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Gender Aspects of International Military Interventions

National and International Perspectives

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**Gender Aspects of International
Military Interventions:
National and International Perspectives**

Report to the Norwegian Ministry of Defence

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the potential benefits and challenges involved in an increase in female military participation within the Norwegian armed forces. The background to the report is the express wish of Norwegian Minister of Defence Anne-Grethe Strøm-Erichsen to increase female military participation within the Norwegian armed forces from today's level of 7% to 15% by the end of 2008, along with the obligations and commitments involved in following up United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security. In order to achieve the goal of increasing the numbers of women involved both in peace processes and in international peacekeeping missions – two of the main points of UNSCR 1325 – an increase in the numbers of women in the armed forces of UN member-states is crucial. Local measures to meet these requirements are therefore imperative if Norway is to meet its international commitments¹ and engagements.

In the present report, the author takes no position on whether an increase in women's military participation is best secured through volunteer recruitments, through compulsory gender-neutral conscription or through a purely professional military system. Rather, the report examines how the scholarly literature deals with the issue of women's military participation, and it summarizes views expressed by a number of interviewees within the Norwegian armed forces and the UN system on this issue. As a result, the report provides an overview of the perceived benefits and challenges of a substantial increase in the number of women soldiers within the Norwegian armed forces, but it does not represent a scientific testing of such perceived benefits and challenges.

Within Norway, discussions about an increase in women's military participation cluster around two core arguments. On the one hand, the political leadership argues that it is essential for the Norwegian armed forces to be more in tune with Norwegian society at large. The primary aim of an increase in women's military participation is therefore a *symbolic* one. According to this line of argument, the Norwegian armed forces are to be regarded as a reflection of and a window onto a gender-equal and multicultural Norwegian society. In relation to international military missions, the thought is that such a makeover of the Norwegian armed forces might have a positive normative effect on other countries involved in joint missions and on the host country in which the mission is carried out. On the other hand, the military leadership argues that the need for an increase in women's military participation is related to new security challenges. The major goal of an increase in the number of women within the Norwegian armed forces is to secure different *qualifications* for the organization. By increasing the number of women, the Norwegian armed forces will expand the range and variety of its members' qualifications and skills, which is again thought to make the Norwegian armed forces more effective and better fit to meet new security challenges.

These assumptions cannot be tested scientifically, because we simply do not have enough experience with women in the armed forces. This is true not only for Norway but also for our neighbouring countries, who have equally low levels of women within their respective national armed forces. Given this background, the report recommends that the Norwegian Ministry of Defence initiate the following:

- *A Nordic comparative study of women within the armed forces of the Nordic countries*; map the measures taken at the national level to increase women's military participation within the armed forces of Nordic countries; map out where women are

¹ Norway has committed itself to following up the intentions of UNSCR 1325 through a national action plan launched on 8 March 2006; see http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/rapporter_planer/Planer/2006/Regjeringens-handlingsplan-for-gjennomfo.html?id=448663.

situated within the military hierarchy; map out how the armed forces of the Nordic countries make use of women in their international engagements.

- *A longitudinal study of the Norwegian women who volunteer for military service in 2007; map their motivations for volunteering; map their expectations of a military career, map where they end up in the military system and how their perceptions change within a five- and ten-year perspective.*

Much of the scholarly literature on gender and military relations focuses on how a military system is placed within social, cultural and political settings. The way in which a military system is perceived in a national or international setting influences the self-perception of individual soldiers, as well as how others outside the military system regard a given military organization. Within the Norwegian context, this suggests that if the Norwegian military is construed as a highly masculine organization, where traditional masculine values, norms and behaviours are the most appreciated, this may hinder an increase in women's military participation. Since Norway is a country where significant value is placed on the need to ensure equal rights for men and women in their working, private and political lives, it is essential that the Norwegian armed forces are also perceived as an organization that values equal rights between men and women if hopes for an increasing participation of women within the Norwegian armed forces are to be realized. Consequently, it is vital that the Norwegian armed forces critically examine how their men (and some women) are perceived not only when they are in uniform but also in their civilian lives, because it is through the combination of these two settings that the image of the Norwegian armed forces as a gender-equal or highly masculine organization is constructed. Against this background, the Ministry of Defence is given the following recommendations:

- *Treat family politics within the Norwegian armed forces as part of the strategy for increasing the number of women; recognize that ways in which family politics are communicated and acted out form an integral part of creating a positive image of the Norwegian armed forces as a gender-equal organization; encourage men to take out paternity leave, stay at home with sick children, etc.*
- *Maintain and strengthen the zero-tolerance policy vis-à-vis the use of prostitutes nationally and internationally; otherwise, such activities will not only create a division between men and women within the Norwegian armed forces, but will also serve to maintain an image of the Norwegian armed forces as a predominantly masculine organization.*
- *Maintain and strengthen the zero-tolerance policy vis-à-vis sexual harassment; otherwise, such activities will not only create a division between men and women within the Norwegian armed forces, but will also serve to maintain an image of the Norwegian armed forces as a predominantly masculine organization.*
- *Create a group that systematically examines military equipment and tests it for gender bias; it is crucial that military equipment, down to minute details, is made to fit both men and women; ensure that shoes, uniforms, bullet-proof vests, etc. also fit women; when military equipment is designed to fit both men and women, the latter will feel more welcome.*
- *Critically examine the physical and psychological tests used; it is possible that tests are made to fit the notion of an ideal male soldier and may therefore be unfit for women with different competences; new needs within the Norwegian armed forces will also require new forms of testing.*

Among the international interviewees, there were considerable expectations for Norway's willingness and ability to follow up UNSCR 1325. Norway is viewed as one of the world's leading countries in relation to gender equality, and it is expected that further progress on this issue will include the Norwegian armed forces. It is therefore crucial that Norway is able to supply the international UN system with female military leaders when these are requested, but

to date this has proven to be difficult. The following recommendations are therefore made to the Ministry of Defence:

- *Secure leadership training for women within the Norwegian armed forces and encourage women to apply for leadership positions; ensure that women with leadership qualities receive formal and informal training and coaching.*
- *Initiate measures that make it attractive for female military leaders to stay in the Norwegian armed forces; the private sector is also engaged in efforts to increase the numbers of female leaders within its ranks and might regard female military leaders as particularly interesting.*

Sammendrag

Denne rapporten sammenfatter de fordeler og utfordringer økt kvinneandel i det norske forsvaret kan medføre. Bakgrunnen for rapporten er forsvarsminister Grethe Strøm-Erichsens uttalte ønske om å øke kvinneandelen fra dagens nivå på 7% til 15% innen utgangen av 2008 og de forpliktelser Norge har for å følge opp FNs sikkerhetsrådsresolusjon 1325 om kvinner, fred og sikkerhet. For å nå målene om økt kvinneandel i fredsprosesser og i internasjonale fredsoperasjoner, som er to av hovedpunktene i sikkerhetsrådsresolusjonen, må man øke andel kvinner i nasjonale forsvarssystemer. Derfor henger lokale tiltak sammen med internasjonale målsettinger Norge ønsker å slutte seg til og har forpliktet seg til gjennom handlingsplanen for oppfølging av FNs Sikkerhetsrådsresolusjon 1325².

Rapporten tar ikke stilling til om økning av kvinner i det norske forsvaret best sikres gjennom frivillig sesjon, såkalt kjønnsnøytral verneplikt eller et rent profesjonelt forsvarssystem. I stedet forholder rapporten seg til hvordan faglitteraturen behandler spørsmålet om kvinner i militære systemer og bringer synspunkter fra intervjuobjekter i det norske forsvaret og FN-systemet. Rapporten gir dermed en oversikt over antatte fordeler og utfordringer, uten at disse testes i vitenskapelig forstand.

Diskusjonen om økt kvinneandel i det norske forsvaret føres med to typer argumentasjon. På den ene siden tar politikerne som er opptatt av forsvarsspørsmål til orde for at vi trenger et forsvar som er mer i pakt med det norske samfunnet forøvrig. Hensikten med økt kvinneandel er altså av primært *symbolsk* karakter. I henhold til denne tankegangen er ideen at det norske forsvaret skal være et vindu inn i det flerkulturelle og likestilte Norge av i dag. Når forsvaret tjener som et speilbilde av denne virkeligheten vil det kunne ha en normativ verdi i internasjonale settinger hvor norske styrker utgjør en del av en internasjonalt sammensatt militæroperasjon og i forhold til den lokale settingen hvor denne internasjonale styrken er plassert. På den andre siden tar militære ledere til orde for at forsvaret trenger ny kompetanse for å møte nye sikkerhetsutfordringer. Hensikten med økt kvinneandel er derfor basert på antakelsen om at kvinner har andre *kvalifikasjoner* enn menn. Ved å øke kvinneandelen i forsvaret antar man at forsvaret vil øke mangfoldet av kvalifikasjoner, noe som igjen antas å gjøre forsvaret mer effektivt.

Disse antakelsene kan ikke testes fordi de ikke har vært utprøvd i tilstrekkelig grad. Det gjelder ikke bare i Norge men også i våre nære naboland som har tilsvarende lav kvinneandel i sine nasjonale forsvarssystemer. På bakgrunn av dette anbefales FD følgende:

- *Initiere en nordisk sammenliknende studie av kvinner i de nordiske forsvarssystemer; kartlegge nasjonale tiltak for å øke kvinneandelen i de nordiske forsvarssystemene; kartlegge hvor kvinnene befinner seg i det militære hierarkiet; og, hvordan kvinneandelen er i de nordiske landenes internasjonale virksomhet.*
- *Initiere en longitudinell studie av de opp til 7000 kvinnene som stiller til frivillig sesjon i Norge i 2007; kartlegge deres motivasjon for stille til frivillig sesjon; kartlegge deres forventninger til en mulig karriere i forsvaret; kartlegge hvor de havner og hvordan deres forventninger innfris og endres i et 5 og 10 års perspektiv.*

Faglitteraturen som fokuserer på kjønn og militæret er opptatt av hvordan et militært system plasserer seg i en sosial, kulturell og politisk sammenheng. Måten et militært system anses i nasjonale eller i internasjonale settinger, farger måten man vurderer seg selv i uniform eller blir ansett av andre utenfor det militære systemet. I en norsk sammenheng kan dette bety at

² http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/rapporter_planer/Planer/2006/Regjeringens-handlingsplan-for-gjennomfo.html?id=448663

dersom det norske forsvaret blir ansett som en svært maskulin organisasjon hvor tradisjonelle maskuline verdier, atferdsmåter og omgangsformer er rådende, vil dette kunne hindre økt kvinnedeltakelse. Fordi Norge er et land som setter likestilling mellom menn og kvinner høyt både i arbeidslivet, i privatlivet og i politikken, er det viktig at forsvaret blir en organisasjon som også er opptatt av likestilling dersom målsettingen om økt kvinneandels skal kunne lykkes. Det blir dermed viktig for forsvaret å ta inn over seg hvordan deres menn (og noen kvinner) oppfattes ikke bare når de er i uniform men også når de er i sivil – for det er kombinasjonen av de to som skaper inntrykket av forsvaret som en likestilt eller utelukkende maskulin organisasjon. På bakgrunn av dette anbefales FD følgende:

- *Å anse forsvarets familiepolitikk som en del av likestillingspolitikken; innse at forsvarets familiepolitikk også handler om forsvarets imagebygging på likestillingsfeltet ved å legge til rette for at det blir naturlig for menn i forsvaret å ta ut full pappapermisjons ved barnefødsler; oppfordre også menn til å være hjemme med syke barn; til å ta ut omsorgstid for familien.*
- *Opprettholde og styrke nulltoleransen for kjøp av seksuelle tjenester nasjonalt og internasjonalt; denne typen aktiviteter vil ikke bare virke splittende på menn og kvinner i forsvaret, men vil også være med å befeste inntrykket av forsvaret som en maskulin organisasjon.*
- *Opprettholde og styrke nulltoleransen for seksuell trakassering; trakassering er ikke bare ulovlig, men vil også være med å befeste inntrykket av forsvaret som en maskulin organisasjon.*
- *Opprette en gruppe som systematisk går gjennom forsvarets utstyr og tester disse for "kvinnevennlighet"; det er viktig at forsvarets utstyr ned på detaljnivå er tilpasset menn og kvinner; sikre skostørrelser, uniformer, skuddsikre vester, osv. som også passer kvinner; det at utstyret er tilpasset gjør at kvinner oppfater seg som velkomne og inkludert.*
- *Foreta en kritisk gjennomgang av fysiske og psykiske tester for å vurdere hvorvidt disse er spesielt rettet mot "idealmannen" og dermed utelukker egnede kvinner; det kan tenkes at de mål man har etablert har gått ut på dato og at et mer sammensatt forsvar også vil trenge mer sammensatte testmetoder.*

Blant de internasjonale intervjuobjektene ble det uttrykt store forventninger og forhåpninger til Norges evne til å følge opp Sikkerhetsrådsresolusjon 1325. Norge anses som et likestillingsland også utenfor våre nasjonale grenser og det er derfor forhåpninger til at dette skal gjelde i vårt nasjonale forsvarssystem. Det er derfor avgjørende at vi kan stille med kvinner i ledende militære stillinger i internasjonale operasjoner når vi blir bedt om det. Slik situasjonen er i dag klarer vi ikke det i stor nok utstrekning. På bakgrunn av dette anbefales FD følgende:

- *Sikre god lederutdanning for kvinner i forsvaret og oppfordre kvinner til å søke leder stillinger; påse at kvinner med lederegenskaper får formell og uformell oppfølging ved coaching eller mentor-systemer (dette prøves ut i det svenske forsvaret).*
- *Sikre at gode kvinnelige ledere i forsvaret blir værende i forsvaret; det sivile arbeidsmarkedet er en stor konkurranse faktor spesielt for kvinnelige ledere fordi det private næringsliv også er pålagt å øke kvinneandelen i sine virksomheter; påse at lønn og andre vilkår er konkurransedyktige med det sivile arbeidsmarkedet og at kvinnelige ledere er spesielt attraktive for forsvaret.*

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Introduction

On 8 January 2007, Norwegian Minister of Defence Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen gave a speech at the Military Society in Oslo on the current situation of the Norwegian armed forces. One of the last issues she addressed during this speech was the need to increase the number of women within the Norwegian armed forces, and the Defence Minister suggested that the situation in the military today was incompatible with the state of affairs within Norwegian society at large. The Norwegian armed forces should reflect, she argued, the diversity in Norwegian society, and the Norwegian armed forces need new kinds of knowledge, experience and expertise in order to meet new military and security challenges. In her own words:

To create a dynamic and well functioning military organization, the armed forces depend on a diversity of human resources. An important personal goal for me is that the armed forces shall reflect the multi-ethnic and socially diverse nature of our society.

We need to attract more women to the defence sector. Women have the same rights as men to all positions, both military and civilian, in our armed forces. Yet, our organization is still essentially male-dominated. Only 7% of our military personnel, including those on contract, are women – and we want to increase this number! Through tailored campaigns and inviting young women to attend voluntary military classification interviews, the armed forces want to make it clear that women are needed, wanted and welcome in the forces.

Over recent decades, Norway has become an ethnically multicultural country. The armed forces need to draw on the experience and the knowledge that the different cultural groups represent. Cultural competence is a central factor for success when international operations are planned and executed. Both at home and abroad, our armed forces should be a showcase for our democratic political system based on human rights, ethnic diversity and gender equality.

As a first step towards meeting the new challenges, Defence Minister Strøm-Erichsen extended an open invitation to girls born in 1989 to join the military. If it turned out, however, that few women were interested and willing to serve in the Norwegian armed forces, she would consider whether to implement compulsory military conscription for girls (in addition to male conscription) – what military leaders within Norway's armed forces prefer to call 'gender-neutral conscription'.³ This last point drew spontaneous applause from the audience.

Why is there such enthusiasm for increasing the number of women within the Norwegian armed forces? Who are the main proponents for this development, and on

³ In Norwegian, 'Kjønnsnøytral verneplikt'

what grounds are they so eager to have more women within the Norwegian armed forces? What is expected of the new female recruits within the Norwegian armed forces and what might these expectations mean for Norway's international military engagements? It is clear that the Norwegian armed forces are setting themselves up for a major social and military experiment by opening the doors for an increasing number of women. It is worth pondering, then, what this experiment will entail on national and international levels.

This report seeks to map out some of the potential benefits and challenges entailed by an expected increase in female conscripts. More specifically, the report is based on interviews with key people within the United Nations system about concerns and wishes for more women in United Nations peacekeeping operations, along with interviews with Norwegian military officials about their perceptions, hopes and concerns regarding Norwegian female military personnel in international missions.⁴ In addition, the report draws on relevant literature and documents on the theme of gender, security and military issues. The report will provide an outline of the role of gender within the military before examining the question of women within the Norwegian armed forces; finally, it will explore how Norwegian developments are viewed within the United Nations system.

⁴ See Appendix for list of interviewees. The interviews will also form the basis for a more thorough data analysis to be presented in an academic article at a later stage.

Gender and the Military

Within the academic literature, there are increasing numbers of publications focusing on the interconnections between gender and military relations. One core argument that cuts across numerous book volumes and academic articles is the notion that both the military and militarization processes are processes of masculinization *par excellence* (Braudy, 2005; Dudink et al., 2004; Enloe, 2000; Higate, 2003). On the relationship between militarism and masculinity, Hopton (2003: 113) writes:

Historically, there is a reciprocal relationship between militarism and masculinity. On the one hand, politicians have utilized ideologies of idealized masculinity that valorize the notion of strong active males collectively risking their personal safety for the greater good of their wider community, gaining support for the state's use of violence, such as wars in the international arena and aggressive policing in the domestic situation. On the other hand, militarism feeds into ideologies of masculinity through the eroticization of stoicism, risk taking and even lethal violence.

The above quote suggests that, traditionally, the values, thinking and modes of behaviour that are the most appreciated within military organizations are seen as more connected to masculinity than femininity – or, put slightly differently, connected to a stereotypical construction of male and female relations. It is not just any kind of man the military seeks: it is a particular kind of masculine male. Higate (2003: 29) argues that the military can be seen as a gendered performance that clusters around violence, aggression, rationality and a sense of invulnerability. Maintaining this particular form of masculinity within a military organization, argues Higate, might be unproblematic, but when transferring to civilian this particular expression of masculinity might be less appreciated. I will return to this point below.

Enloe (2000) argues that militarized masculinity can only exist because there are women who play their roles vis-à-vis their militarized men in particular ways. Military wives, Enloe argues, are crucial in keeping military men happy. This is particularly important, she continues, when military men are stationed abroad (Enloe, 2000: 71). To maintain military support and keep the military-civilian nexus in balance, there needs to be a system of mutual support between men and women, both within and outside the military. This system of mutual support builds on a gender division of labour between the military man and his military wife. The ideal military wife is one who sees herself as part of the military community, where her role is to support her husband's career and in return to receive privileges according to his rank. When her support stops – either because she no longer believes in the military cause, because she has a career of her own that conflicts with the demands placed on her military husband, or because her husband has extramarital relations abroad – she puts the fragile military-civilian nexus out of balance in ways that can have detrimental political effects.

What we can read out of the descriptions given by Enloe, Higate and Hopton is an understanding that the ways in which masculinity becomes militarized depend

on several factors both within and outside military organizations. Higate and Hopton show us that masculinity becomes militarized through being associated with particular forms of behaviour, attitudes and actions, while Enloe shows us that the role of women outside the military also serves as a crucial determinant. Consequently, when the roles and behaviours of women outside the military change, this might also change the militarization processes of men within the military. A highly militarized man may be greatly valued in civilian settings where gender roles are conducive to this particular expression of masculinity, but might not be equally appreciated in other civilian settings where this particular expression of masculinity is not valued in the same way.

The ways in which gender roles and expectations are expressed and constructed both within and outside a military organization are crucial in forming the self-perception of the individual (male or female) soldier, as well as the social perceptions of military organizations and their military duties. From the interviews with UN personnel in New York, two quotes in particular illustrate ways in which the external and internal worlds of a military organization are interconnected, and how this relates to military effectiveness and gender balance. The first relates to how the relationship that men within a military organization have with women outside the military is not just problematic on account of the situation or nature of the 'other' women – such as prostitutes, local women in a host country, or others; it is also a military concern when family life at the home front is affected. The Legal Counsel of the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations voiced the following concerns:

We have so many family breakups and divorces after our engagement in the UNIFIL operation, and it is the women and children at home who really suffer. The impact of peacekeepers' family situation is beyond private; the impact is political.⁵

The Legal Counsel expressed the view that the impact of their duties abroad on the families of the peacekeepers led to deterioration in the morale of the peacekeepers, as well as in the overall image of the Fiji military and the UNIFIL operation in particular. One political outcome has been that it has become attractive for Fiji military personnel to volunteer for the British army, which has a better reputation. The Legal Counsel reported that 3,000 of the country's best military men, and some women, have volunteered for the British army, leaving the Fiji military with a lack of highly qualified personnel and making the Fiji military less effective and promising than it might otherwise have been.

The second quote relates to the interconnection between women's status in the civilian world and the need for gender balance in peacekeeping operations. During a discussion of how the UN recruits women to peacekeeping missions, the UN Officer-in-Charge at the Human Resources Planning and Development Section of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) stated that difficulties in obtaining a

⁵ Quote from Mr Sainivalati S. Navoti, Legal Counsel, Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations; interviewed 10 November 2006, New York.

proper gender balance are linked to inequalities between men and women within a broader spectrum than any given military setting:

"In the start-up phase of a mission, we tend to drift into it becoming male-dominated. Many of the initial functions in a mission are in male-dominated areas such as IT and engineering. For these functions, there are fewer women around and -- those who are around-- have many /other options or family concerns- which is we cannot identify women in sufficient numbers (....) Attracting women to go to Darfur, for instance, therefore is a whole other ball-game".⁶

The UN Officer-in-Charge points to two important aspects related to women's recruitment to military operations. First, that the qualities needed may be strongly linked to male-dominated areas of expertise; second, that women who have qualifications that are attractive for a given military operation may also be very attractive in the civilian job market, where they might get better working conditions in relation to combining family and professional chores.

In sum, it is clear that any effort to increase the number of women within a military organization needs to carefully and systematically consider the social, cultural and political setting of the institution both at home and abroad. Insights on these matters will not only increase our understanding of the connection between gender and the military but will also inform the political rhetoric on increased female military participation.

Theorizing on Women's Military Participation

From a historical perspective, it has usually been a lack of male labour that has served as the main argument for increasing the number of women within a given military organization. Today, at least in the Scandinavian context, the language of political rhetoric has changed, and female military participation is not presented solely as the solution to a resource problem, but also in terms of the need to recruit people with new qualities and experiences that will better meet new security challenges. The challenge for any given political or military leadership, therefore, is to present different kinds of arguments that will make individual women chose a military career. It is difficult, however, to sort out what determines an individual woman's choice regarding whether to join a military organization. Is it the military organization that is appealing? The prospects of going on missions to foreign countries? Patriotism? Or lack of career opportunities in the civilian workforce? The answer will depend on individual goals and wishes, as well as cultural and structural factors, in any given social and political setting. There is, however, an emerging scholarly literature trying to identify how social and cultural factors seem to influence women's motivation and willingness to serve within military organizations on national and international levels. With a new international security regime, the end of the Cold War, and a more diffuse

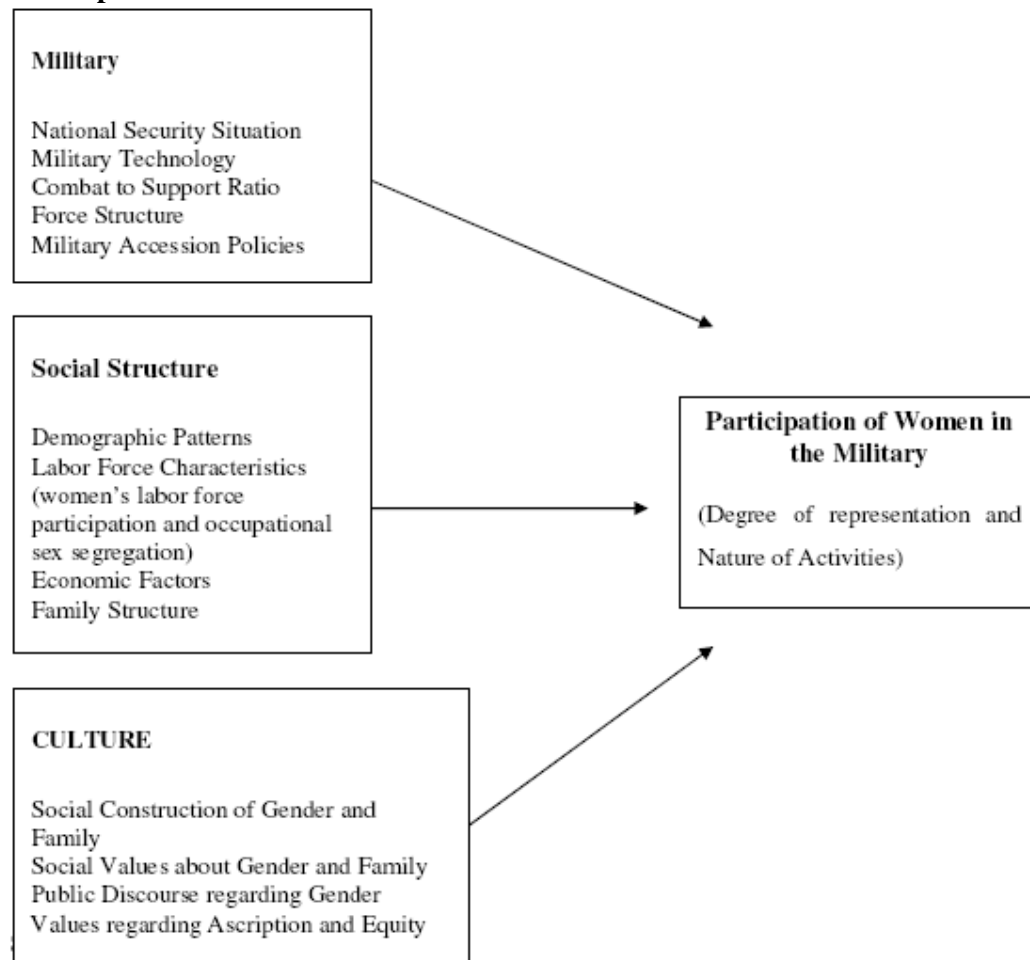
⁶ Quote from Ms Laura Londen, Officer-in-Charge, Human Resources Planning and Development Section, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO); interviewed 7 November 2006, New York.

security situation between and among states, there is a clear need for different kinds of military preparedness and responses. In the light of these changes, the need for increased representation of women within military systems is being felt by many political and military actors, and this development, again, has given grounds for more academic theorizing on women's military participation. In the following, I will give a brief overview of the field.

Segal (1995) is seen as one of the first academics to attempt to systematize our understanding of women's military participation. She argues that we cannot consider the recruitment of women into military organizations without considering the internal workings of the military itself, the social structures in which it is placed, and the gendered underpinnings of the respective cultural context. Segal (1995: 766–767) also notes, however, that the more women take an active part in the labour force, the larger their representation in the armed forces will be. This happens, continues Segal, because the increasing representation of women in the workplace changes social and cultural perceptions of women.

On the level of family politics, it seems that the more family responsibilities the average woman has, the lower the level of women's representation in the armed force. Women's participation in the military is positively associated with later age at first marriage, later age at birth of first child, and fewer children (Segal, 1995: 768). In other words, less traditional gender roles at home might contribute to increasing the number of women in the military. To some extent, the division of labour between men and women in the home overrides the security factor in the following manner. High security threats usually lead to an increase in female military participation; however, in situations where the threat to national security is low but where there is more equal sharing of domestic work between men and women, the number of women within a military organization might still increase (Segal 1995: 762).

Finally, Segal asserts that the greater the cultural acceptance of different family structures, and the stronger the movement away from the traditional breadwinner male and the caretaking female, the greater the potential for representation of women within military organizations. Figure 1 sets out a schematic overview of Segal's conceptualization.

Figure 1: Segal's Theoretical Model of Factors Affecting Women's Military Participation

Source: Carrieras (2004: 23)

Segal's outline has served as source material for an elaborate discussion among academics in the field about which factors – or, rather, which complex of factors – determine the number and rank of women in a given military organization. Carrieras (2004) has reviewed this literature and helps us understand what other factors need to be included. The most salient points can be summarized as follows:

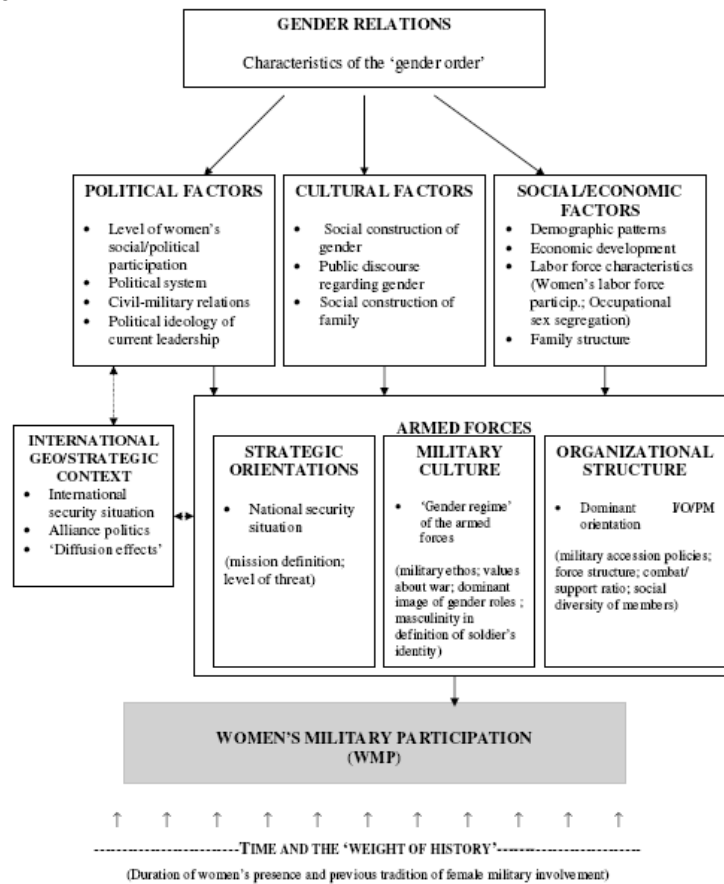
- First, local perceptions of the military as such, as well as of the power structure within the given military system impact the number of women. These dimensions have been included in the hypothesis formulated by Iskra et al (2002: 788), who assert that 'the greater the emphasis on power, authoritarianism, hierarchy and conformity, the more limited women's participation in the military'.
- Second, the significance of the international context in framing national security threats is also absent. Kümmel (2002: 626) has taken this issue into account and has formulated the following hypothesis: 'transformations of the security, political and strategic environment of a given country may thus lead to changes in the armed forces, including the recruitment – or dismissal – of women soldiers'.

- Finally, Carrieras (2004: 34) argues that the Segal’s model does not discuss what ‘participation of women in the military’ actually entails. More specifically, the question is whether representation is a purely quantitative aspect or whether it also entails a qualitative analysis.

Against this background, Carrieras (2004) proposes a revised model for women’s military participation that is more complex and includes more factors than Segal’s initial model from 1995. Both models show that the nature and level of women’s participation within a military organization is the result of a complex relationship between political, social and cultural factors in combination with the international context and the strategic orientation, military culture and organizational structure within the armed forces. Attempts to recruit more women into the armed forces must be based on an appreciation of this complexity, and in practical terms this means that everything from the size of military uniforms, family politics and the international security threat must be part of the rhetorical calculations.

Carrieras (1995) summarizes the challenges and factors determining women’s military participation in the following manner:

Figure 2: Carrieras’s Theoretical Model of Factors Affecting Women’s Military Participation



Source: Carrieras (2004: 36)

What we can read out of this model is that the Scandinavian social and political setting appears to be particularly conducive to a considerable increase in the number of women within the armed forces. In the Scandinavian countries, the level of female participation in public and political life is high, and the social discourse about gender is based on equal opportunities and – in the context of family life – equal duties between men and women. In other words, the timing of the renewed focus on increasing the number of women within the Norwegian armed forces seems to be well calculated. The next section will therefore focus on the particular gains and challenges related to an increase in women's military participation in the Norwegian armed forces.

Gender and the Norwegian Armed Forces

Two thousand and seven has been declared – at least by numerous Norwegian journalists – as the year of the woman within the Norwegian armed forces. The wish to more than double the number of women in order to reach a 15% average by the end of 2008 (and 20% by the year 2020) is communicated to the Norwegian public by political and military leaders using two different voices, with two different aims.

On the one hand, the Minister of Defence argues that the need to increase the number of women is a question of ensuring that the Norwegian armed forces are more in tune with Norwegian society at large. The Norwegian armed forces ‘shall reflect the multi-ethnic and socially diverse nature of our society’, as she argued in her speech of 8 January 2007, quoted above. A higher number of women within the Norwegian armed forces therefore serves a *symbolic* need to modernize the Norwegian armed forces. This political aim also indicates that political understandings of the role of the Norwegian armed forces have changed. The military is no longer seen as an organization tasked solely with protecting national borders, but is also an export item through which it is possible to increase the visibility of the Norwegian social and political culture both domestically and internationally. On the other hand, though, the rhetoric used by Norwegian military officials is somewhat different. Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army Brigadier-General Robert Mood has argued that the need for an increase in the numbers of women in the Norwegian military forces is linked to the need for different kinds of *qualifications* to meet new kinds of security challenges.⁷ This is particularly important in our missions abroad, suggests Mood (*Dagsavisen*, 17 November 2006). In other words, the military leadership of the Norwegian armed forces recognizes that new challenges require new responses, and its hope is that women might bring new experiences and qualifications to the Norwegian armed forces. In addition, as a result of Norway’s Action Plan, the Norwegian armed forces are committed to implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 to increase the numbers of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

The way in which the Norwegian political leadership aims to achieve the desired increase is to invite all girls born in 1989 to volunteer for military service. To much surprise, up to 7,000 women – or every fourth women in this age group – accepted this invitation and will be considered for military service. It remains to be seen how many of these women will actually carry out military service, where they will end up in the military system, and how long their military careers might be. One thing that is clear, however, is that 2007 provides an unprecedented opportunity to study the motivation, career goals, attitudes and experiences of women within the Norwegian armed forces. By following this cohort of women, it will be possible to gain unique insights into how women are adapting in the Norwegian armed forces and

⁷ Interviewed 9 January 2007.

how the military is changing as a result of their entry into such a male-dominated arena. Further, while it may be crucial to map the military careers (or non-careers) of the women volunteers born in 1989, it will be equally important to understand why the remaining women were *not interested* in volunteering. It is among those who find the Norwegian armed forces uninteresting that we can learn how Norway's armed forces can improve in terms of creating better information and communication strategies.

Norwegian Challenges Linked to a Higher Percentage of Women in the Norwegian Armed Forces

On 30 March 2007, a politically appointed group led by Colonel Britt T. B. Brestrup presented a report to Minister of Defence Anne-Grethe Strøm Erichsen on how to increase the number of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces. In terms of policy recommendations, there is little that needs to be added to this group's thorough report.⁸ The group concluded, however, that if the desired goals are to be reached – that is, 20% women by 2020 – then compulsory military service for women must be considered, and this point has also been given public support by the Minister of Defence.⁹ It is to be expected that the recommendation for compulsory military service for women will receive considerable attention – both supportive and critical – from other politicians¹⁰ and politically active groups. To understand how the Norwegian armed forces are perceived by the Norwegian public, it will be important to follow these debates with close scrutiny.

As a complement to the political report of 30 March 2007, it is worth considering what individuals interviewed for the present study have reiterated about female soldiers within highly masculine military systems. One of the core arguments across the entire interview sample for this report is the understanding that many military systems have simply not been constructed for female soldiers. In many countries, there are not enough showers, latrine systems or barracks to house women in the military. The situation is better in Norway, interviewees suggest, in that there are barracks, showers, uniforms etc. that have been made to fit women in particular. Nevertheless, there are still a few areas where equipment and facilities have not been made to fit women. One issue that came up in several interviews was the fact that safety vests have not been customized for women, which means that women need to wear vests that are too large for their bodies generally in order to get them to fit around the chest. This is not only uncomfortable, but is also a safety risk, because the

⁸ 'Utvalg for Større Kvinneandel i Forsvaret, Rapport'

http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Dokumenter/Kvinnerapport_110407_nettersjon.pdf

⁹ Interviews with the Minister of Defence, *Dagsrevyen*, 29–30 March 2007.

¹⁰ Erna Solberg, the leader of the Conservative Party (Høyre), has already officially stated that she does not support such a measure because it would deprive the civilian working force of valuable women and because she does not see this as a gender-equality issue as long as there is not more equal share of domestic work between men and women in Norwegian households. Interviewed in *Kveldsnytt*, 30 March 2007.

vests are not as tight as they should be to provide maximum protection. These kinds of insights demonstrate that, albeit unintentionally, less attention has been given to female safety in military operations than to male safety.

It is therefore crucial, for both practical and symbolic reasons, to go through all military equipment to assess the extent to which military equipment and facilities adequately cater to the potentially different needs of men and women. In order to make a highly masculine organization more welcoming for women, the Norwegian military ought to consider the following points:

- How are the women received by their male and female colleagues – as equals or as different from the majority?
- Are military facilities organized in such a way that they cater to both male and female needs?
- Is military equipment made to fit both men and women?

The proof will be in the details. If female soldiers are constantly being reminded that they are perceived as different from their male colleagues, this can be very challenging over time. It is therefore crucial that military officials go through facilities and equipment at *regular intervals* and make sure that these are tailored to both men and women.

Further, it was frequently pointed out by interviewees that it is vital to have women in top positions within military organizations, whether at the national or international level, while also having substantial numbers of women within the organization at large. In all interviews, it was emphasized that it was crucial to have female role models of high military rank. These role models are important for other military women, but perhaps equally important vis-à-vis male colleagues. Within both the private sector and academia, use of female senior mentors is a fairly common way of ensuring that women have good role models and support in their journey upwards within the organization or up the academic ladder. Within national armies, it may prove difficult to identify enough female mentors of high rank to support younger recruits, simply because the numbers of women within a national military may be very low. One suggestion that was made by some interviewees was to consider an international system of mentoring, whereby women from national militaries might serve as mentors for younger women within national militaries other than their own. One of the benefits of such an arrangement would be that women would not only be supporting other women, but would also get to know each other's missions and countries, and this might contribute to lowering the barrier towards going on international missions. It is also an ingenious way of creating networks among women.

Lastly, but equally important, interviewees pointed to the need to have mechanisms in place that make it attractive for women to stay in the military. Highly qualified women within the ranks of the armed forces will also be attractive to the civilian private sector. It is therefore crucial to analyze and follow the development of female leadership within the private sector in Norway, and to try to understand and

communicate what women would gain by staying on in a military system instead of taking up potential offers elsewhere.

In sum, there are many challenges facing the Norwegian military, but it is clear that, as of 2007, there will also be unique opportunities for systematizing experiences and knowledge about women in the Norwegian armed forces.

Gender and International Military Interventions: International Perspectives

The need to increase the numbers of women within the Norwegian armed forces is related to international developments, and particularly to increasing international recognition of the need to analyze and understand peace and conflict matters along gender lines. Both academically and politically, the international focus on gender and conflict has been dominated by a focus on women's needs for specific forms of protection against structural and direct forms of violence. Little has been done, however, to direct attention to the ways in which wars are gendered (that is, how men and women play different roles and have different economic and symbolic value during and after times of conflict) and how women might be able to make valuable contributions to political decisionmaking provided that their voices are given sufficient political attention. Recent developments, however, suggest that this tendency is about to change.¹¹

*United National Security Council Resolution 1325*¹²

One of the groundbreaking international achievements concerning women's participation in peace and security matters was the unanimous adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in October 2000.¹³ According to Tryggestad (2006), this represents the first time in the history of the UN that issues pertaining to women and security had been placed on the agenda of the Security Council. The actual text of the resolution is broad and far-reaching, and an understanding of women as actors and agents for change in conflict/post-conflict situations – rather than merely as victims – lies at its core. Emphasis is placed on acknowledging the rights of women to participate in political decisionmaking forums, as well as their rights as actors in negotiations and peacebuilding processes. The UN and its member-states are also challenged to do more in terms of appointing women to high-level positions both at headquarters and in field missions, and to recruit a larger number of women as peacekeepers (Tryggestad, 2006).¹⁴ In broad terms, according to Tryggestad (2007), the resolution seeks to achieve the following goals:

¹¹ For a comprehensive overview of women and international peacekeeping, see Olsson & Tryggestad (2001).

¹² I am deeply indebted to PRIO colleague researcher Torunn L. Tryggestad for enlightening me on the political context of UNSCR 1325. The present section is based on her analyses of and insights on this groundbreaking resolution.

¹³ See <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/7424888.html>.

¹⁴ The term 'peacekeeper' encompasses military and police personnel, as well as different categories of civilian personnel.

- to encourage women’s participation in political decisionmaking and peace processes;
- to integrate a gender perspective in the planning stages of peacekeeping missions and provide all peacekeepers with gender-sensitive training; and
- to protect women in armed conflicts.

Within the resolution, there are two recommendations where the Security Council focuses specifically on military issues, namely under Point 4, where the Council

[f]urther urges the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel,

and under Point 6, where the Council

[r]equests the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, invites Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment and further requests the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training.

Within UNSCR 1325, the inclusion of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities is not just a normative issue; it is also seen as a prerequisite to sustainable peacebuilding. In addition, improvement in the gender balance in peace operations on both the civilian and military sides will ensure that operations have a more democratic outlook.

UNSCR 1325 is seen as an important document, but the process of implementing its goals is a very slow one, as recent statistics clearly testify (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Number of Women in United Nations Peacekeeping Missions

GENDER STATISTICS - 28 FEBRUARY 2007												
PK MISSION	Military Component											
	Military Observers			Staff Officers			Contingent Troop			Military Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
MINURSO	195	0	195	1	0	1	23	4	27	219	4	223
MINUSTAH	0	0	0	98	3	101	6591	107	6698	6689	110	6799
MONUC	541	12	553	165	2	167	16335	287	16622	17041	301	17342
UNAMA	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	13
UNAMI	11	0	11	0	0	0	223	0	223	234	0	234
UNDOF	0	0	0	21	2	23	979	17	996	1000	19	1019
UNFICYP	0	0	0	45	4	49	769	35	804	814	39	853
UNFIL	0	0	0	175	1	176	12441	291	12732	12616	292	12908
UNIOSIL	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	11
UNMEE	207	4	211	54	3	57	1725	10	1735	1986	17	2003
UNMIK	36	1	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	1	37
UNMIL	199	8	207	115	2	117	13424	308	13732	13738	318	14056
UNMIN	60	1	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	1	61
UNMIS	565	12	577	237	6	243	8415	101	8516	9217	119	9336
UNMIT	32	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	1	33
UNMOGIP	43	1	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	1	44
UNOCI	187	13	200	93	3	96	7700	57	7757	7980	73	8053
UNOMIG	123	5	128	0	0	0	0	0	0	123	5	128
UNTSO	150	4	154	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	4	154
Total	2373	62	2435	1004	26	1030	68625	1217	69842	72002	1305	73307

Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/gender/feb07.pdf> (accessed 31 March 2007)

The statistics in Figure 3 represent an overview of the numbers of women in the military components of current UN peacekeeping missions. As we can see, the total number of women amounts to 1,305 out of 73,307, which means that the total amount of women in the military components of peacekeeping missions stands at about 1.8%. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSL) have no women at all in their missions, while the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has the highest total, with 318 women out of 14,056, representing 2.3%.

Tryggestad (2007) notes, however, that despite the slow implementation rate within UN systems, it is the UN's Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) that has been the most innovative and successful of all the different departments within the UN Secretariat in terms of implementing the resolution, a point that was also underscored by outgoing UN secretary-general Kofi Annan in his most recent report on the implementation process of UNSCR 1325 to the Security Council.¹⁵ Specifically, the DPKO has focused on the following measures:

- establishing 'gender units' and 'gender advisors' in all new peacekeeping operations, along with the establishment of a gender advisor within DPKO itself;
- developing a resource package on gender issues for UN personnel that is also offered to all member-states;¹⁶
- increasing the recruitment of women in all peacekeeping capacities (civilian, military and police); and
- establishing of a code-of-conduct unit focusing on violations against civilian populations by UN personnel.

In the last few decades, there has been a great change in the UN's peacekeeping operations, both on a quantitative and on a qualitative level. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of UN operations has increased by 400%. UN Deputy Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guehenno has referred to this as an 'unprecedented growth'. By the beginning of 2007, there were about 100,000 persons in 18 peacekeeping operations around the world..¹⁷

In a situation where a number of UN operations are already understaffed, it will be an enormous challenge to also meet the need for new UN operations in new conflict areas, continues Tryggestad (2007). The need to include more women in UN operations is therefore not only a gender issue, but also a resource issue: the UN needs

¹⁵ *Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security, S/2006/770* (27 September 2006).

¹⁶ See 'Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations', www.un-instraw.org/wiki/training/index.php/.

¹⁷ See *The Peacekeeping Year in Review 2006*, http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/pub/year_review06/YIR2006.pdf.

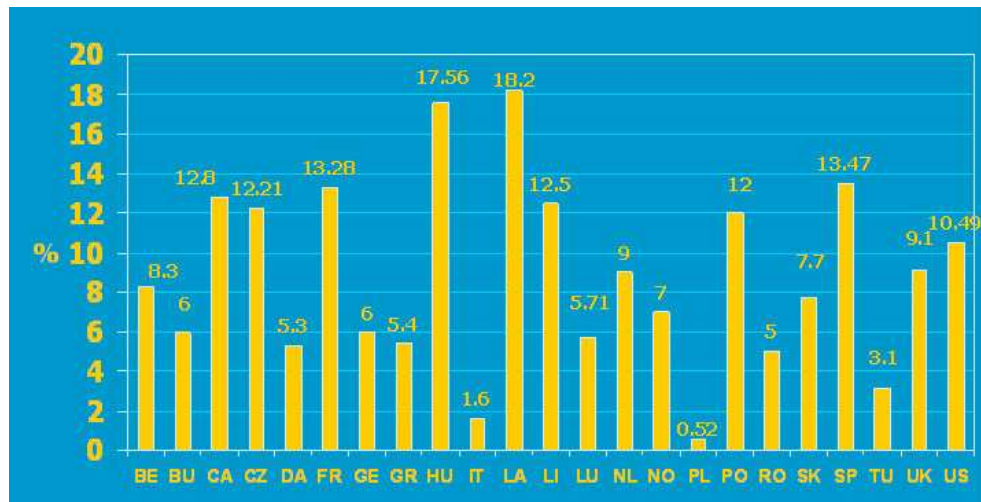
more staff. The following statistics show this quite clearly that there is room for more women:

- There are no women leaders in any UN peacekeeping operations (18 in total), and only one female 'deputy' (Afghanistan).
- Women constitute 1% of the military personnel in UN peacekeeping operations.
- Women constitute 4% of the police personnel in UN peacekeeping operations.
- Women constitute approximately 30% of the international civilian personnel, but this number decreases to about 10% for leadership positions (D1 and higher).
- Women constitute 22% of the national/locally recruited personnel (where they are predominantly employed in lower positions, such as secretaries, cleaning personnel, etc.).

The number of UN operations has not only increased; such operations have also changed character – from small observation forces to large and multifunctional forces. This shift requires new forms of leadership and new areas of competence and experience, providing yet another reason why the UN is actively seeking to increase the numbers of its female personnel: more women will secure more effective peacekeeping operations. The UN argues that if it has more women in observation units, it will be easier for local women to report on sexual assaults. It is also argued that more women within a peacekeeping operation will reduce the number of (sexual) assaults by UN personnel.

To some extent, increasing the number of women within the UN is something the UN can do on its own; however, when it comes to military recruitment to UN peacekeeping missions, the organization is completely dependent on the member-states. On 8 March 2007, the DPKO therefore issued a press statement encouraging member-states to send more women to peacekeeping operations. More specifically, the DPKO encouraged member-states to double the number of women within their national armed forces over the next five years. The DPKO's military division aims to have a 10% representation of women.¹⁸ However, if NATO countries can be taken as an indicator of what to expect from member-states, the picture is gloomy:

¹⁸ See 'UN Asks for More Women Peacekeepers', Inter Press Service (IPS), 20 March 2007.

Figure 4: Percentages of NATO Military Servicewomen 2006

Source: http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/pec_fem_soldiers-2006.jpg

If we look at the development over time, the following picture emerges:

Figure 5: Percentages of NATO Military Servicewomen 2001–06

COUNTRY	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Belgium	7,6	7,9	8,2	8,26	8,3	8,3
Bulgary	-	-	-	4,2	6,0	6
Canada	11,4	11,8	12,4	12,3	12,6	12,8
Czech Republic	3,7	10,0	10,0	12,3	12,21	--12,21
Denmark	5,0	No data	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,3
France	8,5	10,8	11,2	12,79	12,8	13,28
Germany	2,8	3,7	4,4	5,2	6,0	6
Greece	3,8	3,8	3,8	4,2	16,0	5,4
Hungary	9,6	16,0	10,0	10	4,3	17,56
Italy	0,1	0,1	0,5	0,53	1,0	1,6
Latvia	-	-	-	13,5	20,0	--
Lithuania	-	-	-	6,04	9,07	12,5
Luxembourg	--	--	--	--	---	5,71
The Netherlands	8,0	8,4	8,5	8,65	9,0	9
Norway	3,2	3,3	5,7	6,3	6,3	7
Poland	0,1	0,3	0,3	0,47	0,47	0,52
Portugal	6,6	6,6	8,4	8,4	8,4	12
Romania	-	-	-	3,99	5,0	5
Slovakia	-	-	-	6,1	7,06	7,7
Slovenia	-	-	-	19,2	15,38	--
Spain	5,8	9,0	10,0	10,5	10,7	13,47
Turkey	0,1	0,1	0,1	3,95	3,95	3,1
United Kingdom	8,1	8,3	8,6	8,8	9,0	9,1
United States	14,0	14,0	15,0	15,0	15,5	10,49

Source: http://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/perc_fem_soldiers_2001_2006.pdf

These overviews give us a glimpse of the diversity in the numbers of military servicewomen within the NATO countries. Latvia has the highest number of women,

with up to 18.2% (Figure 4), while Poland is at the lowest end of the spectrum, with only 0.52% (Figure 4). By looking at Figure 5, we also see that, though this 2006 figure for Poland is very low, it actually represents an increase from 2001, where the figure was as low as 0.1%, incidentally the same level as that of Italy and Turkey.

While these numbers might be quite discouraging for those who want to see more gender balance within military systems, it is important to underscore what an achievement it is that these numbers actually exist. Keeping track of women within military systems on a global scale is a relatively new phenomenon, and it shows that the ways in which international agencies and women's groups have pushed for this kind of information has actually given some results. Knowing how many – or, rather, how few – women there are in military systems around the world provides a much better basis for analysis, as well as a baseline for discussion and points of improvement.

Returning, then, to the UN's need for more female military personnel, it should be noted that Norway, an ardent supporter of the UN in both financial and moral terms, stands out as one of the few countries with a national action plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, as Tryggestad (2007) points out. It is therefore vital that Norway increases the number of women within its armed forces. In March 2006, a meeting was held in New York during which troop-contributing countries discussed the issue of increasing the number of military women. Here, it was concluded that 'the deployment of female peacekeepers has become not just desirable, but an operational imperative'.¹⁹

There are three challenges that need particular attention and consideration if the goal of increasing the number of female personnel is to succeed within the UN system:

- More effective women recruitment in the member-states is crucial.
- The conditions within UN operations must improve, so that women feel welcome and are able to perform the jobs they are appointed to carry out.
- The member-states must be made more responsible in terms of taking the recruitment of military women seriously.

There are many challenges, but some best practices have nevertheless been identified:²⁰

- Early in 2006, Pakistan had no women among its UN personnel (Pakistan is the largest contributor to the UN), but in November 2006 it appointed a female observer and interviewed an additional six during the same month. In addition, the military academy has accepted 35 women (out of a total of 250).

¹⁹ *Policy Dialogue To Review Strategies for Enhancing Gender Balance Among Uniformed Personnel in Peacekeeping Missions*, Final Report 3, New York, 28–29 March 2006.

²⁰ These examples are from the report *United Nations Reform: Improving Peace Operations by Advancing the Role of Women*, which summarizes and analyses meetings that took place on 14 and 16 November 2006 in New York and Washington, DC. The report was funded by the Stanley Foundation in cooperation with Women in International Security.

- In December 2006, India sent a ‘formed police unit’ to Liberia, consisting of only women. It had taken three years of negotiations between DPKO and India to reach this arrangement.
- New Zealand reports that it has only positive experiences with including women in its troops.
- Sweden has experimented with women units in Afghanistan. It is currently in the process of evaluating these experiences.

Tryggestad (2007) emphasizes that during recent years there has been much focus on ‘codes of conduct’ and the need to increase the numbers of women in UN peacekeeping operations, and she argues that these two areas of concern are interconnected. If success is achieved in one field, it is likely that this will have a positive impact on the other, and in sum this might increase the effectiveness of a given operation and increase its reputation.

Among the interviewees within the UN system, there was considerable frustration with the low priority that gender concerns seemed to receive on the agendas of various UN agencies. A number of speculations were put forward as to why the implementation of this particular resolution seems to be moving slower than other Security Council resolutions, including the lack of an overarching UN agency for women²¹ and the lack of follow-up resolutions that would ensure partial implementation of the resolution (something that has been done with other thematic UNSC resolutions); finally, some thought that the fact that the resolution focused on gender issues – that is, something that was strongly personal, political and social – was the main reason for the slow speed of the implementation. There was also much focus on the gender focal point function²² by the interviewees. There was a clear consensus that the idea of the gender focal point is important and viable, but the problem faced by many of the individuals assigned to this task is that they have little resources and are often junior in the UN system. This not only gives them little power and room for manoeuvre, but also has the unfortunate symbolic effect of signifying that gender issues are not taken seriously within the UN system.²³ It was therefore

²¹ On 8 March 2007, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the world body to create a single agency charged with empowering women and girls and fighting for their rights. A UN panel recommended in November that the UN Development Fund for Women, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues be combined into one ambitiously funded agency. (Press Release, United Nations, 8 March 2007 [Reuters]).

²² The gender focal point position has the role to support the Under Secretary-General and senior managers to carry out their responsibility to implement gender mainstreaming in the substantive work programme. The position is not linked to the promotion of gender equality within the department - i.e. to promotion of gender balance, work/life issues, harassment, including sexual harassment and a gender sensitive work environment. These issues are taken care of by the Departmental Focal Points for Women. For a full description of these positions see: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gmfpdrafttors.htm>

²³ One acute ongoing discussion linked to the theme outlined above related to the prospects for having a gender adviser position assigned to the Peacebuilding Commission (PC). The PC is a new UN body whose major function will be to coordinate the various UN bodies involved in peacebuilding efforts both on the military and the civilian level. The PC had its inaugural meeting on 23 June 2006,

emphasized by several of our interviewees that there needs to be international recognition that such positions need to be raised to a more senior level, with more prestige and resources.

What all agreed on, however, was the fact that the lack of an *accountability* system was an overarching problem with this particular resolution. It is perhaps perplexity with the somewhat vague language of the resolution that has led to the stern focus on increasing the number of women in peacekeeping missions. Counting heads is one way of defining benchmarks for success.

But, counting heads as a benchmark of success is a devious endeavour. If a given national military has up to 15% women within its ranks, but they all cook and clean, this cannot be seen as being in line with the intentions of UNSCR 1325. The number of women in a given national military, as well as within an international military operation, must be weighed against the positions and ranks these women hold. In the interviews with UN officials, there was much discussion about women in uniform and leadership positions within UN missions. A clear consensus emerged that it was hard to recruit women to leadership positions for a variety of reasons. What many of the interviewees reiterated to us was the following:

- The number of female applicants to high-rank military positions within the UN system is alarmingly low.
- Member-states do not have enough female military personnel to nominate.
- Member-states might need their female high-rank personnel at home for symbolic and political reasons.
- Women of high rank within national militaries are also attractive for the private sector, where they might be offered better salaries and benefits than at the UN.
- The ways in which advertisements for vacant high-rank military positions are crafted within the UN system might value masculine qualities at the expense of female capacities.

Increasing the number of high-rank female military personnel therefore needs to be considered in vertical and horizontal terms. In order for military systems to create an environment where women can exercise influence, there needs to be a level of women of up to about 30%. The 30% figure represents what is known as a *critical mass*,²⁴ that is, the number needed in order for a minority to have a realistic chance of having influence over the majority group. If the intention is to include women in the military in order to make change, there needs to be an organizational structure in place that allows for these changes to appear and take form.

and in its work it is mandated to monitor gender issues and ensure gender mainstreaming in all peacebuilding activities. Among our interviewees, however, there was a fear that this way of focusing on gender issues within the commission might not give gender issues the necessary emphasis they deserve. Those concerned would have preferred to see a gender adviser post within the PC in addition to the mainstreaming activities. Several NGOs, as along with resource people within the established UN bodies, are therefore lobbying for such a position to be established.

²⁴ For a discussion on the notion of critical mass, see Dahlerup (2001).

Increasing the number of women within military forces is part of an international political agenda aiming to gender-mainstream peacemaking efforts, of which military troops constitute an important part. This means that an increase in the numbers of women within any given military system is seen only as a first step towards creating a possibility for a peace in which gender equity is an integral part. Counting heads is therefore only a first step in an accountability process, and it should therefore not be regarded as an end-result in itself.

In the interview with Ms Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, who also heads the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (OSAGI), she outlined the following three challenges for UN member-states if they are to meet the requirements set out in UNSCR 1325:

- UNSCR 1325 needs to be implemented at the national level. It needs to be explained, translated and transformed into national action plans.
- UNSCR 1325 requires capacity development on the local level. Good intentions do not get far without capacity that again can be broken up into tangible areas.
- UNSCR 1325 needs bilateral, as well as global, cooperation and exchange of ideas and resources.

Nordic Studies and Cooperation?

Taking Rachel Mayanja's suggestions seriously could encourage Norway to initiate Nordic comparative studies and cooperation on women's military participation. There are already studies under way in Sweden (University of Lund and Uppsala) and Finland (Tampere Peace Research Institute, TAPRI) that focus on gender issues and female recruitment in their respective national armed forces and the impact on international missions. The themes, findings and modes of study of these projects are interesting in a comparative perspective, but even more fruitful would be a coordinated study involving Nordic partners. The Nordic militaries and the respective national discourses about them are very different from those of the rest of Europe and the rest of the world.²⁵ One important area of concern might be to examine how the armed forces of the Nordic countries interact with other armed forces in international missions and to investigate the extent to which the Nordic countries' models of military recruitment and ways of executing military duties coincide with or differ from those of non-Nordic countries, and what impact any differences might have on particular missions. For instance, the Ghanaian contingent to the UNIFIL operation in Lebanon observed that there was a substantial number of women among the Nordic

²⁵ This was an observation made by Professor Christine Sylvester of the University of Lancaster, UK, who was a discussant on the panel on Nordic Research on Security, chaired by the present author, during the International Studies Association Annual Convention in Chicago, 27 February–4 March 2007.

contingents of the operation. Interviews with Ghanaian military officials have shown that this observation contributed to paving the way for increasing the number of women within military ranks in Ghana.²⁶ This, in turn, has led to an increase in the number of women among the troops that Ghana commits to international operations.

Finally, studies of gender recruitment and gender training within the Nordic Battle Group (NBG) would also be worth consolidating among the Nordic countries. The NBG consists of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Estonia, and is a military rapid response group that is intended to be available to EU forces by 2008 (Berggren, 2005: 127). In an outline of the NBG, Berggren (2005) notes that training and recruitment policies within the NBG countries vary greatly, which represents an area of concern and challenge.

²⁶ Abraham Afrim-Narh (2006). 'Gender Integration and International Peacekeeping: The Case of the Ghana Armed Forces', Master's Thesis in Peace and Conflict Studies, submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, Spring 2006.

Conclusion

The Norwegian armed forces are helping Norway to fulfil its international commitments by inviting all women born in 1989 to volunteer for military service. As stated in the introduction to this report, increasing the numbers of women within the Norwegian armed forces will constitute a significant social and political experiment, with national and international ramifications. It is therefore essential that the Norwegian Ministry of Defence allocates sufficient resources to document and analyze the changes taking place, in order that the Ministry itself, the Norwegian armed forces and other international bodies can learn from the successes and failures of this experiment.

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Appendix: List of People Interviewed

Norway, 2006–07

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

1. Major-General Per Arne Five, Deputy Military Adviser
(interviewed 3 November 2006, Oslo)

Deputy Commandant Norwegian National Defense College

2. Colonel Britt B T Brestrup
(interviewed 21 November 2006)

Forsvarets Skolesenter/Forsvarets Institutt for Ledelse

3. Major Heidi Minde
(interviewed 28 November 2006)

Chief of Staff of The Norwegian Army

4. Brigadier-General Robert Mood
(interviewed 9 January 2007)

New York, 6–10 November 2006

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

5. Ms Laura Londen, Officer-in-Charge, Human Resources Planning and Development Section
6. Ms Anna Shotten, Policy Officer, Conduct and Discipline Team

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (OSAGI)

7. Ms Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP/BCPR)

8. Ms Ilaria Carnevali, Programme Specialist Strategic Planning Unit

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

9. Ms Vina Nadjibulla, Programme Specialist, Governance Peace and Security

NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security

10. Ms Gina Torry, Coordinator

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILP) at the United Nations

11. Ms Sam Cook, Adviser
12. Ms Milkah Kihunah, Adviser

Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations

13. Mr Arve H. Lauritzen, Major/First Secretary, Deputy Military Adviser

14. Ms Berit Enge, Minister Counsellor

Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations

15. Mr Sainivalati S. Navoti, Legal Counsel

16. Mr Filimone Kau, Chargé d'affaires



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