

# Masculinity Peacekeeping and Women's Rights

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## Peacekeeping Operations and Gendered Expectations

Peacekeeping operations, in most cases, stand set in territories or rather states, either in war or post-conflict situations, to help prevent the occurrence of conflicts as well as the spread of conflict. Both the means and peacekeeping operation goals often get seen to contradict ideas regarding manhood and masculinity, thus bringing about an aspect of tension between peacekeeping and masculinity. A gender analysis is therefore important to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of the relationship of masculinity with peace as well as the possible consequences in the particular field.

## Defining Masculinity in Conflict Settings

Masculinity, in this case, encompasses distinct types of ideals that sometimes are self-contradictory and to which both men and women lean at a given point in a particular cultural, social and historical situation. The concept of masculinities, therefore, is faced with tensions, especially in this particular case, when put in ambiguous circumstances such as peacekeeping operations. For that reason, it is essential to question the compatibility of masculinities and peacekeeping.

## Militarized Masculinity in Peacekeeping

Masculinity, therefore, plays a significant part when it comes to peacekeeping operations. For instance, in this case, a broad aspect of militarized masculinity affects these peacekeeping operations. Soldiers, for example, stand out as perfect peacekeepers since peacekeeping mainly entails a conflict intervention aspect; thus, combat training comes in handy to enhance the success of these peacekeeping missions. Militarism, however, comes along with traits and attitudes such as militarized masculinity that, in some cases, bring forth negative effects on peacekeeping operations.

## Military Training and Gendered Identity

The army can be defined as a specific site for the creation of gendered identities. Gender as a drill is substantially stressed in the military whereby officers, as well as soldiers, are trained to behave in a

hyper-masculinized manner, an angle that serves to substantiate themselves better than a feminized “other” foe. (United Nations Security Council, 2000) Soldiers in most peacekeeping activities encounter strain between wanting to rehearse what they learnt to be more proficient in realizing peace and their desire or request to be masculine.

## Narratives of Masculine Peacekeeping

By and large, the dissertation of peacekeeping as being manly is a type of account that uses a positive capability in reference to a specific mission. On the other hand, it tends to utilise a negative qualification naming the “other” that is other local soldiers and parts of the same army. There are distinct ways of identifying a peacekeeping mission as being masculine, such as claims that peacekeeping is dangerous and more challenging than a war.

## Women’s Roles in Negotiation and Reconstruction

In any peacekeeping mission, there are processes that involve negotiations, reconciliation, and reconstruction in the society affected by the conflict. Women are part of society, and just like men, they actively participate in these processes. History shows that women are better at these activities than men. Women bring a different perspective into peacekeeping because of how differently they experience conflict and understand peace. Women in the military are no exception in this case, and when put in key roles during peacekeeping missions, the effectiveness and processes of the process increase significantly.

## Conflict-Related Violence Against Women

However, conflict usually has a great impact on women despite their vividly recognizable influence on conflict management. Women also face various forms of discrimination, such as gender-based and sexual violence, which increase during conflicts. In fact, one of the tactics of war is sexual and gender violence, where women’s rights activists are harassed. Therefore, when women are included in peacekeeping operations, they will understand the pain of this violence better than men and ensure that such are kept to the minimum number possible.

## Operational Benefits of Female Peacekeepers

When women are recruited into militarized peacekeeping missions, there are various advantages in the location where the mission is conducted. For example, there are specific needs that women in the area need that can only be realised through the intervention of another woman. Demobilizing and reintegrating female ex-combatants into civilian life will require the attention of another female. (Duncanson, 2009) Also, the presence of women in the peacekeeping force will make the force more

approachable. In societies where women are prohibited from talking to men, interaction with another female will provide an avenue for communication that is critical to peace restoration.

## Women's Rights Protection and Community Trust

One of the critical roles of militarized peacekeeping missions that includes women is the promotion of the rights and well-being of women in society. Other than giving access and support to the neighbourhood ladies, ladies in the force likewise give a greater sense of security that all is well and good to the nearby populace, particularly ladies and kids. They also become role models for the women in the community and broaden the skills available in the peacekeeping force. Ultimately, these women make greater contributions to the empowerment, inclusion and protection of both the local women and girls.

## Conclusion on Gender-Inclusive Peacekeeping

Militarized masculinity is one of the major components of how the social gender is constructed. There has always been a tension between the training a soldier undergoes and the traits he/she attained in a peacekeeping mission. Also, there is no way to turn a trained soldier for war to act with a sense of cultural and gender sensitivity. Therefore, incorporating female personnel into these forces is important because it is the innate nature of women to be caring and understanding.

## References

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