National Security, Gendered Insecurity

Feminist Perspectives on Militarism, Masculinities & Security

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No concept is sacred. No concept should be chiseled in stone. Any concept that is worth its salt is vibrant, always subject to reassessment and fresh understandings. To be reliable, therefor, any concept needs to be constantly applied, tested, evaluated, and refined.¹

- Cynthia Enloe¹

Thanks
To Daniel and Filip – for your endless support, patience and love.

Abstract
I denna uppsats granskas militariserad säkerhet i relation till kvinnors osäkerhet. Uppsatsten genomsyras av ett genusperspektiv och berör skadliga sociala normer såsom våldsuttryck knutna till maskulinitetsideal, nationens betydelse, maskuliniseringen av den säkerhetspolitiska arenan och hur den Amerikanska armén använde sig av feminisering som förhörsmetod i det skandalomsusade Irakiska fängelset Abu Ghraib. Uppsatsten finner att militariserad säkerhet utgör ett hot mot kvinnors säkerhet i och med den könsmaktsordning som upprätthålls och förstärks i samband med konflikt och militär närvaro och som resulterar i specifikt våld riktat mot kvinnor och feminiserade grupper.

Swedish Title
Nationell Säkerhet, Genderiserad Osäkerhet
Feministiska Perspektiv på Militarism, Maskuliniteter & Säkerhet

Keywords
Militarism; national security; hegemonic masculinities; gender; masculinity

Abbreviations
CAT – Convention Against Torture
GBV – Gender-Based Violence
IHRL – International Human Rights Law
IHL – International Humanitarian Law
IR – International Relations
SIPRI – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
VAW – Violence Against Women

*** The cover photo is taken in Pittsburg in 2004. It shows a group of soldiers attending their welcome home ceremony, awaiting their medals. Between October 2003 and April 2004, the group had been serving as guards at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Photo: Jakub Mosur

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1 Introduction

For a long time the political discourse on security has been centered on the nation and the two concepts of security and nation are now, practically, inseparable. This intimate relationship is perhaps the most intrinsic feature that differentiates the military from other patriarchal institutions. Neither private nor public, no other institution constitutes such a significant part of the state as the military. This means that the military obtains a particularly powerful status comprising influence and privileges like no other institution. Moreover, it also means that the concept of national security is defined by, and within the military.

Officially the term implies the safety and protection of the state and its citizens, but the term has also come to encompass a certain type of social order. This social order includes the gender roles and stereotypes that, within the militaristic ideology, can be understood as the indispensable cornerstones of national security. Thus, maintaining this social order has become an important factor in order to successfully obtain “national security”, maybe the most important. The patriarchal construction of the military system has been defined as a recreator and sustainer of traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. The militaristic ideology as a whole rests on the dichotomy between the protector and the protected, which can be translated into traditional masculine and feminine roles.

Strangely enough, the interconnections between men/masculinities and militarism/violent conflict are rarely linked together and therefore, rarely the subject for research. However, traditional notions of security are starting to get questioned and maybe even weakened in some areas of the political arenas of war, peacekeeping and human rights.

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4 Enloe, Cynthia H., Kvinna,Giv Akt!: Militariseringen av Kvinnors Liv, Pax, Göteborg, 1990, s. 19-20

5 Toktas, Sule in MINERVA Quarterly Report on Women in the Military, The MINERVA Center, Vol. XX, Number 2, Summer 2002, p. 33

6 Hearn, Jeff, Män, Maskuliniteter, Krig och Militarism i De los Reyes, Paulina, Eduards, Maud & Sundevall, Fia (red.) (2013). Internationella Relationer: Könskritiska Perspektiv. 1. uppl. Stockholm: Liber, s. 150

7 Hearn, 2013, s. 158-159
1.1 Purpose

This thesis strives to accomplish a thorough analysis of power and gender in relation to militarized security. It will illuminate problematic aspects of traditional militarized national security in relation to women’s security, militarism and ideas about masculinity. It aims to problematize gender and security in order to establish if, and in what ways, they are dependent upon each other and if this relation, in fact, contributes to gendered insecurity.

1.2 Research question

*Women’s security is often severely compromised in times of conflict or in contexts of military presence. The militarized, national security concept’s unchallenged status as protector of the nation is rarely linked to problematic masculinity ideals or the insecurity that is specifically inflicted upon women.*

1.2.1.1 Analysis questions

What is the relation between militarized security and the gender power order?

How can the traditional national security concept be linked to the insecurity of women?

1.3 Methodology

A qualitative research method in conjunction with critical discourse analysis constitutes the overall methodological framework of the thesis. The choice of using a qualitative research approach is partly motivated by its disassociation with the norms, models and courses of action within the natural sciences. Instead, it emphasizes the meaning of perceptions and interpretations of social reality. It is also motivated by its main focus to generate new theories through an inductive way of approaching the relation between theory and research. ¹ Like in

hermeneutics, reality always comes down to interpretations of it and the thesis strives to generate new interpretations of social phenomena on the basis of existing ones.9

Through critical discourse analysis I will examine the security discourse in relation to gendered insecurities, militarism and patriarchal violence in order to establish if, and how the system fails to be gender-inclusive. I will also investigate its “inter-discoursivity”, meaning the occurrence of resistance, opposition and/or signs of alteration within the security discourse.10 However, gender studies constitute an interdisciplinary scientific field and therefore I have chosen to approach the subject of the investigation with an open, experimenting plurality where I let the material lead the way.11

1.4 Theory

Social constructionism and postmodern feminist theory will be the theoretical approach that permeates the thesis. The choice of a postmodern feminist perspective is motivated by its aim to deconstruct and problematize science as a neutral, stable and universal foundation. Instead, it emphasizes an understanding of science as a discourse and narrative that is produced and reproduced through human interaction.12 Also, as in many critical pro-feminist studies of men and masculinities, I aim to deconstruct the “label of neutrality” that often is put on men within science and research. While taking into account the inner hierarchies amongst and between different groups of men, this thesis will study men as a gendered, social category and not representatives of human kind as a whole.13

Similar to post-modern feminist theories, the social constructionist view also takes a critical standing point towards, and problematizes knowledge that is regarded as self-evident, natural


10 Lundin, 2008, s. 101


12 Lykke, 2009, s. 226-227

13 Lykke, 2009, s. 121
or undeniable. Discourse analysis offers a number of different social constructionist starting points. For example, social constructionism assumes that language is not neutral. According to Michel Foucault, statements claiming to be truthful (and often are thought to be truthful by the person stating them) are often used to exercise power and to legitimize actions that express power relations. In this case, focus will be put on the “self-evident and neutral” ideas of violent militarized masculinities as legitimate means of conflict resolution and the gendered power order/dichotomy that such a structure creates.

This thesis holds that masculinity needs to be regarded as a socially and contextually interchangeable category and therefor a complex and diverse subject of research. In order to approach the subject of masculinities in the best possible manner I have chosen to borrow the famous terms coined by the Australian researcher Raewyn Connell. Connell emphasizes that masculinity is a multiple social category that needs to be looked at from an intersectional perspective. Thus, it needs to be understood in relation to other social categories such as ethnicity, class, race, sexuality etc.

1.5 Material

The research will be based on literature, reports and articles in order to achieve good quality argumentation and coverage of different aspects relevant to the thesis. The authors of the material that is used are well renowned and possess great knowledge within their respective fields. Among the sources used as primary material are contributions by Cynthia Enloe, Jeff Hearn, Iris Marion Young, Raewyn Connell and Betty Reardon.

All authors have a similar approach to the question of security, militarism and gender that is in line with the theory and method used in this thesis. Enloe is relevant since she writes about the gendered consequences of globalized militarism; Hearn describes linkages between masculinity and war; Young questions the protector/protected dichotomy; Connell’s famous theory of hegemonic masculinities helps to understand the complexity of men as a group in

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14 Lundin, 2008, s. 98-99
15 Lundin, 2008, s. 97
16 Lykke, 2009, s. 122-123
conjunction to militarism and security, and Reardon questions traditional notions of security through a gendered perspective. The secondary material, such as articles, reports and Internet sources have been selected as complementary material with facts and reasoning that enriches the thesis as a whole.

1.6 Delimitation

The theoretical and methodological orientation that characterizes the core outlay of this thesis was chosen with a western standing point in mind since I want to make visible harmful structures and social processes that are straight in front of us but so deeply entrenched in our cultures and societies that they are taken as given and therefor, unquestioned. I found it especially interesting to critically scrutinize (mainly) American systems of security since there are many problematic aspects that are, and should be, subject of further investigations and research. For example there are discourses challenging the circumvention of democratic values, unreported transitions of financial resources in the name of national security and the use of torture as method of interrogation in the war on terror. These examples are somewhat embedded in this thesis.

However, the main focus for this thesis is the discourse on gender, masculinities and militarism. This delimitation is motivated by the invisibility of gender in security discourses, and mainly, the invisibility of women’s security. Research on gender and security cannot be conducted without examining underlying generators of gender inequality such as the linkages between masculinities and militarism and research on this area still suffers shortages. It needs to be highlighted and prioritized urgently in order to assure that no one’s security and/or human rights are compromised because of the exclusionary characteristics of the prevailing security system.

1.7Disposition

Chapter 2 approaches traditional, state-centered security and problematizes the concept from different angles. Gender and ideas of masculinity permeate the arguments and reasoning presented in order to analyze in what ways they are interconnected and if the relation, de facto, is counterproductive when it comes to building inclusionary security for all.
In chapter 3, different manifestations of inequality in relation to the traditional national security concept are analyzed. The examples used are mainly related to U.S security policy and events that are related to, expressions of and/or tactics used by the U.S military.

Chapter 4 contains of analysis and concluding observations and in chapter 5 contains a summary and thoughts on future research.
2 Questioning National Security

2.1 Defining National Security

Historically, policymaking in relation to security issues has revolved around ways of protecting the nation and the military perspective is the most dominant factor in conflict resolution to this day. There is a lot of different perceptions of what the word security really means and since the 9/11 attacks opinions have been particularly variable. From an international perspective the term security has been strongly associated with the nation. It is based upon a traditionalist realism that can be traced back to the reasoning of Thomas Hobbes. The paradigm that characterizes the security perception of our time is based upon the idea of the nation as a strong, sovereign unit with the ability to defend itself against external threat. This traditional notion of security has been criticized for being highly patriarchal in its estimation of what - and who - is worthy of protection. For example, it has been accused of prioritizing and facilitating economic progression and only representing the interests of those in power.

There is both an external and internal aspect of national security. The first keeps watch and protects against external threat and the second aims to keep the protected masses within the boarders under control. The idea of the external, aggressive antagonist is essential for the state-centered security concept. Military action and allocation of resources that enhance the power of military institutions are deemed necessary and are justified through the patron rhetoric that is typical for the national security concept. It doesn’t matter who committed the first attack on the other or if it’s obvious that the motive is political or economical, the rhetoric and self-defined role of protector is key. The patron rhetoric is also used within a nations border as threats against public order and peace can exist amidst ordinary people. The people must therefore be kept under close supervision through increased surveillance, wire-

17 Karlsson, Josefine, Grejen med Resolution 1325, Internationella Kvinnoförbundet för Fred och Frihet med stöd av Folke Bernadotteakademien, Stockholm, 2014, s. 3


19 Milner, 2010, p. 173

20 Young, Iris Marion, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections of the Current Security State", Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 2003, vol. 29, no. 1, Copyright; The University of Chicago, p. 16
tapping and curfew. All justified with the same patron rhetoric used in cases concerning external threat.\textsuperscript{21}

As economies become increasingly linked together due to globalization, the production of firearms steadily go up. Hence, more and more countries rethink their national defense capacities. Once a country in a region upgrades their national defense, this spreads like circles on the water to neighboring countries. And as weapons come in, societal tensions rise, resulting in widespread fear and violence against civilians. The militarized nationalism constructed by the national security paradigm is counterproductive and dangerous to marginalized and excluded groups, women in particular. Along with the centralization of state power and incorporation of norms of nationalism, the inevitable outcome is a culture of violence.\textsuperscript{22}

Since long before the creation of the nation state, patriarchy was the cultural core on which most societies were ordered. In turn, the construction of the nation state allowed this cultural and customary practice to convert into an institutionalized and sanctioned form of power within a sovereign unit, often in total control of the people living within its borders. The state creates a distance between those in power, and responsibility. It depersonalizes decision-making and rationalizes the use of force to maintain order and avoid demands of accountability. Patriarchal values and perspectives are still deeply imprinted in human institutions everywhere\textsuperscript{23} and the traditional national security system plays a big part in maintaining the global patriarchal power order under which most of our institutions have evolved. This is deeply entrenched in our everyday lives, from our economy, our political systems and religions to the ways we organize social relations within society and family.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Young. 2003, p. 8


2.2 The Invisibility of Hegemonic Masculinities

According to Connell, no other institution apart from the military has been of such significance for the definition of hegemonic masculinities in western culture.\(^\text{25}\) In essence, the concept of hegemonic masculinities pinpoints the cultural and societal practices that legitimize the patriarchal gender power order. It comprises men that benefit from, and are privileged by patriarchy in ways that enable them to successfully subordinate women and other men. The concept of complicit masculinities is, according to Connell, to be understood as a supplementary definition. It covers men that don’t entirely fit the mold of hegemonic masculinities but still take advantage of, and profit from the patriarchal structures that be. Subordinated and marginalized masculinities are deemed as the counterparts to hegemonic and complicit masculinities. The subordinated category implies culturally normative relations of dominance and marginalized implies societal structures that privilege one group over another.\(^\text{26}\)

Hence, men that are exposed to excessive violence are not the same as the men who occupy high positions within politics or the military.\(^\text{27}\) Factors like race, ethnicity, sexuality and class create intersections and hierarchal structures within the category of men, which is important to keep in mind. However, despite great diversity within the category men, Connell holds that we cannot abolish the man-category completely\(^\text{28}\) since there are clear interconnections between the masculine gender and violence both on a personal and organizational level. For example, on the personal level statistics show that men are accountable for 90 percent of murders and attacks and men also represent about 90 percent of the inmates in prisons, that is in America and Australia. On the organizational level one can establish that the majority of, for example soldiers, police and suicide bombers are men. These undeniable facts are slowly starting to get acknowledged as problems.\(^\text{29}\)


\(^{26}\) Lykke, 2009, s. 122-123

\(^{27}\) Connell, 2005, p. 213

\(^{28}\) Connell, 2005, p. 249

\(^{29}\) Connell, 2005, p. 257-258
Linkages between masculinities and militarism are multiple and diverse and need to be looked at both with gender and sexuality in mind. For example, much military masculinity is prone to take a hyper masculine form and hold misogynist opinions that often go hand in hand with deeply homophobic views. Other forms of militarized masculinities may take on a “softer” approach, especially in critical situations. These contradictions show that masculinities within the military are complex and take on different expressions on an identity level. Whether deemed as representing scattered or more specific types of masculinities, the militaristic hegemonic ways of organizing security within a nation have been regarded as implicitly “gender neutral” and/or taken for granted. Therefore, the interconnections between men/masculinity and militarism/violence/war are rarely highlighted or even considered a subject for research. Research, news and medial analysis of war and portrayal of international relations rarely takes on a gendered approach. When it does, it is normally women who are gendered and not men. As Jeff Hearn argues; men and boys are rarely considered to be gendered beings. The “gender-label” almost always falls on girls and women, even in discussions aimed at analyzing gender from a critical standpoint. Quite similar to how white people/whiteness is also regarded as a kind of non-category, neither racial, nor ethnically coded.

2.3 The Nation State as Source of Violence

The state, or as Weber (1919) defined it; “the societal organization that successfully monopolizes the legitimate use of physical violence at a given territory”, generates great amounts of collective violence. In some cases the concept of the state is considered a male coded structure with characteristics such as virility and strength, while the concept of nation

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30 Hearn, Jeff, Män, Maskuliniteter, Krig och Militarism i De los Reyes, Paulina, Eduards, Maud & Sundevall, Fia (red.) (2013). Internationella Relationer: Könskritiska Perspektiv. 1. uppl. Stockholm: Liber, s. 150

31 Hearn, 2013, s. 150

32 Hearn, 2013, s. 149

33 Hearn, 2013, s. 147
implies femininity and the need for protection. Through its different institutions and sovereign power it holds the authority to define who is a citizen and who is not.\textsuperscript{34}

The official historiography emphasizes and establishes the idea of white, western men as leaders of the world through the narratives of violent imperialist conquest, militarism, warfare and the creation of nations.\textsuperscript{35} In part, military logic is based on specific, idealized and stereotypical forms of masculinity and femininity. Men are ascribed the role of heterosexual, masculine, citizens and soldiers are considered to be active subjects expected to wage war, protect and kill. In contrast, women are ascribed the role of victim in need of protection and re-creator of human life/the nation are considered to be passive objects but necessary \textit{counterpart} in relation to the militarized male role.\textsuperscript{36}

In the development of a geopolitical analysis, Connell has narrowed it down to three types of historically “globalized masculinities”. Firstly, in the dawning of the empires there were the conqueror and settler masculinities that, according to Connell, manifested a particularly high level of violence and egocentric individualism. Secondly, there were the actual imperialist masculinities within the established metropolises. They were organized in categories such as imperialists, colonizers, and colonized opponents. Violence was (and still is) strongly associated with masculinity so the more violent the group, the higher up in the hierarchy they found themselves. While, for example victims of colonization that did little or no resistance were viewed as feminine. Thirdly, due to the processes of decolonization, new groups of post-colonial and neo-liberal masculinities have evolved. Both in former empires and colonies, masculinities practiced resistance through violence. This three-phase model presented by Connell gives a historical overview on “globalized masculinities” in relation to violence as the engine behind the expansion and fortification of the state.\textsuperscript{37}

In short, nations can be defined as a patriarchal structure representing a common male identity and hierarchical order that values men over women. And since women are associated with the

\textsuperscript{34} Hearn, 2013, s. 153  

\textsuperscript{35} Hearn, 2013, s. 152-153  

\textsuperscript{36} Eriksson Baaz, Maria and Stern, Maria, \textit{Maskulinitet och Sexualiserat Våld i Krig och Fred} i De los Reyes, Paulina, Eduards, Maud & Sundevall, Fia (red.) (2013). \textit{Internationella Relationer: Könskritiska Perspektiv}. 1. uppl. Stockholm: Liber, s. 118  

\textsuperscript{37} Hearn, 2013, s. 152-153
private spheres of life and men are associated with the public, this power structure results in male domination of certain areas like public affairs, business, resource allocation and politics. Consequently, male elites are setting the agenda and the nations resources and competitiveness in relation to other nations is highly prioritized. This competitiveness overlooks critical aspects of security and is a high-risk gamble that puts nations and its habitants in direct danger.\textsuperscript{38}

\section*{2.4 Gender-Based Violence and Militarism}

Within international law, violence against women constitutes a form of discrimination and is therefore considered a violation of fundamental human rights. However, due to state inaction and widespread impunity for crimes of GBV, the occurrence of violence is understood as a low priority crime, which further normalizes the occurrence of it, and thus reinforces and maintains the subordination and powerlessness of women.\textsuperscript{39}

The most severe and persistent outcome resulting from the prevalent, highly militarized national security system is gender-based violence (GBV), often used with lethal force.\textsuperscript{40} Correlations between GBV and violent conflict can be found on the international, all the way down to the individual level. Along with doctrines of privacy and state-inaction is the use of violence as method of conflict resolution, which represents a crucial field for further research. In armed conflict, the use of systematic sexual violence against women has become categorized as means of ethnic cleansing.\textsuperscript{41}

GBV occurs on a daily basis in all societies worldwide but military presence and armed conflict has a direct affect on the ways in which GBV is manifested. It has been documented that the violence tends to get more intense and more brutal in times of emergency and/or when military forces are present.\textsuperscript{42} Within the field of peace research GBV has been

\textsuperscript{38} Reardon, 2010, p. 17

\textsuperscript{39} Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Women, Background Documentation for: 61st Session of the General Assembly Item 60(a) on Advancement of Women, Forthcoming as Document A/61/122/Add. 1, p. 29

\textsuperscript{40} Reardon, 2010, p. 3

\textsuperscript{41} Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Women, p. 33

\textsuperscript{42} Reardon, 2010, p. 3
highlighted only the last decades and with the exception of the contributions of a small number of feminist theorists; this specific type of violence is rarely linked to conflict, militarism or security policies.  

GBV is part of a vicious circle of violence without apparent end. Women represent a subordinated group in society and subordination often leads to the absence of certain rights; the absence of rights creates great vulnerability to violence. In turn, violence keeps women in a socially subordinated position and the subordination creates great exposure to violence. In short, GBV serves as the guardian that keeps the social order intact. The historic inequalities between men and women are reflected in the different forms of institutionalized subordination and systematical discrimination of women that are still prevalent to this day. This hierarchal structure affects all aspects of women’s lives both in the public, and private sphere. GBV cannot be linked to explanations such as psychological health or socio-economic status. Although, a study conducted in Malawi showed that men and women had very different perceptions of what the causes GBV. Women recognized cultural and social norms as major causes of violence to a greater extent than men who referred to interfamilial or social dynamics between individuals as the main causal factors. 

Undoubtedly, the underlying reasons behind the occurrence of GBV are complex. In order to understand the causes of it, the phenomenon needs to be analyzed from a broad context that includes the underlying factors that enhance the occurrence and risks of it. There are also layers of intersection that mold different women’s experiences. Factors like class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, nationality, religion, disability and culture directly affects these experiences. At the same time it’s important to emphasize that GBV is not confined to certain cultures, countries or regions and is not linked to certain societies or groups. It occurs everywhere regardless of social, national, political, cultural or religious borders. Its pervasive nature penetrates all layers, from universal to particular, which speaks for its integral

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43 Reardon, 2010, p. 15
44 Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Women, p. 27-28
45 Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Women, p. 29
46 Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Women, p. 27-28
relationship with patriarchy. Throughout history gender has been divided and organized in a specific hierarchical order where masculinity has been privileged over femininity. Thus, even though cultural practices linked to each gender role may vary slightly from region to region, the patriarchal hierarchy is global. Through history it has made sure to convince people that relations between men, women and children and the particular role that has been assigned to each category is the inevitable result of natures design and will. Gender roles however, are neither biologically determined nor unalterable. As Cynthia Enloe argues; patriarchy uses the perception of the “naturalness” of gender roles to benefit itself through masking its exercise of power. Because, if people are convinced that this is true they will not bother to question the legitimacy of values, practices and obligations linked to masculinity and femininity since they are regarded as permanent and unchangeable.

However, there are certain times when even the most eager proponents find it hard to defend this gendered dichotomy. Unlikely enough, this uncertainty mainly occurs before or during conflict, for example when women join the army. All of a sudden the “naturalness” of the gendered power order is not that easy to defend and those in power will probably have to deviate from their traditionalist ideals and use women as workforce within the military. When the conflict is over policymakers tend to strive for the reconstruction of traditional gender roles. At this stage, confusion is likely to emerge. Simultaneously, there is no other time than the period before and during war that has such a polarizing effect on the gender roles.

2.5 Gender Perspectives on International Law

There is a multitude of criticism aimed at the gap between the public and private sphere within International human rights law (IHRL). Critics mean that IHRL covers different types of public violence but overlooks violence in the private sphere. In many societies, due to women’s social status within the family, most violations take place in the private sphere, for

47 Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Women, p. 27-28

48 Reardon, 2010, p. 12

example domestic violence, sexual violence or infanticide. The gap between public and private results in challenges in ensuring women the same rights as men. \(^5^0\)

Also, the fact that most human rights are individualistically formulated could, according to Betty Reardon, bear witness of the intrusive powers of patriarchy even within international law. The male perspective tends to be individualistic and self-promoting while inclusiveness and a broad angle tends to characterize the feminine perspective. However, these gendered ways of thinking are neither static nor biologically induced. Contrariwise, these traits can be linked to socialization, experience and education. Moreover, according to gender scholars they can be altered through the same processes that created them in the first place.\(^5^1\)

The patriarchal perspective also permeates International humanitarian Law (IHL) and is particularly noticeable in article 27 of the fourth Geneva Convention, which addresses the protection of civilians in international conflict. It says that women should be met with particular protection against attacks that are aiming to damage their *honor*. Thus, rape, forced prostitution and other forms of “dishonorable” violations are not considered to be strictly forbidden war crimes and a clear threat to women’s security, instead they are formulated as acts that can hurt a woman’s reputation and value in relation to men.\(^5^2\)

Not until a few years ago, sexual abuse was seldom or never a topic reported in human rights investigations and many truth commissions are thought to have received much less information regarding cases of sexual violence than what had actually occurred. Women’s reluctance to come forward due to the social stigma is a comprehensive obstacle between women and their access to justice.\(^5^3\)

The security discourse within the international relations (IR) arena is characterized by western political realism, thus, almost exclusively discussed in military terms and approached from a state-centered perspective. Rendering the understanding of security as something that is


\(^{51}\) Reardon, 2010, p. 12


always provided by the military - armed and trained to wield violence.\textsuperscript{54} Moreover, within IR, there is still a resistance towards considering male behavioral patterns as gendered. According to Jeff Hearn, they are so deeply entrenched in social, cultural and economical relations that male practices are viewed as the neutral and generally accepted norm. Consequently, women’s patterns of behavior are often viewed as the abnormal, irregular and are therefor often subject for debate and questioning. Hence, the gender neutrality ascribed to decision-making and the public politics of international relations is false as it is intrinsically based on male homosociality and patterns. It is quite remarkable how rarely men are regarded as men/gendered.\textsuperscript{55} Even critical masculinity research tends to overlook international relations as an arena for maintaining and reinforcing the gender power order.\textsuperscript{56} When refraining from gendering international relations, the male dominance in the international political field remains unchallenged and the silence continues.\textsuperscript{57}

The invisibility of women is both reflected and reinforced on account of the failure to legislate gender as a ground for persecution side by side with religion, race, ethnicity and political beliefs. Not just in situations of conflict or post conflict, but in society as a whole.\textsuperscript{58} Violence, power and dominance are closely linked to ideas about masculinity and, therefor, so are the politics of security and defense. Consequently, women are underrepresented and left out of decision-making.\textsuperscript{59} And as in many other scientific fields, women’s perspectives have practically been excluded from the field of security as well. Approximately at the same time as feminist peace researchers started to raise their voices within the scientific discourse on peace, security and justice, the traditional concept of security got challenged.\textsuperscript{60}


\textsuperscript{55} Hearn, 2013, s. 155

\textsuperscript{56} Hearn, 2013, s. 154

\textsuperscript{57} Hearn, 2013, s. 155

\textsuperscript{58} Reilly, 2009, p. 100-101

\textsuperscript{59} Karlsson, 2014, s. 3

2.6 Alternative Security Discourses

Betty Reardon argues that the state-centered, militaristic concept of security in many ways is counterproductive and defeats its purpose by, in fact, being a contributing factor to maintaining violence. She claims that traditional security is devastating for the promotion of peace and equality. What is required is instead a broad definition covering a global perspective. Human security is a concept that challenges state-centered, traditional and militaristic perceptions of security and peace. This relatively new way of approaching security focuses on accommodating people their human rights, promoting autonomy and self-empowerment as well as protecting people from acute threat.\(^ {61}\)

Sweden’s foreign minister Margot Wallström made an announcement in early 2015 quite opposite to the traditional national security thinking and discourse. She called for an approach based on a feminist perspective that implied a less militarized national security concept.\(^ {62}\) Her conclusion, she explained, was that “peace, justice, human rights and human development” must be the core values and goals of any foreign policy to insure real national security and that the inclusion of women is key.\(^ {63}\) Wallström has had an extensive political career and possesses more experience than many through her different assignments within the Swedish parliament, the EU and recently the UN, as Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict for the Secretary General. Still she was accused of being “naïve” and “unrealistic”.\(^ {64}\) As long as security continues to be militarized; the security discourse will continue to privilege masculine values over feminine. As Wallström herself put it during a speech held in Washington;

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\text{We won’t get there without adjusting existing policies, down to their nuts and bolts, to correct the particular discrimination, exclusion and violence still inflicted on the female half of us.} \(^ {65}\)
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\(^ {61}\) Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development – issue 17, August 2011, p. 84-85

\(^ {62}\) Enloe, 2016, p. 55

\(^ {63}\) Enloe, 2016, p. 56

\(^ {64}\) Enloe, 2016, p. 55

\(^ {65}\) Enloe, 2016, p. 56
Of course, on an individual level, men also suffer from conflict and military violence just like women, children and other societal groups. The difference is that, collectively, men’s superiority and power stays intact or is even reinforced by military presence and war. However, since the end of the Cold War these kinds of “alternative” security discourses have slowly started to emerge. People are questioning the traditional, militarized security concept and asking whether national security could and should be replaced with human security. Proponents of human security mean that security is achievable by switching the focus from a states military capacity to its people’s sense of security in their everyday lives. For example, instead of putting resources into developing new technology for warfare, states should take preventive action in order to preserve the environment, avoid disease epidemics and/or provide people with their everyday needs, such as clean drinking water. These critical thoughts did not turn up by themselves but through the hard work, dedication and research contributed by feminist scholars, teachers and organizations.

2.7 Protector/Protected vs. Nation/Citizen

Iris Marion Young argues that the logic of the masculinized protector can be found in several layers within the nation state, from public to private. She describes the security state as one that goes to war abroad and expects its citizens at home to be loyal and abide to actions such as surveillance or arbitrary detention that are deemed necessary in the name of security. The same logic can be applied to the heterosexual family constellation where the male head of the household can justify restrictions towards the women and children within the family in the name of security, i.e. putting them in a subordinated position.

Parallels between how leaders of a democratic nation justify the disregarding of democratic processes and basic human rights such as the right to free assembly and freedom of speech can be drawn to the way in which a woman within a family disclaims her voice in decision-

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66 Hearn, 2013, s. 149
67 Enloe, p. 58-59
68 Young, 2003, p. 2
69 Young, 2003, p. 3
making in exchange for protection. There is no room for separate wills in times of crisis. Moreover, certain expectations come with the role of male protector. He is expected to provide for, and make the proper decisions, in order to ensure the security of the dependents within the household. Young points out that in this case the female dependent does not view herself as a victim of subordination. On the contrary she finds substance in the fact that the protector finds her worthy of his protection and will gladly follow his lead in exchange for protection from harm.

However, V. Spike Peterson argues that the dichotomy of protector-protected is a distorted metaphor that does not disclose the full complexity and meaning of security. Peterson claims the state, and it’s integral promise of protection, to be so gendered that it, in itself, is the main cause of female insecurity. The protector-protected dichotomy only reflects the gendered power order of masculine-feminine. Thus, the ones representing the “protected” (i.e. the feminine) who find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy are left systematically unprotected. As recent history has shown, the rhetoric of protector-protected is being used arbitrarily. For example it was used by the Bush administration to collect sympathy and to enhance public support in sending U.S troops to Afghanistan. Thus, the women of Afghanistan were in particular focus as the war was portrayed to be a humanitarian action to free the people from domination. The women were assigned the role as the ultimate victim, making USA the ultimate protector. Reports have shown that except for the fact that many Afghan women lost their homes, their ability to make a living and their relatives, little or nothing has changed for the better. Instead, countries that are exposed to U.S military presence are put in a subordinated position resulting in resentment and frustration among locals. The logic behind these kinds of military interventions can be compared to argumentation used by colonialist ideologies to gain public support in order justify intrusion.

70 Young, 2003, p. 4
71 Young, 2003, p. 5
72 Young, 2003, p. 6
73 Akibayashi and Takazato, 2010, p. 41-42
74 Young, 2003, p. 17
75 Young, 2003, p. 19-20
3 Manifestations of Inequality

3.1 Masculinization of Security Politics

Like militarization, masculinization (and feminization) is a process that happens over time. The process involves imposing the claim that certain activities and traits are deeply connected with gender. Within security politics there are widespread gendered assumptions as to what kind of person makes the most reliable decision-taker, expert or official. Characteristics such as rationality, decisiveness and toughness are highly valued and also tightly linked to perceptions of masculinity. Devalued characteristics on the other hand, such as emotionality, sentimentality and softness are firmly tied to perceptions of femininity. Accordingly, the person most fit for participation within the national security discourse must be someone who is as far from feminine characteristics as possible, making the ultimate candidate the stereotypical “manly man”. Connell argues that the men who are socially designated to represent hegemonic masculinity are the same men that operate the state and its major corporations. Thus, the maintenance of the patriarchal power order is done through the daily work of these institutions and does not call for explicit masculinity politics in order to keep its advocacy and unchallenged status intact.

According to feminist theory the term safety should comprise the conditions that allow human wellbeing and the identification of the sources and factors that ensure people the experience and expectation of wellbeing. To fulfill these conditions should be the end goal of all actions committed in the name of security. It’s a global fact that women’s traditional gender role includes to care for, and ensure the wellbeing of the weak and vulnerable. Children and the elderly in particular depend on care given by women. Accordingly, women carry the main burden of ensuring human wellbeing. Moreover, women also take responsibility to improve the living conditions in their local environment. In many cultures and regions women have to adopt a way of thinking that promotes cooperation and communal sharing of resources. This has given women an outlook on security that is quite different from the perception that

76 Enloe, 2016, p. 5
77 Enloe, 2016, p. 55
78 Connell, 2005, p. 212-213
characterizes the thought of the men in which society puts its trust regarding what and who is worthy of protection.\textsuperscript{79}

Since the military perspective is dominant within security politics, women’s experiences and knowledge are often dismissed as naive or inconsequential. The underrepresentation of women also brings about the fact that specific threats against the security of women do not count as security threats and so; different forms of violence and sexual violence that women are exposed to are not prioritized.\textsuperscript{80} Women do not have access to their political rights and have significantly less access to justice and participation than men. In peace negotiations, it is often the men who, themselves, fought in the conflict who are involved and awarded with a voice, not the ones who fought for peace. Even in cases where women have been deeply involved in a conflict and/or key players in the peace initiatives are routinely excluded from political decision-making.\textsuperscript{81} Acknowledging how women are affected and/or involved in violent conflict is an important step in taking the lid off of the perception that security politics is, and should be, an arena reserved exclusively for men.\textsuperscript{82}

### 3.2 Circumvention of Democracy

The term \textit{militarization} implies a transformative process that often takes place over a long period of time, sometimes generations, which makes it hard to register. Linked to militarization are values that hold military force, hierarchy and obedience as necessary means in an increasingly dangerous world. To become militarized implies more than joining the army; in fact, civilians represent the most militarized group in the world.\textsuperscript{83} The militarization of national security reinforces the perception of constant threat and contributes to a widespread sense of suspicion among and between people. Consequently, this rationalizes infringements of people’s privacy and concealment of decision-making, which in turn can

\textsuperscript{79} Reardon, 2010, p. 16-17

\textsuperscript{80} Karlsson, 2014, s. 3

\textsuperscript{81} Reilly, 2009, p. 165

\textsuperscript{82} Reilly, 2009, p. 98

\textsuperscript{83} Enloe, 2016, p. 18
lead to serious restrictions of human rights. Additionally, policy-making within national security has come to be a peculiar area of decision-making closed off to people regarded as feminine. Reardon questions whom the traditional concept of “national security” actually is supposed to protect. She speaks of traditional security as a phenomenon built by the state, for the protection of state affairs and not for the protection of people. For example, the state can restrain the rights of its citizens without international intervention thanks to state sovereignty. Also, according to Reardon, the strictly patriarchal structure that characterizes the military system rests upon substantial gender segregation. Consequently, and as mentioned above, women’s experiences and security needs are overlooked.

Democratic values are threatened when ordinary people deem the world to be so dangerous that they no longer trust political processes and decision-making as effective ways of addressing a specific threat that is considered extreme and urgent. At this point, officials may circumvent legislative and democratic processes in order to act at their own initiative behind closed doors. These events are often concealed with statements claiming that all is justified in the name of protection and security. However, it happens at the cost of transparency and democracy.

There is no doubt that the militaristic machinery is one of the most powerful institutions in the world. Financially, it seems as though military budgets are unlimited. For example, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) calculated that, in 2007 military budgets around the world accumulated 1200 billion US dollars. That’s more than what was spent during the decline of the cold war in the 1990s and over twenty times more than the whole worlds finances allocated for development aid put together in the year of 2002. Moreover, economists have assessed that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost over three trillion dollars. In addition, there are many intersecting points between capital and government. There is extensive proof of large-scale use and subsidization of private companies in places like Iraq and within the arms trade by the U.S. Payments that are claimed to be lost, stolen or unreported can be linked to companies like Blackwater, Halliburton,

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84 Enloe, 2016, p. 12-13
85 Ian Gibson, Human Security Post 9-11: Gender Perspectives and Security Exclusion, s. 1
86 Enloe, 2016, p. 19-20
87 Hearn, 2013, s. 149
Bectel or Parsons. For example, the latter received a payment of 186 million dollars to build 150 health centers, yet only six were completed.\textsuperscript{88}

The overwhelming majority of those who allocate and spend military finances, and carry out military violence are men. Men as a group remain the unchallenged experts of violence, armed conflict and killing whether it is manifested through the form of a military or paramilitary organization, terrorism or domestic violence.\textsuperscript{89} The military, the police force, the counterintelligence service, foreign policy and economical interests constitute the embodiment of the political, administrative and economical top layers of power within a state. Military forces engage in both national and international operations and the vast majority of its members, both in positions of decision-making and those who execute orders, are men, trained to use violence and cause different types of harm.\textsuperscript{90}

### 3.3 Wartime Crimes Against Women

Women are central to conflicts in unprecedented ways. Not just as the group in society that is expected to keep up some sort of daily life in the midst of a raging war but also as soldiers, peace activists and targets of GBV.\textsuperscript{91} The majority of violent conflicts, both historical and current, are internal and fought amidst civil population both by state and non-state actors.\textsuperscript{92} Before a violent conflict breaks out tensions in society rise and gender roles are narrowed and amplified. Violence against women and LGBT people increases both in the public and private sphere and the violence does not disappear after the conflict has settled and a peace agreement has been signed.\textsuperscript{93} When combatants return home domestic violence tends to escalate and adopt new forms within the private sphere.\textsuperscript{94} For the ex-combatants, the violence is

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\textsuperscript{88} Hearn, 2013, s. 150

\textsuperscript{89} Hearn, 2013, s. 149

\textsuperscript{90} Hearn, 2013, s. 150

\textsuperscript{91} Reilly, 2009, p. 93

\textsuperscript{92} Reilly, 2009, p. 95

\textsuperscript{93} Karlsson, 2014, s. 4

\textsuperscript{94} Reilly, 2009, p. 98
normalized and particularly the sexual dimensions of violence lives on, affecting those who are closest."95

Accordingly, gender analysis is essential since it challenges the notion of peace as a narrow term defined from a male perspective, only encompassing the cease of certain types of public violence.96 Our understandings of gender and power contribute greatly to sustaining GBV in conjunction with violent conflict, especially the perception of men being the protectors of women. This belief makes women targets in battle, resulting in widespread rape and sexual violence used as war tactics and ways of degrading the enemy by “proving” that they aren’t even capable of defending “their own women”, as expected from the masculinized protector.97

Historically and geographically, the millions of rapes carried out during times of war rest on the same militarized narrative. The embodiment of dominant masculinity combined with ethnicity make out two central factors behind wartime rape against women.98 Further, Megan Gerecke argues that this type of violence does not occur between unequal sexes, it emerges between unequal genders and therefor, in itself, is a gendering act. Gerecke emphasizes that gender is socially constructed and disconnected from biological sex. Perpetrators, whether male or female, are ascribed/gendered into strong masculine roles and victims are gendered into weak feminine roles. Boys and men are also targets of sexual violence; yet, girls and women are considerably more vulnerable and likely to be exposed to it due to their already subordinated status.99

Moreover, patriarchal ideas about women’s purity enhance women’s vulnerability to rape, both in peacetime and at war. When at war, the private is dragged out in the public through the rape of women and is therefor a powerful weapon for the shattering of entire villages.100 Victims of rape are also victims of imposed shame resulting in exclusion from family and

95 Karlsson, 2014, s. 4
96 Reilly, 2009, p. 98
97 Karlsson, 2014, s. 5
98 Hans, 2010, p. 386
99 Gerecke, Megan, Explaining Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations, Sjoberg, Laura & Via, Sandra (red.), Gender, war, and militarism: feminist perspectives, Praeger, Santa Barbara, Calif., 2010, p. 142
100 Hans, 2010, p. 387
community, and sometimes they are forced to live side by side with the perpetrator/perpetrators. Wartime crimes committed against women seldom leads to any convictions or justice for the victims. Contrariwise, perpetrators are often granted amnesty.\footnote{Karlsson, 2014, s. 5}

### 3.4 Gendering the Abu Ghraib Scandal

Feminization can be used as a powerful tool of degrading and lowering the status of a person, group or activity. American notions of degradation through feminization influenced the methods of interrogation used to collect intelligence from the alleged enemy in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, in the U.S led prisons of Bagram, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.\footnote{Enloe, 2016, p. 102} The well-known scandal of the leaked pictures taken by American prison guards inside of Abu Ghraib prison unfolded in April 2004. The pictures showed American soldiers with big smiles standing next to Iraqi prisoners, seemingly taking great pleasure in humiliating them in front of the camera.\footnote{Enloe, 2016, p. 104} The prisoners in the pictures were disrobed, put on top of each other and forced to masturbate in front of each other.\footnote{Zurbriggen, Eileen L., Sexualized Torture and Abuse at Abu Ghraib Prison: Feminist Psychological Analyses \url{http://people.ucsc.edu/~zurbrigge/pdf/Zurbriggen2008.pdf}, 2008, p. 306} There was no purpose behind the photos other than the American soldiers’ own private use and amusement. The American soldiers involved would soon become well known faces to millions of spectators online.\footnote{Enloe, 2016, p. 104} The shock value of the scandal was immense. For starters, the Bush administrations who had claimed that the war was an act of solidarity and an attempt to bring freedom to the Iraqi people from it’s vicious dictator Saddam Hussein got turned on it’s feet. The Iraqi prisoners were held without trials and the American soldiers that so unashamedly tortured and abused them represented a government tied to the Geneva Conventions against mistreatment of wartime combatants and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). On top of it all, the U.S has it’s own laws on torture that clearly got violated.

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\footnote{Karlsson, 2014, s. 5}  
\footnote{Enloe, 2016, p. 102}  
\footnote{Enloe, 2016, p. 104}  
\footnote{Enloe, 2016, p. 104}
However, perhaps the most talked about ingredient in this whole scandal was that among the soldiers who engaged in the torture were women soldiers, also posing in pictures while humiliating and abusing prisoners. After the photos were leaked, the majority of the stories written by the media and the intense debates held on the topic focused on low-ranking military clerk (not a guard), a woman by the name of Lynndie England. The picture of England holding a leash tied around the neck of an Iraqi prisoner got tremendous amounts of media attention. As seen below;


Now, this is particularly interesting since there were men at the scene who were far more involved and aggressive in the abuses. According to Enloe, the main reason for the public chock concerning Englands, and the other women’s involvement in the torture was that it put a crack in our hardwired, gendered assumptions. Especially during war, women are expected to represent victims of violence, mothers/wives of soldiers or involved in the military as nurses. In the case of the Abu Ghraib scandal, women were stepping out of conventional expectations by assuming the deeply masculinized perpetrator-role. So why did they do it? Enloe argues for the probability that the women, at some point, where forced to take a decision on how to deal with the social climate within the military that privileges particular types of humor, racism and sexism in order to fit in and “earn” the acceptance of their male-colleagues.

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107 Enloe, 2016, p. 106-107

108 Enloe, 2016, p. 116
Another legitimate question to ask is why nobody blew the whistle before the photographs leaked. Surely, within the long chain of command, from congress to military, there must have been men and women who actively chose to keep quiet about the violations that took place during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Enloe argues that feminist theorists have taught us to always pay close attention to silence. Maybe the reasons behind the silence in this particular context stem from the intensified masculinization of various elements within U.S political culture at this time. Thus, maybe the men and women involved were afraid to be regarded as feminine (soft, weak etc.), lose their masculine image and face exclusion.\textsuperscript{109}

### 3.5 Feminization as Method of Interrogation

The abuses committed against male prisoners inside of the Abu Ghraib prison were of a particularly sexualized, gendered nature that needs further analysis. Studies made on the torture tactics used in the Abu Ghraib prison have shown that there might have been both a gendered and religious aspect behind the methods that were used. For example, in most interpretations of Islamic law homosexuality is forbidden indicating that these types of methods of psychological break down could have been specifically designed for Muslim detainees, likely to have been deemed the most humiliating and shameful approach and therefor of significant value from the standing point of U.S. military intelligence.\textsuperscript{110}

Enloe on the other hand, rejects these theories. She argues that the American perceptions of Iraqi men as fearful of homosexuality, femininity and nakedness are exotifying. Instead, she claims that the underlying reasons for the specific methods used can be traced back to the American military police and intelligence personnel’s own notions of frail masculinity. Regardless of which, both theories could act as motivator behind the use of feminization as method of degradation.\textsuperscript{111} The rituals performed by the American soldiers involved forcing prisoners to wear women’s underwear, the use of women’s underwear as blindfolds, forcing the prisoners to stand on their hands and knees wearing a dog leash held by an American soldier while being photographed. Abuses resembling the above were also conducted at

\textsuperscript{109} Enloe, 2016, p. 116-117

\textsuperscript{110} Zurbriggen, 2008, p. 306

\textsuperscript{111} Enloe, 2016, p. 115
Bagram and Guantanamo. One of the prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Dhia al-Schweiri, declares his experience in an article published by Associated Press;\(^{112}\)

*They were trying to humiliate us, break our pride. We are men. It’s okay if they beat me. Beatings don’t hurt us, it’s just a blow. But no one would want their manhood to be shattered. They wanted us to feel as though we were women, the way women feel, and this is the worst insult, to feel like a woman.*\(^{113}\)

The elements of misogyny and homophobia enacted in these abuses reflect the power imbalances between the active, dominant masculinized gender role versus the passive, subordinated feminized gender role.\(^{114}\) The highly aggressive and sexualized nature of the methods that were applied by U.S soldiers on Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib constitute apparent violations of U.S federal law on torture, the Geneva Conventions and the Convention Against Torture (CAT).

### 3.6 Killing the Inner Woman

It has been argued that the specific abuses perpetrated at Abu Ghraib were a reflection of what the American soldiers d during their military training. Carol Burke, a professor and former teacher at the U.S Naval Academy in Annapolis, connected the dots between the activities displayed in the leaked pictures from within Abu Ghraib and the hazing rituals that had been going on at the academy. For example, men wearing women’s underwear and man on man sexual acts. These rituals of humiliation through feminization and elements of homophobia solidify the dominant perception that anything feminine is, and should be, regarded as inferior.\(^{115}\) When joining the army, boys/men undergo forms of indoctrination that strip them of their boyish/feminine identities through the use of rituals built on humiliation and degradation. The desirable types of masculinity that are fostered within the military include features like obedience, proneness to violence, orderliness, and dominance. Soldiers are formed according to strict codes of conduct that suppresses features that are deemed feminine

\(^{112}\) Zurbriggen, 2008, p. 307


\(^{114}\) Zurbriggen, 2008, p. 307

\(^{115}\) Enloe, 2016, p. 114
since all that is associated with femininity is considered debilitating and weakening. At this stage, violence is directed inwards with the purpose of killing the soldiers “inner woman”.

3.7 “Failed Masculinity”

In order to determine why the militaristic machinery demands the certain type of masculinity that is stripped of all signs of femininity, some researchers have studied the idea of “failed masculinity”. Studies show that militarized masculinities are in many ways mythologized and carry false promises of privileges that seldom correspond with the actual experiences and self-image of real life soldiers. The frailness of the militarized masculine identity constantly needs to be compensated for which takes the expression of both strict institutional practice and individual utterance of masculinity. Accordingly, the militarized masculine identity is a continuous process that can never fully be realized and feelings of “failed masculinity” are bound to occur. In turn, these feelings might contribute to actions aimed at taking control and reclaiming the masculinity that has “been lost”, actions of sexual violence being one of them.116

It has been established that gender ideologies and power relations that exist during times of peace are intensified and reinforced in times of war. Norms and perceptions about masculinity and femininity are narrowed down and tightened. Values like chastity, moderation and abstinence in regards to women’s sexualities make wartime sexual violence directed against women particularly efficient. In a similar manner, values linked to men’s sexuality like potency and having multiple partners are also deemed to be a key factor behind the occurrence of widespread, systematical rape during war.117 Women and girls are grossly overrepresented as victims of rape and sexual violence during war. However, men and boys are also targeted but are often made invisible as victims. The stigmatization affecting male victims of sexual violence is particularly comprehensive since the concept of being a victim is already strongly associated with weakness and femininity. It is also likely that male victims of rape or sexual violence get labeled as homosexuals, which worsens the stigma.118

116 Eriksson Baaz och Stern, 2013, s. 119
117 Eriksson Baaz och Stern, 2013, s. 123
118 Eriksson Baaz och Stern, 2013, s. 124
4 Analysis

Based on the material presented above I hold that national security as a concept prioritizes economical growth and mainly represents the interests of people in positions of power. The power imbalance together with the typical rhetoric of the external antagonists and the self-proclaimed title of protector is essential elements of national, militarized security. As mentioned initially, patriarchy set the frames of the core values on which societies were built long before the creation of the nation. When the nation then was established these norms continued on, but now as a formally institutionalized and state sanctioned form of governance. In this shift, patriarchal values continued to permeate the establishment of societal institutions, family relations, politics and economy.

The centralization of power and incorporation of nationalist values inevitably results in a culture of violence that is proliferated by the gap that is created between policy makers and responsibility at the same time as it rationalizes the use of force in order to avoid demands of justice and transparency. Connell’s theory on hegemonic masculinities specifies the cultural and societal practices that legitimize and maintain the patriarchal power order while it illuminates the power orders within the category of men. Further, Connell proves the linkage between the male sex and violence both on individual and organizational levels. At this point, Connell touches the subject of male invisibility as in the fact that men are rarely gendered as men. Instead, linkages are often taken for granted or not even thought of at all, which hinders the subject from further evaluation and formulation as problems connected to ideals of masculinity.

When taking it one step further, you can see signs of how the nation, in similarity to women, is sexualized and regarded as worthy of protection built on an urge to control its sexuality. Gendering the nation as feminine thus makes it into an object for protection, which is useful for rationalizing aggressive action against an alleged enemy, or the justification of any action aimed at “protecting” the nation. Meanwhile, one can imagine that from the outside the nation aspires to be viewed as masculine, i.e. strong, powerful, aggressive etc. When a nation is described as something that needs to be protected and kept pure you can sense elements of honor that is strikingly similar to the rhetoric used in discourses on female sexuality. Interestingly enough, when discussing issues related to honor, we tend to point the finger towards regions, cultures or religions deemed as non-western. However, honor is obviously a highly relevant topic in relation to western norms of security.
As mentioned, IHRL has been criticized for being patriarchal since it is individualistically formulated and constitutes a gap between the private and public sphere. Also, regarding the formulation of article 27 in the fourth Geneva Convention, where violent crimes of sexual nature committed against women are referred to as something that can hurt their honor. These kinds of formulations in international law are beyond unfortunate since they send out dangerous societal signals that further reinforce women’s subordination and vulnerability to violence. For example, they justify the stigmatization of women who have fallen victim of sexual violence and further entrenches patriarchal notions of women as if they only count when their value is measured from a male perspective/in relation to a man.

Gender segregation and the gender power order have been globally present throughout history by convincing people of its “naturalness” and it has been established that the naturalness-argument is used in order to mask patriarchal exercises of power. However, sometimes actions motivated by national security calls for a redefinition of feminine and masculine. For example when women join the army. Thus, there is no easy way of mapping out these roles by categorizing them into two opposites. It’s an interaction between different ideas of femininity and masculinity that often overlap and contradict each other. When seeking to understand the interconnection between traditional security and traditional gender roles however, it is important to understand the norms, values and power relations that lie beneath the surface.

Iris Marion Young points out the parallels between the private and public sphere in relation to the protector/protected dichotomy. In the public sphere she compares the nation to a husband in a heterosexual family constellation and in the private she compares the citizens of a nation to the wife in the family. Both on the national as well as the familial level, threats against security imply a centralization of power that grants the masculinized protector a position of power that those labeled as protected are left without. At the same time, the dependents, i.e. the protected, view their protector as selfless and risk taking with the families/citizens safety at heart. However, the conception of the masculine as the protectors of the feminine contributes greatly to sustaining GBV in situations of violent conflict, especially sexual violence used by armed groups as method of degradation towards the enemy. But, as Peterson asks, why would the state organize security so poorly for those it says it is supposed to protect? Is it so, that the systematical insecurity of women is simply due to the fact that we are subordinated and therefore not only low prioritized, but intentionally hindered from adequate protection since equality could in fact weaken the very core of the national security concept.
Thus, this would imply that the official purpose of traditional militarized security is built on false premises. Could this be correct? As for the example regarding the Afghan women that were used as an evasion by the Bush administration to gain public support to invade Afghanistan, I would say so.

Moreover, within security politics women’s voices are silenced through the use of master suppression techniques/domination techniques. For example, I have argued that security politics are dominated by the military perspective which often results in the disregarding of women as naïve or irrational. Based on the arguments presented I hold that the de-prioritization of women’s security, or the fact that threats to women’s security do not “qualify” as security threats, is a result of the militaristic logic that permeates traditional, national security.

However, the Abu Ghraib scandal put multiple cracks in widespread assumptions of gender. Not only the pictures of Lynndie England and the other women who were posing in the pictures and thus, stepping out of their traditional gender roles and into the masculinized role of the perpetrator, but also the power of feminization as a degrading interrogation tactic. As the former prisoner Dhia al-Schweiri declared in an interview, the worst experience was to be forced into feeling like a woman. Why? Two theories were presented; one reflecting the gendered fears of Iraqi men, one reflecting the gendered fears of American soldiers. As this thesis has held it’s main focus on a western and American viewpoint, I automatically leaned towards Enloes theory of the U.S. soldiers’ own fears of frail masculinity as motivational factor behind the design of the interrogation methods. As mentioned, Carol Burke deemed the elements of feminization in the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib to resemble the initiation rituals she had witnessed at the U.S Naval Academy in Annapolis. I further argued that such rituals are aimed at killing the soldiers “inner woman”. Hence, one can imagine that a soldier who has been taught to go to great measures in order to suppress his (or hers) inner femininity may result in them trying to bring out the enemies’ inner woman as a method of imposing shame and lower the status of the enemy. And, as studies of the phenomenon “failed masculinity” have shown, the militarized masculine identity can never fully be realized. Instead, it constantly needs to be compensated in ways that frequently translates into expressions of violence directed against women.
The discourse within the discourse, meaning the alternative security discourses verbalized by politics and feminist scholars such as Margot Wallström, Betty Reardon and Cynthia Enloe are examples of resistance and demands reevaluation of the national security system and it’s overwhelming lack of gender analysis that is costing human lives, everyday. Not only the lives of women, but also the lives of everyone who is depending on the care of women and people who, regardless of biological sex, are ascribed a feminine gender role.

4.1 Concluding observations

The military logic depends on stereotypical ideas about masculinity and femininity. According to this logic the ideal man is the heterosexual protector unafraid to wield violence in the name of security of the nation and it’s feminized citizens. The ideal woman is a passive object in need of protection and also the re-creator of human life and thus, the re-creator of the nation. In essence, dependent femininity makes out a vital counterpart that maintains and justifies the existence of militarized masculinity. Without a subordinated, passive and feminized group in need of protection, it would be hard to motivate the protector-characteristics that are intrinsic for the militarized man. In turn, this would undermine the military logic and its rationalization of actions taken in the name of security, both within and outside the nations borders. The national security concept not only benefits from, but also depends on gendered power imbalances and segregation, both within the four walls of a home, as well as within the borders of a nation. Thus, maintaining gender inequality is crucial for the survival of national security and militarism.

Further, this thesis draws the conclusion that the dependency on the gendered hierarchy, in fact, results in gendered insecurity. As discussed above, gender-based violence constitutes one of the most comprehensive and severe consequences of the state-centered, militarized security system. Interconnections between GBV and militarized national security can be found on the international, all the way down to the local/individual level. Violence as method of conflict resolution is a central and intrinsic feature of national security and is, paradoxically enough, deemed to be a relatively legitimate way of ensuring security. At the same time, it has been established that systematical, sexual violence against women also constitutes a central and intrinsic feature of violent conflict. Still, war continues to be rationalized as necessary means of protecting people. The vicious, and seemingly endless, cycle of violence keeps women in a subordinated position at the same time as the subordination in itself creates great vulnerability.
to violence. Given the material that has been presented in this thesis and the discussion held above it is reasonable to conclude that militarized security, in fact, is counterproductive as it maintains and reinforces the violent gender power order that creates gendered insecurity.

5 Summary

This thesis has examined traditional national security concept in relation to women’s insecurity. The thesis is permeated by a gender perspective and touches subjects like harmful social norms, expressions of violence linked to ideals of masculinity, the significance of the nation state, the masculinization of security politics, how the U.S. Army used feminization as method of interrogation in the infamous Iraqi prison of Abu Ghraib and how many of the feminizing actions taken by U.S soldiers resemble the hazing rituals that are a common part of the initiation of newly recruited soldiers.

The purpose of critically reviewing western notions of security was to find out whether the concept, in fact, is interconnected to the gendered power order in ways that create the specific insecurities that are inflicted upon women in times of conflict and/or in contexts of military presence. A qualitative research method in conjunction with critical discourse analysis was used and the theoretical approach is based on social constructionism and feminist power analysis.

Throughout the thesis, different areas of the security discourse is problematized and analyzed. Parallels are drawn between the inner and outer dimensions of national security and the power it has over the citizens within the nations borders. For example, the state can justify curfew or restricting the rights of its citizens in the name of national security. In a similar manner, men in heterosexual relationships are expected to control the dependents living within the household. Often invoking security reasons in order to rationalize the exercise of such control. This rhetoric is based on the military logic that permeates traditional notions of national security.

Based on the material presented in the main part of the thesis, I conclude that traditional national security, in many ways, depends on gendered power imbalances and stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity. Without the gendered dichotomy the concept would lose its ability to justify its actions in the name of security. Further, the thesis also establishes that the national security concept is counterproductive and has deteriorating effects on
women’s security since it is dependent on the subordination of women. Subordination leads to the absence of rights and the absence of rights creates great vulnerability to violence.

5.1 Future research

A subject for further research could be alternative ways of measuring security and a legitimate question to ask is whether national security needs to be militarized at all. When policies are made and state officials take decisions to protect the people, their perceived end goal is to achieve national security. In reality, the decisions taken are often narrow and focused on protecting national interests. If we instead measured security by the welfare of citizens instead of protection against external and internal threat the whole meaning of security would alter. For example security could be measured in access to food, shelter and health care or whether the most vulnerable groups in society has confidence in state officials in their decision-making and institutions.\(^{119}\) As stated in the Enloe-quote in the very beginning of this thesis, every concept that is worth its salt is transparent and open to reassessment and fresh understandings.

\(^{119}\) Enloe, 2016, p. 12-13
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