Women, Peace, and Security in Professional Military Education

Published by Marine Corps University Press


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Chapter Two
Literature Review

The study of gender and security largely began with the post–Cold War reevaluation of international relations theory.\(^2\) Over the course of the next three decades, the field of gender studies has expanded to include positive benefits within the security sector, from military and peacekeeping effectiveness to broad security outcomes.

The relationship between gender and the military evolved through a gradual, albeit swift, progression of scholarship beginning with feminist international relations theories and empirical approaches to women’s participation. The scholarship further evolved into a small body of work that evaluates how women improve the effectiveness of military and peacekeeping organizations. Finally, more recent scholarship explores the relationship between broader security outcomes and military actions.

Feminist International Relations Theory

The root of WPS lies in feminist international relations theory, which emerged in the 1980s. Cynthia Enloe’s Bananas, Beaches and Bases (1989) began a series of intellectual studies focused on how the international system relies on masculinity and femininity and the often-overlooked work of women.\(^3\) J. Anne Tickner’s paper “Man, the State, and War: A Gendered Perspective on National Security” emphasizes the importance of considering war and conflict through a gendered lens accounting for the experience of all people, specifically women.\(^4\) The scholarly work of Jean Elshtain explores the different roles of women in war from “beautiful souls” or innocent non-combatants to their service as soldiers and how these gendered dimensions shape politics and problem solving as a state.\(^5\) Collectively, feminist international relations theory seeks to illustrate that women and gender construct a clearer picture of international politics and, subsequently, peace, war, and conflict.

Quantitative Analysis

Moving to a more quantitative analysis, scholarship explores empirical data about women’s participation and outcomes in the field of international relations and security. In Valerie Hudson’s article “What Sex Means for World Peace,” she emphasizes that the situation and security of women in a country is often the best indicator of

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\(^3\) Cynthia Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 125–73.


how likely that country is to be involved in conflict.\textsuperscript{6} Her empirical results lead to the conclusion that human security (namely the security of women) is linked to national and international security.\textsuperscript{7} The scholarly work of Mary Caprioli evaluates gender equality and state aggression, providing analytical data linking the degree of gender equality and women’s role in the state to the likelihood of the state to use force during an interstate dispute.\textsuperscript{8} This body of scholarship introduces the idea and provides analytical data that meaningful participation of women and gender equality can have further implications for conflict.

**Operational Effectiveness**

Beyond feminist theory and quantitative analyses, much of the scholarly writings and research on WPS focus on how its principles increase operational effectiveness and unit functionality. A number of works in this vein look at women’s involvement in UN peacekeeping missions, for example. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) was the first military organization to consider gender perspectives.\textsuperscript{9} DPKO, partnered with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, conducted a comprehensive study of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Namibia, and South Africa. The study demonstrated that women on peacekeeping teams improved access and support for local women, made men more reflective and accountable, increased capability, and decreased conflict and confrontation.\textsuperscript{10} Subsequent studies have shown that when 30 percent of mission personnel are female, local women more quickly join the peace effort, increasing the effectiveness of peace agreements and leading to better stability of the state. A stable state is less likely to harbor terrorists, violate human rights, and require intervention from the international community.

Scholars supporting gender inclusion within the armed forces similarly conclude an increased credibility. One such scholar, Sahana Dharmapuri refers to increased credibility as providing a greater opportunity to build trust and mitigate violence among the local population.\textsuperscript{11} A well-known example is the all-female police units from India deployed in a peacekeeping capacity in Liberia. These women police are seen as more approachable and make the key victims of conflict-related violence.

\textsuperscript{7} Hudson, “What Sex Means for World Peace.”
\textsuperscript{11} Sahana Dharmapuri, “Just Add Women and Stir,” *Parameters* 41, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 60.
feel safer. In addition, the presence of women peacekeepers deterred sexual and gender-based violence and was viewed as more attuned to the needs of the local populations.

Furthermore, scholars cite the creation of female engagement teams (FET) and cultural support teams (CST) in Afghanistan as an example of increased unit effectiveness through enhanced information gathering. FETs, CSTs, and similar programs were used to engage and search a previously underutilized portion of the population, developing a better understanding of local conditions and increasing force protection of troops in the area of operations. Admiral William McCraven, U.S. Navy (Ret), noted that the inclusion of CSTs enabled greater access and action to the local population, boosting traditional military information support as well as medical and civil affairs activities contributing to mission effectiveness.

When discussing operational effectiveness and gender, peace, and security, there is danger in marginalizing women to stereotypical roles, proliferating the idea that only females performing in these roles can contribute to mission success. For example, there are essentializing assumptions that women peacekeepers or those in the armed forces are inherently best placed to gather information from or protect female civilians. These assumptions risk limiting the potential for meaningful contribution and do not increase women’s participation “beyond gender stereotypes and ‘add women and stir’ calls for parity.”

**Societal Outcomes and Military Actions**

The last area of scholarship (and the most recent to emerge) examines the relationship between military action and broad security outcomes. In “Through a Gender Lens: The Need for Robust Research into Diversity and Military Effectiveness,” Lieutenant Colonel Jeannette Haynie, argues that leaders must use every tool at their disposal to inform a clearer picture of security and develop assumptions. She argues that well-developed and effective tactical, operational, and strategic plans must incorporate diverse perspectives, specifically a gender lens, at every level of leadership. Finally, Haynie suggests that gender is still largely dismissed as irrelevant to “real”

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18. Baldwin, “Expanding Gendered Understandings Key to Protection Concerns.”
security, ignoring the established links between diversity and outcomes.\textsuperscript{19}

Along the same lines, in “A Cornerstone of Peace: Women in Afghanistan,” the authors argue that the military must fully embrace and capitalize on its internal diversity to effectively engage with partner nations and leaders at all levels must fully understand “the linkages between the security of women and the security of the state.”\textsuperscript{20}

The piece connects the full implementation and integration of WPS in the security sector, particularly the armed forces, with meaningful security assistance as an essential component for U.S. success in future conflict.

Consistent throughout the scholarly work on women, peace, and security is the argument that women and gender belong in and enhance the study of security. The field of gender and security has rapidly evolved within the last 30 years, and the divisions in the literature between theory, quantitative analysis, organizational effectiveness, and broader security implications have and will continue to evolve as studies expand. The division in literature is directly influencing and informing divisions on where and how policy and implementation of WPS is applied and integrated. However, there is a significant gap in literature from the implementation at a policy level to integration into military operations, which this paper explores further.
