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A GROWING FORCE?
An Empirical Study on the Role of Female Military
Peacekeepers in UN Peacekeeping Operations

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ABSTRACT

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War and peace are traditionally considered being a “man’s world”. Within the past few decades the nature of conflicts has changed radically. Traditional inter-state conflicts between nation states have become more complex intra-state conflicts, including new non-state actors who are increasingly targeting civilians, medical personnel and peacekeepers. Therefore, also the response to contemporary conflicts, such as UN peacekeeping operations, have had to change accordingly. Traditional UN peacekeeping operations in which peacekeepers were – mainly observing ceasefire agreements and borders – have been replaced with multidimensional operations including new tasks, positions, environments and actors, such as female military peacekeepers.

Although women are a relatively new thing in peacekeeping, they are widely seen as improving the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Both scholars and policymakers argue that female peacekeeper have a special set of skills to contribute to the missions. The UN, being arguably the most known and legitimate actor in peacekeeping, has adopted several guidelines and resolutions, such as the UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions to highlight the need to increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations. Female peacekeepers are argued being especially effective at gaining the trust of locals; combating gender-based violence; and improving the overall reputation and image of UN peacekeeping. Despite these arguments, the number of military female peacekeepers has remained low – with women contributing approximately four percent of the military component. Moreover, women are often absent from situations in which their effectiveness in peacekeeping is evaluated. Therefore, in this study I found it important to listen to voices of female military peacekeepers themselves – at the end of the day, they are among the ones to determine whether a peacekeeping mission will succeed or not.

This research seeks to investigate whether female military peacekeepers believe they improve the operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations or not. In more detail, this thesis aims to find out in which specific tasks they believe they are more effective at than their male colleagues, and if they have faced any limitations because of their gender when trying to perform peacekeeping duties as female peacekeepers. In order to do this, the study conducted an empirical study of the perceptions of female peacekeepers themselves. The study was done through qualitative analysis on qualitative surveys, conducted in cooperation with the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT), as well as written policy documents, which were examined through the framework of feminist International Relations and feminist Security Studies, focusing on classical feminist scholars such as Cynthia Enloe, Jan Jindy Pettman and Jacqui True. FINCENT, as internationally known and recognized expert in crisis management education and training, will possibly use the findings of the study to develop their future training.

While acknowledging that there are differences between women and not all men or women have the same personal qualities, the findings of this research point out that women do believe they increase the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. They believe they are able to gain the trust of locals more easily; help to combat gender-based violence and provide protection; encourage women to participate in decision-making and peace processes; and increase the reputation of the operation. The findings indicate that female military peacekeepers do face limitations that may prevent them to use their whole capacity as peacekeepers. This study also concludes that based on the data, female military peacekeepers stress that all peacekeepers, both men and women, should be adequately military trained and the training should include more practical exercises, lessons learned and best practices from previous missions. The research concludes that male and female peacekeepers complement each other in the mission and the most effective teams are mixed teams.

Keywords: peacekeeping, gender, operational effectiveness, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, conflict, peace

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Laura Kaltiainen
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List of Acronyms

A4P = Action for Peacekeeping

ECOSOC = Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

FINCENT = The Finnish Defence Forces International Centre

HIPPO = High Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations

NAP= National Action Plan

MINURSO = United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

MINUSCA= United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilizations Mission in the Central African Republic

MONUSCO = United Nations Organizations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

NGO = Non-governmental Organization

R2P = Responsibility to Protect

SG = Secretary General

SGA = Senior Gender Advisor

SRSG = Special Representative to Secretary General

UN= United Nations

UNAMID = African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur

UNDOF = United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

UNDPA = United Nations Department of Political Affairs

UNDPKO= United Nations Department of Peacekeeping

UNGA = United Nations General Assembly

UNEF = UN Emergency Force

UNIFIL = United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UNTAC = United Nations Transnational Authority in Cambodia

UNTSO = United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

UMIS = United Nations Mission in Sudan

UMISS = United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNSC = United Nations Security Council

UNSCR = United Nations Security Council Resolution

TCC = Troop Contributing Country

WPS = Women, Peace and Security

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1. Introduction

Peace and conflicts are often considered being a “man’s world”, dominated by male diplomats, soldiers and head of states making decisions, defining relevant concepts as well as sharing their experiences on war and peace (Tickner, 1992, 1; Egnell & Alam, 2019, 1). Within the past few decades, the nature of conflicts has changed radically. Traditional inter-state conflicts between nation states have become more complex intra-state conflicts. Contemporary conflicts include, for instance, new non-state actors (see Bellamy et al., 2004, 3). Conflict parties are violating more human rights than ever before. They are increasingly targeting civilians, medical personnel and peacekeepers, who tend to work in more and more difficult and dangerous environments. Naturally, the changing nature of conflicts has required changes in ways to contain and resolve them (e.g. Kronsell, 2012, 4). Thus, the emphasis of contemporary military and defense, so called “postnational defense” (Kronsell, 2012), has shifted from national security to human security. Both responsibility to protect (R2P) principle, which is increasingly included in UN peacekeeping missions’ mandates, and UN Security Council resolution 1325, are good examples on the new “human rights oriented” approach of defense. (ibid., 138; Penttinen, 2012, 155). Further, in order to respond to new global threats, national militaries have increased their international activities abroad (see Jukarainen, 2012; Kronsell, 2012), and they increasingly deploying their military personnel to keep peace in international operations, such as in UN peacekeeping operations.

Despite not being the only one, the United Nations (UN) is among the most important and legitimate actors in peacekeeping (Whitworth, 2004, 28). The UN has arguably invented the whole concept, and it has also had a great impact on the history and development of the field (Bellamy et al., 2004, 34, 45). In addition, the UN has, over the past decades, carried out more operations than any other institution (Koops et al., 2015, 1; Mazurana et al., 2005, 20). Naturally, alongside the changing nature of conflicts and defense, the nature of UN peacekeeping has changed over the past few decades. Traditional UN peacekeeping operations in which peacekeepers were – mainly observing ceasefire agreements and borders – have been replaced with multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations, which include new tasks, positions and environments. Naturally, this has led to new kind of demands, challenges and problems requiring different kind of expertise, skills and solutions. Female peacekeepers and their increased participation especially in the military component of such operations are largely seen as one possible solution to problems caused by the changing global security environment. Women are relatively new actors in the field of peacekeeping, and they are largely

considered as having a different set of skills than their male colleagues. Further, as Heidi Hudson (2005, 113) argues, “new peacekeeping” operations have more complex mandates and increasing number of humanitarian tasks, which has also created new possibilities for women to participate in the missions.

The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Unit (UN DPKO) concludes its report *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations* (UN DPKO, 2000) on UN peacekeeping by saying “—the presence of women does make a difference – a positive difference”. Two months later, the United Nations Security Council, the main task of which is to maintain international peace and security (see Taylor and Curtis, 2005, 407), adopted the groundbreaking resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which acknowledged the role women play in the field of peace and security, and called for UN member states to increase the number of female peacekeepers deployed to UN peacekeeping operations. Already nearly eighty member states have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) on Women, Peace and Security (PeaceWomen, n.d.b), and almost all of these include the goal to increase women’s participation in UN peacekeeping operations. However, implementation of the resolution, and following subsequent resolutions, have argued being slow and ineffective. As a result, the number of female peacekeepers, especially in the military component of peacekeeping operations, has remained low – with women contributing approximately four percent of the military component. Further, discussions around resolution 1325, both in the media and in academia, have mainly focused on protection of women from all forms of violence, leaving the role of women in UN peacekeeping operations widely undiscussed and understudied.

What are those new and different skills women have to offer and what is their contribution to UN peacekeeping operations? Both scholars and policymakers argue that a greater amount of uniformed female peacekeepers in the military component of UN peacekeeping operations would increase the operational effectiveness of the operation and improve its overall reputation, image and legitimacy. For instance, women are argued being especially good at interacting with the local population, encouraging local women to participate in peace processes as well as at combating gender-based violence. In this study, gender based violence refers to “any act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationship” (UNHCR, n.d). Moreover, several scholars and commanders have argued that UN peacekeeping operations with a greater gender balance have been more successful than traditional male dominated operations. Overall, justifications for the increased number of women in peacekeeping operations vary from rights and equality to

strategy and utility. Some people stress the significance to empower women and advocate gender equality while others emphasize operational effectiveness as means to increase the number of female military peacekeepers. (Egnell & Alam, 2019, 4.) For the purposes of this study, 'gender' refers to "socially constructed differences between men and women" (e.g. Mazurana et al., 2005, 13) and is defined as "culturally shaped and defined characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity" (Tickner, 1992, 7).

The aim of this study is to examine how uniformed female peacekeepers from the military component of UN peacekeeping operations view their role as female peacekeepers. By conducting an analysis on the qualitative questionnaire responses submitted by military female peacekeepers, this thesis aims to evaluate women's contribution to operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, and examine how views of female peacekeepers reflect on the current discussion on the deployment more military female personnel. All the respondents were qualified female military peacekeepers but not all of them had been deployed yet. The qualitative questionnaire was done in cooperation with the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT). FINCENT, as internationally known and recognized expert in crisis management education and training may use some of the findings of the study to develop their future training.

Effectiveness of military organization can be defined as the success "in performing the core tasks that the political leadership asks of it" (Egnell & Alam, 2019, 6). Thus, in this study, operational effectiveness refers to fulfilling the mandate of the operation. As will be discussed later, mandates of peacekeeping operations have changed in the past decades. Furthermore, when referring to UN peacekeeping operations I refer to those peacekeeping operations that are established by the UN and which involve international military personnel as their general objective to restore and maintain peace and security as well as to create lasting peace (e.g. O'Neill & Rees, 2005, 7). It is notable that the UN is not the only organization to deploy peacekeepers and establish peacekeeping operations (Mazurana et al., 2005, 20). Nevertheless, as argued, my study will focus on UN peacekeeping operations only. Currently, UN has deployed fourteen peacekeeping operations on four continents (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.a).

The study considers the following research questions:

1. Do female military peacekeepers believe they improve operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations?

2. If yes, are there any specific tasks in which female military peacekeepers believe they are more effective at than men and why?
3. Have female military peacekeepers faced any barriers or limitations in peacekeeping operations due to their gender?

It is noticeable that in my study, I do not focus on how female peacekeepers can increase the operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations *per se* but rather how and why female military peacekeepers believe they can do so. Examining the experiences and perceptions of female peacekeepers themselves is important because they are often excluded in discussions and decision-making related to peacekeeping effectiveness. I intentionally use the term “believe” since not every respondent had experience from UN peacekeeping missions. However, as qualified peacekeepers they did have their own perceptions and believes on these issues. Moreover, many of the responses were based on individual feelings on certain issues.

Since policymakers and scholars do believe that operational effectiveness can be increased by integrating more women into operations, these women are obviously crucial actors determining whether the operation is a success or not. Thus, if views of female peacekeepers themselves are similar to the perceptions of academics and policymakers and women do believe that they can increase operational effectiveness of operations, it can be expected that they, at least to some extent, focus on achieving the goals and objectives set to them. On the contrary, if female peacekeepers do not believe in achieving those goals, it is unlikely that they would achieve them. (e.g. Karim, 2017, 824, 827.) Further, Karim (ibid.) notes that according to psychologists, the belief in ‘self-efficacy’ may be essential for female peacekeepers to achieve the goals set to them.

There is a lack of literature on women as agents of peace and especially on female personnel in peacekeeping operations (e.g. Jackson & Sørensen, 2003, 277; Flén 2010, 94). Further, studies on female peacekeepers are largely gender neutral, mainly focusing on narratives of male peacekeepers. As a result, current research assumes that experiences of male and female peacekeepers are the same. (Karim, 2017, 822-823.) Therefore, with my study, I hope to contribute to feminist security studies and to discussion on uniformed female peacekeepers. In addition, I hope to provoke more important discussion and further deliberation on the theme. Increasing the number of women in UN peacekeeping operations is a priority for many troop contributing countries (TCCs) such as Finland, and I wish to raise awareness and explain the possible benefits women can bring to those operations.

I begin my discussion on the topic in Chapter 2, in which I will introduce the broader context of contemporary UN peacekeeping as well as Women, Peace and Security Agenda of the United Nations. In addition, I will briefly trace developments and initiatives of the UN to improve operational effectiveness of current and future peacekeeping operations. Further, Chapter 2 introduces previous research and discussion around the topic. In Chapter 3, I continue by introducing the theoretical framework of the study – feminism in international relations and security studies which will explain some of the reasons to conduct such a research and help to understand locate the views of the research participants within the current research. Chapter 4 explains the data collection and methodology used as well as reasons for choosing them. In addition, it outlines ethics, bias and limitations of the study. Lastly, Chapter 5 analyses and examines the data and concludes the findings whereas Chapter 6 summarizes the study.

2. Changing Nature of UN Peacekeeping Operations

This chapter discusses the broader context of contemporary UN peacekeeping. It briefly introduces the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda of the UN as well as the groundbreaking Security Council resolution 1325 on WPS (2000). The chapter introduces UN's gender balancing and gender mainstreaming efforts and difficulties of the organization to implement such approaches. Moreover, this chapter presents an overview of existing research on the roles, stereotypes and barriers of uniformed female peacekeepers in the context of UN peacekeeping operations as well as on the potential added value female military peacekeepers bring to the operations. Additionally, it then briefly traces developments and initiatives of the UN that are strongly reflecting the WPS agenda, and aim to improve operational efficiency of UN peacekeeping operations.

2.1. From Traditional Missions to Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations

Francois Debrix has once argued: "Thanks to peacekeeping, the UN was not left without meaning" (1999, 17). Thus, ever since UN peacekeeping became a vital actor in international crisis management in the 1940s, it has sometimes been commended but also widely criticized (Koops et al., 2015, 1). Although being largely known as a concept, there is no universally agreed definition to peacekeeping. Typically, it is defined by reflecting its main objectives or principles. (Koops et al., 2015, 2; O'Neill & Rees, 2005, 5.) For instance, Rambotsham (2016, 173) suggest that peacekeeping is needed when there is a need to "contain violence and prevent it from escalating to war; to limit the intensity, geographical spread and duration of war once it has broken out; and to consolidate a ceasefire and create space for reconstruction after the end of a war".

Peacekeeping is a problematic term also within the UN system, as it is not defined nor mentioned in the UN Charter (Koops et al., 2015, 2; O'Neill & Rees, 2005, 5; Ramsbotham, 2016, 175; Bellamy et al., 2004, 46). The former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has, however, argued that peacekeeping can be "rightly" described as the invention of the UN (Whitworth, 2004, 28). The majority of international lawyers working in the field argue that peacekeeping is covered under chapter VI of the chapter called "pacific settlement disputes". Originally, peacekeeping was not considered under chapter VII enforcement measures (e.g. Koops et al., 2015, 2) but today, it is widely argued that peacekeeping operates somewhere between Chapter VI and Chapter VII (Ramsbotham, 2016, 175). Nevertheless, as the term "peacekeeping" already indicates, its purpose is to keep peace in conflict or post-conflict situations. In more detail, peacekeeping has been defined, for instance, as

“a military third-party intervention to assist the transition from violent conflict to stable peace” (Sion, 2008, 562) or as “the prevention, containment, moderation, and termination of hostilities between or within states, through the medium of peaceful third party intervention organized and directed internally, using multinational forces of soldiers, police and civilians to restore and maintain peace” (International Peace Academy, 1984, 22). Similarly, the UN stresses that peacekeeping helps to create conditions for lasting peace (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.a). Despite the lack of a clear definition, there is a consensus on many features of peacekeeping. Karim (2019, 23) points out that it is largely accepted that peacekeeping missions help to achieve a long-term peace, they may help to reduce fatalities and one-sided violence in the area, they may prevent the conflict from spreading to neighboring states, they may “reduce the geographic scope of violence” and finally, if having mandates for such actions, peacekeeping missions may improve the human rights situation in the area.

Peacekeeping is one of the most well-known and most visible tasks of the UN and it is argued being the most important tool to maintain international peace and security. Peacekeeping as a phenomenon is, however, relatively new in the contemporary history (Fox, 2001, 9). The UN deployed its first official peacekeeping operation, with the authorization of the UN Security Council, in 1948 by sending unarmed UN military observers to Palestine to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors (see O’Neill & Rees, 2005, 23; Whitworth, 2004, 29; Karim, 2019, 23). Back then, peacekeeping personnel were unarmed observers, and they were only allowed to use force in self-defense. This operation, which is still operating today, is called the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Since 1948, the UN has deployed more than 70 peacekeeping operations of which the first armed one was the UN Emergency Force (UNEF I), deployed in 1956 as a response to the Suez crisis. (Taylor and Curtis, 2005, 412; Whitworth, 2004, 29; UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b.; Hebert, 2012, 108; O’Neill & Rees, 2005, 23.) UNEF I is also called as the first “explicitly labelled” or first “formal” UN peacekeeping operation (O’Neill & Rees, 2005, 23; Bellamy et al., 2004, 71). As a result of the first lightly armed or unarmed operations, peacekeeping is still widely considered as a ‘soft’ form of power and military intervention (Hebert, 2012, 108). Thus, peacekeeping is widely seen as a welcome alternative to the use of force of national militaries, as a creative way to use them (Whitworth, 2004, 11). Similarly, although being lightly armed, Enloe (1993, 33) describes UN peacekeeping to inspire optimism since it indicates that military duties can be performed “without being militaristic”. Peacekeepers, on the other hand, are considered being typically “benign, altruistic, neutral, and capable of conflict resolution in any cultural setting” (Whitworth, 2004, 12).

As mentioned, the nature of contemporary conflicts has changed and therefore, the nature UN peacekeeping has had to change accordingly. It has evolved and expanded from a great number of small “ad hoc commitments” solving specific issues and challenges, to a much broader, much visible and more institutionalized organization that has deployed hundreds of thousands of personnel from over 120 UN member states. (Koops et al., 2015, 2.) Inter-state conflicts have changed to complex intra-state conflicts or civil wars, and as a result, peacekeeping is not only about monitoring ceasefire agreements and demilitarized zones, like during the Cold War (see Taylor and Curtis, 2005, 412; Puechguirbal, 2015, 253; Koops et al., 2015, 3; Ramsbotham, 2016, 175), but instead, contemporary peacekeeping operations include new roles and tasks such as facilitating peace processes, protecting civilians, help in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, organizing elections, cleaning of mines, protecting and monitoring human rights as well as assisting in reestablishing the rule of law and good governance. (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.a.; Puechguirbal, 2015, 253; Whitworth, 2004, 12; Mazurana et al, 2005, 20; Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 12; Beilstein, 1998, 140.) In 1992, the former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made an initiative called “Agenda for Peace” in order to assess the new nature of conflicts and responses to them as well as to broaden the mandates of missions. He noted that mandates should have a greater focus on the role of stabilizing and peacebuilding activities. (Väyrynen, 2004, 125; Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 12.)

Thus, after the Cold War, UN peacekeeping operations changed from “traditional” operations focusing on observation to complex “multidimensional” operations, and at the same time the number of peacekeeping operations increased significantly (Taylor and Curtis, 2005, 412; Hebert, 2012, 108; Whitworth, 2004, 11). It has been argued that the support and faith in peacekeeping operations increased after the Cold war, since without its tensions, the UN was more free to use different tools to build peace (Whitworth, 2004, 11). As a result, the UN mandated more operations between 1988 and 1993 than in the past four decades in total (Bellamy et al., 2004, 75; Ramsbotham, 2016, 176). This is what Bellamy et al. (2004, 75) calls a *quantitative transformation* of UN peacekeeping operations.

Moreover, as mentioned, mandates of new operations expanded, and they started to aim to assist in achieving long-term peace and to include, for instance, heavier military equipment and forces of major powers. UN peacekeepers started to use force more likely than in traditional operations. (Taylor and Curtis, 2005, 412; UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b.) Originally, achieving a lasting peace is was not included in peacekeeping mandates. Traditional peacekeeping operations were deployed to solve the consequences of conflicts rather than their root causes – their main objective was to stop war.

Traditional peacekeepers had little or no contact to local populations. (Valenius 2007, 510.) On the contrary, contemporary peacekeeping combines civilian and crisis management, victims of wars are mainly civilians, increasingly women and children, and peacekeepers work among the local population more than ever (Flén, 2010, 94). Therefore, cultural awareness and sensibility on gender issues are needed, specifically in the areas of high rates of gender-based violence. (Valenius, 2007, 510.) As a result of changing requirements, a *qualitative transformation* of UN peacekeeping took place in the aftermath of the Cold war (Bellamy et al., 2004, 75). If the contemporary defense is more human rights oriented than before, according to Anica Kronsell and Erika Svedberg (2012, 1) also contemporary wars and conflicts are increasingly associated with peace. As examples, they list state militaries' right to protect (R2P) principle, and their engagement to peace making and peace-enforcement. In addition, at the UN Headquarters in New York and elsewhere, many actors reinforce their commitment to conflict prevention and crisis management. On the other hand, the authors argue that "making war is increasingly done in the name of peace".

As contemporary conflicts have become more complex, also UN peacekeeping have faced new challenges. Demands of peacekeeping have increased, operations are deployed to increasingly complex and more dangerous environments and they have become more lethal than ever before. Bellamy et al. (2004, 129-130) have identified six typical characteristics for multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Firstly, new operations take place in the context of ongoing violence. Secondly, operations are deployed to solve 'new wars' instead of traditional inter-state wars. Thirdly, peacekeepers in multidimensional operations are given new tasks, such as supervising elections and delivering humanitarian aid. Fourthly, peacekeepers have to increasingly cooperate with civilian 'humanitarian community'. Fifthly, their mandates are discussed, and also changed, more frequently. Lastly, Bellamy et al. (ibid., 130) argue that there is a gap between the tasks required and the resources given.

Moreover, peacekeeping has faced new challenges. New problems and concerns arose almost as soon as the 'new' missions were deployed (Whitworth, 2004, 13). Contemporary peacekeeping operations have, indeed, resulted several negative side-effects, such as prostitution, gender-based violence against local population as well as trafficking in women which are increasingly acknowledged and examined by scholars and UN human rights organizations (Valenius, 2007, 510). Allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse that started to occur simultaneously as new operations were deployed, have harmed the reputation of operations and started speculations on the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions (see Hebert, 2012). For instance, the UN mission to Cambodia (UNTAC) is

was considered being a successful operation despite the fact that later on allegations of sexual abuse, conducted by UN peacekeepers, came to the public (e.g. Whitworth, 2004, 13). Only after years of continuous allegations in different missions, the UN slowly started to acknowledge the problem. It is contradictory that presence of personnel who are supposed to protect local populations, instead, cause them new threats, such as increasing prostitution, human trafficking, sexual harassment, and new kind of gender relations and dynamics. (Haaland, 2012, 63-64; Whitworth, 2004) Haaland (ibid.) concludes that armed forces might not be suitable for peacekeeping activities, if military peacekeepers increase insecurity.

Although 'new' peacekeeping missions are no longer a new issue, gender perspective in such missions is quite a recent "innovation". Gender issues started to be acknowledged in the 2000s and peacekeeping mandates, drafted by the UNSC, have not included gender issues until recently (Karim, 2019, 23). Hundreds of thousands of military personnel have been deployed to UN peacekeeping missions since 1948 but the number of female peacekeepers participating in these operations has remained low. Thus, only 0.1 percent of military personnel were women between 1957 and 1989 (Puechguirbal, 2015, 254; Olsson, 2000, 2; Beilstein, 1998, 143). Although Beilstein (1998, 143) argues that the "breakthrough" in participation of military female peacekeepers happened in 1993, as female personnel consisted of 10.2 percent of military personnel in the Western Sahara Operation (MINURSO) and the number of uniformed female personnel was steadily rising, by 1993 the number in total was no more than 1.7 percent (Puechguirbal, 2015, 254; Olsson, 2000, 2). When looking at statistics and compositions of national armed forces of TCCs, referring to the UN member states contributing personnel to UN peacekeeping troops, it is clear that the nature of peacekeeping is male dominated. In more detail, men are usually deployed to the military component of operations whereas women are often assigned to civilian roles, such to legal or political advisors, monitors of elections or human rights, as well as to administrations. (Hudson, 2005, 114.) As a result, the participation of women is often considered as nearly insignificant.

In the 1990s, however, the UN slowly started to acknowledge the role women played in peace and conflict. As a result, at the beginning of the new millennium, the UN released three documents with an intention to make peacekeeping operations more gender sensitive: *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations* (2000); the *Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations* (2000); and *Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security* (2000). These documents, in particular, brought attention to the complexity concerning gender and

peacekeeping. In addition, the documents highlighted the importance of integrating a gender perspective into UN peacekeeping operations. (Olsson, 2005, 169.) Puechguirbal (2015, 254) argues that only after resolution 1325, peacekeeping mandates started to include gender issues. Peacekeeping operations are tried to make more gender sensitive by increasing participation of women at all levels of operations, and by ensuring the observance of gender issues in them (Valenius, 2007, 510-511).

2.2. Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the United Nations

Although the role of women in peacebuilding was acknowledged in the early 1900s, and their role in UN peacekeeping in the 1990s, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) was not adopted until October 2000. UNSCR 1325 is considered being a historic milestone in bringing a gender perspective to all levels of peacemaking efforts. Nevertheless, although being possibly the most well-known, adoption of the resolution 1325 was not the first occasion gender issues were discussed at the UN. On the contrary, the first wave of women's peace activism took place already in the early 1900s. After the World War II, during which women were active in peace efforts, women's peace activism was mobilized again in 1975 when the International Women's Year (IWS) was launched. IWS was followed by the UN Decade for Women (1976-85) and four World Conferences on Women. (Basu, 2016, 574.)

In the 1990s, in the context of widespread sexual violence in Bosnia and Rwanda, several international NGOs started to acknowledge the negative effects of war on women, as well as the barriers women face when trying to participate in peace talks (Karim, 2019, 25). Before the adoption of resolution 1325, significant documents concerning Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda were especially the outcome document of the Nairobi conference in 1985, entitled "The Forward Looking Strategies" (FLS), declaration of the General Assembly in 1982 entitled "Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation" as well as the outcome document of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) in Beijing called the Beijing Declaration (1995) which was actually the first document to contain an entire chapter on Women, Peace and Security (Basu, 2016, 574-575; Karim, 2019, 25). In addition, the Rome Statue, adopted in 1996, defined sexual and gender-based violence as war crimes and as crimes against humanity (Basu, 2016, 575). The first major document concerning women, peace and security in relation to peacekeeping missions was the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (2000), adopted only a few months before resolution 1325. The Windhoek Declaration highlighted the need to mainstream and balance gender in UN peace

operations. The document concluded, for instance, that women should have equal participation to all levels of peacebuilding, all mandates should include specific part on gender mainstreaming, women should be deployed to managerial and decision-making positions, TCC countries should recruit more women and that training of peacekeepers should include gender awareness training. All of these justifications are still widely used today. (United Nations, 2000; Karim, 2019, 25.)

2.2.1. Resolution 1325

The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security unanimously in October 2000 (UNSC, 2000). The resolution is considered as a “remarkable document” and a “groundbreaking achievement” in placing women’s rights in UN’s agenda on peace and security (Charlesworth, 2008, 350; Tryggestad, 2009, 539). The adoption marked the first time gender perspective was officially brought to the center of UN peacekeeping, peacebuilding, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts (Hermoso & Sugawara, 2016, 67; Mazurana et al., 2005, 16). Resolution 1325 calls for, for instance, increased number of women in decision making and peacekeeping, attention to special needs of women and girls, and it also stresses human rights of women and girls. In addition, it requests the Secretary General to include development of gender mainstreaming in reports on peacekeeping missions, and to provide the member states guidelines and material on these issues to use in training. (Mazurana et al., 2005, 16; McLeod, 2012, 135; UNSC, 2000.)

The resolution includes ideas and language from different documents and treaties adopted throughout the history of the UN. It also takes note, for instance, of the Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UNGA, 1979) as well as the Security Council Resolution on the protection of civilians (UNSC, 1999) (Hill et al. 2003, 1256; Basu, 2016, 576; Shepherd, 2008, 109-111). The adoption was historical, as it was the first time in UN’s history to formally discuss on “women's interests and concerns in relation to peace and security matters” in the UN Security Council (Tryggestad, 2009, 539). Further, as a result of resolution 1325, international community started to acknowledge the relationship between gender and war (Basu, 2016, 572). The adoption of resolution 1325 resulted from strong lobbying done by a variety of actors who managed to place women, peace and security in the Security Council’s agenda (Tryggestad, 2009, 539).

Resolution 1325 and its eighteen provisions emphasize the importance of women’s “equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and

security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution” as well as “the urgent need to mainstream gender perspective into peacekeeping operations” (UNSC, 2000). One of the major achievements of resolution 1325 is that women were officially acknowledged as agents of peace, not solely as victims of war (Tryggestad, 2009, 540; Basu, 2016, 576). Indeed, resolution 1325 identifies women, for instance, as political actors, peacemakers, peacekeepers, combatants, and victims (ibid.; UNSC, 2000).

Even though resolution 1325 was adopted unanimously and it is argued being politically and normatively strong, the legal status of resolution 1325 continues to be widely discussed and contested in the academy almost two decades after its adoption (Tryggestad, 2009, 544). Generally, the UN Charter (1945) article 25 refers to the binding nature of the Security Council Resolutions. However, there is a difference between Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VI (non-coercive measures) and under Chapter VII (coercive measures) of the UN Charter. Resolutions under Chapter VII are adopted in response to issues threatening international peace and security and they are binding on member states. Resolutions adopted under Chapter VI, such as thematic resolution 1325, on the other hand, are non-coercive and not binding under international law. (Tryggestad, 2009, 544; Basu, 2016, 579.) In general, however, Security Council resolutions are seen as carrying a strong normative imperative (Tryggestad, 2009, 544). Thus, by adopting resolution 1325, the Security Council promised to keep WPS issues in its agenda. Following resolution 1325, the Security Council has adopted seven subsequent resolutions on Women peace and Security: 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and 2242 (2015) (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 15; PeaceWomen, n.d.a).

Although often ignored, resolution 1325 is significant also in the context of UN peacekeeping since it acknowledges gender issues in peacekeeping operations. Despite the fact that conflicts were considered as ‘gendered experiences’ already in the 1990s, gender did not become an important part of peacekeeping missions until institutionalization of the WPS agenda (Karim, 2019, 25). Concerning peacekeeping, resolution 1325 emphasized two issues: firstly, it addressed the impact of wars on women and secondly, it urged to increase the number of female personnel in peacekeeping operations (Bridges & Horsfall, 2009, 121; UNSC, 2000). Resolution 1325 recognizes “the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations” and need “for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women” (UNSC, 2000). Further, it urges the inclusion of a gender component to field operations, to provide guidelines on the protection as well as special needs and rights of women, and on the significance of women’s participation on peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities (UNSC, 2000).

Although resolution 1325 is considered as a groundbreaking achievement and as a great milestone, it has faced lots of critic especially for its language and conceptualization. Further, its implementation is argued being ineffective and slow. Puechguirbal (2015, 255) stresses the importance to focus on the language of resolution 1325. Language in it, and in many other UN documents, reinforces the idea of how women and men are seen and treated in conflicts. The language of the resolution, at least to some extent, explains why stereotypes of men and women are embedded in all levels of peacekeeping. Maybe not surprisingly, both in UN documents and in the academia, women are defined as vulnerable victims who need protection of men. By victimizing women, the resolution is limiting its own implementation.

Moreover, in many UN documents, women are associated with children, undermining their role in and their contribution to peace processes. (ibid., 254-255.) Thus, also resolution 1325 reinforces the 'womenandchildren syndrome' (Basu, 2016, 577). By putting women and children into the same category, women are being 'infantilized' and seen as weak, vulnerable victims rather than agents of peace (ibid.). Overall, it has been argued that the resolution, unintendedly, reinforces the framework of peace and security issues being "hyper masculine" in nature (Puechguirbal, 2015, 254). Additionally, resolution 1325 is criticized for how it uses the concept *gender*. Various scholars (e.g. Basu, 2016, 577; Hermoso and Sugawara, 2016, 72; Raven-Roberts, 2005, 56) argue that in resolution 1325, the word gender incorrectly only refers to and is associated with women and men are not even mentioned in the resolution. Consequently, many seem to think that since it is 'women's issue' they should deal with it (Raven-Roberts, 2005, 56). Thus, as the definition of gender needs to be widened in order to redefine equality (Kouvo & Levine, 2008, 366).

SCR 1325 is also criticized for its ineffective and slow implementation (Karim & Beardsley, 2017; Valenius, 2007; Basu, 2016). Although the resolution reaffirms the strong commitment of member states to the WPS agenda, there is a gap between words and practice (Valenius, 2007, 512). Indeed, many scholars stress that the adoption of the resolution did not make a huge difference in changing the practices and policies in practice (see Tryggestad, 2009, 539). UN member states are argued being too slow in implementing the resolution due to its legally non-binding nature (ibid., 544). Indeed, the main responsibility to implement resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions lies on UN member states as the implementation is largely operationalized through their National Action Plans (NAPs). (Basu, 2016, 582; PeaceWomen, n.d.b.) NAPs introduce priorities, approaches and plans of national governments in relation to WPS issues. To date, nearly eighty national governments and eleven

regional organizations have developed their own NAPs. (PeaceWomen, n.d.b.) In practice, TCC countries are the ones being accountable for female personnel making up such a low percentage of military peacekeepers whereas main responsibility in monitoring the progress of gender mainstreaming lies in the UN (Bridges & Horsfall, 2009, 120; Karim, 2019, 32; Hudson, 2005, 114; Belstein, 1998, 143). Member states have explained the slow progress by stating that achieving gender balance takes time. Moreover, many TCCs claim that they do not have enough female soldiers to achieve a gender balance in operations (Bridges & Horsfall, 2009, 120.) Nevertheless, at least to some extent, the lack of implementation can be explained by the lack of political will and continuous commitment to the issue (Basu, 2016, 582).

Indeed, one of the most important areas for the implementation of Women, Peace and Security agenda and Resolution 1325 is the deployment of UN personnel. It includes, for instance, increasing the number of female peacekeepers and other female UN personnel as well as deploying gender advisors to the operations. Gender advisers' work is to ensure that gender perspective is integrated to all functions of peacekeeping operations. Their tasks include, for instance, ensuring that needs of women and girls are acknowledged, protecting them from gender-based violence and promoting their political participation. (United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d.e.) Before the adoption of UNSCR 1325, there were only two offices focusing on gender issues at UN peacekeeping operations – one in Kosovo and one in Timor-Leste (Basu, 2016, 581). In his latest report on Women, Peace and Security (UN Security Council, 2018, para. 22), UN's Secretary General Guterres argues that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) together with the Department of Field Support and Department of Political Affairs (DPA) will “continue to work towards improved availability of gender advisers and experts”. The aim is to have gender advisers and experts both at headquarters and in field operations as well as to have a network of gender focal points all around the UN system (UN Security Council, 2018, para. 22). In 2017, of 15 peacekeeping operations, nine operations had gender units, having altogether 4 senior gender advisers as well as 53 gender advisers and officers (UN Security Council, 2018, para. 22).

Although the number of female peacekeepers, commanders and gender advisers deployed has increased slowly but steadily the number of women in professional positions in peacekeeping and peacemaking bodies around the world is still relatively small – especially in the military component of peacekeeping operations (Hermoso & Sugawara, 2016, 68). Despite their significant contribution to peacebuilding efforts, women have remained in the margins (ibid., 69). As of December 2017, the representation of women in the military troops was 4 percent (UN Security Council, 2018, para. 12).

Additionally, there is a lack of uniformed female personnel at the leadership positions. As of July 2018, there was only one military Force Commander who was a woman. According to report of the Secretary-General, targeted mechanisms to train female military officers, such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), play an important role in improving these figures. (UN Security Council, 2018, para. 12.) In addition, some TCCs organize gender parity and women only training courses. For instance, Finnish Defence Forces organizes United Nations Military Experts in Mission (UNMEM) courses and in gender-parity courses, it allocates a specific number of seats for female military officers.

After the adoption of resolution 1325, several reports have been conducted to assess its implementation (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 15). For instance, in 2010, ten years after resolution 1325 was adopted, the Security Council reaffirmed its commitment to WPS agenda and requested the Secretary General to create a joint strategic framework to track the implementation of the resolution between 2011 and 2020. Strategic framework includes 26 indicators, which are divided under four 'thematic pillars': prevention, participation, protection as well as relief and recovery. Concerning peacekeeping operations, report suggests, for instance, to increase the number of gender adviser and gender experts and to decrease alleged sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN peacekeepers. (Barnes, 2011, 28-29; UN Women, 2011.)

2.2.2. Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Balancing in UN Peacekeeping Operations

In order to make gender and women visible and to respond to inequalities in world politics, international organizations have adopted policies of *gender mainstreaming* (True, 2015, 227; Charlesworth, 2005, 1). The idea behind the concept is to make gender issues “normal” and put them to the center of discussions (Charlesworth, 2005, 1). The UN defines gender mainstreaming according to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Actions (1995, 50), adopted in the Fourth UN World Conference of Women, as means to apply “a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively”. Similarly, two years later, UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined gender mainstreaming as “mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels” (ECOSOC, 1997). Thus, these definitions indicate that gendered consequences of all policies, in all levels, must be taken into account to be able to achieve gender equality. At first

glance, gender mainstreaming looked like a “clear” and “measureable” policy to offer for policymakers to implement nationally.

Moreover, another tool to integrate gender in international institutions is *gender balancing* which refers to increasing the representation of women in an organization. Feminists continuously debate whether gender mainstreaming or gender balancing is a more effective one. (Egnell & Alam, 2019, 13-14.) Thus, it is commonly assumed that gender balancing is, on the contrary to gender mainstreaming, easier to implement and its results of its implementation are easier to measure (ibid.; Karim, 2019, 31). However, not everyone agrees with this. For instance, Kronsell (2012, 135-136) notes that in Sweden and in the EU, recruiting female personnel has been harder than gender mainstreaming. As the results of the study will later indicate, there is a lack of gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping. Moreover, gender balancing may cause problems in the future, especially if it is done by undermining the quality of peacekeepers.

Activities of the UN DPKO towards gender equality stem from the global adoption of the WPS agenda (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 11). After the adoption of resolution 1325 in 2000, the UN DPKO, as one of the first UN bodies, started to take steps to mainstream and balance gender into its policies, programs and activities, both in New York and in the field (Puechguirbal, 2015, 258-259; Basu, 2016, 575). The main goals of both approaches are to make a cultural and structural change in peacekeeping operations, and to reduce male dominance of the whole institution. The extent these approaches help to achieve gender equality is still unclear. (Karim, 2019, 34.)

The UN has, thus, implemented both approaches but gender balancing has gained more attention, not least because its progress is easier to measure (Karim, 2019, 31, 24). For example, in 2009 former Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon launched an initiative to increase the percentage of female personnel in peacekeeping military units to 10 percent. As shown above, the goal was not met. However, this initiative indicates that numerical goals are easier to set. Similarly, UNSCR 2242 (2015) had an ambitious goal to double the number of female peacekeepers in five years. (Karim, 2019, 31.) Another example of gender balancing efforts of UN DPKO are all-female police units that have been deployed, for instance, to UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2007 (Karim, 2017, 824). Nevertheless, to date, there has not been all-female units in the military component of such operations.

Although implementing and measuring gender mainstreaming is more complicated, scholars argue that gender mainstreaming has potential to be more successful in increasing the operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations than gender balancing (Karim, 2019, 29). There are several ways to implement gender mainstreaming. For example, today nearly all peacekeeping mandates include a notion of gender. The scope of the mention might, however, vary from prohibiting sexual abuse to promoting women's participation. (Puechguirbal, 2015, 258-259; Karim, 2017, 824; Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 15; Karim, 2019, 26.) Additionally, establishing gender units, headed by a senior gender advisor (SGA) as well as pointing gender advisors and gender focal points to peacekeeping operations have also been part of gender mainstreaming activities. Mandates of gender units usually include ensuring gender mainstreaming through the work of all of the components of the mission as well as providing technical support to governments and civil society. (Puechguirbal, 2015, 259-260.) The role of gender advisors is thought of being crucial, and their number has been increasing. Gender focal point, on the other hand, refers to "key personnel in the military and police part of missions designated as responsible for gender issues" (Karim, 2019, 31). Yet, True (2015, 231) argues that evidence demonstrates that expert approach has not worked as it should. For instance, reports on gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping operations note that some have failed to understand that gender mainstreaming is a responsibility of all (ibid; UN DPKO, 2005). Further, reports of the Secretary-General indicate that although some progress has been made with the help of gender advisers, there is still a lot to be done (see UNSC, 2012, para 58; UNSC, 2018).

Thus, despite the efforts made and resolutions adopted, integrating a gender perspective to peacekeeping operations is not always simple. Already in 2004, review of the Secretary General revealed that many areas of the organization, such as peace and security, had not been able to integrate a gender perspective into their practices (ECOSOC, 2004, para. 15). Moreover, Charlesworth, (2005, 2) argues that despite the attempts to take gender issue seriously, gender mainstreaming "detracts attention from the ways that sexed and gendered inequalities are woven into the international system". Thus, she continues that gender mainstreaming strategy has, in fact, made it harder to identify and solve issues related to inequalities between men and women (Charlesworth, 2005, 2).

Both gender mainstreaming and gender balancing have had some success but few major challenges remain (Karim, 2019, 31). One major difficulty is the language used. In order to overcome these issues, people in New York as well as peacekeepers in the field need to have a better, and a more comprehensive, understanding of peace and security. That understanding should not victimize women, but instead, see them as actors of peace and individuals with fundamental rights. Thus, as

Puechguirbal (2015, 256) notes, male dominated militarized organizations define security differently than ordinary women. Militarized organizations see security as cessation of fighting and hostilities whereas women see it as being safe and feeling safe. Further, masculine values are so embedded in peacekeeping institutions that mainstreaming a gender perspective in them takes time. (Ibid.) Another problem lies in the term gender mainstreaming itself. According to Karim (2019, 35-36) not everyone understands what it means and how it can be measured or monitored.

Moreover, there are also problems related to gender units within the UN peacekeeping operations. Gender units are often integrated into humanitarian pillar of the operation, and as a result, a proper gender mainstreaming to military component of such operations does not take place (Puechguirbal, 2015, 260). Instead, it reinforces the marginalization of gender issues as it demonstrates that gender is considered as a separate issue from peace and security. Gender issues are often associated with humanitarian issues that are, moreover, considered being more feminine. On the other hand, peace and security are defined, as shown, from male perspective. Peacekeeping operations and peacekeeping personnel often fail to understand that gender is not only relevant to humanitarian and development issues but also to peace and security issues. (Ibid.)

Furthermore, gender units in missions are often lacking staff and resources when comparing to the variety of tasks they are pointed to accomplish (Global Study, 2015, 279; Karim, 2019, 31). Raven-Roberts (2005, 57) notes that there is a common view in peacekeeping operation and humanitarian environments that gender work takes time from 'more important' tasks, such as from food distribution and other life-saving actions. Further, even though Special Representative to Secretary General (SRSG) has the main responsibility to integrate gender perspective in to UN peacekeeping operations, often SGA is the one to take the responsibility (Puechguirbal, 2015, 260). Although gender issues should be integrated to all components of peacekeeping missions, and gender mainstreaming should be everyone's tasks, in peacekeeping operations people tend to believe that SGA is alone responsible for dealing with gender issues within the mission, and that gender-related issues are solely his concerns (ibid., 260-261).

Does gender balancing or gender mainstreaming work in the context of UN peacekeeping? Although both approaches have gained some success (see Karim, 2019), military peacekeeping is widely considered as the component making the least amount of progress (Egnell & Alam, 2019, 2). Although the UN has slowly but steadily increased the participation of women in the military component of peacekeeping operations, it has not reached the targets set by numerous resolutions.

Moreover, despite explicit commitments, implementation of gender mainstreaming has a long way to go especially within structures and values of the UN (Raven-Roberts, 2005, 56). Similarly, Karim notes that gender mainstreaming “suffers from inadequate conceptualization and has not been effective because of a pervasive male dominance within peacekeeping culture” (Karim, 2019, 24).

Thus, the UN its departments has also been criticized for uneven or even nearly complete lack of progress in gender mainstreaming efforts. Raven-Roberts (2005, 47) emphasizes three main issues that explain lack of progress in gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping operations. Firstly, lack of conceptual clarity in its different approaches, such as humanitarian, human rights or political approaches, when responding to armed conflicts. It has been argued that UN`s agencies having different approaches have failed to recognize the diverse effects of conflicts on women and girls. For instance, the UN has sometimes handled suffering as it would be a technical issue to be solved in technical solutions. (Ibid, 51.) Secondly, the biased gender-equality within the UN system. For example, although gender mainstreaming has been a priority of both DPKO and DPA, both have tried to integrate gender perspective separately into their policies and practices. Thus, gender focal points are appointed but they work outside from policy units and therefore, their ability to work and they are excluded form decision-making and policy formulation processes. (Ibid, 52.) Thirdly, ineffective management, monitoring and evaluation systems. In other words, there is still a lack of standard procedures, frameworks and monitoring mechanisms in the UN system. (Raven-Roberts, 2005, 52-53.)

Similarly, Whitworth (2004, 18) notes that despite principles produced concerning gender issues in peacekeeping, the UN has been not lived up to those. For instance, in peacekeeping operations, if gender issues are not included in operations` mandates, gender issues might be left for other agencies to deal with. Further, Hebert (2012, 115) emphasizes that complexity of gender is not integrated into UN programs and policies. The majority of the proposed solutions to mainstream gender is to increase the number of women in current structures and environments, instead of changing structures themselves (2012, 115). Although UN is visible advocate of gender equality, there is still work to be done to fully integrate gender issue into values and practices of the organization. Moreover, gender issues are still considered as women`s issues are women are considered being responsible for taking care of them and finding solutions. (Jukarainen & Terävä, 2010, 16; Raven-Roberts, 2005, 56-57.). Ignoring and miscalculating the role and experiences of women during conflicts or after them overlooks efforts made to create lasting peace (Mazurana et al., 2005, 2). Women are absent

especially from formal level, and despite their important role in peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities, operations tend to ignore gendered structures and the value of women's work (ibid., 3).

Although gender mainstreaming may have brought some potential success to peacekeeping operations, it can be argued that cultural change regarding gender has been minimal. Peacekeeping operations consist of mostly male personnel from military institutions, which as widely known to be highly masculine. (Karim, 2019, 34.) Thus, since gender mainstreaming efforts include changing "entrenched institutional culture" and its male and masculine dominated norms, values and identities, the overall culture of peacekeeping operations is difficult to change (Karim, 2019, 35-36).

2.3. Women in Peacekeeping Operations

As a result of WPS related documents and initiatives, such as UNSCR 1325, research and policies reflecting gender in peacekeeping have slowly increased (e.g. Karim, 2017, 825). Previous scholarly work on the topic includes, for instance, studies on masculinities and gender reforms of male dominated institutions such as militaries and peacekeeping operations, on stereotypes related to male and female soldiers, as well as studies on the contribution of female personnel in peacekeeping operations. As noted, policymakers and scholars strongly advocate to increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations and especially in their military component. Thus, female peacekeepers are often considered of having "special" or "unique" skills to contribute to the missions (e.g. Kronsell, 2012, 106; Karim, 2017, 825). It is arguably ironic that stereotypes usually associated with women, which were previously seen as a barrier for them to participate in military or peacekeeping activities, are now seen as their asset in such operations (DeGroot, 2001, 24, 34; Kronsell, 2012, 107).

Traditionally, men and women are often considered being inherently different in nature. Men are seen being strong, masculine and violent, whereas women are considered being weak, peaceful and emotional (e.g. Carey, 2001; Valenius, 2007; Simic, 2009; Fukuyama, 1998; Charlesworth, 2008). Thus, already two decades ago, responding to feminist IR theories, Francis Fukuyama (1998) argued that scholars do not focus enough on biology as a source of gendered perceptions. His article elaborates the longstanding idea of international politics that women are being more peaceful than men. Similarly, Charlesworth (2008) points out a famous play of Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, in which peaceful women did not want to sleep with men before the war between Sparta and Athens was over. Dianne Otto (2006) emphasizes that this kind of thinking is problematic. She stresses that the link between women and peace limits their agency as they are considered only to contribute their

“womanly instincts” which might limit tasks assigned for them to more “feminized tasks” (2006, 139).

Moreover, since peacekeeping operations are often dangerous and require good physical condition, soldiers and peacekeepers are traditionally considered being strong and fearless masculine men. However, as a result of various gender reforms and the decreasing number of men willing to deploy, the UN and TCC countries have slowly started to consider also females as soldiers and peacekeepers. Thus, a wide range of literature has arisen that studies the suitability of female soldiers in the military or in peacekeeping operations. Often suitability of women is evaluated in accordance to their “different nature” from men. For instance, DeGroot’s (2001, 24) study examines stereotypes associated with female soldiers in military as well as in peacekeeping operations. He argues that if stereotypes that are typically associated with women, such as “gentle nature, conciliatory attitude and the ability to control aggression” are valid, female peacekeepers might be even more effective than male peacekeepers. This reinforces the existence of gender stereotypes and stresses that peacekeeping requires not only combating skills but also conciliatory and patient nature. His study aims to prove that arguments used to not deploy women are, instead, arguments proving the need to deploy them. (ibid., 33.) Similarly, Valenius’ (2007) study notes that documents and activities on gender mainstreaming are often based on typical perceptions of women being victims and inherently peaceful. As a result, local women are not seen as agents of peace in eyes of international community, but instead, as victims of war. In addition, female peacekeepers are promoted due to their alleged calming effect on male peacekeepers. In other words, Valenius’ study concludes that in peacekeeping missions, typical gender roles are reinforced and differences of masculine and feminine features are overlooked.

Similarly, Karim and Beardsley (2017, 3) argue that police and military institutions, of which peacekeepers are deployed from, are “gendered institutions in that they project and replicate structures of power that privilege men and certain forms of masculinity.” Thus, the imbalance between sexes in that kind of institutions can lead to imbalance of power as well as gendered problems, such as privileging starchy gender roles in peacekeeping operations. The authors argue that gender power imbalance can result from largely accepted perceptions of warrior men and peaceful women. Due to these perceptions, women might get discriminated in the security sector and excluded from its tasks, such as in peacekeeping operations. (Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 3.) Moreover, gender imbalance is also caused by the idea of men as protectors and women as protected. To this

date, this kind of “gendered protection norm” exists in peacekeeping operations, and limits female peacekeepers to use their whole potential available. (Ibid, 3-4.)

Other scholars, such as Bridges and Horsfall (2009), Kronsell (2012) and Karim (2017) have examined women’s contribution to peacekeeping operations. Donna Bridges and Debbie Horsfall (2009) examined the operational effectiveness of female soldiers within the context of Australian Defense Forces. The authors argue that successful operations in the past have had an equal distribution of both male and female peacekeepers. An increased presence of female personnel will increase the effectiveness of operations, for instance, by gaining the trust of locals easier and by improving the reputation of peacekeepers among local population. Kronsell (2012) elaborates the argument by emphasizing female peacekeepers’ good relationships with locals, especially with local women, which also makes them more effective at information gathering (2012, 91). According to Kronsell (2012), it can be argued that as a result of their better communication skills and their abilities to calm aggression, female peacekeepers are considered being especially effective at securing good relations to locals and therefore, in solving problems and conflicts among them. Comparing to male peacekeepers, female peacekeepers are seen as “softer, more peaceful and more prone to cooperation”. (Kronsell, 2012, 106.) Thus, women’s argued tendency to solve issues by discussing, negotiations and compromises, are seen as their special skill as peacekeepers (ibid.). Kronsell continues that the level of trust has an effect on whether the missions succeeds or not as it is crucial to help the local population to understand why certain actions are taken (2012, 104). Overall, being calm, professional and careful in using force are considered being good qualities of peacekeepers in general (Flén, 2010, 93). Similarly, Karim (2017, 825) notes that female personnel “make the peacekeeping missions more approachable for the host population”.

Similarly, Karim (2017) examines the added value female peacekeepers in the military and police components might bring to the missions. Karim’s research concludes that, according to the host community and female peacekeepers themselves, activities of female peacekeepers have brought positive elements to peacekeeping in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), by building trust, mitigating rape and promoting gender equality through various initiatives. Thus, Karim notes that women “are inhibited from reaching their full potential” due to, for instance, restrictions to leave the base. (Ibid., 842.).

Women’s alleged ability to gain trust of locals easier is also seen as a positive issue, especially in the light of continuous allegations of sexual misconduct of UN peacekeepers. Several scholars argue that

a greater number of female military personnel in UN peacekeeping operations would increase operational effectiveness in various ways, such as in reduction of gender-based violence (e.g. Simic, 2010). Despite UN zero-tolerance policy, adopted in 2003, there are reoccurring allocation of incidents of sexual misconduct (Kronsell, 2012, 98). Karim and Beardsley (2016) have researched whether or not a greater number of women in UN peacekeeping operations help to explain variations in gender-based violence. The authors conclude that a larger number of female peacekeepers is associated with a lower number of gender-based violence allegations reported against military personnel, although it does not help to tackle the root causes of the problem. Similarly, Olivera Simic (2010) argues that although presence of female peacekeepers would have an impact in fostering a change in male behavior and combating male sexual violence in peacekeeping operations, the responsibility to combat sexual violence in operations does lie on the UN as well as on troop contributing countries.

Along the same lines, due to several all allegations of gender-based violence conducted during operations, scholars have recently started to analyze the impact of female peacekeepers in the overall legitimacy and reputation of the operations. For instance, in her study, Penttinen (2012) evaluates the purpose to increase the number of women, and especially female police, in crisis management. She concludes that “as such the politics of increasing the number of women is a politics of hope” (2012, 163). In other words, she argues that women, who are deployed to missions, are sent there hoping that they will act as they are taught to act, and that they will meet the demands, such as make their male colleagues to behave better and gain trust of locals easier. Thus, Penttinen notes that politics of Resolution 1325, especially in relation to peacekeeping, is “not add-women-and-stir but add-women-and-hope” (2012, 164). Furthermore, according to Kronsell (2012, 104) tempering inappropriate behavior is among the most important duties of female peacekeepers. Kronsell argues that women in peacekeeping operations represent a different “culture” than male peacekeepers. Nevertheless, according to Simic (2010, 188), the approach is problematic, as women are encourage to deploy to peacekeeping operations “as sexual violence problem-solving forces”. Thus, also Kronsell (2012, 105) argues that considering women as ‘saving angels’ or ‘beautiful souls’ of peacekeeping operations is unfair and the expectations too high.

Some scholars have also analyzed barriers female peacekeepers in operations. As mentioned, after the adoption of resolution 1325, there has been a minor increase in the number of female peacekeepers. However, Karim and Beardsley (2013) argue that although deployed, women are tended not to be deployed to areas where they are needed the most – to areas with problems with

sexual violence and gender equality. Instead, Karim and Beardsley claim that female peacekeepers are deployed to areas with low risks. According to the study, TCC countries continue to exclude women serving in combat roles because women are seen as lacking the combat skills needed in military institutions (Karim and Beardsley, 2013, 483). In addition, TCC countries seem to think that the public cost of women dying on missions is higher in comparison to men. The authors conclude that peacekeeping operations should not miss the opportunity to meaningfully mainstream gender to such missions. Further, Sion, (2008) examines the limitations that affect Dutch female soldiers' ability to perform and contribute to peacekeeping missions. The author notes that some soldiers continue to exclude women because they see "feminine" issues of peacekeeping as controversial (Sion, 2008, 581). Therefore, even as a new military model, peacekeeping "reproduces the same traditional combat-oriented mind-set of gender roles and limits women's ability to perform and contribute to peace missions" (Sion, 2008, 581).

Further, Heinecken's (2015) study concludes that although recognizing the important role of female personnel, the training of female peacekeepers does not advance their ability to make a difference 'as women'. For instance, they do not receive any additional or special training on how to interact with local communities or how to deal with cases of sexual violence. In other words, Heinecken notes that gender-neutral trainings limits women's ability to use their full potential as peacekeepers. In addition, Heinecken's study concludes that female soldiers have to adjust to masculine values. They have to adjust to the same training, culture, uniform and technology although they are usually designed for men. The author suggests that support and the training of women in peacekeeping operations need to be reviewed in order to achieve the goals of gender mainstreaming and UNSCR 1325 (Heinecken, 2015, 248). Nevertheless, Olsson and Tejpar (2009) note that despite various gender strategies in adopted TCC countries, such as in Sweden, there are still problems in recruiting women, and their number has remained low.

Moreover, many scholars argue that expectations on the added benefit women might bring to peacekeeping operations are often too high. Karim and Beardsley (2017) note that if the presence of female peacekeepers are justified because of their added value to operations, it causes pressure to succeed in order to get acceptance. Thus, male peacekeepers are not expected to bring any additional value to be accepted as peacekeepers. Therefore, expectations put on female personnel are disproportionate. Further, as Karim (2019, 28) notes, and as it has been argued above, ability of female personnel to reach their full potential might sometimes been inhibited, which makes the burden even bigger.

Overall, many scholars are still cautious to draw strong conclusions on the role and contribution of uniformed female peacekeepers in UN peacekeeping operations too early (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003, 277; Flén 2010, 94). Many agree that female peacekeepers do increase the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. However, academic literature rarely reflects on the views of female peacekeepers themselves. Karim (2017, 822) argues that contemporary literature on peacekeeping and its effectiveness in more detail, is largely gender neutral, “overlooking the “unique role female peacekeepers may play in peacekeeping operations”. Gender neutrality in the current literature assumes that contribution and experiences of men and women are the same. As argued above, due to the male dominance in security sector, the current literature mainly reflects on the perceptions of male peacekeepers. (Ibid., 823.) Moreover, Cynthia Enloe (2014, 8) argues that in order to conduct “a gender investigation fueled by a feminist curiosity requires asking not only about the meanings of masculinity and femininity but also about how those meanings determine where women are and what they think about being there”. Therefore, this given research aims to analyze peacekeeping effectiveness and women’s unique role in UN peacekeeping operations by using a gendered approach. This is what this current research wishes to contribute to. Analyzing the views of female peacekeepers helps to identify their special contribution to peacekeeping operations as well as the barriers and limitations women face in operations or during the training, which might prevent them from contributing their all potential available.

2.4. UN initiatives to improve UN peacekeeping

“Recent peacekeeping experience confirms that uniformed female personnel play a vital role in reaching out and gaining the trust of women and girls within local communities, understanding and detecting their unique protection needs and tailoring the responses of peace operations”

(High Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations, 2015, para 212.)

As mentioned, the importance to increase uniformed women in peacekeeping, and especially in the military component, has also been echoed in recent reports and assessments of policymakers concerning UN peacekeeping operations. Reports do not only provide concrete recommendations on how to improve UN peacekeeping but in addition, they have created a great momentum around the topic within the international community (see Mabera, 2018, 241). In 2015, a High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO) conducted a review in which they evaluated

contemporary UN peacekeeping operations and their effectiveness. The aim of the report was to review current UN peacekeeping operations and needs for the future (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.c). The report strongly emphasized the role of female peacekeepers and it focused on two points: their vital role in cooperating with local communities in the field and on their low number in leadership positions (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.c.; HIPPO, 2015). More than a decade after the resolution, possible positive results of integration of a gender perspective and meaningful participation of women remains poorly understood (HIPPO, 2015, 23).

Firstly, one of the main advantages of including women is arguably their great connection with local communities and especially with local women and girls. The review stresses that female peacekeepers gain trust of locals more easily and they are better in understanding and responding to special needs of local populations. (HIPPO, 2015, par. 212.) Communication skills of female peacekeepers are also mentioned in the United Nations Military Observers (UNMO) guidelines. Guidelines on the composition of the UNMO team state that each team should ideally have at least one female UNMO since they are “critically important in providing better access to local communities, especially women and children” (UNDPKO, 2017, 6). Secondly, HIPPO acknowledges that the percentage of uniformed female personnel, especially in higher positions, has remained too low. To be able to raise figures of women’s participation, HIPPO urges TCC countries to implement their NAPs on WPS or to develop them. Moreover, TCC countries should redouble their efforts to recruit more women to national security sector. (ibid.) Additionally, HIPPO urges the UN Secretariat to create a strategy, with a gender perspective “to address the recruitment, retention and advancement of female uniformed personnel, including by exploring such incentives as reimbursement premiums” (ibid). The report urges the Secretary General to appoint more female personnel to leadership positions (ibid., par. 274).

Two years after the HIPPO review, in December 2017, General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz submitted his report “Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers” (also known as the Cruz report) which aims to decrease fatalities of UN peacekeeping with practical and concrete recommendations. The need to conduct such research stem from increasing number of peacekeeping fatalities and injuries between 2013 and 2017 (Mabera, 2017, 241). Thus, Cruz’ report reopened the discussion on dangerous working environments of peacekeepers. As Cruz states in his report, since 2013, there has been a continued increase in the fatalities of peacekeepers (2017, 1.) Although Cruz does not directly refer to female military personnel in his report, many of his recommendations are strongly linked to WPS agenda.

“To prevent casualties, peacekeeping missions need tactical intelligence... Missions do not lack high-tech resources to collect intelligence. They lack basics, especially human intelligence, networks of informants, situational awareness, and capacity to communicate with the population”

(Cruz, 2017, xi)

Thus, as policymakers often argue, uniformed female peacekeepers are especially good at interacting with local population. Uniformed female personnel are, as the results of this study later reveal, better in gaining trust of local people, especially of local women. In addition, women’s communication skills are argued being better than their male colleagues’. Therefore, it could be argued that increasing the number of military female personnel in UN peacekeeping operation would increase security of UN peacekeepers.

Moreover, in 2018, the UN Secretary General António Guterres launched a new initiative, called Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), to engage UN member states in renewing their political commitment to peacekeeping operations in order to improve and strengthen them (Mabera, 2018, 242). In A4P, Secretary General urges “member states to join him in developing a set of mutually-agreed principles and commitments to create peacekeeping operations fit for the future” (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d). Guterres’ goal was to reach a formal agreement by the end of 2018. Thus, on 25 September 2018, during the opening session of the 73rd session of the General Assembly, Guterres chaired a GA73 high-level meeting on A4P, in which several member states committed themselves to the Declaration of Shared Commitments. (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d.) As of 25 October 2018, 150 member states as well as 5 organizations, including European Union (EU), Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF), African Union Commission (AU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), have endorsed the Declaration (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d).

Twenty-four provisions of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operation are divided under seven main points: enhancing political solutions to conflict and improving the political influence on peacekeeping, strengthening the protection peacekeeping operations aim to provide, improving security and safety of peacekeeping personnel, supporting effective performance and accountability of all peacekeeping components, strengthening the impact of peacekeeping on sustaining peace, enhancing partnerships in the field peacekeeping as well as strengthening the management of peacekeeping operations and their personnel. (UN Peacekeeping, 2018.) Member states and organizations committed to collectively “implement Women, Peace and Security agenda

and its priorities by ensuring full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace process and by systematically integrating a gender perspective into all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and reporting”. They also recommitted to increase uniformed and civilian female peacekeepers in all levels and positions of missions. (Ibid.).

3. Feminism in International Relations and Security Studies – A Theoretical Framework

Where are women in national in peacekeeping missions or in national militaries in which they consist of? Are women invisible or just absent from them? This chapter gives an outline to feminism in International Relations (IR) and in Security Studies. It discusses the main theories, approaches and ideas of feminism in those interlinking fields. The chapter explains why it is so important to analyze views and experiences of women who often make a small minority but arguably a significant contribution to peace and conflicts at all levels. It should be emphasized that not all feminist IR scholarship on security is defined being part of feminist security studies, which is why, at the first glance, it seems that there is a lack of feminism in security studies. However, labeling research as a part of feminist security studies has become more and more common within the feminist IR.

3.1. Feminism in International Relations and Security Studies

Gender is not absent from international relations but instead, an important feature of it. Feminism in IR, as an approach and with series of various theories, aims to make gender visible in the world (Pettman, 2005, 695). Pettman (2005, 685) defines feminism as “a political project to understand and, therefore, to change women’s inequality, exploitation, or oppression”, and in addition, as an act “to validate women’s interests, experiences, and choices”. Feminism is a relatively new approach in IR, and feminist IR scholars have often faced resistance in the academia due to the fact that their research has revealed “gendered nature” of IR research which is traditionally based on experiences of men only (ibid., 670). Thus, feminism in IR has widely been criticized (e.g. Keohane, 1998; Sylvester 1994). For instance, Robert Keohane (1998, 193) notes that there is a reason for feminist IR scholars to fear that by engaging seriously to discussion on issues related to feminism they would not generate a serious discussion on the issues themselves but, instead, they would “become targets for ad hominem attacks on their motives”. Similarly, Sylvester (1994, 315-316) notes that “‘Women’ who deviate from the norms of IR wander the field unnoticed and untheorized” and that “most ‘women’, in fact, are homeless in the canons of IR knowledge”.

Originally, feminism came to IR from peace research and politics of development (Smith and Owens, 2005, 281). Feminist theories in IR did not “flourish” until the mid-1980s, which is rather late considering that IR is one of the most masculinist fields in social sciences. Some argue that masculinity of the field is, as a matter of fact, the main reason behind the late coming of feminism. (Pettman, 1996, vii; Ackerly et al., 2006, 1.) Similarly, Ticker (1992, 8) argues that the reason for

feminist perspectives coming so late to the IR is that the field is largely gender neutral, and gender is often considered as an “irrelevant” issue in the field. However, the field is so strongly masculine that instead of being irrelevant, hierarchical gender relations are hidden in the structures (ibid.).

Feminist IR theories use gender as a tool to understand and analyze power relations in the global world and to discuss alternative world orders. Is a male dominated peacekeeping operation the only way to construct them? Unlike other IR theories, feminism focuses on international structures and actors as well as on their transformations. Feminist IR theories pay attention to non-state actors, people in the margins, and reveal new approaches to power and relationships bringing new ways to think and act in world politics (True, 2013, 241.) For instance, before the proliferation of feminist IR theories, war, peace and conflicts were studied without referring to people. Instead, causes and consequences of conflicts were considered using abstract concepts, such as ‘the state’ and ‘the system’. Nevertheless, since 1980s, individual people considered as active agents of peace and conflict. (True, 2013, 242.) Moreover, feminist research has also invoked discussion on women’s role in peace and security (True, 2013, 241). During the first “wave” of feminism, women advocates were mobilized to achieve equal civil and political rights whereas during the second wave, they wanted to make private gender inequalities between men and women invisible around the world. By addressing private inequalities, they wanted to shape also the public sphere. (True, 2013, 243; Pettman, 2005, 672.) During the third wave, feminists wanted to call attention to “intersectional harms”, such as to inequalities related to class, race and sexuality (Sjoberg, 2016, 144). All the waves stem from the argument that political’ is also ‘international” (see True, 2013, 243).

Originally, the argument of personal being political was made by Cynthia Enloe who, in her book *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1989), argues that international politics include, for instance, intimate relationships, personal identities and private lives. Enloe’s books are considered representing classical feminist theories in IR. Finke (2014, 304) continues that Enloe “develops an unusual perspective on international politics and calls into questions our traditional notions of the scope of the political”. Further, Enloe (2014, 306) continues that “taking seriously the assertion that international is personal means that women - in all their diversity – must be made visible, analytically visible, in our investigations of every one of these organizations, and in the relationships between these organizations”. Additionally, she proves that contemporary international system is based on traditional notions of men and women as well as of masculinity and femininity (e.g. Finke, 2014, 315). In other words, all feminist IR theories aim to prove that gender relations play an important role in international relations (True, 2013, 243; Kronsell, 2012, 10). Additionally, feminist challenge

traditional theories on international relations and security by research that is based on experiences of women (Wibben, 2011, 592). A common objective of feminist theories is to deconstruct gender relations by changing the common views and ideas of gender stereotypes (Kronsell, 2012, 10-11). For instance, if people would not ignore traditional stereotypes of women as soldiers or peacekeepers, it would most likely effect on gender relations of operations and also of institutions conducting them. Feminist scholars are the ones to pay attention to non-elite women who challenge typical assumptions of women in global politics (Enloe, 2014, 4). Similarly, in my research, I focus on “ordinary” female military peacekeepers. I aim to change the common ideas and stereotypes of female military peacekeepers, and show that they are not only passive actors but instead, they may increase the operational effectiveness of the operation as a whole.

Yet the male dominated ideology sometimes prevents from seeing women as active agents. Therefore, Enloe (2014, 4) encourages feminist scholars to look beyond Hillary Clinton, Margaret Thatcher and Angela Merkel since, despite the headlines, they are not the only women engaged in world politics. Pettman (2005, 671) notes that female leaders, such as the ones mentioned above, who did not hesitate to use power have invoked arguments that if women rarely are in power, they are considered behaving like men. Thus, it might tell more about contemporary politics being masculine rather than about differences between men and women. Similarly, Sjoberg (2009, 1) argues that international peace and security still remains as a “man’s world”. For instance, gender of female peacekeepers is often highlighted instead of highlighting their contribution to the mission. They are called as female peacekeepers whereas male peacekeepers are called as peacekeepers. According to Hearn (2012, 44) “non-naming of men” demonstrates the domination of men in IR. Men and their power are not talked about but their dominance is ‘invisible’ and ‘absent presence’. In this research, both male and female peacekeepers are named in order to present clear and coherent findings on the topic.

War and conflicts, being legitimate forms of politics and reasons to use force, are at the heart of IR (Pettman, 1996, 87, 88). As a discipline, IR focuses on politics, war and relationships between nations states, and in all of those fields main actors are often male. World politics have traditionally included discussions on themes, such as security, conflict, competition and power – concepts that are traditionally strongly male dominated. (Pettman, 1996, vii; Pettman, 2005, 670.) Therefore, it could be seen, that feminist IR created feminist security studies, which as a concept, became after feminist IR research. Surprisingly, however, Laura Sjoberg (2016, 144) argues that feminist scholarship in the security predates feminist IR. Indeed, she notes that the feminist scholarship is originally all about security. (ibid.). Feminism, gender, security and militarization are all, without a doubt, linked

together. Sjoberg (ibid.) notes that because securitizations, referring to “naming something as security”, may have an influence on the militarization, which is used as a tool to define what is security. Since feminists try to change the understanding of security, they can also be associated with militarization.

Moreover, feminist scholarship, both in IR and in security studies, tries to challenge the normative and traditional bond between men, politics and war (Finke, 2014, 304; True, 2013, 241). Feminist scholarship also notes that in order to have a comprehensive and more inclusive viewpoint to security, war and peace, women and their perspectives need to be included in the scholarship. Concepts, such as security is created by political narratives (see Wibben, 2011, 593). Therefore, as soon as there are more people creating such narratives, those concepts, and later on realities, may change too. Further, feminist researchers are interested in lives and thoughts of women, who work in various positions within international relations. Enloe calls the approach as “gender-curious” approach to international politics (Enloe, 2014, 11). Feminists see women as relevant “knowledge-makers” of the world and therefore aim to learn from them, especially in places where they are underrepresented, such as in peacekeeping operations. Thus, it is not comprehensive to only interview men as actors in world politics. (Pettman, 2005, 671; Enloe, 2014, 306-307.) Similarly, in order to have an inclusive point of view to peacekeeping, experiences of female peacekeepers must be included in the discussions.

3.2. Gender, Militaries and Peacekeeping in Feminist Security Studies

War and peace are typically seen as a “man’s world”, in which gendered analyses are considered as causing “awkward silences and miscommunications” (in Sjoberg, 2016, 147). Traditionally, in conflict situations, men are seen as combatants and women as victims of war. As Cohn (2013, 127) notes: “Central to these links between men, hegemonic masculinity, and the military is the ideological construction of the military (staffed by masculine men) as the protector of society and especially of those who are too weak and vulnerable to protect themselves (primarily women and children)”. Similarly, according to Enloe’s (1989, 12-13) dangerous world theory, a typical way to see men and women in conflicts is that ‘real men’ protect the weak, being women and children. Moreover, along the same lines, Jean Bethke Elshtain (1995, first published in 1987) introduces terms “Just Warriors” and “Beautiful Souls” describing these stereotypical gender roles or men as combatants and women as noncombatants, men as “violent, whether eagerly and inevitably or reluctantly and tragically” and women as “nonviolent, offering succor and compassion” (Elshtain, 1995, 4). Elshtain notes that these assumptions undermine other realities in a dangerous way (1995, 4). Same concepts of “Just

Warriors” and “Beautiful Souls” are still, after three decades, widely used among feminist IR scholars (e.g. Kronsell & Svedberg, 2001; Sjoberg, 2009). Thus, men are traditionally considered as naturally aggressive due to, for instance, their competitiveness, hormonal testosterone levels and their alleged nature to hunt. Because of these and other assumptions, men are often linked to violence and war whereas women, on the contrary, with nurture and peace. (Pettman, 1996, 92.)

Similarly, concentrating on feminist approach to conflict resolution, Beilstein (1998, 145) notes that women are “socially conditioned” to act more peacefully and less violently than men. He stresses that the “pacifist orientation” of women is associated with their role as caring and nurturing mothers, as well as to their role as “conciliators” within their families and communities. Beilstein notes that these roles provide women negotiations skills that can be further used in conflict resolution and peace negotiations at all levels. (Ibid.) Nevertheless, since the beginning of this century, and especially since the events of 9/11, the research on the relationship of gender and international security as well as on gendered impacts of war and peace, has increased significantly. Thus, war and peace have become “feminist issues” (Pettman, 1996, 87). Feminist scholars have started to view war, peace and conflicts as “gendered activities” whereas militaries are considered, not only as male dominated, but as male values dominated institutions (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003, 277; Enloe, 2014, 27). Although women are not often visible when discussing on peace and war, it does not mean that women would not have been involved in or affected by them. Thus, as Jackson and Sørense (2003, 277) note: war as an activity is not “reserved for men or confined to men”. Therefore, feminist scholarship aims to review and rework war, security and international organizations (Pettman, 1996, ix).

Thus, although women have been active in the field of peacebuilding, they are often failed to be taken seriously in them. One of the major problems is that women often work in domestic or private arenas, in contrary to men who typically work in “more important” arenas of international or military security. Moreover, women are not taken seriously due to narrow understanding of core concepts, such as security, stability, and war, which are, as argued, strongly male dominated concepts. (Enloe, 2014, 16.) Some claim that women are absent from them because of their lack of education related to international issues and global politics. Thus, women are yet not invited to share their own experiences and interpretations on global politics but instead, they are invited to learn about men’s views. Some fail to acknowledge the contribution of women’s potentially different understanding of international issues. (Ibid, 33.) This common “women-need-to-learn-more-about-foreign-affairs” idea reinforces the image of women as objects and as victims. People sharing this view argue that women should learn about things such as the climate change as it has effects on them and they are

victims of it. On the contrary, women are usually not considered as experts or explainers of these threats or phenomena. Further, they are never cited nor interviewed. As a result, women are not able to present their views on the nature of the problem or its root causes. (Ibid., 16, 33-34.) The same idea is echoed in the context of peacekeeping. As mentioned, female peacekeepers are considered having the same experiences as their male colleagues, and therefore, there is a lack of literature which would be based on the perceptions of female peacekeepers.

Many feminist security scholars have conducted gendered analyses on militaries as they are among the most masculine institutions also in countries in which women are otherwise equally participating in public life, and in countries that highly value gender equality, such as in the Nordic countries (e.g. Cohn, 2013, 127; Haaland, 2012, 65). Thus, men are present throughout those massive and powerful institutions, and militarism is one of the most gendered government related activity (Hearn, 2012, 35, 39; Carreiras, 2010, 472). Dana Britton (2000, 419-420) argues that organizations are arguably gendered if they are “defined, conceptualized and structured in terms of a distinction between masculinity and femininity”, referring to reproduction of gender differences, if they are dominated by males or females or if the organizations are “symbolically and ideologically described and conceived in terms of a discourse that draws on hegemonically defined masculinities and femininities”. As well known, uniformed female personnel usually make a small minority in national militaries, with only few exceptions (e.g. Enloe, 2014, 130, Hearn, 2012, 39). In Western countries, for instance, women have been joining state armies increasingly since 1970s. Today, due to increasing demands, many militaries seek to recruit more women. (Pettman, 1996, 142.) Pettman (1996, 143) argues that this is due to ‘manpower’ concerns and due to industrial politics. ‘Manpower’ concerns are reflecting to falling birthrate as well as lack of suitable men. Industrial politics, on the other hand, include for instance, equal employment laws and need to create wider society. In addition, pressure to recruit more women has grown as a result of active feminist movements. (Ibid.)

Nevertheless, there has been an endless debate on whether or not women should receive equal treatment in the military. Many of these discussions are related to stereotypes and expectations of women and on the other hand, on the needs and on the nature of militaries. Some, for instance, argue that militaries should represent better the people they are protecting – both men and women. In contrast, some argue that usually institutions or organization should be more representative, but the military is a special exception as it is “men’s business”. (Pettman, 1996, 144.) Those arguing that militaries, and especially the combating positions within them, are not suitable for women base their

thoughts on women's argued weakness or disrupting influence, or on 'problems' such as pregnancies (Pettman, 1996, 144).

As Pettman (1996, 93) notes, feminist security scholars argue that military training is "socialisation into an extreme kind of masculinity". Enloe (2014) stresses that if men are naturally aggressive, as widely argued, there is no need to bring ideological work or power to military training. As a result of several allegations of soldiers being aggressive or abusive towards civilians in peacekeeping operations, many feminists have questioned the fact that soldiers are, in general, used in creating peace (e.g. Whitworth, 2004). Many of them stress that problems in operations result from military masculinity "associated with practices of strength, toughness and aggressive heterosexuality" (Duncanson, 2009, 63). Could it be that male and masculine dominated characteristics cannot ensure human security in contemporary world? Is there, then, a need to change to characteristics typically associated with female and femininity in order to do so? (Tickner, 1992, 136). Tickner (1992, 137) continues by arguing that "feminine" characteristics should be seen as women's response to their "historical roles in society". Duncanson further elaborates that there is a distinct "peacekeeper masculinity" which is quite similar to hegemonic or militarized masculinity but includes skills and values traditionally considered as feminine (2009, 74, 76).

In peacekeeping operations gender issues are often overlooked. Many officials seem to think that issues related to women and gender are not in the center of operations. Gender issues are argued being "soft" or "marginal" issues that should be handled after "hard" issues are taken care of. Some fail to acknowledge that pretty often those "soft" issues, such as gender or human rights, are the issues that should be tackled in order to achieve lasting peace. Therefore, they fail to design missions to take into account complex political situations, and they fail to tackle the root causes of conflicts. (Mazurana, 2005, 40.) Peace can, thus, be defined in different ways. Johan Galtung has introduced a widely known distinction between 'negative peace' and 'positive peace'. Whereas negative peace refers to absence of war and other forms of violence, positive peace refers more broadly to social justice (1969.) Webel and Galtung (2007, 6) describe positive peace as "the simultaneous presence of many desirable states of mind and society". According to Galtung (1996, 32), positive peace is the best protection against violence. Similarly, within a context of UN peacekeeping operations, Mazurana (2005, 40) notes that not until the UN, other international governments and governments pay attention to these factors, this cannot be changed.

3.3. Approaches to Feminism

All feminist approaches have a common goal: to draw attention to inequality that is based on gender, and to achieve equality between men and women (Finke, 2014, 306). Feminist scholars share the same concern on the gender-hierarchy of the international system which feminist scholarship considers being a normative problem that can be unveiled by conducting evaluative studies. Failure to recognize this hierarchy can be seen as an empirical problem among a wide range of scholars in general. Not revealing the hierarchy in scholarship, on the other hand, makes the whole field of IR and security studies less accurate and less powerful contributor to global politics. Thus, for feminist scholarship, gender defines the reasons and the ways global politics are studied. (Sjoberg, 2009, 3-4.) Consequently, feminist theories have contributed to security studies by analyzing and reformulating traditional ideas and views, explaining roles of women and gender in conflicts as well as by emphasizing issues that have been neglected by others. Feminist scholars have revealed the gendered bias of traditional concepts, such as peace and war, as well as gained new ideas on the role of women in conflict resolution. For instance, as touched upon above, feminists have broadened the way to look at security. Security is not only security from wars and armed conflicts but it is also security from domestic violence, poverty and ecological destruction. Feminists agree with the ideas of classical feminist Cynthia Enloe (2014) that security does not only refer to collective security of states but also security of individuals. (Sjoberg, 2009, 4-5.)

Despite different approaches, the majority of feminist theorists align themselves with traditional liberal feminism which tries to overcome the barriers of women's participation and put them in the center of attention (Pettman, 1996, 7). Feminist IR scholars can approach international relations from, for instance, realist, liberal, constructivist, critical, and poststructural perspectives. These approaches have different perceptions, ideas and predictions on world politics. Realist feminists call attention to the role of gender in strategy. Liberal feminists, on the other hand, urge that women should be included in the structures of world politics. Critical feminism "explores the ideational and material manifestations of gendered identity and gendered power in world politics". (Sjoberg, 2009, 3.) Feminist constructivism emphasizes the effect of gender in global politics and vice versa. Lastly, poststructural feminists concentrate on the language that empowers masculinity, marginalizes femininity and constructs world politics. (Sjoberg, 2009, 3.) Similarly, Mary Burguières (1990) has identified three "clusters" or "tendencies" in feminism, which all approach peace, war and gender differently. Firstly, *pacifist* or *maternalist* feminists see women as peaceful because of their gender. They want to utilize characteristics, commonly associated with women, to make peace. Secondly,

liberal feminists urge equality between men and women. Liberal feminists reject nature of women as a reason to oppress women. In addition, liberal feminists argue equality of women and men also in the military, including in combat positions. Thirdly, *anti-militarist feminists* abandon typical sex stereotypes of women being more peaceful, and oppose the militarization. (in Pettman, 1996, 107.)

In my research, I combine traditional liberal feminist ideas by examining the masculine structures of which women are often missing. Peacekeeping missions, and national militaries of which they consist of, are among the most male dominated institutions in the world. Women, as “a new thing” of peacekeeping, may face problems when they are trying to fit those structures with strong embedded values. Moreover, I criticize nature of women as a reason to oppress them. In the context of peacekeeping, women are often seen as being weaker and less qualified. However, the requirements for the deployment are the same for both men and women. Therefore, there is no legitimate reason to oppress or undermine qualified female peacekeepers. My approach to feminist theories include also notes from poststructural feminism, as I pay attention to the language of documents or my research participants. My research will contribute to feminist security studies, as a subsection of feminist IR studies.

My analysis combines of empirical and analytical feminism. *Empirical feminist* scholars argue that lives and experiences of women are still often left out from IR and security studies. Therefore, the majority of the research gives only a partial, masculine view that cannot give an explanation on the reality of the world. Further, they argue that denial of women in world politics is a result of men considering their experiences as experiences of both men and women. (True, 2013, 245.) Concurrently, *analytical feminism* reveals gender bias in key concepts of IR, providing a comprehensive understanding on the field. Analytical feminist scholars emphasize that western masculinity is associated with the autonomy, sovereignty, objectivity and universalism whereas femininity is associated with lack of them. For instance, in militaries all soldiers, both men and women, are trained to provide protection to women and children and to “suppress feminine emotions associated with bodily pain and caring”. (True, 2013, 251.) Thus, security is a concept that is considered as gender-biased in IR and security studies. Feminist scholars criticize these gendered identities and security discourses by using gendered analysis.

4. Methodology

This chapter presents the way this research is designed. It explains in detail how the data used is gathered and analyzed. Moreover, it then discusses qualitative questionnaire as a method and assesses its relevance to the current study. Finally, it discusses validity, issues of bias and potential limitations of the study while clarifying ethical considerations.

4.1. Questionnaire Responses as a Research Material

Denzin and Lincoln (2008, vii) argue that there has been a 'methodological revolution' in social sciences. Boundaries between disciplines have blurred and loosened while qualitative methodologies have gained a firm ground within a variety of methodologies used. Thus, since my research examines phenomenon of female peacekeepers rather than their number, a qualitative method suits best for my study (see Silverman, 2014, 5). As Berg (1989, 2-3) notes, quantitative research refers to measurement of thing. Qualitative research, on the other hand, examines concepts, definitions, characteristics, descriptions and meanings of things. It aims to answer questions regarding social settings and phenomena as well as individuals in them (ibid., 2, 6). Qualitative researchers seek to find answers to questions focusing on social experiences and their meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 8). Moreover, qualitative research provides an approach that enables researchers to gain a deep understanding of individuals and, further, of a given topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, 2). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is based on "lived experiences" of individuals (ibid.).

Similarly, my study is based on lived experiences of female military peacekeepers. I choose to analyze views of female peacekeepers themselves rather than perceptions of policymakers or both male and female peacekeepers. I believe such an approach would overlook views of women which I believe have possibility to provide more detailed and accurate information on their own role in peacekeeping. Thus, they are the ones being most affected by gender issues in the context of peacekeeping operations and the ones to determine their success (e.g. Karim, 2017). Moreover, unless the perceptions of female peacekeepers themselves do not reflect on the ideas of scholars and policymakers, there is a little chance that women would reach the goals set to them by these groups. To be able to understand and analyze the perceptions and views of female peacekeepers themselves, I needed to gather data in which they can have their voices heard.

In order to collect adequate data on the topic, I choose to use qualitative questionnaires as a method. Thus, my data mainly consist of responses to questionnaires (Appendix 1) sent to female peacekeepers by email. Fortunately, contemporary technologies available have expanded the possible ways to collect research data, and “interviews” are made possible to conduct through electronic outlets by sending, for instance, a qualitative questionnaire with open-ended questions (see Fontana & Frey, 2000, 666). In more detail, my research data was collected between December 2018 and January 2019. The sample was selected as a result of practical reasons: information concerning peacekeeping operations and their personnel is largely classified and for security reasons, information on or contact details for peacekeepers are not publicly available. Therefore, the invitation to participate in the questionnaire was sent to women of which all have participated in the peacekeeping training courses organized by the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT). With the help of FINCENT, an invitation to participate in the questionnaire was emailed to 60 female peacekeepers from 23 different countries. Since I wanted to protect the identity of the participants, I did not ask their nationality in the questionnaire. However, as will be discussed, the results indicate that the research participants came from different cultural backgrounds. Most of the women had already been deployed to UN peacekeeping operations, and a few were waiting for the deployment decision. All the women have, however, received an adequate training to work as qualified peacekeepers. The sampling used can be considered as *convenience sampling*. As Fink (2003, 41) defines, convenience sample is “a group of individuals who are ready and available”.

Moreover, women who were invited to participate in the research were also encouraged to forward the invitation to other female military peacekeepers. This sampling, in which new participants having the same characteristics are being picked through recommendations is called *snowball sampling* or *chain sampling* (Gobo, 2004, 449; Fink, 2003, 41; Noy, 2008, 328). This technique can be used in situations when a list of individuals is not available and cannot be compiled (Fink, 2003, 41), when individuals are “on the move” (Noy, 2008, 328) or when the researcher aims to find “hidden populations” (Noy, 2008, 330), such as peacekeepers. It is also seen an effective way to collect data on topics that are sensitive or private (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, 141; Waters, 2015, 367). Noy (2008, 327) argues that despite its weaknesses, if viewed critically, snowball sampling “can generate a unique type of social knowledge – knowledge which is emergent, political and interactional”. I decided to employ snowball sampling as an additional method and as “auxiliary mean” since peacekeeping units are tied social networks, in which individuals are closely interacting with one another and they share the same social knowledge (Noy, 2008, 330, 329). However, it is notable that people in the “same snowball”, in the same chain, might share many similar characteristics (Waters,

2015, 372). In my case, some characteristics can be, for instance, same nationality or same deployment location. Moreover, snowball sampling has raised concerns related to verification of respondents and the quality of data (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, 150, 158). However, it can be argued that emailed questionnaires produce a better-quality data than other forms of qualitative questionnaires. Emailed questionnaires provide more detailed responses, especially when they include open-ended questions. (Fontana & Frey, 2000, 667.)

The reason to collect data through qualitative questionnaires, instead of for example interviews, was mainly practical. Since organizing and conducting interviews is extremely time-consuming, by creating a questionnaire I was able to gather data from a larger group of female military peacekeepers. Moreover, I wanted to reach a wide range of nationalities from all over the world. Because the majority of participants live outside of Finland, and some are currently deployed to peacekeeping operations, face-to-face interaction with them was not possible. Further, as emphasized, a large part of the information concerning peacekeepers and their deployments is qualified. Anonymous questionnaires do not provide me any personal information which helps me to better protect identities of female peacekeepers participating in the research. Moreover, given the sensitiveness of my research topic, questionnaires including open-ended questions gave participants the possibility to share as much or as little information, stories and narratives as they wished.

Nevertheless, in order to evaluate the quality of the overall questionnaire, its questions, reliability and operationability for the this purpose, it was first piloted with a test group (see Marshall & Rossman, 2006, 125; Fink, 2003, 108). A pilot questionnaire was sent to a test group of three female peacekeepers who were aware of my ongoing research project and its main objectives. As a result of their useful and relevant feedback, the piloted questionnaire was edited to its final form. The final version of the questionnaire included 17 broad open-ended questions that were divided under five sections: female peacekeepers in general, work among local populations, work related to gender-based violence, the training of peacekeepers as well as conclusion. Themes of these sections were formulated reflecting the existing literature, policy documents and my private discussions with female military peacekeepers and other military personnel. Typically, literature reviews are good sources for finding themes (see Ryan and Bernad, 2000, 780). Questionnaires included open-ended questions concerning, for instance, reasons to deploy to peacekeeping mission, the role of female peacekeepers, building trust with locals, combating gender-based violence as well as the reputation of missions.

Unlike the majority of the previous research on female peacekeepers, I wanted to gather information not only from peacekeepers deployed to one specific UN peacekeeping operation (see Karim, 2017), and not only from women from a particular country (see Penttinen, 2012) but from women with different cultural backgrounds and from women who have been deployed, or who will be deployed soon, to UN peacekeeping operations all over the world. Echoing the ideas of Cynthia Enloe (2014, 307-308) I found it important to make visible also female peacekeepers coming from poorer countries as it is important to remember that there are also differences between women. Thus, as the results will indicate, some female peacekeepers stressed that cultural differences are even more significant than differences between men and women. Moreover, since the majority of the existing research on female peacekeepers have focused on the police component, or both on the police and the military components of peacekeeping operations, I wanted to focus on the military component only. To date, it is the component which, despite significant efforts to increase participation of women, has the smallest number of female peacekeepers – with women contributing approximately four percent of the military component (e.g. Karim, 2017, 823).

Within the time frame of four weeks to respond, I received 21 responses to my questionnaire. Taking into account extremely time-consuming open-ended questions of the questionnaire, the number of responses received can be seen as emphasizing the importance of the given topic. Moreover, the length of responses indicate that participants have given time and effort to meaningfully contribute to the study. Additionally, many of the female peacekeepers participating the questionnaire separately mentioned that the topic was important which is why they wanted to contribute to it by telling their stories and experiences. For instance, one female military peacekeeper wrote that she finds the research project as “a great initiative”, whereas another one noted that the topic is “relevant to the new trend of demands in the peace support operations and missions”. Moreover, one of the participants believed that this kind of research on the topic will, at the end, have an effect on how women have been and will be viewed in the context of peacekeeping.

4.2. Other Material

Other material used for this study consists of written documents. These documents were the above-mentioned report of the Independent High-Level Panel on Peace Operations (2015) as well as the Cruz report (2017). Additionally, various guidelines for peacekeepers and troop contributing countries were utilized when analyzing the data. Moreover, as one of the objectives of the analysis is

to evaluate whether or not the perceptions of female peacekeepers align with the perceptions of scholars and policymakers, also previous literature was used when discussing with the data.

4.3. Qualitative Questionnaires as a Method

Most of the literature and the majority of textbooks on qualitative research methods do not acknowledge qualitative questionnaires as a method (e.g. Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Seale, Gobo, Gubrium & Silverman 2010; Silverman 2014) and as Jansen, (2010, 3) notes, qualitative questionnaires are almost “non-existent” in them. Thus, qualitative methods are not typically associated with questionnaires, although in recent years, a growing body of literature have acknowledged “the complexity of subjective views” in questionnaires and tried to understand meanings of responses of individuals (Adamson et al., 2004, 139-140). While qualitative questionnaires, similarly to other qualitative methods, do not provide “hard data” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 7; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, 10), they enable the researcher to focus on individuals’ characteristics and beliefs especially on issues that are politically or ethically sensitive (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, 125, 126). Fink (2003, 1) defines a questionnaire, also known as a survey, as a “system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes or behavior”.

My questionnaire was a self-administered questionnaire meaning that it consisted of questions that individuals completed on their own (Fink, 2003, 22). In my case, a link to self-administrated questionnaires were emailed to the participants. Nevertheless, qualitative questionnaires, especially when including open-ended questions, collect information about individuals’ experiences and on meanings attached to them. (ibid., 61). Open-ended questions, which my questionnaire consists of, referring to questions that require respondents to answer using their own words (ibid., 163), allow the researcher to gain responses that were not anticipated (Fowler, 2009, 101). Further, they allow respondents to describe their real views on issues discussed, and have their own voices heard (ibid). Qualitative questionnaires provide information that answers to *hows* and *whys* of a given topic. (Fink, 2003, 61.) Moreover, Fink (2003, 62) continues that qualitative questionnaires are “useful when you want detailed information in the respondents’ own words. Qualitative questionnaires are particularly suited to examine feelings, opinions, and values of individuals and groups. Further, they are practical if a researcher has access to only small sample (ibid). As emphasized, by conducting qualitative questionnaires, I aim to collect data that can provide deep and unique information, instead of typical or generalizable knowledge, on the given topic (Fink, 2003, 68).

It has been argued that we currently live in an “interview society” which refers to a society whose individuals try make sense of their lives based on interviews, such as documentaries, talk shows and research interviews (Sivermann, 1993, 19). Thus, interviews are used to create information on lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 633) as well as to understand other individuals (Fontana & Frey, 2000, 645). Interviews can be conducted through face-to-face interaction but also by emailed and self-administered questionnaires (ibid). Qualitative questionnaires of this given research can also be seen as structured interviews, referring to same series of pre-established questions that are emailed to all participants (ibid, 649).

4.4. Validity, Limitations, Bias and Ethics

Findings of qualitative studies are not generalizable (see Gobo, 2004, 450). Further, qualitative research, and especially feminist qualitative research, is often being criticized for not being scientific and for devoid of validity (Berg, 1989, 2; Oleson, 2000, 230). Similarly, as a qualitative research on the phenomenon of female peacekeepers, my thesis does not claim to represent common or universally generalizable results or opinions on the topic, but rather the perceptions and ideas of people who work with the phenomenon that is studied here. Thus, there is a difference between the representativeness of samples and the generalizability of findings. The study can include a representative and accurate sample without generalizing its findings. (Ibid., 436.) Similarly, as Fink (2003, 68) notes: “Depth and uniqueness rather than breadth and representation should be a qualitative survey motto”.

It is notable that since individual participants of this study have willingly chosen to deploy to UN peacekeeping operations as female peacekeepers, they are expected to have positive perceptions on the role of military women in them. Therefore, the main research question of this study is not how female peacekeepers can increase the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations *per se* but rather how and why they believe they can do so. Further, it is important to acknowledge that conducting a feminist research is theoretically, analytically, ethically and politically challenging (Ackerly et al., 2006). Although evaluating women’s voices and experiences is central to feminist qualitative research (see Gilligan, 1993; Kitzinger, 2004, 126), can the data be evaluated as an accurate information of the world, or as an accurate information of their perceptions of the world? In other words, do these sources reflect on the realities of the UN peacekeepers? Kitzinger (2004, 126) points out that experiences and voices of women do not always tell ‘truths’. Instead, there is always

a possibility that “memories can be fallible, stories can be embroidered, participants may be more interested in creating a good impression than in literal accuracy, speakers contradict themselves and sometimes deliberately lie” (ibid). Moreover, Fontana & Frey (2000, 650) emphasize that participants may try to please the researcher or prevent him or her from gaining some specific information. Thus, they may give “socially desirable” responses (ibid).

Additionally, there are some limitations when conducting an analysis based on qualitative questionnaires. First of all, often the main problem is to get responses to the questionnaire sent. Gobo (2004, 442) identified three typical reasons for “the phenomenon of non-response”. Firstly, the lack of contact with persons selected to participate meaning, for instance, incorrect email address (ibid). To avoid this problem, the questionnaire was sent to emails which female peacekeepers used when contacting FINCENT in their training course related issues. Naturally, there is always a possibility that not all women read their email regularly or that they have changed their email address. Secondly, participants can refuse to respond (ibid). Regarding my case, as mentioned, the questionnaire including 17 open-ended questions was relatively time-consuming. That might have had an impact on the response rate. Additionally, there is a possibility that not everyone wanted to contribute or felt that they have a contribution to the study. Lastly, participants can refuse to fill in the whole questionnaire due to, for instance, too personal questions (ibid). Additionally, Fowler (2009, 49) notes that participants might be unable to complete the questionnaire due to, for instance, language limitations. For this reason, in my questionnaire, it was possible to leave responses blank if wished. However, nearly all of women participating responded to every question in the questionnaire. It is notable that non-response changes the data. As Gobo (ibid) notes: “Non-response makes non-random a sample chosen as random”. However, since I knew the time-consuming and sensitive nature of my questionnaire, it was sent to 60 people with acknowledging that there will be non-responses. Thus, there was a gap between the initial sample and the final sample that was taken into account prior data collection (Gobo, 2004, 441).

Moreover, there were also some technical and language barriers regarding the questionnaire. In more detail, the women selected for this study received an email including a link, and by following this link, they were able to respond to the questionnaire. It is notable, that due to technical difficulties some participants might not have had the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire. Furthermore, there might have been some language barriers. The language of the survey was English, and as a result, most of the women participating were not able to respond in their mother tongue. Additionally, although being piloted, not everyone understood every question in the survey. Thus, language barriers

may have had an influence on the depth of the responses (see Fink, 2003, 48). Moreover, it is notable that writing quotes later on the research are included as they were written, and they may have some grammar mistakes.

Although my data collection did not include face-to-face interaction and I was not able to collect nonverbal expressions (see Fontana & Frey, 2000, 666), I believe that, due to their commitment to the topic, research participants were able to describe their beliefs through self-reporting (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, 125). Thus, as Marshall and Rossman note, self-reporting may limit the ability to delve into “tacit beliefs and deeply held values there are still many occasions when surveying can be useful” (ibid).

The most prominent possible bias results in from working on the thesis with an organization. However, I did not get paid for writing my thesis, and since FINCENT provided me information and material that otherwise would not have been available, such as contact information for female military peacekeepers, my engagement with them in fact increased the validity of my research. FINCENT knowingly provided the material and contact information used. The finished thesis was sent to them before submitting in order to avoid classified information being published. Another possible bias results from the data collection that was conducted by using convenience and snowball sampling. Thus, it is notable that I might get a particular set of answers that add to the understanding of peacekeeping missions and actions in those missions.

Given the sensitiveness of a given topic, and the nature of qualitative research in general, it is also important to clarify some ethical considerations of the study. Thus, a high-quality research involving individuals needs to include careful ethical considerations (Berg, 1989, 130). First of all, participation in the research was completely voluntary and it was based on full and open information (see Berg, 1989, 134; Christians, 2000, 138). All of the participants received an email inviting them to contribute to the study. The participants of the study were clearly informed about the study, its nature and aims, and about their own role in it. The information was available on the email sent to them, and also at the beginning of the questionnaire. Additionally, they were informed that this research in question is done in cooperation with FINCENT, and that they will possibly use its results to develop their institution’s work in the future. In other words, the first standard ethical issue, ‘informed consent’, requirement was filled (Ryen, 2004, 231; Berg, 1989, 137). Christians (2000, 138) defines *informed consent* requirement as “a tradition that research subjects have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of experiments in which they are involved”. As Berg stresses, often in large-

scale questionnaires, instead of a written agreement on participation, participants give an *implied consent* to willingly and knowingly participate by responding to and completing time-consuming and long questionnaire (1989, 138). Similarly, Fink (2003, 93) notes that in email questionnaires, completed and returned questionnaires can be seen as an evidence of informed consent.

Moreover, also issues related to privacy and confidentiality were taken seriously into account. Researchers need to protect their participants' identity, as well as places and locations of the research (Ryen, 2004, 233). Berg (1989, 138) defines confidentiality as an "active attempt to remove from the research records any elements that might indicate the subjects' identities". He continues that, similarly to my case, self-administrated survey questionnaires are often able to provide anonymity to participants (ibid). Thus, with the context of the given research, especially since a large part issues regarding peacekeeping operations are confidential in nature, no questions related to participants' identity were asked. The questionnaire did not include any questions on their names or nationalities. They were only asked in which peacekeeping missions they have been deployed to, when, and in which kind of manning task did they serve. Emails or other contact information were not collected. Additionally, no harm or embarrassment was caused as a result of the research (see Christians, 2000, 139).

5. Add Women and Stir? – Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It empirically analyzes, following the themes of the qualitative questionnaire, whether or not the views of female military peacekeepers themselves echo the views of scholars and policymakers concerning the added value female peacekeepers are argued to bring to the military component of UN peacekeeping operations. In particular, this chapter aims to evaluate whether or not female military peacekeepers themselves believe that they can increase the operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, and if they do, whether or not there are any specific tasks they believe they are more effective at than their male colleagues and why. Moreover, I aim to discover what the main limitations female military peacekeepers might face when performing their duties are. To be able to answer these questions, the research explores the views, experiences and narratives of female military peacekeepers themselves. That is something the previous literature on the given topic is missing: the phenomenon and the added value of female military peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations is often discussed without analyzing views and perceptions of female peacekeepers, and without them even being present. Thus, the majority of existing literature is based on the experiences of male peacekeepers. Therefore, in this research I wanted to listen to female military peacekeepers as experts and explainers of the phenomena (ibid. 33).

Again, it should be emphasized that the chapter does not aim to present an objective view on how female military peacekeepers may increase the operational effectiveness of such missions, but instead, how they believe they can do so. As stressed above, when evaluating the effectiveness of peacekeeping, it is important not only to take into account the perceptions of policymakers at the UN Headquarters or the views of IR scholars. Instead, it is vital to listen to and reflect on the perspectives of female peacekeepers working in the field as, at the end of the day, they are the ones determining the effectiveness and success of such operations. Often, however, female peacekeepers are excluded from discussions regarding the operational effectiveness. Moreover, if the perceptions of female peacekeepers do not align with the ideas of policymakers and scholars, and women themselves do not feel that they can be more effective at specific tasks, it is likely that they will not meet the goals set for them. As Karim (2017, 827) notes, “Belief in ‘self-efficacy’ on the part of female peacekeepers may be a necessary condition for female peacekeepers to achieve these outcomes”.

5.1. The Role of Female Peacekeepers in UN Peacekeeping Operations

In general, all 21 women military peacekeepers, who replied to the qualitative questionnaire described the role of female military peacekeepers in a positive way. This is not a surprise since all of them had willingly decided to work as peacekeepers at the UN. Nevertheless, most of them described that their time in the mission was “interesting”, “fabulous” or a “good experience” (Participants No. 1, 5 and 13). As mentioned, if peacekeepers have a positive experience in the mission, they might contribute to its success. In contrast, if the time in the mission had been a negative experience, women might not have been as effective at their job (see Karim, 2017, 827). Consequently, women participating in the research have more likely contributed positively to missions they have been deployed to. Moreover, women saw their role as female military peacekeepers in such missions in a positive light. Participants viewed or had experienced that their role as female peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations was “pivotal”, “vital” and “important” (Participants No. 19, 15, 4). One of the participants emphasized that the role of female peacekeepers is “crucial and essential for the success of the peace process” (Participant No. 12), whereas another described that women are the “backbone” of such operations (Participant No. 4). She stressed that female personnel are the ones to get things done.

Additionally, also participants who experienced the role of female peacekeepers being similar to the role of males, saw their own role as females in a positive light. Many of them noted that although the role of both men and women is the same, women often have another perspective and approach to issues than men. One participant (No. 9), who served in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan stated: “The same [role of female peacekeeper] as for men but with another perspective”. Similarly, as True (2013, 241) argues, people in the margins, such as female peacekeepers in peacekeeping missions, bring a fresh perspective and practices to international politics. This kind of fresh thinking and new ideas may bring new solutions to old problems but they may also reveal the gender relations within the operations.

A few women argued that due to different perspectives, female and male peacekeepers complement each other in the mission. One of the participants called this approach as “covering the gaps” (Participant No. 16). Thus, their different perspective also refers to their view of security. As echoed in the feminist scholarship (e.g. Sjoberg, 2009), participants seemed to have a broader perception of the security. Their replies indicate that they define security not only as security from armed conflicts but as security from oppression, poverty, and inequality. As echoed, concepts, such as peace, war and security, are defined based on political narratives (see Wibben, 2011). Before, narratives on peace and conflict were based on different experiences than today. Traditional notes on peace were referring to absence of war, but as the nature of conflict has changed, it has changed political narratives that

these concepts are based on. Nowadays, as the data of the study indicates, definition of security has broadened. One factor may be that there are more actors, such as women, whose experiences are increasingly taken into account. The different viewpoint of women has resulted in positive outcomes in the host communities. Participants noted that female peacekeepers often voluntarily engage in different charity and humanitarian projects during the missions although it would not be in their job description. Thus, in order to have a broader and more inclusive approach to the mission, it is vital to have women in the troops.

Regarding the role of female peacekeepers, the majority of participants noted that the role of female military peacekeepers did influence their decision to deploy. The ones arguing that the role did not have an impact on the decision stressed that they would have applied anyway, even without the ongoing discussion around the theme. Nevertheless, most of the participants stressed that the role of female peacekeepers did have an impact on the decision to deploy. One female peacekeeper told that she decided to deploy after she had heard about the need to increase the number of female peacekeepers, as well as about the impact female personnel had already made on the missions and the host community: “This prompted me to be more aggressive on my decision to become a peacekeeper as I know I can be a help to my team in reaching out to those most affected by conflict” (Participant No. 11). Another participant emphasized that she wanted to contribute for her part “to prove that female peacekeepers are capable of playing an important role in this framework” (Participant No. 12). However, it is notable that the presence of female military peacekeepers is often only justified and accepted because of the added benefit they are argued to bring to missions. Consequently, this might cause huge pressure for them to succeed in order to prove themselves, especially since male peacekeepers, to be accepted, are not expected to bring any ‘additional value’. They are considered being naturally effective at peacekeeping. As a result, expectations that are put on female personnel are often disproportionate. (see Karim, 2019; Karim & Beardsley, 2017.) The requirements and expectations for all peacekeepers, both men and women, should be the same.

Moreover, when comparing the role of female peacekeepers to the role of their male colleagues in more detail, the perceptions and opinions of participants were divided. A small majority argued that the role of female peacekeepers did indeed differ from the role of their male colleagues. Participants, who argued that the role was nearly the same stated that both male and female peacekeepers knew their tasks in the mission, which they perform as equally and effectively as each other. One participant, who served in the United Nations-African Union Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), argued that her work output was similar to her male colleagues’ output (Participant No. 18).

Instead of highlighting differences between men and women, a few participants stressed an important issue concerning cultural differences. One female military peacekeeper noted that cultural differences were the factors that made the roles of female and male peacekeepers different in some situations. She stressed that, according to her experience as a Nordic female peacekeeper, there is a difference between Nordic male and female peacekeepers. Thus, as Karim (2019, 36) emphasizes, there is a lack of understanding that peacekeeping operations consist of soldiers coming from various countries with different cultural backgrounds. As a result, within the operation, the knowledge and understanding on issues, such as gender, may vary greatly. Varying degrees of knowledge on, for instance gender, might pose difficulties to management of peacekeeping missions in general but also to work of gender focal points and gender advisers (see Karim, 2019).

A few participants argued that there should not be a difference between the roles of male and female peacekeepers, but there is because people continue to make the distinction between them. As noted, women working in peace and security sector are often identified by their gender. For instance, female leaders are called female leaders, whereas men leaders are called leaders (see Sjoberg, 2009, 1). This argument seems to be valid even today since, based on the data, the gender of female peacekeepers was frequently seen as an identifying factor. For instance, one participant who was deployed to UNIFIL and UNTSO noted: “Female soldiers and peacekeepers are still a ‘new thing’ in peacekeeping world, which is positive but also causes problems with gender related issues” (Participant No. 2). Further, another woman who is currently being deployed to UNAMID stressed that since women are new in peacekeeping world, most of the roles in missions are assigned to male peacekeepers. This comes down to the traditional male dominance of security section (e.g. Cohn, 2013, 126). Experiences of female military peacekeepers show that almost twenty years after the resolution 1325 on WPS, in which women were acknowledged playing an active role, peace and security continue to be “a man’s world” (e.g. Tickner, 1992). Moreover, these perceptions stem from the old-fashioned idea of women, who have been working in domestic and private arenas while men have reserved “important” arenas of international or military security (Enloe, 2014, 16). This kind of thinking is problematic, as it undermines the active role of women. How long it will take before the tasks are designed for both men and women equally, or until men and women are assigned to them equally? These will not take place over the night. Instead, they require new narratives, structural changes and lot of political will.

Moreover, one of the most prominent issues the participants raised was the quality of peacekeepers. Many of the participants stressed that the TCC countries and the UN should only send qualified peacekeepers to the missions – regardless of their gender. One participant, who served in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Lebanon and the Middle East (UNTSO) stated that the TCC countries “have to remind themselves to send only qualified females to overseas” (Participant No. 2). She further emphasized that women who are sent to work in the military component of peacekeeping operations should have military training, and not just women who work in the armed forces. Similarly, another participant noted that although it is a priority for the UN to increase the number of women in operations in accordance with to the UN Security Council Resolutions, some TCC countries tend to send unskilled women:

“I think the biggest problem with female peacekeepers is that in some countries they don’t have military training. I don’t like that countries send female peacekeepers just because they are female if they don’t have military training background. This kind of female should take part in civil tasks. Person who doesn’t have the basic military skills is threat to other peacekeepers if they don’t know how to use a map, communication tools or give first aid. I don’t want to patrol with this kind of team mate. At least what I noticed in the training and heard from the field, there are lots of this kind of female peacekeepers who are, for example, doctors in real life and had just one or two-week training before deploying to the operation... Unskilled military female peacekeeper are not good for the reputation of females or the UN”

(Participant No. 3)

The participant pointed out that is not comfortable, for example, to patrol with this kind of unskilled person one does not trust. She continued:

“If they are valid female peacekeepers I think they do [improve the reputation of the mission], if they are some random civilian women put in military clothes and officer rank (as I have noticed and heard some countries do) I think they don’t do good. I think that if unskilled female peacekeeper works with local officers, that shows to them that female should not work in military or equal tasks with men.”

(Participant No. 3)

Thus, some women are missing skills that are essential and can be lifesaving. First aid skills, for instance, are a minimum requirement for all peacekeepers (UNDPKO, 2017). Further, the participant noted that sending unqualified women will most likely not help the conditions of women in the host communities. The same issue was also highlighted in the report of the Independent High-Level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) stating that the TCC countries should “ensure that all personnel deployed are trained, equipped and commanded” in order to deliver their responsibilities (2015, 42 para. 105). Similarly, the training of military women, in particular, was highlighted in Milad’s speech to the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centers in October 2018:

“Peacekeeping needs more women. And I need you to train more women. Please run more courses that have fifty-fifty men and women students. When you sponsor a foreign student, offer that government sponsorship for two students if one of them is a woman.”

(Milad’s Speech to the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres
(IAPTC) Conference on October 2nd 2018)

As the participants echoed, sometimes attempts to gender balance missions, lead to “adding and stirring” or “adding and hoping”. Similarly, in the academia, one of the main approaches regarding the need to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping has been the liberal feminist “add-women-and-stir” approach (e.g. Harding, 1995; Valenius, 2007; Cohn et al., 2004). Väyrynen (2004, 129) notes that experts solving issues, for instance regarding peacekeeping operations, often take “the world for granted”. As a result, if the problem is considered to be the underrepresentation of women in peacekeeping operations, especially in the military component, the only solution is to increase their number. Often policymakers assume that only by adding and stirring female personnel into the structures of peacekeeping operations and their military components will women, solely by being present, change the persistent gender hierarchies of the UN and the UNDPKO, leading to wider gender equality in the future. Elina Penttinen (2012) further elaborates the “add-women-and-stir” approach and notes that it could be argued that policies reflecting resolution 1325 are not “add-women-and-stir” but more akin to “add-women-and-hope”. She notes that the approach is not effective since there are so few female personnel in the mission and, in addition, it puts pressure and tasks on those few women who are in missions. (Ibid.,164.)

The “add-and-stir” approach, similarly to the “add-and-hope” approach, is problematic in many ways. As Valenius (2007, 513) emphasizes, the results of adding and stirring are often only “cosmetic”, and

additionally, the approach “essentializes and totalizes gender and women’s experiences, as if biological womanhood were enough to bring out women’s experiences”. Unfortunately, as the results of the study indicate, these approaches still widely exist. According to the participants, some TCC countries keep sending unqualified female peacekeepers abroad, and assume that they will fit in. And even if they would not, those particular TCC countries could still argue that they are implementing resolutions on WPS and increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations. If the TCC counties would not try to slavishly follow the WPS agenda, they would have a possibility to truly change the stubborn structures. Moreover, as Cohn et al. (2004, 137) note, if the WPS agenda were not stuck to the “add-and-stir” approach, the agenda would have the potential to transform the way security is understood and maintained, which would further help transform the gender hierarchies and structures of institutions. Thus, in order to increase the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, it is not enough to just add some women to operations and hope that they will, only by being present, make them more effective.

Therefore, gender balancing as a policy is problematic although it is easy to measure. Although gender balancing and the increased number of women are important priorities for the UN and for many TCC counties, as the above-mentioned Resolution 2242 for instance indicates, gender balancing should not be done by undermining the possible consequences. Unskilled peacekeepers can, on the contrary, harm the reputation of the organization which is already in question. If the structures and values of peacekeeping are actually meant to change, there are no “shortcuts to happiness”. They can only be changed by sending adequately trained professional peacekeepers to operations.

As will be indicated below, regarding the possible added value female peacekeepers might bring to the military component of UN peacekeeping operations, most of the participants highlighted, similarly to policymakers and scholars, work among the local populations. As the results below will indicate, participants believed that military female peacekeepers are often more efficient in interacting with locals than their male colleagues, and that they can act as a role model to women in the host communities. In addition, they believed that good relationship with locals also helps to combat gender based violence. However, female peacekeepers did also stress some of the barriers or limitations they have faced when trying to use their full capacity as peacekeepers.

5.2. Work among Local Populations

The relationship between peacekeepers and the local population is crucial. As Heidberg (1991, 147-148) notes, it is a “decisive element in determining the operation’s success or failure”. Thus, nearly all of the research participants stressed the excellent ability to work with local communities as one of the most important skills female peacekeepers brought to the military component of the UN peacekeeping operations. Some suggested that women were easier to tell the stories to and to trust since they might share similar gendered experiences.

All of the participants believed, at least to some extent, that they were more effective than men at gaining trust of local communities and therefore, more effective at gathering information. Gaining information from locals is highly important for the operationability and safety of the mission since reports on the situation on the ground are largely based on information gained from locals (e.g. HIPPO, 2015; Cruz, 2017). Research participants had experienced being warmly welcomed by the host communities and nearly all women argued that female military peacekeepers indeed tended to gain the trust of locals more easily. Moreover, some participants believed that solely a presence of uniformed female peacekeepers made the local population more comfortable when meeting uniformed staff. One of them stated: “Some may look into the male peacekeepers as the same perpetrators or offenders thus, not trusting or cooperating with these male peacekeepers in their tasks” (Participant No. 11). This statement strongly linked to the basic assumption, which also feminist security studies echo, stating that men are the combatants and the perpetrators of conflicts whereas women are their victims. It is important to emphasize that, similarly, women can be fighters and perpetrators and men victims.

Moreover, another female peacekeeper, who served in UNAMID, emphasized that local women are, not only more cooperative towards female peacekeepers, but also more cooperative in sharing information. She noted:

“When male peacekeepers interact with their male counterparts in the host country, males normally do not want to say much but if you interact with women they really say a lot of things which needs attention”.

(Participant No. 15)

A wide network of informants is, indeed, crucial for the success of the operation. The majority of participants stressed that uniformed female peacekeepers got a lot of positive attention in the host country. That is one of the reasons why local people and especially women and children, tended to

approach female military peacekeepers and make an initiative to interact with them. Women described they felt that local communities saw female personnel as “approachable” and “trustworthy” (Participant No. 9). One participant who had peacekeeping experience from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) said:

“Children and ladies approached me easier than they approached male officers. I used to meet them [women and children] at the airport”.

(Participant No. 1)

Furthermore, sometimes presence of female peacekeepers is simply a necessity to be able to interact with the locals. Nearly every participant stressed that in some cultural settings local women were not allowed to talk to a person with an opposite sex. One female peacekeeper, who had served in Darfur (UNAMID) noted that Sudanese women, for instance, could not interact with male peacekeepers, which is why it was vital to have female personnel in the team. Another female peacekeeper, who had experience from Afghanistan, stressed the same issue. She mentioned that she did not encounter any problems when interacting with locals, male or female, but that in some cases the presence of female peacekeepers was crucial. Interestingly, none of the female peacekeepers had not had any problems with communicating with local men.

According to female military peacekeepers, a great ability to interact with and gain the trust of locals more easily results from the perceptions of locals regarding female peacekeepers. Both scholars and policymakers believe that locals tend to see women as loving and caring helpers. Many of the participants shared the same view. One female peacekeeper described:

“Women naturally have a compassionate and caring heart. They are also accommodative, making people freely to share with them.”

(Participant No. 4)

Similarly, another female peacekeeper, currently deployed to Darfur (UNAMID) said:

“It is easier for local populations to interact with female peacekeepers because women are generally considered to be more humane and not a threat generally.”

(Participant No. 7)

Thus, female peacekeepers are often seen through lenses of *pacifist* or *maternalist* feminists who see women being more peaceful than men because of their gender (Pettman, 1996, 107). Women are traditionally associated with peace and nurture, whereas men, in the contrary, with violence and war (Pettman, 1996, 92). A large number of female peacekeepers noted that female peacekeepers are often associated with caring mother figures. One female peacekeeper, currently serving in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) wrote: “Because of motherly love, they [female peacekeepers] are seen as peacefully, caring and loving” (Participant No. 16). Moreover, women believed that as a result of their caring heart they are were more understanding in locals’ issues than their male colleagues.

There is a wide range of literature on the topic. Previous research covers various issues, starting from play of Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, in which peaceful women did not want to sleep with men before the war between Sparta and Athens was over (Charlesworth, 2008) and moving on to peacekeeping. Although the results of the study refer to similar issues, this kind of thinking is problematic and inaccurate in many ways. Firstly, it reinforces stereotypes in peacekeeping missions. Stereotypes, on the other hand, make it harder to change the embedded values within the missions. Moreover, the fact that scholars, policymakers and female peacekeepers themselves think that women are more peaceful in nature, undermine the differences between women and differences between men. What is one does not fit in to the typical picture? In that case, it may be hard to work among people who have this sort of perception. Additionally, it may cause stress that one does not behave or act as others expect him or her to behave.

Female military peacekeepers believed they can deal with the most affected people of the conflict in the mission area. Participants stressed that local people, and especially women and children, often came to female peacekeepers to share their stories and experiences. One participant noted that female peacekeepers tended to hear stories and narratives of local more easily than their male colleagues since locals did not see women as a threat. On the contrary - she continued that women and children did not have to fear female soldiers “as there is the ‘mother’ figure in females which signifies protection and care” (Participant No. 11). A few participants noted that they believe female personnel are more empathic than their male colleagues. Additionally, based on the research data, local people saw military female personnel as providing not only solutions to their problems but also security. Although personnel wearing uniforms are often associated with insecurity and war, female personnel wearing military uniforms were not seen as threats. One female peacekeeper noted:

“The local population judge, generally, that female peacekeepers inspire confidence and calm tensions. By the contrast, when the local people face male, even if they are peacekeepers, they strongly think that the conflict and the tensions still persisted.”

(Participant No. 12)

Sometimes even the presence of female soldiers in missions was seen as a positive sign in the eyes of locals. A few participants stressed that often solely presence of women was seen as “a prove that the peace process is in progress” (Participant No. 12). The same issue is also echoed by scholars but from a different point of view. Some scholars argue (e.g. Karim & Beardsley, 2013) that female peacekeepers are not deployed to the most dangerous places – places in which they are needed the most. It seems like local communities may have the same perception: if there are female personnel involved, there is light at the end of the tunnel. I slightly disagree with this view. Obviously men make the majority of the military component of peacekeeping operations, but I have heard experiences of women from places such as Afghanistan and Iraq, that are far from safe or peaceful places.

Moreover, nearly every female military peacekeeper believed or has experienced that they can encourage local women to participate in decision-making or peace processes within their own communities. Participation of women is indeed crucial and scholars argue that peace will last more likely in cases in which peace processes were inclusive (e.g. Moser & Clark, 2001). Many female peacekeepers echoed that seeing uniformed female peacekeeper performing their duties will make local women feel more confident in themselves. The majority of female peacekeepers believed that they could act as “role models” and “empower” local women. Thus, many highlighted that since local women can identify themselves with female peacekeepers, it was crucial to show local women that they are able to do the same job as men. One women wrote:

“Women in the community could already see how these female peacekeepers, especially the female MilObs [Military Observers] are working with the team in the team sites. That there are female team leaders, staff officers, drive the team on patrol, lead the negotiation and everything a male peacekeeper does is now also being done by a female peacekeeper. With that, they can too be a part in the decision-making for their families and communities.”

(Participant No. 11)

This issue can be reflected beyond peacekeeping. When female military peacekeepers show that they can perform the same duties as men, they can encourage local women and girls to challenge stereotypical gender roles, jobs and positions – although there is a lot to be also at the mission until female peacekeepers achieve the gender equality.

Additionally, female peacekeepers also believed they can help local women to participate in the society. As one participant, who has served in both UNMIS (United Nations Mission in Sudan) and UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan) noted, in most of the countries UN peacekeeping missions are deployed to, local people are not fully aware of issues related to gender equality, and many women live under oppression. She stressed:

“When more female peacekeepers are deployed, they can be used to assist these women in expressing themselves, since it is a taboo for a number of these women to freely interact with the opposite sex. As a result, these women will be assisted in decision-making and peace processes.”

(Participant No. 6)

Moreover, simultaneously as women prove that men and women can do the same job, they show that women and men can freely communicate with one another. Thus, many female military peacekeepers believed that an increased participation of local women may possibly help to achieve gender equality and lasting peace in the host community. Nevertheless, one female peacekeeper, who has been deployed to Lebanon (UNIFIL) as well as to UNTSO, kept in mind that missions or female peacekeepers cannot have an influence on everything:

“Seeing female peacekeepers, doing the same job as men, can encourage local females that they might also have a chance to do something out of traditional gender roles, but peacekeepers cannot change the host nation’s culture or politics etc., just with participating and showing different gender roles.”

(Participant No. 2)

Indeed, it is important to bear in mind that embedded values and hierarchical structures do not change overnight, and they cannot be changed from outside. Although female military peacekeepers would have a positive influence on gender equality, the change needs to happen inside of people’s minds, values, and realities.

Furthermore, some scholars argue that the presence of female peacekeepers has a positive impact on behavior of their male colleagues within the mission (e.g. Karim, 2019). The majority of female peacekeepers participating in my study agreed that it did have or it may have had a positive effect. A few stressed that female peacekeepers were often more calm than their male colleagues, which is why they were sometimes able to calm the possible tensions rising at the work environment. One woman who had served in MINUSCA stated that female officers “cool down everyone’s temper especially in meetings” (Participant No. 1). Similarly, another female peacekeeper noted that the presence of women in the troops reduced stress and created a work-friendly environment, whereas another woman stressed that also male peacekeepers expressed that females create “harmony” in the mission unit (Participant No. 8). Moreover, one participant, who had served in Sudan (UNMIS) and in Darfur (UNAMID) raised a concrete example and stated that female personnel had a positive impact on the hygiene and the cleanliness of their male colleagues which also affected the overall atmosphere at the mission.

5.3. Work Related to Gender-Based Violence

Some participants argued that female military peacekeepers at the unit acted as “a source of morale”. This can be seen, for instance, in the way male peacekeepers behave and interact with locals while female colleagues are present. One woman, currently serving in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), stated that because of female personnel present, men “adopt an attitude of tolerance” (Participant No. 5). Similarly, another participant said that male peacekeepers who have female colleagues might become more “cautious of their behavior towards any women, whether local populace or their comrades in uniforms and those civilians working for the UN” (Participant No. 11). Some participants also pointed out that male peacekeepers, similarly to female peacekeepers, wanted to be valued and want to protect the already damaged image of peacekeeping, which is why they improve their behavior. Within this context, a few women echoed that the presence of female military peacekeepers might have also had an influence on alleged gender-based violence conducted by some male peacekeepers. One female peacekeeper with experience from South Sudan (UNMISS) noted that the presence itself did not change the behavior of male peacekeepers “but it helped them to understand women and not to be abusive” (Participant No. 16). Similarly, some female military peacekeeper stated that presence of female personnel might have reduced risk of gender-based violence conducted by some of their male

counterpart in the area. Furthermore, one woman, who had experience from UNIFIL, noted that presence of female peacekeepers can be both positive and negative, and she raised some problems:

“Yes, it [presence of female peacekeepers] has an effect, in good and bad ways. Good way might be that all try to do their best to keep troops, equipment, accommodations in order because females involved, but also females are a minority which causes gender based harassment and difficulties between inter-sex relations.”

(Participant No. 2)

Thus, sexual harassment in male-dominated institutions such as in peacekeeping missions is not uncommon and female peacekeepers may be exposed to sexual harassment during their time in the mission. Unfortunately, it is often considered as “normal” and as an issue women just have to deal with if they want to serve as peacekeepers. As Simic (2010, 196) notes, the issue “women in the military are exposed to high rates of sexual harassment is not news”. Thus, women in military are in ‘double jeopardy’. Jeffreys (2007, 16) claims that women in the military are in danger from both their (mainly male) colleagues and from their ‘enemies’ or other local paramilitary forces. She argues, that the root cause of the danger is the masculinity of the military (ibid).

On the other hand, these strongly masculine attitudes and values may slowly be changing. Whereas before, the guidelines and booklets of militaries included inappropriate language regarding women, at least in Finland (see Jokinen, 2000), it is not the case anymore. More and more women are serving in militaries, and changing the view people have on soldiers. For instance, an increasing amount of advertisement of the military is including pictures of female soldiers. When women become more visible, when problems that they face are heard, also the masculine attitudes are possible to be changed. Nevertheless, it is notable that also men and male peacekeepers may be exposed to sexual harassment in the mission.

Nevertheless, despite the zero-tolerance efforts of the UN, gender-based violence is still a problem in military components of UN peacekeeping missions. As mentioned, I define gender-based violence as “any act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationship” (UNHCR, n.d). Evidence of gender-based violence in peacekeeping operations have raised a question on the appropriateness of soldiers creating peace (e.g. Whitworth, 2004). If men indeed are more aggressive and abusive than women, an argument I do not agree with, why are they

assigned for a job in which they should provide protection? Especially in peacekeeping, which aims to create lasting peace?

Thus, gender-based violence is a human rights violation but it also violates the image and the legitimacy of UN peacekeeping operations and undermines the work done for gender equality in local communities (see Karim & Beardsley, 2016). Although the number of reported cases has decreased in recent years, there were still 30 cases reported for instance in 2013 (ibid., 102). Moreover, unfortunately a large part of cases go by unreported because most of the victims do not feel comfortable to report so in reality, the number of cases is most likely even bigger. Therefore, a good relationship between peacekeepers and locals is essential. A trust may help victims, mostly women and children, to report on cases of gender-based violence. Reported cases can further be used in the fight against impunity. Thus, nearly all of the female peacekeepers participating in the study, similarly to policymaker and scholars, believed that as a result of their good relationship with local communities, they did help to combat gender-based violence. One woman noted:

“Since women are mostly victims they can freely share with other women [rather] than men. Also, gender violence issues will be addressed as more cases will be reported as now women will be free to talk about them”.

(Participant No. 4)

Similarly, another woman stressed that in the fight against gender-based violence and its impunity, gathering as much information as possible on the cases is essential, and often female officers were easier to share this information with. Another woman, who had served in UNAMID noted that locals were more open to share these experiences with female peacekeepers since they felt more secured and comfortable.

A few participants also commented on these allegations of gender-based violence some male peacekeepers have faced, and their effect on the legitimacy of peacekeeping missions. Many of them noted that to date, there are no reported cases in which woman would be the perpetrator. One woman with experience from UNIFIL and UNTSO stated:

“When you think about misuse of authority, sexual abuse etc. what have been occurred in some missions effecting strongly in missions’ and organization’s reputation, in that

case female might affect positively. It is harshly said, but it is really unlikely that female would do this kind of things during employment”.

(Participant No. 2)

Furthermore, women believed that they can help to prevent gender-based violence, conducted by both peacekeepers and locals, by awareness-raising and education. Some women pointed out that they have both lived and trained expertise on issues related to gender-based violence, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. As one female peacekeeper stressed, problems that female victims face might be better understood by other female counterparts. A few female peacekeepers emphasized that some women, due to lack of knowledge, kept their experiences to themselves and did not report on these crimes and “until it is revealed to them that they are able to seek advice and help” (Participant No. 16). This is why work of peacekeepers on this issue is essential. Many participants highlighted that they are able to raise awareness among the local population on women’s rights as well as on the fight against gender-based violence which, as a result, might increase women’s integration in social and political life. It is notable, however, that peacekeepers should educate and raise awareness among both men and women of the host communities, in order to help mitigate violence and abuse. Additionally, some participants noted that education can be carried out also by showing good example to locals.

Not only women can educate or raise awareness on these issues. Instead, also male peacekeepers play a crucial role in education and awareness raising activities concerning gender-based violence. Indeed, if male personnel are committed to raise the issue, they may make a huge difference. Thus, one research participant highlighted the role of men in this issue. In more detail, with an example of HeForShe campaign of the UN Women, she noted that gender equality cannot be achieved without men and boys taking the full responsibility. Moreover, she stressed that male personnel play better role as gender advocates: “Speaking out as active agents and stakeholders who can transform social norms, behaviors and gender stereotypes” (Participant No. 6).

A few participants believed that female peacekeepers cannot help to combat gender-based violence, and they could not see presence of female personnel having an effect. One woman pointed out that peacekeepers are not the “major perpetrator of gender based violence” which is why she does not believe that female peacekeepers could influence on reducing it (Participant No. 9). Although peacekeepers would not be the major perpetrator, it does not mean that the problem should not be solved. It is, thus, unrealistic to believe that solely the presence of women would change whole the

culture of peacekeeping operations. However, they can still have an impact whether or not the perpetrator is a peacekeeper or a local. Similarly, Karim and Bearsdley (2016) conclude, missions consisting of peacekeepers from countries that do well in gender equality, have fewer allocations of gender-based violence. This indicates that to improve equality within the missions, beliefs and knowledge of individuals in regards to gender equality should be improved, and national militaries sending troops should focus on educating their personnel accordingly.

Furthermore, sometimes women are argued being deployed to peacekeeping missions at least partly to improve their legitimacy and overall reputation which have been damaged in recent years due to the alleged cases of gender-based violence. Although, similarly to Jeffreys (2007), Annica Kronsell (2012, 111-112) notes, problems related to those issues usually have a little to do with women but rather with masculinity, and “particularly the problematic view of sexuality embedded in militaries and peacekeeping”, nearly all research participants agreed that qualified female peacekeepers improved the overall reputation and image of the operation. Women gave several different reasons, stating that women did improve the image because they were “mission oriented” and because some things were better addressed if they are addressed by woman, for instance issues related to women and children, human rights and gender-based violence. Peacekeeper, who served in the Golan (UNDOF), argued that female personnel helped to “build the reputation that has been damaged” (Participant No. 9). Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that only professional female peacekeepers may possibly improve the overall image and reputation. As stressed, non-qualified personnel, both men and women, have negative impacts on the image the locals have on the mission.

How to improve the damaged reputation? Many participants believed that solely the fact that women and men were working together showed good example to the host communities and therefore improved the overall legitimacy, reputation and image of the mission. As one participant stated: “We show the norm that men and women work side by side to solve problems” (Participant No. 8). Mixed teams further strengthen the idea that military trained troops including both male and female personnel would be the ideal and desirable composition of the military component. Moreover, education plays a major part when building the reputation and the legitimacy of peacekeeping missions (see Kronsell, 2012, 111-112). The training of peacekeepers should include more training on gender-awareness to teach troops how the sexuality is understood and constructed within the UN system (ibid). Several participants believed that women can play a role in gender-awareness training of other peacekeepers. As argued, the difference between male and female peacekeepers might not be that significant but cultural differences between peacekeepers play a major role. Therefore, gender

awareness training should be in a crucial role within the missions in order to make sure every single person in the mission is on the same page with this issue.

5.4. Limitations of Female Peacekeepers

Although female peacekeepers themselves, similarly to scholars and policymakers, widely believed they can increase the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, some of them had faced barriers and limitations preventing them from using their full capacity as peacekeepers (e.g. Karim, 2017, 834-835; Carreiras, 2010, 438). Some of these limitations result from the fact that peacekeeping operations, like national militaries which they are consisted of, are masculine and male-dominated institutions with only a small minority of personnel being women (e.g. Enloe 2012; Hearn, 2012). Some female peacekeepers who participated in my study had faced limitations when performing their duties as peacekeepers.

A few of them noted that since women are “new to the military”, they were sometimes considered being physically too weak and therefore getting “special treatment”. These traditional prejudices often stem from the idea that, in this “dangerous world”, men are expected to be protectors and suppress their “own fears, brace themselves and step forward to defend the weak, women and children” (Enloe, 1989). One participant had also heard these prejudices from male peacekeepers. In more detail, she was warned prior to the deployment that she could not handle being a female peacekeeper. She wrote: “Male peacekeepers discouraged us to deploy as MilObs due to facilities and danger of being SEA victims too” (Participant No. 11). This comment culminates the embedded stereotypes that are widely shared within the organization. Even though the ideas of “dangerous world” were written already thirty years ago, the same sort of perceptions of typical gender roles still exist. Women have been in national militaries already for decades, but they are still widely seen as needing protection of men. Luckily, these old-fashioned views are increasingly being challenged, and not everyone thinks that military is a “men’s business” (e.g. Pettman, 1996, 144) For instance, some argue that militaries should represent better the people they are protecting – both men and women.

However, this “gendered protection norm” of strong men protecting vulnerable women still exists in peacekeeping operations and limits female peacekeepers to use their whole potential available (see Karim & Beardsley, 2017, 3). For example, one participant noted that because of their lower rank in the military, voices of female peacekeepers were “hardly heard” (Participant No. 4). Despite the gendered protection norm, female peacekeepers argued that local women seemed to feel more secured

with female peacekeepers than with their male colleagues. Opposite to Enloe's "dangerous world" theory, local women in the host communities did not see female peacekeepers as weak or in need of protection. Instead, they saw female military peacekeepers and protective forces.

Cohn (2013, 127) notes that this idea of masculine men protecting vulnerable people of the society is also central to the link between men, hegemonic masculinity and the military. Some female peacekeepers did emphasize that most of the men in their missions had better physical condition than themselves which helped them to perform in different tasks. Since the weather in many mission areas is extremely warm and the equipment is heavy, better physical condition may help, for instance, in patrolling. Furthermore, some women noted that men in their missions were more "brave", "better in fighting" as well as often better in using weapons than their female colleagues. Some participants noted that men had a stronger authority. Thus, one participant noted that men are better in giving orders because they have "loud and firm voice" (Participant No. 1). Although these responses are largely at line with previous literature, there may be cultural differences. My data did not reveal the cultural background of the respondents but it can be read throughout the data, that the participants came from different cultural backgrounds. Whereas the others had the perception that men are more brave and better in fighting, the others emphasized a practical issue: their longer experience in the military.

For instance, one participant noted that men have usually been in national armies longer than women and therefore they are more experienced. This is not a surprise – men often do have more experience than their female colleagues. In Finland, for instance, women did not have the possibility to become peacekeepers until 1995, when the military service, being a requirement for peacekeeping deployment in Finland, became voluntary for women (Valenius, 2007). Furthermore, the lower rank and lower positions of women are often acknowledged. Thus, the need to increase women in leadership positions is highlighted both in Secretary-General's report on WPS (UN Security Council, 2018, para. 12.) as well as in the HIPPO report (2015, par. 274). Unfortunately, there is still a long way until women start to reach the higher positions. Even today, it is rare that a woman would be appointed to, for instance head of missions.

Moreover, nearly half of the participants believed or have experienced that women are assigned for particular tasks in operations because of their gender. A few women noted that sometimes this resulted from practical reasons, for instance, when female peacekeepers are assigned to do body checks for women or to visit female prisons or girls' schools in countries where there are strong

boundaries between men and women. Additionally, there are some certain tasks, for instance Female Engagement Teams (FET), that female personnel are obviously assigned to. However, some stressed that female military peacekeepers are not assigned for some locations or duties because of their gender. Similarly, Karim and Beardsley (2013) argue that female military peacekeepers are not usually deployed to the places where they are needed the most – to places with high rates of sexual violence or places in which are less equal in terms of gender. Instead, scholars argue that often female personnel are tend to deploy to areas with lower risks. The same issue was echoed by one female peacekeeper:

“Some females in uniform have been given duties and assignment locations based on their gender. It is not our preference but in an organization where seniors (mostly males) are not still fully aware of gender equality, we have no option but to comply to orders like holding these positions only, and being assigned only in garrisons where there is also a female soldier or civilian assigned there. But later, the seniors have seen and realized that we can be at par with males and can as much handle and do duties that they though males could do and could also deployed to anywhere, being far flung remote areas even without utilities.”

(Participant No. 11)

Thus, one of the major challenges female military peacekeepers had faced was the that female personnel were often prevented from participating in certain duties of a peacekeeper. Despite women play an important role in today’s labor, rigid gender roles and the perceptions of appropriate jobs of men and women exist in many institutions, especially if they are strongly male dominated (e.g. Carreiras, 2006; Karim, 2017). However, I believe this is about to change – slowly but steadily. The ideas and the distinctions between “men’s jobs” and “women’s jobs” have started to blur. Men are increasingly working as care givers whereas women are trying to break the class ceiling.

Moreover, as stressed above, gender issues are often overlooked in peacekeeping operations. Some – especially older – and mostly male officials seem to think that issues related to women and gender are not in the center of operations. Instead, those issues are handled if there is spare time after “more important” issues. As pointed out, there is a common view that gender work takes time from life-saving actions (Raven-Roberts, 2005, 56). Furthermore, gender issues are due to many reasons, such as language used, often seen as “women’s issue”. As a consequence, women are seen being the ones who should take care of it (e.g. Raven-Roberts, 2005, 56-57). Thus, also some of my research

participants had faced the assumption that gender issues should be handled by women. One woman noted that she was nominated as gender POC (Protection of Civilians) in her section in South Sudan (UNMISS) solely because she was a woman. However, she refused to take the position. Similarly, another woman, who has experience from Sudan (UNMIS) and South Sudan (UNMISS) stressed that men were often not willing to focus on gender issues within peacekeeping operations. She argued that although the “ability to perform and deliver [such tasks] was required” men never wanted to do tasks that are somehow related to gender (Participant No. 6). She continued: “Some failed to perform such tasks and are sometimes unwilling (lazy if I can say)” and at the end, women were often assigned to do them (ibid.). Notably, however, gender issues, often considered being soft or marginal issues, are the everyone’s issues that should be tackled first in order to achieve lasting peace (e.g. Mazurana, 2005, 40).

5.5. The Training of Female Peacekeepers

As echoed above, it is vital not to only increase the number of women in the military component of peacekeeping operations, as suggested in UN Security Council resolutions, but it is even more important to focus on the quality of their training. With quality training peacekeepers, both men and women, may be able to respond to the needs of the host communities more effectively – today and in the future. Therefore, I also wanted to include the aspect of training in my research.

As mentioned, some TCC countries, however, tend to send unqualified women to the operations to meet the goals set by policymakers concerning the number of women. The importance of quality training for all was widely echoed among research participants. Thus, as one female peacekeeper, being recently deployed to UNTSO, noted: “Everyone going overseas should be given the same training with same quality” (Participant No. 2). Similarly, another one argued:

“I think the biggest problem with female peacekeepers is that from some countries they don’t have basic military training. I don’t like that countries send female peacekeepers just because they are female if they don’t have military training background. This kind of female should take part of operations in civil tasks. Person who doesn’t know the basic military skills is threat to the other peacekeepers if they don’t know how to use map, communication tools or give first aid. I don’t want to patrol with his kind of team mate.”

(Participant No. 3)

The research participant is referring to the significance of basic military training. Although requirements for all the peacekeepers are the same in the paper, requirements of the TCC countries vary. As mentioned, for instance in Finland all women need to complete the military training before they are even qualified to apply for the deployment. All the TCC countries should follow the same guidelines in which skills the participants mentioned, such as proficiency in first aid, land navigation and use of communication tools are referred as being essential requirements (DPKO, 2008). Interestingly, however, a lack of first aid skills is mentioned as one of the main problems in the Cruz report. Cruz argues (2017, 29) that “the field medical system is essential to saving lives and limiting the severity of injuries when attacks occur, but capabilities are often inadequate and response time sometimes too slow to achieve good outcomes. First aid training is lacking...”. Thus, although the guidelines are the same, quality and the training of peacekeepers in the TCC countries tend to vary.

Further, the same participant continued:

“At least what I noticed in the training and heard from the field, there are lot of this kind of female peacekeepers who are for example doctors in real life and had just one or two-week training before deploying to the operation. The UN has some demands for the tasks and they should be followed no matter they want to rise up female peacekeepers.”

(Participant No. 3)

As emphasized above, there are no shortcuts to happiness. If policymakers and the TCC countries want women to meaningfully participate in and contribute to UN peacekeeping missions, they need to invest on their training. It takes time and resources but at the end of the day, it possibly has an impact on lives of people who are affected by conflict, on the situation on the ground as well as on lasting peace.

While female military peacekeepers are considered being more effective at some tasks, such as in interaction with local communities, some scholars (e.g. Heinecken, 2015) claims that the training of peacekeepers limits female peacekeepers from using their whole potential. She stressed that women do not receive any additional training on issues that they are considered being naturally more effective at and as a result, gender-neutral trainings limits women’s ability to use their full potential as peacekeepers. Although one participant had a similar experience, research participants widely disagreed with this view. However, one participant, similarly to Heinecken (2015), argued that the training could have had the possibility to limit her potential as a peacekeeper. When asked if those

specific issues, in which women are considered especially effected in, were emphasized in the training, she answered:

“I do remember the opposite, instructors telling us that sometimes it’s inappropriate for females to talk to local women. I have no such experience and I don’t agree.”

(Participant No. 8)

Many of the women did, however, argue that these issues, such as issues dealing with gender-based violence and facing locals were emphasized during the training.

Echoing the need of quality training, research participants shared recommendations to improve the training in order to better respond to new needs and threats of contemporary operations. As mentioned, the need to make basic military training as a requirement for the deployment was highlighted by many female military peacekeepers. Thus, basic military training would ensure that all peacekeepers would have the basic skills needed to perform their duties in the missions. Similarly, the need to equal training for both male and female peacekeepers was seen as important. For instance, participant who had served in UNIFIL and UNTSO stressed: “Everyone going overseas should be given the same training with same quality” (Participant No. 2).

In order to ensure quality training, a strong commitment from the TCC countries is needed. Thus, all contributing countries should commit themselves to follow the guidelines set by the UN, and to only send qualified personnel to peacekeeping operations. As long as there are countries sending unqualified men or women, peacekeeping missions cannot be successful. Simultaneously, unqualified personnel may cause harm to the reputation and the legitimacy of operations, compromise security local people, and put peacekeeping personnel to an unnecessary danger.

Additionally, pre-deployment courses were seen as essential. Female military peacekeepers valued courses because female personnel are able to gain more experience on the duties through practical exercises and, as a result, it increases their professional confidence. Once future peacekeepers have learned how to act in certain situations that they might face in real peacekeeping missions, they have more confidence in them. One research participant summarized: “Women with basics should be upgraded” (Participant No. 4). Some participants stressed that peacekeeping courses should include even more practical exercises. They highlighted that it is important to stimulate situations that might happen in the field during the deployment. Moreover, again, participants raised the cultural

differences and stressed that the peacekeeping training should include more cultural awareness training so that future peacekeepers could adapt to new environments more easily. One participant emphasized:

“I think pre-deployment training should be conducted so that peacekeepers will understand the culture of the country that they are deployed to in order to eliminate unnecessary friction that might occur due to lack of cultural understanding.”

(Participant No. 19)

One practical thing that helps to face the cultural shock is to learn more languages. Simultaneously, the ability to speak the local language will enable to communicate in the community one is deployed to. Additionally, women military peacekeepers suggested that also the ones who have gone through the training, should be trained further. One participant stressed that refresher courses in related to important themes, such as gender-based violence is needed. Thus, it is important to keep the skills and knowledge updated. As one participant, who is currently serving in UNMISS in South Sudan stressed, it is vital to train investigation and gathering accurate and relevant information. As noted, the nature of conflicts may change over time, which means that also the response must be updated accordingly.

As mentioned, women wanted to increase the number of practical exercises during the training. Similarly, one of the most prominent issues participants noted about the training of peacekeepers was the importance of sharing the lessons learned and the best practices. For not to lose all the things learned so far in previous missions, it is vital to share these experiences. More precisely, women wanted to learn from those who have already worked as female peacekeepers. One participant noted:

“The aim is to take advantage of the experience of female peacekeepers predecessors. By the lessons learned, and including them in the training, it will be beneficial to its [operation’s] success.”

(Participant No. 12)

Similarly, another participant stated: “Continue to inject actual experiences of female peacekeepers in the future training for it to become relevant and update some situations in mission areas where female presence is a big help” (Participant No. 20).

Thus, the perceptions of these women indicate that the future training of peacekeepers should include more counseling, and experiences from the past should be used to increase the capacity in the future. It should be done in order to avoid doing the same mistakes all over again but also to use the practices that have had success before. However, experiences of former peacekeepers, and more precisely experiences of former female military peacekeepers, should not be included to the training of female peacekeepers only. Instead, they should be included in the training of all peacekeepers, both male and female. Many participants highlighted that lessons learned on gender-based violence in particular should be shared with all during the training. Educating all peacekeepers on these issues is significant. As stressed above, gender equality, also in peacekeeping, is not only women's issue that they should handle on their own. It is everyone's issue and achieving it requires a joint response.

One of the most prominent issues raised concerning the training was the need to train peacekeepers and other peacekeeping personnel to notice the benefits of mixed teams. The same has been echoed within the feminist IR scholars. One of the main arguments of scholar is that militaries and peacekeeping troops should represent the ones they are protecting – both men and women (e.g. Pettman, 1996, 144). Similarly, many of the participants of this research argue that women may be more effective at some tasks, while men in some others. As a result, also the training should be planned having this idea in mind. One female peacekeeper stressed that the training should:

“Point out the benefits and the positive effects of having mixed teams. Train situations where you learn how to adapt to different situations, sometimes men are better suited for handling a certain situation and sometimes women.”

(Participant No. 8)

Moreover, another participant had more concrete suggestions for mixing the teams:

“Participants [of training] must include both males and females and roles should be equally distributed notwithstanding the gender. Likewise, facilities should also be considered in such a way that all participants (males and females) don't feel awkward being with each other. Groups or syndicates must be mixed, roles as group leaders and tasks should be rotated.”

(Participant No. 11)

She further elaborated that roles, already in the training, should be rotated, and for example driving tasks should be given to females although it is usually considered as a man's task. Overall, women highly stressed the value of training. They further elaborated that in order to have more female military peacekeepers, they need to be trained more. A few women noted that sponsoring female peacekeepers to the training courses should be more common. One participant noted: educate the women, educate the whole world.

6. Conclusions

“Women peacekeepers broaden the range of skills and capabilities among all categories of personnel, enhance the operational effectiveness of all tasks, and improve operations’ image, accessibility and credibility vis-à-vis the local population.”

(The Global Study, 2015, 141)

This thesis sought to answer three main questions: do female military peacekeepers believe they increase the operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, are there any specific tasks in which they believe they are more effective at than men, and have they faced any barriers or limitations in the missions because of their gender. Asking these questions was essential considering that arguments on the benefits of female peacekeepers, both of scholars and policymakers, often refer to the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. Despite these arguments and several policies and resolutions adopted on the given topic, the number of female peacekeepers has remained low. Today, female peacekeepers contribute approximately four percentage of the military component of the missions. Therefore, this study focuses on female military peacekeepers and their perceptions. The findings of this research indicate that female military peacekeepers themselves do believe they increase the operational effectiveness and make the operations more successful. In this research, operational effectiveness referred to fulfilling the mandate of the operation. Given the importance of self-efficacy, the perceptions of female peacekeepers are crucial for achieving goals set to these operations. The study concluded that women do believe they are more effective at some particular tasks and they indeed face some limitations because of their gender when performing their duties. Their perceptions largely align with the perceptions of scholars and policymakers.

Based on the questionnaire data, the perceptions of female military peacekeepers on the security align with the feminist scholarship: participants looked beyond the traditional and gender-biased concept of security (e.g. Sjoberg, 2009, 4-5). Participants did not understand the security only as the security from armed conflicts. Instead, they understood it more broadly as the security from gender-based violence, security from poverty and as security from oppression. Moreover, like various scholars (e.g. Enloe, 2014), participants indicated that the security refers to the security of individuals – not only of states. As a result, additionally to their regular tasks, women raised the importance to work among issues such as humanitarian work, charity, as well as awareness raising and education of locals during the missions. Thus, their perceptions of the security can be argued being different from the perceptions of their male colleagues. Also those who have not experienced their role being different

from male's role noted that women often have a different approach to concepts such as the security. Based on the questionnaires, female peacekeepers may take into account issues that have often been overlooked in the male dominated operations. Often these "soft" or "marginal" issues are not in the center of the attention in peacekeeping operations. Some personnel seem to think that those should be taken care after "important" and "hard" issues. Sometimes these soft issues, however, are vital when the aim is to build lasting peace. Thus, the findings of this study further elaborate that in order to have a comprehensive, more inclusive viewpoint to world politics and security, perspectives of women need to be included.

Nevertheless, the findings indicate that due to various cultural backgrounds of peacekeeping personnel, it possible that there are more differences between female peacekeepers coming from different cultures than differences between male and female peacekeepers coming from similar cultures. Based on the data, not all female peacekeepers have the same perception on, for instance, gender equality, or on the role of women in general. Many of the participants seemed to think that women are naturally peaceful whereas some participants did not agree with that. Varying degrees of knowledge on gender may pose difficulties to management of peacekeeping missions in general, but also to work of gender focal points and gender advisers (Karim, 2019). As my research did not indicate the nationalities of participants, it is hard to evaluate how much did the perception of people with different cultural backgrounds differ. Thus, a deeper analysis on cultural differences would be needed – especially in the context of female peacekeepers, there is a huge lack of research on the topic.

Moreover, some participants emphasized that the role of female peacekeepers is largely seen as distinct from the role of male peacekeepers because scholars and policymakers continue to make such a distinction. Female military peacekeepers are still relatively 'new thing' in the missions but it does not legitimize to identify them only by their gender. In the context of this topic, it also must be recognized that skills and capabilities often considered as feminine may also be embodied by men (e.g. Penttinen, 2012, 164). Thus, male military peacekeepers having features typically considered as "feminine" could be understood better through further research.

As anticipated, similarly to scholars and policymakers, female military peacekeepers seemed to believe that they do have a unique set of skills to contribute to the missions which makes them a vital advantage and additionally, improves the operational effectiveness of operations. Concerning the work done among local populations, female military peacekeepers stressed that they are often able to build relationship with locals more easily than their male colleagues. As a matter of fact, locals often

make an initiative to approach them. As a result, female peacekeepers believe they are more effective at gaining trust of locals. A good relationship is, indeed, largely determining whether the mission will succeed or not (e.g. Heidberg, 1991, 147-148). Trust will enable peacekeepers to gather information from the field, including the vital information from local women and children, as well as to report on cases of, for instance, gender-based violence. Based on the questionnaires, participants believed they are more effective at gaining the trust because locals perceive female peacekeepers as peaceful, caring and emphatic. Some participants described female military peacekeepers as “mother figures” embodying “motherly love”. Women in uniforms are not seen as threats, like their male colleagues, but instead, providing security, care and solutions. Typical stereotypes often associated with women enable female military peacekeepers to start to build the trust, which they may later on strengthen by behaving accordingly. The local population can be argued seeing female peacekeepers as “Beautiful souls” referring to nonviolent persons who offer succor and compassion (Elshtain, 1995). As mentioned, however, there may be cultural differences on views on this. Moreover, sometimes including women in the troops is simply a necessity because in some cultures local women are not allowed to communicate with men.

Furthermore, the findings of the study show that female military peacekeepers believe that they have a possibility to encourage local women to participate in decision-making and peace processes. Local women can be encouraged by, for instance, showing a good example. When female peacekeepers are working together with their male colleagues, they act as role models indicating that men and women can work together and equally perform the same duties. Peacekeepers can also educate and raise awareness among locals on issues such as gender equality. It is notable, however, that it is impossible for female peacekeepers to change embedded culture, norms and values of the host country over night. Female peacekeepers may have an influence on the situation but structural changes will also require national ownership and political commitment.

Based on the questionnaire data, female military peacekeepers believe that trust between peacekeepers and locals may also help to reduce gender-based violence taking place during the mission. Despite the zero-tolerance commitment of the UN, gender-based violence conducted by their peacekeepers is still a problem in the mission areas. To decrease the number of these and other alleged cases and fight against impunity, reporting on these violations is crucial. The trust between peacekeepers and locals may help the victims to report. Based on the questionnaire, victims of which the majority are women and children, may feel more safe to talk with women if the perpetrator has been a man. Local women may also feel that female peacekeepers have faced similar gendered

experiences making them more approachable. Additionally, female military peacekeepers stressed the importance of awareness raising and education of locals. The data indicated that not all victims know that they are able to report on the cases and seek for help. However, including male peacekeepers and local men to the education would be vitally important. Referring to allocations of UN peacekeepers, the presence of female military peacekeepers is argued decreasing the number of these alleged cases. Participants of the study believed that, within missions, they act as a source of morale and that they make men to adopt a more tolerant attitude. Many of them also believed that they have an impact on the behavior of their male colleagues. However, it is notable that also men are victims of gender-based violence. This rare and sensitive topic could be further examined through future research.

The evidence here shows that some of the participants have also faced limitations preventing them to use their whole capacity as peacekeepers. Based on the questionnaires, some female peacekeepers have experienced situations in which they have been seen as too weak to perform their duties, and therefore they have been offered special treatment. It is evident that some fail to acknowledge that despite female peacekeepers being quite a new thing in peacekeeping, they have fulfilled the same requirements and are similarly qualified. Moreover, because men have been in the military for a longer time, most of the roles of the missions are assigned from men. Various policymakers, such as the UN Secretary General Guterres have called to increase the number of women in leadership positions of peacekeeping. All in all, nearly half of the participants believed that women are indeed assigned for certain tasks in missions because of their gender. Some stressed the practical reasons but some argued that older (mostly male) peacekeepers seem to think that women should handle issues related to gender. Not all, especially male peacekeepers, are willing to work among gender issues. Further research could in more detail evaluate the possibilities to get more female soldiers in the leadership positions.

Despite the need and continuous calls and policies to increase the number of female peacekeepers, such as UNSCR 1325 and 2242 as well as gender balancing and mainstreaming activities, the participants strongly emphasized that the TCC countries should only send qualified personnel to the mission. Similarly, the Secretary General António Guterres states in the session on WPS: “This is not just a question of numbers, but also our effectiveness in fulfilling our mandates” (UNSC, 2019, 2). The evidence shows that many of the participants have faced or heard of situations in which women with no military training have been deployed to military component of the mission. Nearly all of the female military peacekeepers stressed that in order to be a military peacekeeper, male or

female, military training is crucial. Unskilled personnel further damage the overall reputation of the operation, prevent the mission from achieving its goals and may put other people in danger. People willing to deploy to missions need to be able to meet the official requirements set to them. Additionally, based on the data, pre-deployment and refresher courses were seen as vital in order to have the most recent information and skills especially since the nature of conflicts changes so quickly. Many of the participants emphasized that the training of men and women should be the same. According to female military peacekeepers, the training today should include more practical exercises, education on different cultures, lessons learned as well as best practices. Moreover, once qualified female military peacekeepers are sent to missions, their meaningful participations need to be secured. To avoid the common “add-women-and-stir” approach, which usually only have cosmetic results, access gap of female military peacekeepers in missions need to be eliminated, and their ability to perform their duties with their whole potential (e.g. Karim, 2017). Only by meaningful participation, female military peacekeepers are able to respond to the needs of local communities, provide security and start to build lasting peace. This will require changes in the embedded norms and values of national militaries as well as of the UN.

Overall, the findings conclude that women do believe they are more effective at certain tasks, which results to increased operational effectiveness of the peacekeeping missions. However, the participants strongly emphasized that the troops should be formed in a way that there are both male and female peacekeepers. Participants stressed that similarly, also men are considered being more effective at some other tasks, such as handling weapons. Therefore, participants strongly emphasized that mixed teams are the most effective teams within the missions because male and female peacekeepers complement each other. To be able to form equal mixed teams, both men and women should receive the same training. This training should include all kinds of tasks – those that are traditionally seen as “men’s” duties and those that are typically seen as “women’s” duties. In peacekeeping, they are everyone’s duties.

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Appendix 1 – The Qualitative Questionnaire

Information on the Research

I am Laura Kaltiainen, a Master's Degree student in Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research from the University of Tampere, Finland. I am working with the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT) on my Master's thesis on the role of uniformed female peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations. In my research I wish to find out how female peacekeepers see their role as female peacekeepers and do they believe that women can increase the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, and if yes, how.

With my research, I wish to contribute to discussion on uniformed female peacekeepers and, in addition, to evoke more discussion and further deliberation on the theme. Increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations is a priority for many troop contributing countries (TCCs), such as Finland, and I wish to raise awareness and explain the possible benefits women can bring to peacekeeping operations.

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. No personally identifiable information will be asked or associated with your responses when analyzing the data. In your response, I kindly ask you to share your experiences as well as stories, views and examples you think could be relevant to the study. If you do not want to reply to some questions, it is possible to leave them blank.

FINCENT will use the results of the study when developing the training of current and future peacekeepers. Completed research will also be sent to all participants replying to this survey.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Your responses will be very important part of my research. If you know any other female peacekeepers who have been or will be deployed to peacekeeping operations, I kindly ask you to forward the survey link also for them.

The survey will be open until 20th of January 2019.

The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes.

If you have any questions related to the survey or the study, please do not hesitate to contact me:

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Section 1: Female peacekeepers in general

In this section, you will be asked questions about your background as a female peacekeeper as well as about your views on the role of female peacekeepers in general. I kindly ask you to share your own experiences as well as real-life examples and stories to elaborate your answers.

1. Which peacekeeping operation/operations you have been deployed to and when? (If you have not been deployed yet, leave blank)
2. In which kind of task of manning table have you served? (If you have not been deployed yet, leave blank)
3. How do you see/ have experienced the role of uniformed female peacekeepers?
4. According to your own experience, is there a difference when comparing it to the role of male peacekeepers?
5. Has the role of female peacekeepers influenced your decision to deploy to an operation?
6. Do you believe/have you experienced, that women are assigned for particular tasks in operations because of their gender?

Section 2: Work among local populations

In this section, you will be asked questions about the work of peacekeepers done among the local populations. I kindly ask you to share your own experiences as well as real-life examples and stories to elaborate your answers.

7. According to your experience, is it easier for local populations to interact with female peacekeepers than with male peacekeepers? If yes, why?
8. According to your experience, can female peacekeepers encourage local women to participate in decision-making or peace processes? If yes, why?

Section 3: Work related to gender-based violence

In this section, you will be asked questions about gender-based violence conducted during conflict or post-conflict situations. I kindly ask you to share your own experiences as well as real-life examples and stories to elaborate your answers.

9. Can the participation of female peacekeepers help to combat gender-based violence? If yes, why?
10. Does the presence of female peacekeepers have an effect on the behavior of male peacekeepers? If yes, what kind of effect?

Section 4: The training of peacekeepers

In this section, you will be asked questions related to the training and education of peacekeepers. I kindly ask you to share your own experiences as well as real-life examples and stories on your training to elaborate your answers.

11. Were those specific issues, in which women are often considered more efficient than men, somehow acknowledged or highlighted in your peacekeeping training?
12. How would you develop training of peacekeepers in order to strengthen training related to these issues?

Section 5: Conclusion

In this section, you are free to share any stories, viewpoints and experiences related to female peacekeepers that you were not asked about in earlier sections.

13. Do you believe that women improve the overall reputation and image of the operation? If yes, how?
14. Are there other specific issues in which you believe women are more effective than their male colleagues?
15. As a female peacekeeper, have you faced any limitations or problems when trying to increase the operational effectiveness?
16. In which specific issues you believe male peacekeepers are more effective than their female colleagues? Why?
17. Something else you wish to tell about the topic?