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Aiko Holvikivi

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Training the Troops on Gender: The Making of a Transnational Practice

Aiko Holvikivi 

Department of Gender Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, the international Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has established a commitment to increase the participation of women in matters of peace and security, to ensure the protection of women's rights, and to include gender perspectives in conflict prevention. The WPS agenda foresees a number of measures to make peacekeeping more gender-responsive, including training uniformed peacekeepers on gender. These policy commitments date back to the year 2000, and have instigated the development of training materials and the institutionalization of training at regional and national levels. This article examines these training mandates, asking: What is the scope and nature of gender training for peacekeepers? How is gender understood to operate in peacekeeping? A review of international and national policy commitments demonstrates that training uniformed peacekeepers on gender has become a significant transnational practice. An examination of these mandates and training guidance reveals that training discourse establishes a normative understanding of gender that is focused primarily on vulnerability to sexual violence, and that frames gender as a question of skills and capacities rather than political investments or moral values. However, differences in localization demonstrate that gender training could be and sometimes is understood more expansively.

KEYWORDS Gender training; peacekeeping; Women, Peace and Security; feminist security studies

Introduction

In the year 2000, a flurry of activity at the level of global governance drew attention to the question of gender in peacekeeping operations. Feminist activists and policymakers, drawing from a long tradition of women's peace activism and the principles laid out in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, organized and lobbied for the structures of global decision-making to recognize the gendered dimensions of conflict, and to address gendered harm and discrimination in the practices of international peace and security. This activity produced the

CONTACT Aiko Holvikivi  a.i.holvikivi@lse.ac.uk

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Windhoek Declaration and Plan for Action in May 2000, and culminated in the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in October of that year.¹ Amid these policy developments, the idea of training peacekeepers on the topic of gender began to circulate. The governments of Canada and the United Kingdom sponsored the development of a training package on gender for peacekeepers, which was subsequently adopted by UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.² Training was then incorporated into the WPS policy architecture, which consistently evokes it as a key mechanism for the implementation of the agenda.

Gender training has thus become a reliably present feature of interventions designed to make peacekeeping more gender-responsive. This is a significant development for two reasons. On the one hand, policymakers and (some) activists place high expectations on such training, evoking it as a way to: address and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers; respond to and prevent wartime rape; and increase the participation of women in matters related to peace and security.³ Gender training is associated with a broader cluster of initiatives – such as training on conflict resolution and cross-cultural communication – which are expected to inculcate peacekeepers with cosmopolitan values.⁴ Training, however, also matters beyond its instrumental capacity to produce directly measurable behavioural change. Training on gender involves negotiating understandings of what gender ‘is’ and ‘does’, who has or does it, and how it operates in relation to different subjects. As critical (and) feminist literature on peacekeeping has demonstrated, how peacekeepers understand themselves and the ‘peace-kept’ population has important implications for how these peacekeepers carry out their tasks.⁵ Viewed in this light, it becomes apparent that training not only equips peacekeepers with technical skills and knowledge about gender, but that it also constitutes a discursive practice, producing ‘grids of intelligibility’ which make possible certain ways of being and acting in the world while foreclosing others.⁶ In other words, training matters because it shapes the realm of possible options for how peacekeepers understand themselves in relation to the population they serve; it is an endeavour that structures how peacekeepers perform their duties on mission. Gender training therefore constitutes a practice that may have, or is expected to have, significant practical and/or epistemic effects.

The institutionalization of training suggests several questions for the study of peacekeeping, ranging from whether training ‘works’ as a way to remedy gendered problems in peacekeeping, to what epistemic and political

¹Cohn et al., “Resolution 1325”; Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf, *Women, War, Peace*; Shepherd, *Gender, Violence, and Security*.

²Mackay, “Training the Uniforms,” 218; Puechguirbal, “Gender Training,” 114.

³Mackay, *Mainstreaming*, 265.

⁴Curran, “Training for Peacekeeping”; Fetherston, *Towards a Theory*; Flaspöler, *African Peacekeeping*.

⁵Henry, “Parades”; Jennings, “Conditional”; Razack, *Dark Threats*.

⁶Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 93.

‘work’ this training ‘does’. A number of insightful accounts on the practice of gender training in specific locations provide important insight into how training is conducted in different contexts and explore its effects.⁷ This article builds on and extends the growing body of scholarship on peacekeeper gender training by examining the policy mandates that underwrite this practice. It reviews global and national policy commitments and interrogates: What is the scope of gender training for peacekeepers? What understanding of gender does this training prescribe? In so doing, this article situates existing scholarship in transnational context, and lays groundwork for further research on gender training for uniformed peacekeepers.

To that end, this article proceeds as follows. The next section reviews the literature on gender training for uniformed peacekeepers, demonstrating that scholarship on the topic cautions that the institutionalization of gender training should not be uncritically celebrated as a normative good and highlights the importance of examining the content, practice and effects of gender training. At the same time, this body of work remains limited in empirical scope and stands to be productively expanded. In conversation with this scholarship, I elaborate on the theoretical framing and method of my inquiry, arguing for the need to attend to the terms on which ‘gender’ is taken up in relation to the peacekeeping enterprise. The second section turns to the empirical material on gender training. Undertaking a review of policy commitments and evidence of their implementation, I demonstrate that gender training is an evolving global phenomenon, and one which qualifies as a significant transnational practice. The third section then examines what gender ‘is’ and ‘does’ in peacekeeper training – that is to say, how training is envisioned, what meaning the term gender acquires through it, and what the epistemic effects of such framings are. I examine policy mandates on gender training and a selection of training materials to argue that gender in training is typically reduced to the question of sexual violence, and framed as something that can be addressed through problem-solving frameworks. At the same time, a number of departures from the global policy framework hint at possibilities for constructing different types of training regimes and attest to the importance of continuing to interrogate how gender training is constructed. In the concluding discussion, I reflect on what this overview of the field tells us about how gender is thought to operate in the peacekeeping endeavour, and suggest avenues for further inquiry.

Situating the Study of Peacekeeper Gender Training

When gender training was introduced for uniformed peacekeepers in the early 2000s, then senior gender advisors Angela Mackay and Nadine

⁷Carson, “Pre-Deployment”; Holmes, “Situating Agency”; Holohan, “Transformative Training”; Laplonge, “Absence”; Mackay, *Mainstreaming*; Puechguirbal, “Gender Training.”

Puechguirbal published their reflections on the aims and challenges of this practice.⁸ They provide nuanced accounts of the practical work involved in translating commitments to gender equality and sustainable peace to an audience Mackay describes as: ‘soldiers, task oriented, 90 percent male, who had most likely not given the subject too much attention in the past, and who were likely to be defensive’.⁹ Their analyses point to the complex politics of gender training: in her characterization of gender as a topic that evokes defensiveness among uniformed personnel, Mackay hints at some of the constitutive contradictions of peacekeeping. The tension between soldiering (war-fighting) and peace-making is well established in the peacekeeping literature.¹⁰ Gender training adds to this contradiction by introducing a concept with feminist lineage to martial institutions often described as institutions of hegemonic masculinity, in which femininity is denigrated and responsiveness to feminist analyses is low.¹¹ Peacekeeper training, then, is a site at which the contradictions of peacekeeping are negotiated, and through which scholars and practitioners expect to diffuse the cosmopolitan values of peacekeeping to uniformed peacekeepers.¹² These early accounts of peacekeeper gender training reveal training to be a political practice that intervenes in the culture of martial institutions, rather than simply a value-neutral transfer of technical knowledge and skills.

This premise – the negotiation of the structuring contradictions of peacekeeping through training – has prompted scholarly interest in how these encounters play out in training practice. Lisa Carson examines pre-deployment gender training for Australian peacekeepers, demonstrating that the ways gender is taken up in such training often reduces gender to equivalent difference between women and men, thereby eliding from view questions of power and patriarchy.¹³ Dean Laplonge undertakes an overview of UN gender training curricula, arguing that the omission of men and masculinities from training curricula severely circumscribes the potential of training to address issues of both male violence and male vulnerability.¹⁴ Anne Holohan surveys European peacekeepers on their experience of training on ‘soft skills’, noting that peacekeeper gender training tends to equate gender with women and focuses on ‘cultural difference’ between the peacekeepers and the peace-kept population.¹⁵ Similarly to the work of Mackay and Puechguirbal, these contextualized accounts of training practice reveal that the constitutive tensions of peacekeeping are worked out in complex

⁸Mackay, “Training the Uniforms”; Mackay, *Mainstreaming*; Puechguirbal, “Gender Training.”

⁹Mackay, *Mainstreaming*, 267, see also Reeves, “Feminist Knowledge,” 355.

¹⁰Duncanson, *Forces for Good*; Kronsell and Svedberg, *Introduction*; Whitworth, *Men*.

¹¹Belkin, *Bring Me Men*; Whitworth, *Men*; Wilén and Heineken, “Regendering.”

¹²Curran, *More*; Fetherston, *Voices*.

¹³Carson, “Pre-Deployment,” 280.

¹⁴Laplonge, “Absence,” 94.

¹⁵Holohan, “Transformative Training,” 16.

and often unpredictable ways through pedagogical encounters. While these accounts are grounded in specific contexts and training environments, together they caution that the ways in which the concept of gender is taken up in training cannot be presumed to live up to a feminist desire for transformation.

Further, recent studies of peacekeeper training more broadly attest to a diversity of approaches and capacities in how this training is conducted at different geographical and institutional sites.¹⁶ They underscore the importance of constructing what Georgina Holmes terms a ‘feminist praxiography’ to study training; that is, examining the embodied and situated practice of training to fully account for its effects.¹⁷ These studies examine peacekeeper training as a site at which global and local norms and practices meet, and track the dynamics of this encounter. As Holmes observes, training constitutes ‘a hybrid space in which TCC military actors and external actors from training institutes, other militaries, and UN subsidiary bodies engage in curriculum design and delivery and contribute to operationalizing UN norms’.¹⁸ Analyses of peacekeeping training centres caution that the training delivered may deviate from what was envisioned at the level of global governance, and fail to produce desired outcomes.¹⁹ Accordingly, a key area of interest for scholarship on peacekeeper training is the transnational nature of this practice: how (and whether) global norms are localized. These insights suggest that in order to understand gender training practices, both grounded accounts of gender training practices, and an understanding of the transnational normative framework in which these practices are situated are necessary. This article develops the latter, sketching the contours of the normative framework on gender training as expressed in policy. While it is important to remain alive to the consideration that training practice, as scholarship on peacekeeper training demonstrates, may often depart from what is mandated by policy and laid out in training materials, an examination of the global normative framework provides information about how the institutions of global governance envision training and establishes context for understanding the specific negotiations at play in localized training practice.

In examining gender training as a transnational practice, this article develops a conceptual approach with which to investigate the political and epistemic effects of gender training. My point of departure here is not a predetermined understanding of what ‘gender training’ consists (or should consist) of; rather my aim is to construct an empirically informed account of what such training involves. ‘Gender’, in relation to military and police

¹⁶Curran, *More*; Flaspöler, *African Peacekeeping*; Holmes, “Situating Agency”; Jowell, “Unintended Consequences.”

¹⁷Holmes, “Situating Agency,” 59.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁹Flaspöler, *African Peacekeeping*; Jowell, “Unintended Consequences.”

organizations, and to the peacekeeping endeavour, could be thought to operate in any number of ways. Efforts to train peacekeepers on gender are closely related to the international Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which emphasises the importance of the *protection* of women's human rights; gender-responsive efforts to *prevent* conflict; and the importance of women's *participation* in all matters related to peace and security. However, feminist work that tracks the operations of gender in martial institutions reveals that the WPS agenda does not offer an exhaustive account of the gendered dimensions of peacekeeping. Sexual harassment and assault within the ranks; domestic abuse perpetrated by service members; and post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by peacekeepers are all well-documented gendered problems in martial institutions, but typically fall out of the purview of the WPS agenda.²⁰ Military training serves to inculcate norms of hegemonic masculinity, and the military is arguably adept at mobilizing concepts of femininity to enlist women's labour to the service of the military institution as, *inter alia*, cleaners, laundresses, sex workers, and supportive spouses.²¹ This is by no means an exhaustive account of the gendered dimensions of peacekeeping, but these examples illustrate that gender operates in myriad ways inflected by race within peacekeeping endeavours, only some of which are taken up and made visible in the WPS agenda and through ensuing gender training practices.

In light of this recognition, what gender training consists of cannot be assumed to flow naturally or inevitably from a given number of 'gender issues' in peacekeeping. Rather, the identification of certain problems as specifically to do with gender, and as relevant to gender training, is the product of political processes and decisions. It does not simply correspond to an underlying truth as to what gender is, or what the gendered dimensions of peacekeeping are. Judith Butler reminds us: "The question ... of what qualifies as "gender" is itself already a question that attests to a pervasively normative operation of power, a fugitive operation of "what will be the case" under the rubric of "what is the case".²² In continuity with Butler's theorization, my inquiry departs from an understanding of gender not as ontological fact, but as produced through discursive practices, specifically in this case those of gender training mandates. The way gender is conceptualized in training (its epistemic effects) has political effects in that it constructs 'grids of intelligibility' which make possible certain ways of being and acting while foreclosing others.²³ For example, if, as Laplonge suggests, training materials on gender do not address men and masculinities, the epistemic effect of this framing is that gender is equated with women, and the political effect that

²⁰Gray, "Geopolitics of Intimacy"; Wadham, *Violence in the Military*; Whitworth, *Militarized Masculinity*.

²¹Enloe, *Maneuvers*; Cockburn, "Gender Relations."

²²Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xxii.

²³Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 93.

there is no need to address men's vulnerability or to examine how gendered structures of power enable harmful behaviours associated with masculinity.²⁴ Accordingly, I suggest that understanding the practice of gender training requires an investigation of the terms on which gender is made into a training topic, and the effects of that conceptual inflection. Gender training can thus be understood as a process that makes and gives significance to gender as an analytical and political problem, rather than an automatic response to all actually existing issues of gendered harm.

In order to provide an overview of the transnational scope of gender training for peacekeepers, and to examine on what terms gender is put to work in this endeavour, I examine policy documentation on the topic. This analysis is anchored in the international WPS policy architecture. The WPS agenda comprises the key policy architecture addressing gender in peacekeeping, providing a helpful framework to examine how such policy mandates develop a consensus around the need to train peacekeepers on gender. My analysis of policy documents departs from a review of the ten UN Security Council resolutions on WPS, and progresses to examine to what extent this Security Council mandate is localized in regional and national action plans to implement these resolutions.²⁵ In total, I examined 6 regional action plans (RAPs) and 75 national action plans (NAPs). For each policy document, I conducted key word searches for passages relating to training. In most cases, the search for 'train/ing/er' identified the relevant passages. In cases where this yielded no results, I expanded the search to include related terms: *educat/e/ion*, *aware/ness*, *capacity/y/ies*, *curricul/um/a*, *sensiti/s/z/e/ation*, *workshop*, and *seminar*. I then undertook a qualitative analysis of training-related commitments, examining what mandate the policies establish. I read the passages on training with a view to identify how the policy mandates frame the scope of gender training – what gender means in relation to peacekeeping, how the need for training is established, and what peacekeepers should know about the topic. I examine these framings against the insights provided by feminist literature on gender and peacekeeping.

This examination of policy mandates helps understand what meaning is attributed to gender, what function training is seen to serve at the level of global governance, and how this meaning is subsequently taken up and refined in regional and national training commitments. However, as becomes evident in the following analysis, these policy commitments are often broad and offer little detail, especially at the level of global governance. In order, then, to get at the question of what understanding of gender training conducts, I supplement this reading of policy mandates with a selection

²⁴Laplonge, "Absence."

²⁵For a regularly updated list of policies see the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom website: www.peacewomen.org. Additional translations of national action plans are available at: <http://lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/research/rethinking-policy-advocacy-implementation>.

of publicly available training materials and curricula. As part of its commitment to training peacekeepers on gender, the UN Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials (CPTM) provide extensive guidance on training military and police peacekeepers on gender, and are examined as an authoritative source on how this training is envisioned at the level of global governance.²⁶ Further insights on how this training is localized is gleaned from training materials produced by influential regional organizations: NATO; the Institute for Security Studies for the African Union; and Folke Bernadotte Academy for the European Union.²⁷ While training manuals are different types of texts to state and inter-governmental organizations' policies, insofar as they are authored by specialists working on the topic (such as McKay and Puechguirbal) rather than diplomats, they are nonetheless published under these organizations' seal of approval, providing further information as to what their training mandate comprises.²⁸ This analysis of policy documents and training materials demonstrates that there is a well-established and broadly accepted mandate that peacekeepers must be trained on gender-related questions, and offers insights into how gender training is understood in different geographic and institutional locations.

A Significant Transnational Practice

The first claim that this article advances is that gender training constitutes a significant transnational practice. In this section, I examine policy commitments and evidence of their implementation to demonstrate the transnational scope of peacekeeper gender training. I anchor this analysis in the policy framework of the international Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, but the suggestion here is not that gender training somehow emerges as an automatic or natural response to the issues raised by WPS. The concept of gender training was developed in the 1990s in the field of international development, drawing from a lineage of feminist consciousness-raising activities in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁹ Training in the WPS field was likely influenced by the pre-existing availability of a model circulating in the broader field of global governance – indeed, the pedagogical approaches of training materials in international development and peacekeeping are remarkably similar. Accordingly, I do not suggest that gender training is an inevitable outgrowth of WPS, but rather use this policy

²⁶DPKO & DFS, *CPTM 2017*; DPKO & DFS, *Police Gender Toolkit*. For an account of how the CPTM were developed, see Curran, "Training for Peacekeeping," 81–3.

²⁷NATO ACT, *Gender Education & Training Package*; ISS Africa, *Gender Mainstreaming*; Folke Bernadotte Academy, *A Gender Perspective in CSDP*.

²⁸These experts typically balance their own desires for more transformative change with institutional constraints. See Puechguirbal, "I Speak Fluent Patriarchy"; Kunz et al., "Gender Expertise."

²⁹Ferguson, *Gender Training*; Kabeer, "Gender, Development, and Training"; Sexwale, *What Happened*.

framework to concentrate my analysis of how this practice has been taken up and developed in relation to peacekeeping in the past twenty years.

An Emergent Consensus on Gender Training

Training is a consistent feature of UN-level policy commitments on WPS: nine out of ten Security Council resolutions on WPS mention training of peacekeeping personnel.³⁰ The foundational Resolution 1325 (2000) establishes a broad scope, asking Member States to incorporate training

on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures ... as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national military and police personnel pre-deployment training.³¹

This broad commitment is later articulated in the terminology of ‘gender training’, with Resolution 2106 (2013) calling for ‘comprehensive gender training of all relevant peacekeeping and civilian personnel’.³² In the Security Council mandate, the UN is primarily charged with providing training materials and guidance to Member States, while troop and police contributing countries are asked to implement this training.

These overarching commitments to develop training have been refined and developed in a number of ways. First, responding to the Security Council resolutions’ mandate, the UN has developed training materials to guide Member States’ efforts.³³ Second, these commitments have been taken up and developed further in regional and national action plans for the implementation of the WPS agenda. These localized policy commitments are significant because they operationalize and further develop the high-level principles articulated in Security Council resolutions.³⁴ A handful of regional organizations have developed policies and implementation plans on WPS, including: the Economic Committee of West African States (ECOWAS, 2010), the European Union (EU, 2018), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in East Africa (IGAD, 2013), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO, 2016), and the Pacific Region (2012). The African Union Strategy for Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment (AU, 2018) also elaborates on AU commitments on WPS, and is accordingly included in the present analysis. All these regional action plans (RAPs) include a commitment to train military and police personnel (presumptive

³⁰The WPS resolutions are: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888, 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106, 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 and 2493 (2019). Only Resolution 1889 (2009) does not mention peacekeeper gender training.

³¹Resolution 1325 (2000), para 6.

³²Resolution 2106 (2013), para 8.

³³See DPKO & DFS, *CPTM 2017*.

³⁴Kirby and Shepherd, “Mapping”; Swaine, “Assessing”; True, “Explaining.”

peacekeepers) on gender-related topics. The commitment to training is central in several RAPs: the NATO and EU action plans each feature a section entirely dedicated to training and education, outlining extensive commitments to training. Both not only affirm commitments to mandatory pre-deployment training on gender, but also mandate gender training across broader institutional structures. The EU action plan further encourages ‘Member States to prioritize capacity building and training as a priority in their national action plans’.³⁵ These RAPs thus promote the centrality of training for WPS implementation and extend commitments on who should receive such training.

Further, a growing number of states have formulated national action plans (NAPs) on the implementation of WPS commitments. These NAPs demonstrate that the commitment to train military and police personnel on gender is widely taken up in different geographic contexts: out of a total of 75 NAPs available,³⁶ the overwhelming majority mention gender training of security and defence personnel. Only three NAPs – those of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, and Togo – do not mention such training. Like the NATO and EU RAPs, several NAPs foreground training as an area of particular focus. The Norwegian NAP, for example, proclaims: ‘We believe that knowledge encourages action. We will therefore strengthen expertise as regards women, peace and security in the Foreign Service, the Norwegian Police, and the Norwegian Armed Forces through education and training and practical experience’.³⁷ In addition to domestic activities, several NAPs produced in the Global North mention providing gender training to development cooperation and security sector reform partners in the Global South.³⁸ States in the Global North thereby demonstrate their familiar tendency to self-represent as already gender-aware and, by implication, to frame countries in the Global South as in need of their tutelage (training).³⁹

In sum, an overview of mentions of training in regional and national action plans reveals that gender training is a broadly accepted practice that is mandated in policy not only at the UN-level, but also across a range of geographic contexts. Further, given that not all countries have adopted a WPS NAP, but may nonetheless mandate such training through other policies and directives,⁴⁰ this review of the policy commitments of NAPs likely produces a conservative estimate of the reach of such policy commitments.

³⁵Council of the European Union, *RAP 2018*, paras 48–9.

³⁶As of September 2019.

³⁷Government of Norway, *NAP 2015–2018*, 13.

³⁸See for example, Government of the UK, *NAP 2018–2022*, 11, Government of New Zealand, *NAP 2015–2019*, 18.

³⁹Holvikivi and Reeves, “Women, Peace and Security”; Shepherd, “Making War Safe.”

⁴⁰For example, the South African Defence White Paper contains a commitment to gender training, but South Africa does not have a NAP on WPS. Government of South Africa, *Defence in a Democracy*. See also Wilén and Heineken, “Regendering,” 674.

Implementation of Training Policy Mandates

The broad reach of policy mandates does not of course necessarily give an accurate picture of who provides this training, or who is being trained. There may be, and often are, inconsistencies between policy commitments and their implementation. To establish an understanding of where training is carried out and, who, in practice is being trained, it is necessary to examine the implementation of policy mandates. The policy commitments on gender training map onto an existing division of labour between troop and police contributing countries and the peacekeeping mission itself, which is summarized in [Table 1](#). In this division, troop and police contributing countries are responsible for providing pre-deployment training on gender, which should correspond to the UN-provided core training curriculum.⁴¹ Pre-deployment gender training, which is in principle mandatory for all peacekeepers departing on mission, is supplemented by specialized courses provided by national and regional peacekeeping training centres, which often cater to functional specializations: trainers, gender advisors, and so forth. Peacekeepers receive further training in the mission area itself in the form of induction and on-going gender training.⁴²

It is worth noting that the formal organizational division of labour depicted in [Table 1](#) to some extent glosses over the complexity of institutional actors involved. The institutions that provide training draw on a range of expertise, beyond military and police trainers and peacekeeping personnel. Some NAPs explicitly mention outside expertise, such as that of Croatia, which specifies that gender training should be provided ‘in cooperation with civil society organizations’.⁴³ In practice, gender training courses typically involve as trainers also civilian experts, academic researchers, NGO workers, and civil society activists.⁴⁴

In addition to peacekeeping-specific training, military and police institutions sometimes also provide education and training on questions of gender as part of the core curriculum delivered to all staff. This training often includes topics such as the prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination within the organization, which are not included in peacekeeper training. Perhaps more to the point, basic training especially in military institutions is often described as a process of inculcating norms of hegemonic masculinity, involving proving toughness and aggressiveness, and denigrating femininity and queerness.⁴⁵ Arguably, basic training can be understood as constituting a wholly different type of education on gender. [Table 1](#)

⁴¹DPKO & DFS, *CPTM 2017*.

⁴²Curran, *More*, 11; Lamptey, *Gender Training*, 16; Lyytikäinen, *Gender Training*, 9.

⁴³Government of Croatia, *NAP*, 11.

⁴⁴Holvikivi, “Gender Experts.”

⁴⁵Barrett, “Organizational Construction”; Belkin, *Bring Me Men*; Welland, “Militarised Violences.”

Table 1. Gender training at national and multinational levels.

National security forces	Regional training centres	Multilateral organizations
Basic training		
Professional military education		
Pre-deployment training	Pre-deployment syllabi, handbooks, e-learning, etc.	
In-mission training		In-mission training
Military exercises		
Specialized courses		

therefore takes into account basic training and professional military education as the background against in which peacekeeper training takes place. While the scope of this article is limited to peacekeeping training, it is helpful to bear in mind the structures and context within which this training is carried out – not least to understand the types of challenges encountered in training practice described by Mackay earlier.

Although pre-deployment training on gender is in principle mandatory for peacekeepers, many observers lament that such training is not systematically provided.⁴⁶ However, to note implementation gaps is not the same as to conclude that the practice is insignificant. Though no global statistic is available on the number of peacekeepers who have received such training, numerous reports point to the conclusion that significant numbers of peacekeepers have received training on gender.⁴⁷ A few NAPs helpfully report figures: that of Bosnia–Herzegovina mentions that in 2014 around four thousand members of the Ministry of Defence and armed forces had been trained on UNSCR 1325.⁴⁸ State reports to regional organizations likewise communicate that training has taken place: Guinea reported in 2013 to ECOWAS that it had provided training on Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 to one thousand security sector personnel as well as women activists.⁴⁹ Over 90% of NATO and partner countries report that they include gender in pre-deployment training.⁵⁰

In addition to national pre-deployment training, regional peacekeeping training centres provide specialized courses on gender, many of them open to foreign nationals. Course catalogues reveal that training centres in Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia–Herzegovina, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mali, Serbia, and Sweden regularly provide gender courses for multinational audiences.⁵¹

⁴⁶Carson, “Pre-Deployment,” 287; Lamptey, *Gender Training*, 7; Lyttikäinen, *Gender Training*, 9.

⁴⁷Lyttikäinen, *Gender Training*, 10.

⁴⁸Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *NAP 2014–2017*, 11, see also Government of Georgia, *NAP 2016–2017*, 8.

⁴⁹UNOWA, *ECOWAS Plan of Action*, 17.

⁵⁰NATO, *Summary*, 30.

⁵¹CAECOPAZ, *Oferta Académica*; BIPSOT, *Courses*; PSOTC, *Course Catalogue*; KAIPTC, *Core Training Courses*; UN Women, *In India*; UN Women, *Female Peacekeepers*; IPSTC, *Courses*; EMP, *Calendrier de formation*; SWEDINT and NCGM, *Course Catalogue*; UNDP SEESAC, *Gender Training of Trainers*. On regional peacekeeping training centres, see Curran, “Training for Peacekeeping,” 91–2, Jowell, “Unintended Consequences,” 102.

Further, most peacekeeping missions provide in-mission training, the scale of which can be far-reaching. UN and NATO institutional reports testify to the prevalence (though also often the unsatisfactory scope of) in-mission training on gender.⁵² These examples attest to the provision of gender training in various locations of world, amounting to a practice of transnational scope that implicates significant numbers of peacekeepers.

What Gender 'Is' and 'Does'

Training peacekeepers on gender can be described as an emergent practice that is implemented across a range of geographic contexts. The significant scope of training mandates, combined with the insight of situated studies of gender training practices, suggests a need to examine how gender is discursively framed at the transnational level and to what effect. In this section, I examine policy commitments and training materials to demonstrate that gender training focuses heavily on sexual violence in conflict, and typically frames gender as a problem of skills and capabilities. In other words, gender training mandates largely confirm the suspicions of feminist observers: that the concept of gender loses much of its critical potential when employed in the service of global governance, and particularly the martial institutions associated with peacekeeping.⁵³ At the same time, an examination of how the training mandate is localized by regional organizations and at the national level reveals a degree of variation in how gender training is conceptualized. These departures from the global normative framework both caution that global norms may be localized in ways that produce even more restrictive understandings of gender, but also that possibilities exist for more creative and potentially transformative approaches to gender training.

Global Norms and Dominant Frames

Following from the Security Council Resolution 1325 mandate to train peacekeepers 'on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures', UN mandated training focuses specifically on women, even if subsequent resolutions employ the terminology of 'gender training'.⁵⁴ UN training materials (the CPTM) include lessons titled 'Women, Peace and Security', 'Conflict Related Sexual Violence' and 'Sexual Exploitation and Abuse'. This focus on women is also reflected in

⁵²Lackenbauer and Langlais, *Review*, 36; Lyytikäinen, *Gender Training*, 23–6; Higate, *Gender Relations*, 18.

⁵³Whitworth, *Men*, 17, 140.

⁵⁴Resolution 1325 (2000), para 6.

national action plans, with 48 of the 75 NAPs mentioning training specifying WPS as a training topic. While intended as a much needed corrective to centre women's experiences, needs and priorities in practices of international peace and security where they have so often been ignored, critical feminist accounts suggest a need to be cautious about conflating gender with women. First, this discursive move can serve to preclude an examination of gendered structures and relations of power, implying that one need only 'add women and stir' in the gendered status quo.⁵⁵ Second, the equation of gender with women obscures from view both how masculinities are implicated in violence, at the same time as it inhibits an examination of male vulnerability to gendered violence.⁵⁶ The epistemic effect of the focus on women in gender training paradoxically both centres previously marginalized perspectives, while at the same time narrowing the analytical field through which women's marginalization can be understood in the first place.

A second key area of focus is sexual violence. Five of the ten WPS Security Council resolutions to date specify the need for training on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence,⁵⁷ and three resolutions highlight the need for training to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers themselves against the local population.⁵⁸ Both are the subject of their own dedicated lessons in the CPTM. This focus on sexual violence is affirmed in localized training commitments. The topic is highlighted in IGAD, ECOWAS and NATO regional action plans;⁵⁹ regional peacekeeping training centres have produced specialized training materials on the topic;⁶⁰ and the majority of national action plans specify that training should cover, or even focus on, sexual violence.⁶¹ While the focus on sexual violence highlights an indisputably deleterious effect of armed conflict, feminist scholarship has noted that an intense concern with sexual violence as a weapon of war prevents the examination of other (arguably conflict-related) forms of gender-based violence, such as domestic violence, as well as the structural factors fuelling violence and insecurity more broadly.⁶² Moreover, discussions around sexual violence often evoke colonial tropes of deviant racialised sexuality and white saviour politics.⁶³ Similarly to the focus of training on women, the focus on sexual violence provides important

⁵⁵Carson, "Pre-Deployment," 280; Whitworth, *Men*, 140.

⁵⁶Kirby, "Refusing"; Laplonge, "Absence"; Wright, "Masculinities."

⁵⁷Resolutions: 1820 (2000), para 6; 1888 (2009), para 9; 1960 (2010), para 11; 2106 (2013), para 14; 2467 (2019), para 24.

⁵⁸Resolutions: 1820 (2000), para 7; 1888 (2009), para 21; 2242 (2015), Para 9.

⁵⁹ECOWAS, *Dakar Declaration*, 4, 9; IGAD, *Running with the Baton!*, 25–7; NATO, *Action Plan*, 5.

⁶⁰PSOTC, *Prevention*; USAFRICOM, *Preparing*.

⁶¹48 of the 75 NAPs surveyed contain training commitments on various forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

⁶²Eriksson Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence*; Mertens and Myrntinen, "A Real Woman."

⁶³Eriksson Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence*; Pratt, "Reconceptualising Gender"; Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

recognition to a form of gendered harm, but this discursive narrowing of gender to sexual violence simultaneously creates its own set of exclusions as to what types of gendered harm ‘count’ as gender in peacekeeper training.

Finally, what is notable about the focus of dominant discursive framings, is that training commitments focus on gender as an operational question. Gender is framed in training mandates and materials as the needs and protection of women in the area of operations; the importance of female peacekeepers to addressing the concerns of peace-kept women; and the behaviour of peacekeepers toward them. This framing of gender as an operational question lends itself to a particular pedagogic approach, evident in the training materials produced by the UN and regional organizations. The learning outcomes listed in the UN lesson on WPS provide an instructive example:

- Explain the different impact that conflict has on women and girls, men and boys
- Explain how women are both victims in conflict and key partners for peace in the activities of UN peacekeeping organizations
- Explain ‘gender equality’, ‘gender mainstreaming’, and their importance to effective mandate implementation
- List actions to take to protect women and girls, and support gender equality⁶⁴

The aims of this training can be described as follows: first, to convince trainees that a problem exists, and that they have a duty – imposed either by legal frameworks, operational demands, or moral imperatives – to respond; and second, to provide them with skills and capabilities to do something about the problem. Training materials, in other words, privilege a technical, problem-solving approach to training.⁶⁵ This is literally the case in the UN Police Gender Toolkit, which includes seventeen pages of training guidance in using different problem-solving frameworks, such as SWOT-analysis and other acronym-based analytical tools.⁶⁶ The approach is also localized in regional organizations’ training materials. In particular, NATO materials present gender as a tool that supports the pre-existing goals of the mission, communicated in the title of the organization’s mandatory pre-deployment training module: ‘Improving Operational Effectiveness by Integrating Gender’.⁶⁷ In sum, authoritative training materials frame gender as a problem that can be solved through the application of the correct knowledge and skills. The epistemic effect of the problem-solving framework serves,

⁶⁴DPKO & DFS, *Lesson 2.4: Women, Peace and Security*, 1.

⁶⁵This tendency has also been observed in the broader field of gender training. See for example, Sexwale, *What Happened*.

⁶⁶DPKO & DFS, *Police Gender Toolkit*, 310–27.

⁶⁷See also Hurley, “Watermelons”; Wright, “NATO’s Adoption,” 351.

as Wendy Brown observes, to obscure the political nature of interventions such as gender training.⁶⁸ This discursive move is in many ways beneficial to the gender training enterprise: it presents material in a familiar register to military and police audiences, and pre-empts defensiveness about being personally challenged.⁶⁹ Such depoliticisation, however, comes at a cost. It leaves little scope for introspection, as it does not suggest a need to challenge peacekeepers' own attitudes and stereotypes. It closes down space for engaging with productive discomfort, which feminist pedagogical thought suggests is a necessary part of the kind of transformative learning required to further gender equality.⁷⁰

Narrowing and Expansion Through Localization

Thus far my analysis has focused on the training mandate on gender as set out in UN Security Council resolutions, developed in the UN core pre-deployment training materials, and affirmed through localized commitments in regional and national action plans. However, this localization process does not only involve the implementation of global mandates. Localized training commitments are articulated in ways that sometimes narrow the scope of gender training, and at other times expand the remit of what such training should cover. This variation demonstrates that states do not simply implement a top-down level mandate, but rather engage in their own interpretations of what qualifies as gender and what gender training should achieve, contributing to an on-going evolution of the realm of gender training for peacekeepers, and ultimately exposing the malleability of the concept of gender itself.

A number of exclusions in regional and national commitments suggest that localization sometimes leads to a further narrowing of what is understood to constitute gender in comparison to global frameworks. The question of sexual violence provides one example of such narrowing. While a significant focus on sexual violence committed by warring parties echoes the global mandate, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) committed by peacekeepers is not consistently mentioned in localized commitments. At the regional level, the EU's training curriculum omits any mention of the topic, focusing exclusively on the question of gender as external to the mission. At the national level, a notably majority of NAPs likewise fail to mention SEA, with only 11 of the 75 NAPs examined specifying that training should address the topic. These localized commitments thereby exclude a training topic identified in the WPS Security Council resolutions.

⁶⁸Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 141.

⁶⁹Mackay, *Mainstreaming*, 269; Puechguirbal, "Gender Training," 118.

⁷⁰Boler, *Feeling Power*, 186; Plantenga, "Gender, Identity, and Diversity," 44.

The emphasis on gender-based violence also comes at the expense of other WPS commitments at the national level, such as ensuring the protection of women's human rights, and enabling their participation in matters related to peace and security. Only 15 out of 75 NAPs mention women's rights as a training topic. 5 of the NAPs mentioning women's rights also mention women's participation. A further 7 NAPs mention women's participation without explicit reference to women's rights. Such a selective approach to training topics points to the fact that different lines of reasoning are operative in how gender training is approached. Further, the importance of women's participation is justified following very distinct rationales. Some NAPs, such as that of the Philippines, employ the language of 'economic and political empowerment', as a goal underlying women's participation.⁷¹ Others, such as Austria's, instead frame participation in terms of the priorities of the peacekeeping mission, citing '[b]enefits of the participation of women in the deployment country *in terms of fostering the mission's effectiveness and access to civilians*'.⁷² The coexistence of rights-based approaches and approaches which instrumentalise women's participation in localized action plans demonstrates how states pick and choose priorities and language from the UN Security Resolutions as foci for training. In other words, localized commitments to training peacekeepers at times conceptualize the substance of gender in even more restrictive ways than the structures of global governance, thereby limiting what gender training can be expected to achieve.

However, this is not uniformly the case. In other instances, localized commitments establish *more* expansive mandates for gender training. This is most evidently the case in the shift in discursive focus from women to gender. Whereas the UN CPTM lesson is titled 'Women, Peace and Security', the AU's training materials speak of 'gender mainstreaming' and the EU's of 'gender perspective'. A further 35 NAPs reference training related to 'gender', 'gender issues', or 'gender awareness'. These mentions of gender training occasionally exceed the requirement established by the Security Council resolutions for pre-deployment training on gender by for example recommending that gender is mainstreamed throughout all peacekeeper training,⁷³ or that gender is integrated into basic military training.⁷⁴ This expansive interpretation of the global training mandate is evident not only in the terminology and scope of training commitments, but also (occasionally) in the substantive mandate. Whereas institutional training curricula typically frame gender as a problem-solving tool, a minority of NAPS (18 out of 72) nonetheless evoke training as a way of fostering gender equality.

⁷¹Government of the Philippines, *NAP 2017–2022*, 17.

⁷²Government of Austria, *Revised NAP*, 9. Emphasis added.

⁷³Government of Nigeria, *NAP 2017–2020*, see also Alaga and Birikorang, *Integrating Gender*.

⁷⁴Government of Belgium, *NAP 2013–2018*, 13.

The NAP of Cameroon directs: ‘Organize systematic and obligatory training sessions on issues around the rights of women, women-men equality and sensitization against gender related violence’.⁷⁵ In contrast to persisting silences over marginalized sexual subjects in the WPS agenda,⁷⁶ the Albanian NAP lists among training commitments the intention to: ‘Strengthen professional capacities of state police officers to investigate crimes on grounds of sexual orientation’.⁷⁷ Despite the notable absence in the WPS resolutions and training curricula of mentions of men and masculinities, the Solomon Islands’ recent NAP identifies a need to cultivate, through training, ‘male advocacy for women’s rights’.⁷⁸ In other words, the training commitments of several states interpret gender in ways that suggest the potential for training to address questions excluded in dominant global framings.

These expansions also sometimes take the shape of an examination of the internal dynamics of institutions involved in peacekeeping. Building on the broad agreement in the WPS community that more female peacekeepers are needed,⁷⁹ Moldova’s NAP identifies a need to address sexual harassment and discrimination through training, in a bid to improve women’s career prospects in the military.⁸⁰ Other states go further to include topics that have traditionally been excluded from the remit of WPS policy: Luxembourg’s recent NAP outlines a commitment to addressing domestic violence in pre-deployment training for military and civilian peacekeepers.⁸¹ By expanding the scope of peacekeeper gender training to include questions internal to the peacekeeping endeavour, these training mandates suggest an awareness that in addition to gender training teaching analysis and skills, this training can be personal and challenge ‘an individual’s gender attitudes and stereotypes’ – one function of gender training suggested in the African Union’s 2009 Gender Policy.⁸² The epistemic effect of framing gender as something that also applies to the peacekeepers themselves cracks open a door for training to pursue transformative politics.

Conclusion

This article has provided an overview of the transnational development of the practice of training uniformed peacekeepers on gender. It has demonstrated that a broad-reaching policy consensus exists on the need to train the troops on gender, qualifying it as a significant transnational practice. I

⁷⁵Government of Cameroon, *NAP 2018–2020*, Output 3.1.

⁷⁶Hagen, “Queering.”

⁷⁷Government of Albania, *NAP 2018–2020*, 24.

⁷⁸Government of the Solomon Islands, *NAP 2017–2021*, 27.

⁷⁹Carreiras and Fragoso, *WPS*; Karim, “Reevaluating”; Simić, “Does the Presence of Women?”

⁸⁰Government of Moldova, *NAP 2018–2021*, 5.

⁸¹Government of Luxembourg, *NAP 2018–2023*, 32.

⁸²AU, *African Union Gender Policy*, 35.

contend that this practice warrants analytical attention both because of the high expectations policymakers and (some) activists place on the training, and because existing accounts of training caution that the practice may not live up to transformative hopes vested in it. In conversation with scholarly accounts of peacekeeper (and) gender training as a situated practice, this article has sketched the discursive contours of gender training practice by examining transnational policy commitments and training guidance.

Examining the practice from a theoretical vantage point that suggests that the content of gender training is not a natural or automatic outcome of given 'gender issues' in peacekeeping, I explored what exactly gender comes to mean in discourses about peacekeeper training through a review of training materials and WPS action plans. This qualitative analysis points to the fact that gender is typically understood through the prism of sexual violence and is framed as a problem that is amenable to knowledge acquisition and the development of technical skills. At the core of framing gender as a discrete operational problem is the tendency to locate gender somewhere other than within the context of the peacekeeping enterprise itself. This tendency is particularly marked among Global North countries, where NAPs often describe gender equality as something they export to countries in the Global South. At the same time, an examination of regional and national training mandates reveals variation in how UN-level training mandates are localized. At times this variation involves an even more restrictive understanding of what qualifies as gender; whereas in other instances localized training mandates describe a more expansive approach to gender training, hinting at the possibility of developing training to transform institutional cultures. Overall, these variations reveal the field of peacekeeper gender training to be malleable and suggest that its epistemic frames and political potential are not fixed.

Ultimately, the aim of this article is not to provide a fixed definition gender training across its many manifestations, but rather to provide an empirical and conceptual framework that opens up questions for further inquiry. A review of the policy mandates on gender training contributes to the existing literature by mapping the transnational normative context in which particular training interventions take place. It does not in and of itself provide for an exhaustive analysis of what the effects of training peacekeepers on gender are or might be. Existing scholarship on the topic suggests the need for, per Holmes, an approach that involves praxiography, attending to what happens in gender training classrooms, and in the embodied and situated pedagogical encounters that training gives rise to. Mapping the transnational scope and discursive framing of this enterprise demonstrates that the existing empirical literature stands to be productively expanded to further examine pedagogies of gender training and what epistemic and political work this practice does.

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Notes on contributor

Aiko Holvikivi is currently an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Gender Studies, LSE. Her research examines transnational movements of people and of knowledges, and how these are produced by/productive of racialised and gendered (in)security. Her areas of interest include feminist (and) postcolonial thought, critical security studies, and liberatory pedagogies. Her work appears in the *European Journal of Politics and Gender* and the *European Journal of International Security*, and she is currently preparing a book manuscript which examines the transnational practice of training uniformed peacekeepers on gender.

ORCID

Aiko Holvikivi  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7901-1105>

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