

Book Review: Feminist Security Ethics in the U.N. Peacekeeping Missions: Gender, Sex, and the Postnational Defense: Militarism and Peacekeeping, by Annica Kronsell

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As regards women situation in neighboring Afghanistan given Taliban as powers that be at 2021, there is a need to concentrate more on gender-security aspect of the developments there which the masterpiece by Annica Kronsell on 2012 has already caught hold of it. It does not only illuminate the salience and necessity of feminist ethics of care and emphatic cooperation in international security and postnational military defense grounds and specifically the U.N. peacekeeping missions but also is a scintilla of ethical leadership indispensability in the current world, specifically with regard to the deteriorating prevalent international crises and the international organizations' failures to dilute them, as scholarly literature has recently been aggregating on ethical leadership such as the recent one on ethical leadership in international organizations.

In point of fact, ethics in leadership could purely root from feminist perspectives; having had human security, not merely states' security, become the focal point of international security due to the transformed global security settings given the ethnified and religious internal conflicts being dominant, the notion has gained vast identification to the extent that it is reflected in the UN Security Council resolutions. Prioritizing the 'responsibility to protect' and 'gender and peacekeeping' matters connotes the recognition of human rights or particularly gender and security importance which the manuscript inquires whether it has impacted the organization of defense and military.

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Considering Afghanistan case study as the quintessential presentation of simultaneously both war-making U.S armed forces that engaged in the ‘war on terror’ and ISAF peacekeeping forces from Sweden and the EU, the author crystallizes the contradiction of war-making/peacekeeping occurring at the same time which reflects change in security and defense politics in the global context. The International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) were there to disarm and enable a secure environment fit for civilian activities. The ISAF was created through a UN mandate and is led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Moreover, The paradoxical relation between peace and war-making not only is a dilemma for the defense organization but also for the people ‘attacked’ or ‘protected’ by these forces. The incongruity of the fact that militaries that are trained for war now are to do peacekeeping is excellently well represented in the book as gender being its highly interesting focal point in investigating military and defense transformation with its outstanding contribution to feminist International Relations and feminist security studies which emphasizes on gender gaps that are frequently criticized, challenged and reconstructed the historically dominated masculinity and heterosexuality in military positions in the postnational security and defense context.

United Nation Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN SCR 1325) on gender and peacekeeping from 2000 being the cornerstone of new global security context and the crucial basis to the development of gender awareness and policies in the practice of the Swedish, EU or individual member states’ defense organization and to gender mainstreaming source in peacekeeping is the book’s foundation; UN SCR 1325 together with other policies and equality norms make it increasingly difficult for militaries to persist politics recurrently. Building upon Sandra Whitworth’s (2004) *Men, Militarism & UN Peacekeeping* specifically and other scholars Annica Kronsell provides seminal contribution to feminist analysis of peacekeeping, articulating the way masculinity and militarism are internalized in peacekeeping. As a Swedish scholar, she promotes Sweden as a feminist state militarily nonaligned and not a NATO member that as the EU member “since 1995, has agreed on a common security and

defense agenda that has a strong emphasis on peace enforcement, peacekeeping, and crises management” (chapter-0:5). Taking Swedish ISAF stationed in Mazar Sharif northern Afghanistan as a basis, the manuscript considers reassessing masculinity and its connection with sexuality and femininity in relation to peacekeeping activities with some constructivist approach. The book evaluates women peace-keepers as not only inimical to sexual misconduct but also as an intelligence resource to be engaged with local women specially in intensive patriarchal environments and thereof it is women that make possible the implementation of UN SCR 1325, and assure a more comprehensive security circumstance.

The book represents profound analysis of the transformation of Swedish Armed Forces (SAF) as Sweden’s national defense through considering how military and defense forces have responded to the new security context. Moving away from neutrality as a security doctrine and deserting the territorial defense is the most remarkable matter in this regard enunciated plus claiming that Sweden is the leading merger of gender-security reflection. It discusses how Sweden’s defense forces have equipped for peacekeeping through their engagement with the ISAF in Afghanistan and yields cardinal general knowledge about gender dynamics in relation to nation-building and citizenship and plus the European defense transformations such as EU Battlegroup as a military unit expected to enforce peace through military means as another complementary case study.

Since militarism and masculinity is at the core of military organizations and defense thinking, democratization of “the military, an institution of hegemonic masculinity” (chapter-3: 2), as a challenge for Swedish postnational defense and militaries of other mid-sized powers holding cosmopolitan- driven values could be declared as the heartbeat of the book.

Despite of great impediments to militaries’ efforts to take a cosmopolitan trajectory, Kronsell, adopting an ambitious scope claims Swedish military organization is a gender-aware military that has been democratized and therefore has challenged hegemonic masculinity and become gender responsive, inclusive and adaptable

resembling a large number of state militaries that are active in distant places with a focus on peace enforcement, peacekeeping, and crises management pursuits not just defending their homeland.

Confirming that the ‘responsibility to protect’ is one instance of how international peacekeeping activities have become more human rights oriented, and that the UN Security Council’s agenda on women, peace, and security, with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 as the first in a series of resolutions, Kronsell argues that the incremental rate of ratifications of resolutions on gender security issues can be translated either to incremental weighting of gender aspects on the UN Security Council or insufficient recognition and implementation of the original UN SCR 1325 among UN member states; as a consequence, an immenser recognition of gender and security issues has probably had significant impact on the international security agenda and challenged and reconstructed gender relations associated with the essential dichotomy into protector and protected of the national defense.

Demonstrating the fact that there is a grave variance between gender parity and gender mainstreaming is of paramount importance in the book; adding women to security and defense governance, in spite of being hard to attain, does not necessarily mean to any deep change in institutional values and norms. The fact that is gauged there through the ESDP’s (European Defense Skill Partnership) practices concentrating on the EU Battlegroup.

By inference, the principal matter of the Kronsell’s book was to examine how gender security issues have affected the postnational defense and the military organizations in specific. It explicated that gender-driven concepts, coined in the women’s movement, incorporated into the resolutions have moved to postnational military practices and on its way have come into conflict with institutionalized norms of militarism, took novel expressions through the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in the military organization and many countries mostly the Nordic countries and European Union (EU) member states, that have responded with their National Action Plans. Making military staff sensitive to the particular security needs of women in fighting zones in the region of

deployment to find ways to engage local women in the mission is what peacekeeping activities in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and in the Nordic Battlegroup have done. Hence, it has been such great achievement to formulate resolution in the Security Council and let it to be firmly rooted; it literally did necessitate comprehensive gender training efforts and innovations throughout the whole military organization. Initiatives like appointing gender field advisors and leaders responsible for gender themes have all been counted as success factors of the study. Finally, challenging hegemonic masculinity of the military institution, being a heart beat of the book, may be an outstanding concealed promising point of the book for the rest of other institutions since challenging hegemonic masculinity seems to be the most conspicuous step to move forward in gender responsive governance throughout the whole institutions of societies specially in developing countries to finally empower women in practice in a meaningful way.