   Global Affairs Canada, "The Vancouver Principles," 4.

37   Global Affairs Canada, 4.

38   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance*, 56.

in the local community."[39] This sentence is backed by a citation to the Elsie Initiative baseline study,[40] which included a brief literature review on the current state of knowledge on women in peace operations. This report notes that the evidence presented is largely anecdotal, though it does also draw on Karim and Beardsley's[41] more systematic work as well.

The Implementation Guidance states that "Women peacekeepers can also communicate and engage with children differently, and they can offer valuable perspectives on the gender dynamics associated with the recruitment and use of child soldiers."[42] This statement is not supported with a citation, and hence it is not known whether it was written based on existing research or on gendered assumptions.

The statements that women can offer important perspectives on communities, cultures, and gender dynamics of recruitment imply a universality to women's experience that has long been critiqued, especially by postcolonial feminists. It also implies a sufficiency of lived experience for effective peacekeeping practice, neglecting training, professional experience, and education on particularities of the mission context. While women's lived experience is a critical basis for understanding gender dynamics and building solidarity with other women, there are usually significant differences of class, race, ethnicity, nationality, and other aspects of identity between peacekeepers and the host community. These differences challenge the degree to which gendered experience alone equips female peacekeepers for the skills and perspectives described in VP 11. For instance, Marsha Henry's research with Indian and Uruguayan female peacekeepers demonstrated how shared identity as women did not fully overcome differences in class, race, and military identity for connecting or empathizing with local women.[43] Georgina Holmes found that Rwandan women peacekeepers were deployed to deal with sexual and gender-based violence without proper training on assumption that their gender equipped them sufficiently for such a sensitive role.[44]

While there are certainly real differences in how men and women carry out child protection, and in how they interact with and are received by people living in a peacekeeping mission host state due in part to their gender, these differences need to be empirically understood to form the basis of improved policy. The context of specific troop and police contributing countries, the mission context, and training and professional experience need to be understood better

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39   Government of Canada, 55.

40   Ghittoni, Lehouck, and Watson, "Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study."

41   Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping: Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States*, Oxford Studies in Gender and International Relations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

42   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance*, 56.

43   Henry, "Peacexploitation?"

44   Holmes, "Female Military Peacekeepers Left Feeling Overwhelmed after Inadequate Training."

through future research on child protection. This will not only help ensure that more women are deployed in peacekeeping, but that they also receive the needed training and support to excel in their roles.

A second problem with the justification section of the VP 11 Implementation Guidance, which is also a challenge faced by WPS more broadly, is how to understand the construction of gender and the role of men and masculinity. Feminist scholars point out that gender identity is constructed in a relational manner, and a focus on women that ignores the role that men and masculinity play in gendered power dynamics can be problematic. At the same time, gender inequality necessitates a specific focus on women, and bringing men into this picture can dilute this focus in problematic ways.[45] This is important to consider for VP 11, since the principle itself and the justification section both discuss men, despite the principle being about the contribution of *women*. However, beyond the mention of the distinct roles of women and men in child protection, VP 11 leaves out further discussion of men. While we should be cautious on how to focus on men and masculinity in elements of international peace and security focused on women,[46] it is important to note that the way in which VP 11 briefly addresses men contributes to the gender essentialism discourse. The focus on women contributing certain skills by virtue of their gender, ones which are traditionally seen as feminine, simultaneously neglects that men may also possess these skills and that men can deploy them in peacekeeping.

For instance, the Elsie baseline study notes that men deployed in mixed-gender engagement teams in Afghanistan felt more comfortable expressing empathy,[47] nd an interview conducted by Sara Singleton and Anne Holohan in Lebanon indicated that the focus on women interacting with civilians, including children, may make men who are otherwise comfortable doing so to hold back.[48] Such findings need more systematic research, which would also improve this section of the Implementation Guidance. Given that the aim of the Vancouver Principles is focused on improving child protection to prevent the recruitment and use of children, focusing the Implementation Guidance on a more nuanced approach to gender in which women make an important contribution, rather than maintaining a focus solely on women, might be beneficial.

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45   Wright, "'Masculinities Perspectives.'"

46   Wright.

47   Ghittoni, Lehouck, and Watson, "Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study."

48   Sara Singleton and Anne Holohan, "The Case for 'Trust Awareness' as a Key Soft-Skill for Peacekeepers," *Journal of International Peacekeeping 21*, no. 3–4 (April 28, 2017): 224–45, https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-02103003.

In comparison to the justification section, the implementation section proposes a set of suggestions that are much more progressive and nuanced concerning gender. It details seven areas of implementation for VP 11:

1. Collecting gender-disaggregated data on organizations relevant to peacekeeping as a first step towards dismantling barriers to women's participation;

2. Working to increase the representation of women in peacekeeping contributing organizations, including through a National Action Plan under Resolution 1325;

3. Increasing the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping through promoting them to senior positions, fostering a safe work environment, and ensuring women have the career support and skills they need to deploy;

4. Aim for gender balance across Child Protection Focal Points in missions;

5. Deploy mixed-gender units to peacekeeping missions, including engagement teams, formed police units, and "gender strong" units;[49]

6. Train and educate peacekeepers on gendered dimensions of children in armed conflict, gender-sensitive approaches to protection, and SGBV against children;

7. Support research on the intersection between women in peacekeeping and child protection.[50]

Each of these implementation approaches demonstrates a much more gender-sensitive approach to women in peacekeeping and child protection than does the justification section. The first three together focus on the barriers to women becoming peacekeepers and being deployed to mission locations where they can put their skills to use, a major focus of the Elsie Initiative and a range of research.[51]

Points four and five are most relevant to this discussion, as they focus on the importance of having a gender balance in peacekeeping missions, rather than a sole focus on what women bring to peacekeeping. While some of the description under the fourth suggestion

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49 "A 'gender-strong unit' is a military unit or a formed police unit (FPU) that includes the substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and has adequate equipment and other materiel to ensure parity of deployment conditions for women and men peacekeepers" Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance*, 57.

50 Government of Canada, 56–58.

51 e.g., Baldwin and Taylor, "Uniformed Women in Peace Operations"; Ghittoni, Lehouck, and Watson, "Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations: Baseline Study"; Louise Olsson, Anita Schjølset, and Frida Möller, "Women's Participation in International Operations and Missions," in *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, ed. Louise Olsson and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (London | New York: Routledge, 2015), 37–61.

is still problematic as it repeats the language about the "unique and distinct contributions"[52] of men and women in child protection without elaborating what they are or the evidence for their uniqueness and distinctness, they do indicate an understanding that is both theoretically informed and increasingly supported in the literature that mixed-gender teams in peacekeeping are more effective. Such a view is more amenable to a relational approach to gender that includes men, women, masculinity, and femininity and their construction, and better fits with a rights-based perspective on women's equal right to serve with men in peacekeeping. It also leaves open the potential that men can bring beneficial contributions to peacekeeping in part due to their gender, which helps to balance the important focus on the harms caused by militarized masculinities in peacekeeping.[53] Finally, points six and seven focus on the importance of educating and training peacekeepers on gender perspectives, regardless of their gender, and on improving the empirical foundation for peacekeeping practice. Point six's attention to training on the gendered dynamics of recruitment in the mission location is particularly important, as this challenges the implication in the justification section that such an understanding emerges primarily from gendered experience.

Two issues stand out between the justification and implementation sections. First, these clear differences in how the two sections (and the principle itself) approach gender are in tension with one another. This can be dealt with largely in future editions of the Implementation Guidance by updating the justification section to reflect a more nuanced understanding of gender, taking a relational perspective to its construction, and including the latest research on gender and peacekeeping that continues to emerge.

Second, the Implementation Guidance fails to engage in an intersectional perspective, which the critical literature on peacekeeping has demonstrated is essential to understanding the importance of gender in peacekeeping. Such a perspective particularly illuminates the problems with the universality of women's experience implicit in the gender essentialism in the justification section of the Implementation Guidance. The Black Lives Matter movement is helping to draw more critical attention to race and intersectionality in the security sector, and in implementing the Vancouver Principles, security practitioners and policymakers should learn from these perspectives and critique the underlying assumptions of their work. The Implementation Guidance could be updated to note the importance of an intersectional analysis and suggest that it be included in data disaggregation, addressing barriers to women's participation in peacekeeping, and in research. Furthermore, an intersectional perspective is important in child protection as it can also interrogate the ways in which age matters in identity.

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52   Government of Canada, *Implementation Guidance*, 57.

53   e.g., Paul Higate, "Peacekeepers, Masculinities, and Sexual Exploitation," *Men and Masculinities 10*, no. 1 (July 2007): 99–119, https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X06291896; Sherene Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Whitworth, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*.

A final point for the future consideration of academics, practitioners, and policymakers is how to move beyond the binary approach to gender that still dominates even more critical discussions of international peace and security. Activists and scholars have long demonstrated the construction, limits, and exclusionary nature of the gender binary, and we should begin thinking through its implications in peacekeeping.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Based on the preceding discussion of the literature and VP 11, I conclude with some policy implications that can complement and deepen the Implementation Guidance and provide ideas to policymakers and practitioners responsible for the implementation of the Vancouver Principles. These recommendations aim to be pragmatic in addressing the criticisms of WPS and peacekeeping from feminist literature as it is important to recognize both the importance of these critiques for improving practice, and the difficulty of making drastic changes in conservative, masculine institutions. Improving child protection in UN peacekeeping is vital. It is also important to ensure that the implementation of the Vancouver Principles is done in a way that does not reinforce some of the problems with previous attention to women in peacekeeping.

- The theoretical knowledge and life experience needed to bring a feminist approach to the Vancouver Principles is plentiful not just in academia, but among activists, civil society, think tanks, policymakers, and in the security sector. All of these sources should be drawn on, while ensuring that there is space for critique and honest conversation, especially for those in academia and civil society who have legitimate concerns about their work being co-opted.

- Despite the many problems with gendered essentializations and stereotypes about female peacekeepers, strategic use of essentialism can be productive and is often unavoidable in highly masculine institutions in order to make advances in women's participation.[54] In many institutions responsible for implementing the Vancouver Principles therefore some use of essentialism is likely needed, with the aim of moving beyond it. For instance, it may be unavoidable to draw on certain gendered essentializations to convince key policymakers of the importance of supporting increasing the number of women in peacekeeping. It is important to make sure that such approaches do not inadvertently further the added burden for female peacekeepers or neglect their training. However, it seems likely that the essentialization that women are better suited to child protection duties is commonplace already, and

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54   Anne Marie Goetz, "Foreword: Toward Strategic Instrumentalism," in *New Directions in Women, Peace, and Security*, ed. Soumita Basu, Paul Kirby, and Laura J Shepherd (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2020), xxv.

for implementation of VP 11 more nuanced approaches focused on a gender balance in child protection personnel may be more appropriate.

- In combination with this, it is important to shift conversations towards women's equal right to serve, achieving gender parity in missions, and how these improve the legitimacy of the mission. Improved effectiveness of the mission should be seen as an important result of this, rather than the reason for doing so.

- Particularly, the equal right to serve must include an equal basis for receiving the training and education needed to be an effective peacekeeper, regardless of gender. This is especially important in more specialized fields such as child protection, and all peacekeepers deployed in roles where child protection is an important component should receive quality training in this area.

- Gender analysis needs to consider men and masculinities, particularly in moving beyond gender essentialism in peacekeeping, and for changing the gendered basis of the security sector. Such a relational approach to gender must be carefully balanced with maintaining an important focus on women.

- Look for internal allies and champions who can support efforts to include women in peacekeeping, challenge the masculine culture of the security sector, and provide support, including men who share these perspectives on gender and peacekeeping.

- Look for synergies between the Vancouver Principles and existing national policies and priorities. For instance, the implementation of VP 11 is likely to be mutually supportive with existing National Action Plans developed under WPS.

CONCLUSION

A central insight of feminist scholarship on peacekeeping is that many of its failures of protection and the harms committed by peacekeepers are rooted in the forms of militarized masculinity that dominate military and police organizational cultures. For peacekeeping to meet its full potential, this gendered nature of security sector institutions needs to be challenged and transformed, rather than abandoning peacekeeping entirely. While not the only component of the solution, achieving gender parity in the military and police is an important part of transforming the masculine culture of the security sector and peacekeeping. Given the urgency of better protecting children during armed conflict and particularly preventing their recruitment, VP 11 can serve as an important leverage point for tackling the barriers to women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping and provide an opening for transforming the security sector's gendered basis through appreciation for women's and men's role in child protection. At the same time, it is urgent to guard progress to date against the global backlash to women's rights and more critical approaches to gender while continuing to push ahead, so it is critical for the security sector to recognize the importance of feminist critique. Feminist

insights on gender and international peace and security can serve as an important basis for making these advances. They should be considered and taken up by practitioners and policymakers responsible for the Vancouver Principles so that they are implemented in a more gender-sensitive and transformational manner that both improves protection of children and supports women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping.

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GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN UN PEACE OPERATIONS AND THE PREVENTION OF THE RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

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ABSTRACT

20 years after the adoption of the landmark Resolution 1325, it is important to assess the implementation of gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping operations and its impact on the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers. How has Resolution 1325 influenced the role of men and women in the fight against recruitment and use of child soldiers? What are the challenges and the way forward? This paper will examine the effect of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations on the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

INTRODUCTION

The increased proliferation of armed conflicts globally has resulted in the increasing numbers of children involved in the brutalities of war.[1] The recruitment and use of children as soldiers by armed groups, voluntarily or by force, is recorded in many countries. Post-conflict environments are characterized by extreme financial hardships, lack of employment and other opportunities for survival. This exposes young boys and girls to be recruited into armed groups as child soldiers. The role of children in armed groups may include full participation in combat, spies, sex slaves /bush wives, cooks, messengers, bodyguards, human shields, suicide bombers,[2] or other roles that might be based on circumstances during the period of conflict. Children are used as human shields and militants by both the government and opposition forces, tortured to gather intelligence on their parents and siblings, and schools transformed into "military staging grounds, temporary bases, detention centres, sniper posts and centres for torture and the interrogation of adults and children."[3] The participation of children in armed conflicts simply deprives them of their childhood and leaves a lasting impact on their lives.

The Geneva Convention IV of 1949 and its additional protocol I adopted in 1977 serve as the first international instrument that focuses on the protection of children in armed conflicts. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the child in 1989 threw more light on the issue of child soldiers, after which several conventions and legal documents have been adopted to prohibit and criminalize the enlistment and recruitment of children into armed groups.[4]

Peacekeeping operations help to strengthen the foundations for the reconstruction of post-conflict states. They seek to stabilize political and socio-cultural tensions that still linger after armed conflicts in order to prevent the recurrence of other conflicts. The volatile nature of post-conflict environments requires a sensitive and strategized approach to maintain and sustain peace. Peacekeeping operations entail a series of activities that seek to reconstruct the

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1 Graham, George, Mariam Kirollos, Gunvor Knag Fylkesnes, Keyan Salarkia, and Nikki Wong. "Stop the War on Children: Protecting Children in 21st Century Conflict." London: Save the Children, 2019, 9. https://www.savethechildren.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/REPORT-Stop-the-War-on-Children.pdf.

2 UNICEF. "The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups." New York: United Nations, February 2007. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/ParisPrinciples_EN.pdf.

3 Jacob, Cecilia. "'Children and Armed Conflict' and the Field of Security Studies." *Critical Studies on Security 3*, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 14–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2015.1014675.

4 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "The Six Grave Violations Against Children During Armed Conflict: The Legal Foundation", Children and justice, working paper No 1 (2009): 11, https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/WorkingPaper-1_SixGraveViolationsLegalFoundation.pdf

socio-economic and political environment of post-conflict states. These operations also serve as grounds to monitor and report violations and irregularities that need to be controlled.

The adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the agenda on Women, Peace, and Security reveals that they are intended to be strategic frameworks for conducting more effective and sustainable peace negotiations, peacekeeping missions, and conflict resolution interventions by the international community.[5] They encompass a range of complex issues, including judicial and legal reform, security sector reform, formal and informal peace negotiations, peacekeeping, political participation, and protection from sexual violence in armed conflict.[6] This was also in response to the bias and limited representation of women in global peace processes.

Gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations does not only improve upon the services and results of the mission, but also influences the political and socio-economic status of the host state and population.[7] The impact of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations on the reduction of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) has been established by many studies[8] but there is limited empirical evidence of the impact of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations on the prevention of child recruitment and use in armed conflicts.

How has Resolution 1325 influenced the role of men and women in peacekeeping operations? How does the inclusion of women in peacekeeping contribute to the fight against the recruitment and use of child soldiers? What are the challenges and the way forward?

This paper seeks to contribute to the advocacy for the inclusion of more women in peacekeeping operations by outlining their role in the prevention of recruitment and use of child soldiers, a role that has been undermined for many years.

5   Françoise Nduwimana, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security Understanding the Implications, Fulfilling the Obligations", UN Women, September 9, 2005, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/cdrom/documents/Background_Paper_Africa.pdf

6   Robert Egnell and Mayesha Alam, *Women and Gender perspectives in the Military: An International Comparison*, 1st ed. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2019, 10.

7   *Women in Peacekeeping: The Power to Empower*. New York: United Nations, 2009. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAuFQj9xBYc.

8   Vasu Gounden, "Gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping", *ACCORD: Conflict Trends 2* (2013): 20. https://media.africaportal.org/documents/ACCORD-Conflict-Trends-2013-2.pdf ; Kreft, Anne-Kathrin. "The Gender Mainstreaming Gap: Security Council Resolution 1325 and UN Peacekeeping Mandates." *International Peacekeeping 24*, no. 1 (January 2017): 132–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2016.1195267.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: ANALYSIS AND FRAMEWORK

A gender mainstreaming approach in peacekeeping is an approach to policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns. Although gender mainstreaming is considered as a tool for achieving gender equality, it plays an important role in responding to the situations of both men and women in different cultural, religious and ethnic settings. Gender mainstreaming, therefore, enables both men and women to play their individual and specific roles within the cultural, religious and ethnic values in the peacekeeping environment. It considers the focus on creating a working environment in which female peacekeepers will be integrated.[9] Gender mainstreaming must also seek to address specific needs of both men and women, which include providing uniforms and body armours in the right sizes.[10]

Authors like Dorota Gierycz[11] use biological explanations to claim that women are more peaceful than men by nature and therefore more equal gender relations will result in a higher degree of peace. Additionally, Heland and Kristensen argue[12] that women's contribution in peacekeeping operations can be analysed at the internal level where women can positively influence social relations within the operation, and the external dimension which relates to their contact with the local population. The progressive recognition of the role of women in the peacekeeping process must be consolidated with a review of policies to ensure a gender-sensitive approach in all levels of peacekeeping. This policy review framework must be supported by the adoption of structures to promote gender equalities.

The Council of Europe considers gender mainstreaming as a multi-stage cycle, which includes defining, planning, implementing and checking (monitoring and evaluating).[13] This cycle requires constant policy evaluation and updating to respond to the evolving challenges and needs of both men and women. Gender mainstreaming analyses therefore requires the provision of the necessary data and information to integrate a gender perspective into peacekeeping policies and programmes.[14] This will precede an effective gender mainstreaming

9   Wilén, Nina. "What's the 'Added Value' of Male Peacekeepers? (Or – Why We Should Stop Instrumentalising Female Peacekeepers' Participation)." Brussels: Egmont: Royal Institute for International Relations, February 13, 2020. http://www.egmontinstitute.be/whats-the-added-value-of-male-peacekeepers/.

10   Wilén, ''What's the added value of male peacekeepers?"

11   Gierycz, Dorota. "Women, Peace and the United Nations: Beyond Beijing." In *Gender, Peace and Conflict Gender, Peace and Conflict*, edited by Inger Skjelsbæk and Dan Smith, 14–31. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2001. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446220290.n2.

12   Anita Helland and Anita Kristensen, *Women in peace operations, Women and armed conflicts- A study for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 1999, p83.

13   European Institute for Gender Equality. "What Is Gender Mainstreaming." Gender mainstreaming, n.d. https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming.

14   *DPKO/DFS Guidelines: Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military*

process in identifying the differences and specific roles of men and women in a given position and society.

THE RHETORIC AND REALITIES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN UN PEACEKEEPING

Evolution in efforts to include women in peacebuilding processes has been remarkable since the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1325.[15] The shift in focus on women as victims of conflicts to participants in peacebuilding was emphasised in The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000. This resolution focuses on the protection, inclusion and representation of women in decision-making processes at all levels in both national and international institutions. This resolution highlights the indisputable roles of women in conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution, and in the global efforts for sustainable peace. This resolution exposes the contribution of both men and women in the peacebuilding process instead of the one-sided discourse that focuses on men.

Intentionally or otherwise, women in leadership positions in field missions are seen as role models for women within peace operations-both within the mission and to the host country. Many women managers in field missions hire other women, purposefully recruiting them, supporting those in junior positions, and demonstrating a commitment to mentor their careers.[16] Furthermore, when women are visible in the mission, particularly in senior positions, an example is set for women's post-war participation in the host country in political, economic, and even military roles.[17]

After the adoption of the UNSCR 1325, there have been remarkable changes in the gender context of both the mandates for UN peacekeeping operations and the implementation of the mandates. Previous research has identified that the gender content in UNPKO mandates has increased after the adoption of the UNSCR 1325, although its implementation seems selective.[18] These changes influence the gender dimensions in mission mandates, staffing and policy processes. Progressive improvements have been made by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPO) regarding gender mainstreaming in

in Peacekeeping Operations. New York: United Nations, 2010, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpko_dfs_gender_military_perspective.pdf

15   United Nations. "Resolution 1325 (2000)." New York: United Nations Security Council, 2000. http://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325(2000)

16   Pampell Conaway and Jolynn Shoemaker, "Women in United Nations Peace Operations: Increasing the Leadership Opportunities," Women In International Security, July 2008. https://www.resdal.org/ultimos-documentos/women-peaceoperations.pdf

17   Conaway and Shoemaker, "Women in UN peace operations".

18   Kreft, "The gender mainstreaming gap."

peace support operations. Gender considerations now influence the process of deployment for missions, pre-deployment and in-mission trainings as well as the adoption of mission policies. For instance, "Previously, if a Member State chose to rotate members out after six months, the cost incurred had to be borne by the Member State as the UN policy caters for one rotation every 12 months at the cost of the United Nations. However, according to a recently-introduced policy, women peacekeepers with children under the age of seven are able to deploy for a period of six months instead of the usual 12 months and be repatriated at the expense of the UN."[19] Despite the practical changes that have been brought in UN peacekeeping after the adoption of Resolution 1325, the overall impact of the resolution has been considered as modest and unsystematic by authors like Bell and O'Rouke.[20]

Women constituted about 1% of the total deployed personnel in UN peacekeeping missions before the adoption of the landmark Resolution 1325. This increased to 3% of military personnel and 10% of police personnel by 2014.[21] In 2020, out of approximately 95,000 peacekeepers, women constitute 4.8% of military contingents and 10.9% of formed police units in UN Peacekeeping missions.[22] Women now hold leadership positions in the UN and UN peacekeeping now deploys women as military observers, troops and staff officers who engage in patrols, operations planning, clearing minefields, offering medical assistance and the protection of civilians in general. In the UN police, women serve as individual officers and members of formed police units who contribute to promoting rule of law, justice administration and reinforcing governmental institutions in peacekeeping theatres.[23] The emergence of all-female police units has also been recorded.[24]

2014 recorded the appointment of the first female to serve as a force commander in a UN peacekeeping operation. Major General Lund of Norway was appointed as the force commander in the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus on 12th May 2014. These kinds of

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19   Bintou Keita, "Women in peacekeeping: an operational imperative," UN Peacekeeping, October 14, 2018, https://medium.com/@UNPeacekeeping/women-in-peacekeeping-an-operational-imperative-24d4e9a86250

20   Bell, Christine, and Catherine O'Rourke. "Peace Agreements or Pieces of Paper? The Impact of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Peace Processes and Their Agreements." *International and Comparative Law Quarterly 59*, no. 4 (October 2010): 941–80. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002058931000062X.

21   Keita, "Women in peacekeeping."

22   United Nations. "Women in Peacekeeping." United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/women-peacekeeping.

23   United Nations Police Division, Office of Rule of law and Security Institutions, and Department of Peacekeeping Operations. "On Duty for Peace: 2008-2012." New York: United Nations, 2013. https://police.un.org/sites/default/files/12_53015_unpol_booklet.pdf.

24   Pruitt, Lesley J. "All-Female Police Contingents: Feminism and the Discourse of Armed Protection." *International Peacekeeping 20*, no. 1 (February 2013): 67–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2012.761836.

examples demonstrate how more attention is now being accorded to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and the awareness creation on the role of women in the reconstruction of post-conflict countries.[25]

Despite these remarkable improvements in the quest for gender equality in UN peacekeeping missions, there are some gaps and challenges that slow down efforts to bridge the existing gender inequalities. The limited number of women in the troop/police contributing countries is a fundamental challenge to increasing the representation of women for mission deployment by the UN. The implementation of UN policies in member states depends largely on the capacity and willingness of individual states.[26] There exist many discrepancies between the political commitments of states and the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. These include the lack of political will in some states, the absence of accurate accountability mechanisms and a general stereotyped attitude towards the inclusion of women.[27] Patriarchal norms also impede the empowerment of women in many countries. Girls have limited access to education and job opportunities, which in turn reduces the number of qualified candidates to be presented for representation.

Unfavourable living conditions in missions constitute obstacles for women deployed in peacekeeping.[28] The urgency in the process of deployment usually requires the establishment of makeshift facilities which may not meet the physiological needs of women. Such arrangements may increase the vulnerability of female peacekeepers and expose them to contracting infections to the detriment of their health. This is confirmed by Tidbedd-Lundholm[29] who argues that women are less likely to be deployed in the early stages of missions because new missions are associated with high levels of operational uncertainty, which is ultimately a type of risk.[30]

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25   Keita, "Women in peacekeeping."

26   Renata Giannini and Lotte Vermeij, "Women, Peace and Security Gender Challenges within UN Peacekeeping Missions," Policy Brief, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, May 2014, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/183155/PB-5-Vermeij-Giannini.pdf

27   Rounaq Jahan, *Strengthening national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women: A Global Synthesis Study*, New York: United Nations, 2010, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/TechnicalCooperation/GLOBAL_SYNTHESIS_REPORT_Dec%202010.pdf

28   Vermeij, Lotte. "Woman First, Soldier Second: Taboos and Stigmas Facing Military Women in UN Peace Operations." New York: International Peace Institute, October 2020. https://www.ipinst.org/2020/10/taboos-and-stigmas-facing-military-women-in-un-peace-operations.

29   Tidblad-Lundholm, Kajsa. "When Are Women Deployed? Operational Uncertainty and Deployment of Female Personnel to UN Peacekeeping." *International Peacekeeping 27*, no. 4 (2020): 673–702. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2020.1760717.

30   Vermeij , "Woman First, Soldier Second."

Physical fitness and some other minimum requirement tests for deployment will continue to hinder the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. These requirements include driving skills experience in the recruitment process for peacekeeping missions. Due to patriarchal norms preventing women in many contexts from having vehicles, women can face additional barriers when attempting to pass the driving tests and therefore they are dropped off the recruitment phase.[31] Some of these limitations justify the increase in female civilian participation in UN peacekeeping over the uniformed female personnel. Gender mainstreaming efforts must capitalize on the specific abilities of both men and women in order to play an effective role in the protection of children from recruitment and use by armed groups.

THE ROLE OF PEACEKEEPING IN THE PREVENTION OF CHILD RECRUITMENT AND USE IN ARMED CONFLICTS.

Peacekeeping operations contribute to draining the recruitment pool for armed organizations. They serve as grounds to professionally handle child soldiers to be freed and reinserted into their communities. They equally contribute to the promotion of children's rights. The Security Council has requested that UN missions increasingly play a role in certain aspects of child protection, especially in monitoring and reporting and in dialogue with parties to conflict for commitments to protect children.[32] The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is committed to the protection of children affected by armed conflicts. The department prioritizes efforts to mainstream the issues of children in armed conflicts within UN peacekeeping operations. Within peacekeeping operations, all personnel receive training on child rights and child protection to make them aware of the concerns that affect children in conflict. Through that training, all of them become credible advocates for children.[33]

The Secretary-General's Action Plan for the implementation of the monitoring, reporting and compliance mechanism under Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005)[34] stipulates that where there is a peacekeeping mission, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) Task Force is coordinated and co-chaired by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General

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31   UNDPO, Standard Operating Procedure (Revised) Assessment for Mission Service of Individual Police Officers, New York: United Nations, 2019, 19, https://police.un.org/sites/default/files/sop_2019.pdf

32   UNICEF, *Guidelines for Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave violations against children in situations of armed conflicts*, New York: United Nations, 2014, https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM_Guidelines_-_5_June_20141.pdf

33   Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and Department of Peacekeeping Operations. "Child Protection in United Nations Peacekeeping." New York: United Nations, Spring 2011. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/peacekeeping/en/child_protection%20_in%20un_peacekeeping2011.pdf.

34   UNICEF, *Guidelines for Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism*

and a UNICEF representative, with the former serving as the reporting conduit to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG).

Peacekeeping missions also make significant contributions to the collection and verification of information on violations.[35] These tasks are assured by the Child Protection Advisers (CPAs) in missions, in collaboration with other mission components, notably, human rights, UN police and military observers, to ensure the mission's effective contribution to the implementation of the mechanism. CPAs conduct systematic monitoring and reporting as well as advocacy on the prevention of grave violations against children.[36] They also act as the secretariat for the preparation of specific reports required by the Security Council under the mechanism established under Security Council Resolution 1612. Within the mission, CPAs serve as the technical level representatives of SRSGs and as the primary interlocutors with child protection partners. They negotiate agreements for the release of children, conduct trainings on child protection, coordinate with UNICEF and other relevant actors and also advocate for child protection needs.[37]

The Military Child Protection Officer also advises the Battalion Commander on all issues related to the protection of children, liaise between child protection actors and the battalion, establishes an alert system to transmit information received on any of the six grave violations through command channel and also to the child protection unit/section, coordinates with Military Child Protection Focal Point at Force/Mission HQ for the prevention of all forms of exploitation of children including child labour and sexual exploitation.[38]

Another important role of peacekeeping missions that contributes to the protection of children is the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR). These processes are crucial for conflict-affected countries to overcome the consequences of war and to facilitate "humanitarian assistance, restoration of civil authority and promotion of economic growth and development.[39]

35   Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and UNICEF. "Leader, Roles and Responsibilities." MRM Guidelines, 2014. https://www.mrmtools.org/mrm/mrmtk_1113.htm.

36   Office of the SRSG, et al., "Child protection."

37   Office of the SRSG, et al., "Child protection,"17-18.

38   Department of Peacekeeping Operations. "UN Military Specialised Training Materials on Child Protection Module 4: Roles and Responsibilities of Peacekeeping Mission Components and External Partners." New York: United Nations, 2018. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/10878/pdf/Module-4-Presentation.pdf.

39   United Nations Mission In Liberia, Office of the Gender Advisor, "Gender Mainstreaming In Peacekeeping Operations Liberia 2003 – 2009: Best Practices Report," United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), September 2010, https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/wps-pk_gender-mainstreamingpkoliberiabestpracticesreport_unmil_sept2010_0.pdf

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN UN PEACEKEEPING ON THE PREVENTION OF RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

The importance of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations has been widely recognized by the UNSCR 1325 and other subsequent resolutions. Gender mainstreaming creates awareness of the distinct roles of both men and women during peacekeeping operations. Although both men and women can play the same roles in peacekeeping to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers, there are some roles that are specifically better attributed to the nature of women.[40] This includes the role of female peacekeepers in intelligence gathering and sensitizing communities against child enrollment into armed groups.[41]

Female peacekeepers are easy to be approached by community members and play an important role in gathering information for early warning indicators on the recruitment and use of child soldiers.[42] Access women have in the communities also enables them to create awareness and sensitize women on the role they have to play to prevent the recruitment and use of their children as soldiers. Major General Lund, the first appointed female force commander for a UN mission pointed this out as one important advantage that female peacekeepers have: "Being a female, from my recent deployment in Afghanistan, I had access to 100 percent of the population, not only 50 percent."[43] Access to the local population becomes particularly relevant when considering the current nature of conflicts in which UN peacekeepers find themselves.[44]

Access to the local population is vital in the prevention of child recruitment and use by armed groups. This enables the mission to ensure comprehensive intelligence gathering. According to Major General Lund, "Accurate intelligence is vital for peacekeeping operations. Mission leaders and Force Commanders need to be able to map threats and identify armed groups and their leaders for effective planning. They need to analyse their types, motivations, behaviours and goals, and understand the context in which these armed groups evolve and operate."[45]

In an interview, Brigadier General Zewdu Kiros Gebrekidan, who was the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in 2016,

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40   Bradley, Harriet. *Gender*. Second edition. Key Concepts Series. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013, 254.

41   Alexandra Ivanovic, "Why the United Nations needs more female peacekeepers," United Nations University, 2014, https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/why-the-united-nations-needs-more-female-peace-keepers

42   Yolande Bouka and Romi Sigsworth, "Women in the military in Africa: Kenya case study," *Institute for Security Studies Issue Brief*, 7 (2016): 2, https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/ear7.pdf

43   Ivanovic, "Why the United Nations."

44   Ibid.

45   Ibid.

indicated that:

> *Women in peacekeeping are very important, because in field missions and conflict areas, the most vulnerable people are women and children. Female soldiers are close to women and children, so in many missions the female soldiers protect these groups because they easily understand the female victims' problems, and children's challenges too. After understanding their problems easily, they communicate with women and help them. In some areas, especially Islamic areas, or in Islamic communities, women cannot communicate directly with men. They communicate and interact with female soldiers with whom they have a close relationship, and so they can communicate about their problems. So, female soldiers in missions have a great role: to help the victims, especially women and children.*[46]

Alexandra Ivanovic argues that female soldiers do not face the same cultural restrictions as their male counterparts, and are able to gain information from women and children in their operations through a study in Cambodia, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Liberia and the DRC.[47]

Another specific role of women in peacekeeping to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers is through the protection of children in refugee camps and shelters for displaced persons. These are places where children are vulnerable to be recruited by armed groups.[48] The protection of children in these camps and shelters through monitoring and reporting mechanisms does not only prevent the abuse of vulnerable children, but also secures them from recruitment into armed groups. As recounted by Jacqueline O'Neill, when researchers in Sierra Leone asked predominantly male ex-combatants to identify those who played a significant role in helping them reintegrate, 55% named women in the community. Only 20% cited community or traditional leaders, while 32% cited international aid workers.[49] Respondents then said, "community women-including some working through civil society

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46 UN News, "INTERVIEW: Female peacekeepers connect better with women and children – UNISFA Deputy Force Commander," Peace and Security, October 31, 2016, https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/10/544212-interview-female-peacekeepers-connect-better-women-and-children-unisfa-deputy#.WCHwFmsrKM9

47 Ivanovic, "Why the United Nations."

48 Lischer, Sarah Kenyon. "War, Displacement, and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers." Pittsburgh: Ford Institute for Human Security, 2006. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/28058/2006_4_War_Displacement.pdf.

49 Jacqueline O'Neill, "Engaging women in Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR): Insights for Columbia," Inclusive Security, March 31, 2015, https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/engaging-women-in-disarmament-demobilizaton-and-reintegration-ddr-insights-for-colombia/

organizations—provided guidance, shared meager resources, and, perhaps most important, facilitated their skills training and education by providing childcare, clothes, and food."[50]

THE WAY FORWARD: DEVELOPING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS THROUGH GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS.

Gender mainstreaming plays an integral role in the success of peace support operations. The distinct roles of men and women in the reconstruction of post-conflict states must be prioritized to ensure sustainable peace. The sensitive nature of post-conflict environments and the risk of conflict recurrence requires a strategic and inclusive peacekeeping operation to protect the vulnerable victims of war. Focus on gender mainstreaming will improve upon the protection of children and facilitate the identification of early warning indicators of child recruitment and use by armed groups, as well as prevent the relapse of conflict. The integration of a gender perspective in all phases of peacekeeping is key to the prevention of child recruitment and use as soldiers.

The protection of women and children in armed conflicts also involves the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women and children. This process is vital in preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers because it unveils those involved in the violation of children's rights, the organizations or freelancers involved, the strategies and processes linked to their activities. Gender mainstreaming in Judicial, legal and correctional systems and processes will improve upon the gathering of evidence and the conviction of children to witness against members of armed forces or groups accused of enlisting and using child soldiers. The role of women in both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms will help manage the expectations of children through their witnesses.[51] This will contribute to ending impunity and deterring the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Integrating a gender perspective in the negotiation process for child release from armed groups and in all phases of the DDR process will also project signals that can be capitalized on to prevent the recruitment and use of other children as soldiers. DDR programmes are important steps in the reintegration of ex-child soldiers back into society. The success or failure of this process can contribute to the prevention or re-emergence of conflicts.[52] The needs of both boys and girls must be addressed throughout the process to ensure ex-child

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50   Ibid.

51   Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. "Children and Justice During and in the Aftermath of Armed Conflict." New York: United Nations, September 2011. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/WorkingPaper-3_Children-and-Justice.pdf.

52   United Nations. "Preventative Role of DDR/CVR." New York: United Nations, n.d. https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/pb_review_thematic_paper_orolsi_ddrs_-_preventative_role_of_ddr_and_cvr-final.pdf.

soldiers do not consider returning to armed groups. Gender mainstreaming will therefore enable both men and women to play their specific roles to manage the anxiety, physical, and psychological needs of all ex-child soldiers to be reintegrated into their communities.

Ensuring safety in camps and shelters for displaced children is vital, and the role of women in attending to the needs of both girls and boys in these places can reduce their state of vulnerability for recruitment or voluntary enlistment into armed groups.

Emphasis must be put on training more women to facilitate the deployment of female peacekeepers. Specific trainings on child protection and early warning indicators must be mainstreamed in all pre-deployment and in-mission courses.

Finally, individual states must reconsider policies that limit the access of girls to education and the recruitment of women into certain categories of work like the army. The implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and the advocacies for better inclusion and participation of women will be of no effect if women remain unqualified and limited in their capacity to participate.

CONCLUSION

Peace operations serve as a fertile ground to ignite early warning mechanisms against the recruitment and use of child soldiers in armed conflicts. Gender mainstreaming in peace operations facilitates and improves the mechanisms in detecting the indicators of child recruitment and use in regular or irregular armies. The UNSCR 1325 remains an important weapon of peace after two decades in promoting the inclusion, protection, and participation of women in peace processes. Women who face unique vulnerabilities in armed conflicts have specific roles to play in the protection of children and in breaking the cycle of recruitment and use of child soldiers.

A better representation of women can only be attained if the challenges and obstacles that deprive women of education, recognition and acceptance in socio-economic and political spheres are addressed. The implementation of UNSCR 1325 for the past 20 years has revealed that gender inequalities in peace processes can be surmounted only if deliberate efforts are made by individual states and the International community. Ending the vicious cycle of child recruitment and use by armed groups requires a holistic approach that must be gender-sensitive in all phases.

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