Gender, Sex and the Postnational Defense

Looking at the European Security and Defense Policy and the Nordic Battlegroups through a feminist lens

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What is a Postnational Defense?

- Territory and nation less important to security
- Activities in distant places
- Multilateral
- Civilian norms important
Tasks: What do militaries and soldiers of the postnational defense do?

- peacekeeping
- civilian-like tasks
- ‘saving distant others’
- ‘win hearts and minds’
- paradox: trained for war

UN Military observer in Ethiopia. Photo: Ulf Ehrnt, Swedish Defense Forces
Why a feminist analysis?

- military organizations train combat and heterosexual masculinity
- norms of protector/protected
- civilian norms: equal rights to jobs, eliminate discrimination, increase tolerance
- UN SCR 1325 in peacekeeping operations

From Advert for Armadillos, Danish Documentary by Janusz Metz, 2010
Women’s experiences of the military profession in EU MS

• challenge to institutions of hegemonic masculinity

• ‘women-in-arms identity’ impossible

• control, differential treatment and harassment
- UN Gender and Security Agenda Resolution 1325(2000)

- Gender perspective and particularly look to women and children in conflict areas, sexual violence against women


- UN special representative on sexual violence in conflict (2010)
Who has agency in the EU Defense?

Meeting of the EU Chief of Defense Nov 2009
Gender in the ESDP organization

- MS militaries provide staff for EU missions and policy making bodies
- Finland and Poland 99% men
- 10 MS less than 10% women
- Hungary and Latvia ‘only’ 80% men
- National gender gap reflected in EU (conscription law, gendered military career)
- In general: less women in international missions
EU Battlegroups

- military concept
- range of tasks
- multilateral
- Ex. of Nordic Battlegroup (2008, 2011)
Nordic Battlegroup: men and masculinity the norm

- ‘culture’ of militarism
- extensive gender training, 1325
- but female representation 5%

’Castration of the lion’

Examplifies:

• tension between culture of militarism and gender awareness
• tension between national and postnational militarism
Gender in the ESDP texts

- general idea of the perception of gender as the ESDP developed

- before 2006 gender rarely mentioned but ‘woman’ as vulnerable victims in countries outside EU

- since 2006 gender mainstreaming in connection to UN SCR 1325 more important (EU NAP 1325 in 2008)

- but a complete silence on men and masculinity
"We need to continue mainstreaming human rights issues in all activities in this field, including ESDP missions, through a people-based approach coherent with the concept of human security. The EU has recognised the role of women in building peace. Effective implementation of UN SCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security and UNSCR 1612 on Children and Armed Conflict is essential in this context."

Report on the implementation of the European Security strategy (Council 2008)
Taking stock of implementation of UN SCR 1325 in ESDP

- intellectual concept
- operational effectiveness
- limits meaning of gender
- optional, side issues
- Success factors: gender advisors, field advisors, leadership, resources
Conclusions

• Equality legislation, gender mainstreaming in the EU not extended to the ESDP

• Gender is reduced to mean women (mainly outside EU and in conflict areas)

• Gender mainstreaming depolitized when UN SCR 1325 becomes operational

• Male bodies and masculinity dominates also postnational defense

• EU women's agency in ESDP matters remains limited