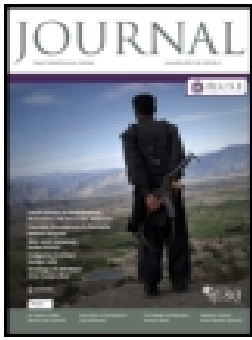


## Copyright Warning

---

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be 'used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research.' If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of 'fair use,' that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgement, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.



## The RUSI Journal

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi20>

# Moving from Gender Analysis to Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender

Jody M Prescott

To cite this article: Jody M Prescott (2020): Moving from Gender Analysis to Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender, The RUSI Journal, DOI: [10.1080/03071847.2020.1831950](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2020.1831950)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2020.1831950>



Published online: 05 Nov 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Moving from Gender Analysis to Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender

Jody M Prescott 

In wars fought within and ultimately for the support of civilian populations, the gender dimension becomes a vital one. Different efforts to address gender in military operations have shown increasing sophistication in the past few years. One thing that has not been satisfactorily developed, however, is an overarching theory of gender's operational relevance that would allow it to be fully normalised in military planning and operations. To fill this gap, Jody M Prescott suggests that the gender analysis that is part of military staff products at all operational levels needs to evolve to also consider risk to the mission and its personnel.

Although it was not the first instance of the international community establishing norms to increase women's security through more equal treatment with men,<sup>1</sup> the passage of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000 is widely viewed as a very important milestone in these efforts. UNSCR 1325 recognised that, in general, women and girls suffer differently and more severely in armed conflict than do men and boys, and it called on states to involve and consider women and girls in their security efforts in all phases of armed conflict. Globally, the movement within states to realise the goals of UNSCR 1325 has been significant – at least from a policy perspective. For example, at least 77 states have now developed National Action Plans to implement the resolution and related resolutions that followed,<sup>2</sup> and the UK is now on its fifth updated plan since its first in 2006.<sup>3</sup>

Placing this progress in context, however, the OSCE has noted that only about 14% of these plans include more than minimal information on the budget or financing mechanism to be used to implement them.<sup>4</sup> Within these plans, national defence establishments are often given a role, which is consistent with UNSCR 1325's focus on the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls. However, fulfilment of that role by different militaries, often assisted by international organisations such as the UN, has been uneven. One recent survey across the international community identified many different initiatives in the areas of doctrine, education, training, planning and operations to embed UNSCR 1325 principles and concepts into military programmes and activities, but found little evidence of coordinated and systemic incorporation.<sup>5</sup>

1. J Ann Tickner and Jacqui True, 'A Century of International Relations Feminism: From World War I Women's Peace Pragmatism to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda', *International Studies Quarterly* (Vol. 62, 2018), pp. 222–25.
2. Securitywomen.org, 'UNSCR 1325 And National Action Plans (NAPs)', <<https://www.securitywomen.org/united-nations/unscr-1325-and-national-action-plans-nap>>, accessed 15 March 2020.
3. HM Government, 'UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security 2018-2022', January 2018.
4. OSCE, 'Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region', 2020, p. 4, <<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/444577?download=true>>, accessed 15 March 2020.
5. Jody M Prescott, *Armed Conflict, Women and Climate Change* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 198–226.



Students learning how to integrate gender into military operations during the Operational Gender Advisor Course hosted by US Southern Command in Doral, Florida, December 2018. Courtesy of US Air Force/Marcie Mascaro

Against this backdrop of incremental but incomplete implementation, disagreement continues to exist in the academic community as to UNSCR 1325's efficacy in general, and as to whether there should even be a role for militaries in its implementation.<sup>6</sup> Some critics have argued that UNSCR 1325 has not lived up to expectations that it would lead to revolutionary change in the field of international relations,<sup>7</sup> which has traditionally been very male-oriented.<sup>8</sup> In particular, its progressive intent has become diluted by the bureaucratized means used to implement it by the very countries whose conduct they hoped UNSCR 1325 would help reform. One aspect in particular that has troubled critics of UNSCR 1325's implementation in this field is that not only has militarism not been removed as a part of state conduct, it also has been co-opted by

national military establishments to make 'war safe for women' rather than eliminate war altogether.<sup>9</sup>

Other writers have acknowledged the challenges in changing traditional patterns of international relations, and have instead focused on the very real value of making even incremental gains over time in terms of increasing equality for women and girls on the ground.<sup>10</sup> These writers have favourably noted the incorporation of gender considerations in the activities and operations of military organisations, and the work of special military personnel to actually implement these concepts and measures.<sup>11</sup> From a similar pragmatic perspective, this article argues that this crucial work will remain incomplete until militaries develop an overarching theory of the operational relevance of gender, one which sets the basis for generating a staff product that assesses the

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.
7. Mila O'Sullivan, 'The Women, Peace and Security Agenda: The Unfinished Story of Feminist Revolution Versus Compromise in Global Politics', *Czech Journal of International Relations* (Vol. 54, No. 4, 2019), p. 48.
8. Seema Narain, 'Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives of J. Ann Tickner', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* (Vol. 21, No. 2, 2014), pp. 182–85.
9. O'Sullivan, 'The Women, Peace and Security Agenda', pp. 50–52, 53–54.
10. Sara E Davies and Jacqui True, 'Women, Peace, and Security: A Transformative Agenda?', in Sarah E Davies and Jacqui True (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 3–14.
11. Megan Bastick and Claire Duncanson, 'Agents of Change? Gender Advisors in NATO Militaries', *International Peacekeeping* (Vol. 25, No. 4, 2018), pp. 560–71.

## Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender

risk to missions and their personnel because of a failure to consider gender.

It might seem odd to focus on something as mundane as a piece of staff analysis in a headquarters unit as a means to further the accomplishment of strategic and operational goals, including gender goals. To explain its importance, it is useful to first consider the role that conventional gender analysis plays in three recent military developments that seek to meet UNSCR1325's goals in armed conflict in both its kinetic and non-kinetic aspects.<sup>12</sup> After review of these significant developments, operational gender analysis itself will be briefly examined. Next, using a hypothetical example that shows a potential blind spot in conventional operational gender analysis, this article will explain how an analysis that further translates gender factors into an operational risk assessment would better serve commanders and staffs in making realistic and deliberate choices in allocating resources to achieve gender goals. Last, using the hypothetical example, the steps will be identified that need to be taken to set the conditions favourable to the development of an effective risk analysis of gender in operations.

### NATO's Bi-Strategic Command Directive

The three recent developments that demonstrate the quiet but fundamental role that gender analysis plays in implementing the goals of UNSCR 1325 are NATO's latest iteration of its Bi-Strategic Command directive on gender, the suite of gender-related courses offered by the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) in Kungsängen, Sweden, and the recent doctrine notes published by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) regarding gender in joint operations and in air operations specifically. As to the directive, the Alliance defines gender as 'the social attributes associated with being male and female learned through socialisation and determines a person's position and value in a given context'. Gender also means 'the relationships between men, women, boys and girls, as well as the relations between women and those between men'. As a caveat to this

definition, 'gender does not equate to an exclusive focus on women'.<sup>13</sup>

The directive defines gender analysis in a straightforward way as 'the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and on social relations between men and women in order to identify and understand inequities based on gender'. The gender analysis definition is holistic, and it includes reviewing the different security concerns of men, women, boys and girls, the impact of power relationships within communities on the relative ease of access to humanitarian aid by people of different sexes, and, importantly, how gender roles can affect operations and missions.<sup>14</sup> Conceptually, these definitions are important because they are consistent with the definitions used in NCGM's instruction on gender analysis and in the development of the ADF's doctrine.

NATO issued its first Bi-Strategic Command directive on integrating gender perspectives into Alliance activities and operations in 2009. Although the latest version contains certain areas that are underdeveloped and therefore of limited practical usefulness, such as the section dealing with masculinities,<sup>15</sup> it otherwise is evidence of significant maturation of the understanding of how gender considerations can best be practically incorporated into both the work of standing and deployed headquarters. The two good examples of this are the realistic descriptions of the duties of gender-trained personnel such as the Gender Advisor (GENAD) and Gender Focal Points, and the role of gender analysis.

In terms of personnel, the GENAD is now located explicitly within the group of special staff advisers to the commander, such as the Political Advisor or the Legal Advisor. GENADs are responsible for providing subject matter expertise to other staff sections in the planning process and in operations, and for providing support for gender-related education and training of other personnel and subordinate units. Importantly, GENADs are also responsible for developing the gender analysis of the operational theatre to assist staff planning and to gather information on crisis areas and conflicts.<sup>16</sup>

GENADs maintain a degree of technical supervision over Gender Focal Points, who serve in staff sections or subordinate units as a collateral

12. Prescott, *Armed Conflict, Women and Climate Change*, pp. 175–77.

13. NATO, 'Bi-Strategic Command Directive 040-001 (Public Version): Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspective into the NATO Command Structure', SH/SAG/GEN/JC/17-317874/1, 17 October 2017, p. 5, <<https://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/structure/genderadvisor/nu0761.pdf>>, accessed 23 March 2020.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

duty. The functions of Gender Focal Points include providing support for the integration of gender considerations into their sections or units, monitoring gender issues at their level and reporting on gender issues up through their chain of command and to the GENADs. This work also includes providing support to the development of the operational gender analysis.<sup>17</sup>

As indicated earlier, the directive defines gender analysis straightforwardly. It provides a useful explanation of the definition, describing in practical terms what such analysis might look like and how it might be used.<sup>18</sup> The directive refers to Allied Command Operations' Gender Functional Planning Guide, which provides extensive information on the development and use of a gender analysis as a critical part of a headquarters' operational planning process. Importantly, the guide specifically directs the reader to the gender analysis methodology as taught at NCGM in Sweden as the preferred approach.<sup>19</sup>

## NCGM's Gender-Related Courses

Although several countries, including the US,<sup>20</sup> have formally incorporated aspects of Women, Peace and Security into their foreign policies, Sweden stands out as the first country to explicitly adopt a feminist foreign policy as a whole.<sup>21</sup> Consistent with this emphasis in Swedish foreign policy, NATO has designated NCGM as its Department Head for gender-related areas of expertise and education and training in the Alliance. NCGM currently conducts five different blocks of instruction on gender, two of which focus on leaders at different levels, to familiarise them with integrating a gender perspective into operations. The Key Leader Seminar on Gender is a two-day strategic-level course, and is geared towards senior leaders such as flag officers and ambassadors. The Commanding

Officer Seminar on Gender runs for three days and is pitched at the operational and tactical levels, and is intended for both military and civilian chiefs of staff and joint-level staff section heads and their equivalents in addition to commanding officers.<sup>22</sup> Each of these seminars introduces the participants to the use of gender analysis as part of staff planning and mission execution.<sup>23</sup>

The other three courses are functional, and directly complement one another. The NATO Gender Advisor Course is two weeks long, and is intended for those who will provide gender expertise at the strategic and operational levels. The entry requirements are rigorous; students must have a bachelor-level degree, training and experience in the military planning process, and military staff work experience. After completing the course, consistent with the NATO directive, students are expected to be able to provide advice on integrating a gender perspective in operations to commanders and staffs as part of enhanced staff work, and to have the capacity to '[a]nalyse the different security risks of men and women in a gender analysis' and '[a]ssess risks and occurrence of conflict related sexual and gender based violence . . . and recommend actions' to address them.<sup>24</sup>

The Gender Training of Trainers Course is particularly important because it addresses a very serious deficit in the effort to operationalise gender within military educational and training institutions in general – building gender capacity. This course is almost two weeks long, and is geared towards trainers, instructors and teachers, irrespective of whether they are officers, non-commissioned officers or civilians. The course takes a very holistic approach, and its graduates are expected to be able to plan, conduct and evaluate 'education, training and exercises with an integrated gender perspective for the security sector, including pre-deployment, in theatre- and national training'.<sup>25</sup> Although students are not instructed in how to complete a

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20, Annex A, A-2.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

19. NATO, 'Gender Functional Planning Guide', July 2015, pp. 5–6, 9–12, <<https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/siteassets/english/swedint/engelska/swedint/courses/genad/07-aco-gender-functional-planning-guide.pdf>>, accessed 15 March 2020.

20. White House, 'United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security', June 2019.

21. Karin Aggestam and Annika Bergman Rosamund, 'Feminist Foreign Policy 3.0: Advancing Ethics and Gender Equality in Global Politics', *SAIS Review of International Affairs* (Vol. 39, No. 1, 2019), pp. 37–48.

22. Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), 'Courses and Seminars at NCGM', <<https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/swedint/nordic-centre-for-gender-in-military-operations/courses-at-ncgm-and-how-to-apply2/>>, accessed 15 March 2020.

23. Email to the author from Rebecca Blum, Kungsängen, 21 April 2020.

24. NCGM, 'Courses and Seminars at NCGM'.

25. *Ibid.*

## Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender

gender analysis themselves, they are introduced to its function and format.

At the tactical level, the Gender Focal Point course instructs more junior officers and senior non-commissioned officers, as well as their civilian equivalents, on how to integrate gender perspectives in their own staff sections and units and report gender-related information up through their chains of command and to GENADs. Because it is only three days long, this course does not train Gender Focal Points on conducting gender analysis themselves, but it does familiarise them with the purpose of this skill and how their information collection and work in their units contributes to this analysis at the operational level and above.

Gender analysis features in the instruction that NCGM provides its students, and NCGM's research and analysis work also informs the development of NATO doctrine as it relates to gender.<sup>26</sup> It does not appear, however, that the instruction on gender analysis includes a methodology to translate it into a risk assessment of failing to consider gender. Like Sweden, Australia has its own bilateral relationship with NATO even though it is not an Alliance partner, and over time it has provided NATO missions with capable and senior GENADs.<sup>27</sup> In the past couple of years, the ADF has pioneered the development of doctrine that specifically deals with gender and the use of force – doctrine also premised on the use of gender analysis.

### ADF's Doctrinal Notes

In two recent publications, the ADF has pioneered an approach to the integration of gender considerations into the planning and execution of kinetic as well as non-kinetic operations. In Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 2-18, Gender in Military Operations, the ADF has created a guide specifically addressed to the integration of gender into planning and operations in joint and multinational missions, consistent with both UNSCR 1325 and domestic Australian authorities. Importantly, JDN 2-18 distinguishes between a mere gender assessment, which it sees as a 'country and/or community specific assessment of

gender considerations, including sex disaggregated information/data on the population's demography, gender differences and social/cultural relations', and gender analysis. Gender analysis is higher-level work, involving the application of the gender assessment 'to draw out deductions relevant to an operational context'.<sup>28</sup>

The conduct of gender analysis is addressed in a separate annex to the note. It provides useful information regarding the main steps to conduct a gender analysis, and an extensive list of gender analysis factors that the GENAD staff should take into account when creating the analysis. Finally, it provides a list of helpful information sources that can be consulted in preparing the analysis.<sup>29</sup> Surprisingly, given the centrality of gender analysis in the document, it does not provide a methodology for the GENAD staff to use when working to convert a gender assessment into a gender analysis.

Air Force Doctrine Note (AFDN) 1-18, Gender in Air Operations is noteworthy for its thoughtful work to come to grips with the significance of gender in the operational planning process and particularly in the targeting process. For example, it notes that an air operations centre's 'planning activities should assess the different security concerns of men, women, boys and girls in operations to support appropriate kinetic targeting that does not adversely impact communities'. It provides a concrete example of this, explaining that the destruction of the paths used by women to obtain food and water 'can threaten women's security when they must find alternate paths through unknown terrain'. Further, it suggests a means for avoiding these sorts of scenarios, through the analysis of 'sex disaggregated data to identify the second and third-order impacts on communities that result from targeting'.<sup>30</sup>

At a step higher than this specific targeting example, the doctrine note identifies gender analysis in general as a key function to ensure the full consideration of gender across all aspects of an operation. The doctrine note provides a useful description of what a gender analysis should include, and also highlights the complexity of gender analysis in any given country, depending on people's individual 'upbringing, culture, class, ethnicity,

26. *NCGM Review*, 'NCGM Visit To HQ SACT' (Vol. 1, 2020), p. 2, <<https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/siteassets/english/swedint/engelska/swedint/nordic-centre-for-gender-in-military-operations/ncgm-q12020.pdf>>, accessed 29 August 2020.

27. Dan Pinhorn, 'Captain Andrews Leading the Way', *Navy Daily*, 2 October 2019, <<https://news.navy.gov.au/en/Oct2019/Operations/5480/Captain-Andrews-leading-the-way.htm#.X0rmIchKiUk>>, accessed 27 August 2020.

28. Australian Defence Force (ADF), 'Joint Doctrine Note 2-18: Gender in Military Operations', 2018, pp. iii, 4.

29. *Ibid.*, Annex A.

30. Air Power Development Centre, 'AFDN 1-18: Gender in Air Operations', 2018, pp. 23, 32–33.

religion, age and education.’<sup>31</sup> As with JDN 2-18, however, AFDN 1-18 does not prescribe a particular methodology for developing the gender analysis. This does not mean that the ADF is without such a methodology, just that it may not be published in the public domain. One very useful example of an operational gender analysis is in the public domain, however, and available for assessment as to whether it lends itself to the development of an operational theory of gender that considers risk analysis.

## Operational Gender Analysis

The reliance on operational gender analysis to drive the inclusion of gender considerations across the spectrum of military activities and operations is fundamental to each of the three milestones set out above. A detailed example of a methodology to conduct a gender analysis is set out in NATO’s Allied Command Operations’ Gender Functional Planning Guide. The guide provides detailed instructions to Alliance GENADs on how to construct this analysis, which ‘involves the analysis of “information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify and understand inequities based on gender”’. Using this approach, the analysis would then assess political aspects such as the level of threats against women politicians compared with those facing men, social aspects such as access to education for girls versus boys, and infrastructural aspects such as gender-differentiated access to necessities including water and energy sources.<sup>32</sup>

The product of gender analysis could take many forms, ranging from identifying a consideration for future planning to making a recommendation. The guide also includes an extensive list of possible tactical-level planning considerations that GENADs could raise with commanders and staff. With regard to gathering firewood and drawing water, for example, a recommended action could be to plan for conducting ‘social’ patrolling to coincide with women’s and children’s participation in these activities. If women and girls were at risk of suffering sexual violence in carrying out these chores from anti-government actors, commanders would need to be prepared ‘to patrol and operate in unconventional

space’, and to order soldiers to conduct armed patrols to deter these crimes. The rationale for such patrols would be at least in part utilitarian – that is, based on an understanding of ‘the links between sexual violence and the restoration of peace and security’ in the conflict-affected area.<sup>33</sup>

The example of patrolling to protect women and girls as they complete their domestic chores has been noted as a useful and practical measure in after-action reports from operations.<sup>34</sup> While this specific example is sound, and the Functional Planning Guide also notes the importance of assessing different risks to men and women,<sup>35</sup> there is a gap. What is missing from the methodology is an overarching theory of the operational relevance of gender that ties it to the one thing that will always be present to some degree in combat missions and will never be far from the commander’s mind – risk to the operation, and risk to the personnel conducting it. Assuming that these physical-presence patrols did result in a reduction of sexual violence against at-risk population cohorts such as women and girls (an inarguable good), how would a commander be able to tell whether the investment in limited resources of troops, time and equipment is worth the benefit on the restoration-of-stability side of the ledger? The answer in part might lie in developing a more precise understanding of the operational relevance of gender.

## An Operational Theory of Gender that Considers Risk to the Mission

There are many operations where gender simply is not relevant to the mission from the perspective of operational risk. This is likely true in equipment-heavy, force-on-force engagements conducted in areas where there are no civilians present, or in which the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of the civilians are not relevant to whether either side prevails. Consider the position that the two US Air Force fighter pilots who were tasked with intercepting and destroying United Airlines Flight 93 over Pennsylvania on 9/11 found themselves in – no missiles under their wings, and training rounds in their cannons. As they raced to their jets, the female

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–14, 42.

32. NATO, ‘Gender Functional Planning Guide’, pp. E-1–E-2.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. C-4, D-2-2–D-2-3, E-2.

34. Li Hammar and Annika Berg (eds), ‘Whose Security? Practical Examples of Gender Perspectives in Military Operations’, NCGM, 2015, pp. 15, 32, 38; UNMISS, ‘UN Peacekeepers on Patrol, Help Bentiu Women Safely Get Firewood’, <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/unmissmultimedia/45575964784/in/photostream/>>, accessed 29 August 2020.

35. NATO, ‘Gender Functional Planning Guide’, pp. A-3, B-1, B-5, D-3-1.



## Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender

fighter pilot said she would take out the tail. The male fighter pilot said he would go for the cockpit. Neither expected to survive.<sup>36</sup>

These personnel were both highly trained, well-educated and completely familiar with the ordinary authorities and experiences that regulated and shaped their actions. Infrastructural measures within the US Air Force designed to promote equality of opportunity in education, training, and career advancement irrespective of sex<sup>37</sup> worked to eliminate any operational risk posed by the different genders of these officers on this mission. Parsing a gender-differentiated analysis of the different courses of action they chose that day would tax anyone's patience.

This is not likely true at the opposite end of the mission spectrum, where operational success does depend on what the local populace believes and acts on – what General Sir Rupert Smith has described as 'war amongst the people'.<sup>38</sup> Here, the failure to consider gender in the conduct of the mission likely does present an operational risk, because not doing so ignores the fact that half of the population has different security needs from the other. The crucial point here though is not to assume that a risk faced by women and girls will always present a risk to the operation that the commander can and should mitigate at the expense of under-resourcing other efforts. Instead, an important question to be asked is whether failing to consider gender in civilian-centric mission environments presents a risk to the operation and its personnel.<sup>39</sup>

To illustrate this, consider the earlier example of how an operational gender analysis might result in a conclusion that to mitigate the risk of sexual assault to women and girls gathering firewood and drawing water, deploying force units should patrol along the routes routinely taken by them to complete these chores. Assume, for example, that the deploying forces were present in sufficient numbers most of the time such that these patrols could actually be effective. This could lead to predictability in both the timing of the patrols and the paths along which the patrols were conducted. The anti-government actors are unlikely to be impressed with the noble intentions of the deploying force to reduce the risks of their assaults to local women and girls. Instead,

they are more likely to now see the patrols as targets of opportunity for ambushes and improvised explosive device attacks.

Casualties among the deploying force are the foreseeable result of these engagements. Commanders would therefore have three options in response to these losses: continue the patrols as currently conducted; increase military activity in the area to more effectively engage the anti-government forces; or reduce the patrols. What metrics could be used to effectively determine the most favourable course of action? If the rationale for the patrols in the first place was to make the collection of firewood and drawing of water safer for women and girls along these paths, and intelligence showed that the number of reported assaults had indeed dropped, then the status quo could be assessed as effective, increasing the patrols could be deemed unnecessary, and decreasing the patrols could be assessed as counterproductive from a deterrence perspective.

Realistically though, depending on the mission, the status quo might not be sustainable. It could pose an open-ended risk to the deploying force and to the mission itself if casualties were being sustained only on the basis that the patrols promoted realisation of UNSCR 1325's goals for greater protection of women and girls. Conceivably, other norms could come into play that drove this protective patrolling, for example, if the country from which the troops on patrol came had a national policy that required measures such as the patrols, or if actions such as patrolling were an integral part of the deploying force's mandate. Even in these cases though, this raises the question of who would determine what level of casualties were indefinitely endurable versus the number of assaults committed upon women and girls along the collection paths. Morally, even one such assault is one too many, but if the rationale were only to achieve greater protection, what metrics could be justifiably used to determine what an 'acceptable' level of assault is versus deploying force casualties?

The option of increasing military activity likely faces troop and equipment constraints, but even if additional forces were available, it is not clear that more military activity would actually lead to greater protection for the women and girls. Instead, their collection routes would perhaps become zones of

36. Steve Hendrix, 'F-16 Pilot was Ready to Give Her Life on Sept. 11', *Washington Post*, 8 September 2011.

37. Martha Lockwood, 'Women's Legacy Parallels Air Force History', US Air Force, 18 September 2014, <<https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/497548/womens-legacy-parallels-air-force-history/>>, accessed 30 August 2020.

38. Toni Pfanner, 'Interview with General Sir Rupert Smith', *International Review of the Red Cross* (Vol. 88, No. 864, 2006), pp. 716–26.

39. Inci Kucukaksoy and Adrian Sullivan, 'The Three Swords Interview: Armed Conflict, Women and Climate Change', *Three Swords* (No. 34, April 2019), pp. 61–64.

more frequent kinetic combat, not only endangering them directly, but perhaps also forcing them to seek other paths to collect the necessities their families require. Ironically, if the deploying force continued collecting statistics on the number of assaults on women and girls reported along the reinforced original routes, it might appear that the increased patrols were having the desired effect because assaults were down – when in fact the women and girls were instead being placed in danger of assault elsewhere.

Having already launched the effort to patrol to increase protection for women and girls along the pathway, if the stated purpose were solely to increase their protection, it is difficult to see how the deploying force could pull back from this effort and maintain credibility among the local population. The women and girls who benefited from the patrols' presence may have grown to rely on them, and violence suffered by them after patrols had been lessened will likely be seen in part as the fault of the deploying forces rather than just the anti-government forces. The reactions of Rwandan civilians to the pull-out of UN troops from protected areas during the genocide in 1994,<sup>40</sup> and among Bosnian civilians to the failure of UN troops to protect them in the designated safe haven of Srebrenica in 1995,<sup>41</sup> suggest such an effect is highly likely. Decreasing the patrols could also be viewed by the anti-government forces as a sign of tactical weakness on the part of the deployed forces, and embolden them to step up their assaults on local women and girls.

In short, depending on the actual operational situation, once the deploying force orders the patrols on the basis of an ordinary operational gender analysis, untethered to an evaluation of the risk to the mission and its personnel of not launching the patrols, its commanders and planners might find themselves in a position where there is no favourable course of action from the perspective of operational risk. Such a result does not further the purposes and goals of UNSCR 1325.

## A Blind Spot in Operational Gender Analysis

It is no small task to develop a useful gender analysis for an area of operations, but with a sufficient staff of trained GENADs and adequate and accurate

intelligence about the society, culture, economy, politics, infrastructure and religion of the area, it can of course be done. Reasonably accurate forecasts of the harms women and girls might experience can be made, and different measures by the deploying force to lessen the risks they face because of these threats can be formulated with a substantial amount of staff work. To take the next step, however, and to create an operational gender risk analysis, an analysis of the risk to the mission and its personnel if it fails to consider gender, is likely more difficult, but by no means impossible.

By way of illustration, consider the Palipehutu-Forces for National Liberation (FNL), a rebel group active in Burundi's civil war between 1994 and 2008. The FNL's brutality to civilians in general was well-documented, and it was known to recruit child soldiers. Interestingly, however, the group had a very specific code of conduct regarding its members' relationships with civilian women and girls. The group forbade assaulting them, and those FNL members who did engage in such actions were punished severely and held in low esteem by their comrades. FNL fighters held the 'image of an ideal soldier' as one 'of heroic sacrifice, including in terms of sexual conduct. This was seen as a way to demonstrate allegiance' to the FNL. Importantly, both civilians and rival armed factions recognised that FNL members were less likely to engage in sexual violence against civilian women, and likely to suffer harsh punishment if they strayed.<sup>42</sup>

Suppose a multinational force were approved to deploy into a host country and assist its forces in fighting an anti-government group that had the same ethos regarding protection of women and girls as the FNL, and that this was well known among the civilian population. If a typical operational gender analysis were conducted, it could find that sexual assaults on women and girls were not a major issue in areas controlled or contested by the anti-government group, and that therefore there was no need to conduct patrols to ensure their safety as they gathered firewood and drew water. On its own, this sounds very favourable for the women and girls of this area of operations, and thus there would be little need for further consideration of gender inequities in this regard.

While logical, what this typical analysis would miss is that the local populace's recognition of the

40. Nicole Winfield, 'UN Failed Rwanda', *Associated Press*, 16 December 1999, <<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/201-rwanda/39240.html>>, accessed 30 August 2020.

41. Chris Hedges, 'Bosnian Serbs Overrun Town Protected by UN', *New York Times*, 12 July 1995, pp. A1, A6.

42. Angela Muvumba Sellström, 'Burundi's Rebel Groups and the Stigmatisation of Wartime Sexual Violence', *Journal of Sexual Aggression* (Vol. 25, No. 3, 2019), pp. 275–88.

## Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender

anti-government group's approach towards women and girls could actually pose a threat to the deploying force's mission. Assume that the deploying force's tactical formations are predominately male, as most military forces are today. Also assume that the host country's culture and religion are not such that women are sequestered in their homes and forbidden contact with men who are not family members. Commanders and planners might conclude on this basis that although most of their forces are male, they are well-trained and professional, and there is no need to worry about local customs and mores in their operational contact with local female civilians. This conclusion might seem gender-neutral, but it is in fact gender-blind – blind to the strength that the anti-government force's positive reputation regarding the treatment of women and girls could give it.

### Moving from Operational Gender Analysis to Operational Gender Risk Analysis

For example, suppose a deploying force unit finds itself searching a village and villagers for weapons. A situation could develop where male deploying force soldiers find themselves physically restraining and searching village women and girls, and there could be altercations in which these female civilians are inadvertently hurt. Videos and postings regarding these instances could then circulate very quickly on social media and could be used by the anti-government force as it contrasts its ethos of female protection with the abuse of host country women by foreign soldiers. Given the existing well-publicised violations by UN peacekeepers, any video that might suggest physical abuse will likely be read within that context. The sexual exploitation of host country's women by UN troops, for example, has been recognised as undermining the missions and lowering the public's esteem of the UN once these abuses were revealed.<sup>43</sup> It takes little imagination to see how video postings online that suggest physical abuse of the women of a host country might negatively impact the deploying force's ability to enhance the legitimacy of the host country government.

The deploying headquarters' GENAD staff therefore cannot simply create an operational

gender analysis that focuses on the protection of women in the area of operations; it must go further and determine whether forces opposing the deploying force take a gendered approach in their operations, and how that plays out. In this example, it is probably going too far to say that the anti-government force's ethos of female protection is a centre of gravity. Winning a war merely by taking a gendered approach is not likely, although it can help. From a networked perspective, however, this anti-government force ethos is a potential threat that creates a risk that will require the deploying force to take a gendered approach in mitigating it.

In this hypothetical, the GENAD staff would add value by explaining to the commander and the planners that while there is no apparent significant threat to local women and girls from the anti-government group because of its female protection ethos, the anti-government force would be likely to pounce on an opportunity resulting from deploying force soldiers allegedly not living up to the same high standard. The risk presented by such an event is significant, because it only needs to be recorded on one smartphone in one village one time for it to then be distributed on social media across the country. Once this occurs, it could have a chilling effect on deploying force attempts to gain and maintain support for the host country government.

The GENAD staff could then recommend a number of steps that could be taken to mitigate this risk. For example, this fact should be included in the pre-deployment training that all deploying force soldiers receive, especially in situational training exercises involving searches and detention of civilian men and women. Who presents this training and how it is presented could have a significant impact on whether the troops receiving it actually take away the proper message from it. Subject matter experts who lack an operational background might not be assessed as credible by the soldiers, while those with operational depth might lack the background to effectively tie gender considerations to military actions.<sup>44</sup>

Next, the countries contributing personnel to the deployment should be asked to boost the number of female soldiers participating in the mission in general. Although all-female units have proven themselves effective in UN peacekeeping operations, such as the formed police units deployed

43. Muna Ndulo, 'The United Nations Responses to the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Women and Girls by Peacekeepers During Peacekeeping Missions', *Berkeley Journal of International Law* (Vol. 27, 2009), p. 130.

44. Martina Lindberg and Yvette Foliant, 'Gender Education and Training in the Military', in DCAF and PfPC, *Teaching Gender in the Military: A Handbook* (Geneva: DCAF and PfPC, 2016), p. 76.

by Bangladesh<sup>45</sup> and India,<sup>46</sup> it is not clear that these sorts of units are available in most countries' militaries. However, countries should also be asked to provide smaller units specifically geared towards interaction with civilians of different sexes, such as the Female Engagement Teams used by NATO and allied forces in Afghanistan,<sup>47</sup> the Cultural Support Teams used by US Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan,<sup>48</sup> or the *Jegergruppen* in the Norwegian armed forces.<sup>49</sup>

Commanders and planning staffs are accustomed to calculating in the currencies of risk. Likewise, mitigation measures can be quantified into amounts of money, in personnel staffing levels, the number and types of units, and time on training schedules. Resources can be allocated in a holistic fashion when different risks are compared relative to one another in this way, and adjusted as different risks wax and wane over the course of an operation. Viewing gender considerations in an area of operations just in terms of protecting host country women and girls, however, would not allow for normalising gender in the military planning and execution processes as other operational factors are. Until gender is considered from the perspective of mission risk, it will likely continue to be an outlier in important ways, a task that to some seems at best ancillary to the accomplishment of the mission: a box to be checked to keep politicians happy.

## Setting the Conditions for Creating Operational Gender Risk Analysis

Operational analysis of the risk of failing to consider gender in civilian-centric operations is not a methodology currently documented in military doctrine. Development of such a methodology will take time, and will need to be informed both by results from training exercises and unvarnished after-action reports from the field. Nonetheless, using the example of an anti-government force with a recognised ethos of female protection, it is possible to trace back from the GENAD's advice to

the commander and broadly identify the steps that must have already been in place for such analysis to have occurred.

First, an assessment of the operational risk of failing to consider gender must be based on a much broader analysis than that set out in NATO's Gender Functional Planning Guide – the analysis of 'information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify and understand inequities based on gender'. It is simply not enough to understand how gender works in the host country and then come up with military measures that could ameliorate risks to vulnerable populations because of gendered inequities. Instead, the gender analysis also needs to identify areas of gender relations in the host country that might not seem inequitable, but in the actual conduct of operations might pose a threat to the mission.

Second, any gendered threats to the mission must be understood to the degree where they can be expressed in concrete examples of risks – roughly, the multiplication of a threat's likelihood of occurrence by the severity of its potential harm. This means that gendered threats must be war-gamed like all other potential threats to the mission to understand the ways in which they might play out in actual operations. Once this is done, the GENAD staff can compare the results with historical operational examples and assess the potential negative impacts in their theatre of operations, and estimate the likelihood of occurrence through an understanding of intensity and scope of tactical actions in which the threat might appear. On this basis, the GENAD staff can provide not just a well-reasoned risk assessment, but, if necessary to convince doubters, they can also show their risk assessment methodology.

Third, no special adviser wants to be the one who identifies complex challenges to the commander and the planning staff but brings no feasible measures to mitigate these problems to the table. For the GENAD staff to be able to credibly propose the training, staffing and specialised unit options it did in the scenario above, it would need to have known what already

- 
45. UN Peacekeeping, 'Women in Peacekeeping', <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml>>, accessed 17 June 2018.
  46. Charlotte Anderholt, *Female Participation in Formed Police Units: A Report on the Integration of Women in Formed Police Units of Peacekeeping Operations*, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Papers (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2012), pp. 14–15.
  47. Raymond T Kareko, 'Female Engagement Teams', *NCO Journal* (25 October 2019), pp. 1–4.
  48. Jared M Tracy, 'The U.S. Army Cultural Support Team Program: Historical Timeline', *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* (Vol. 12, No. 2, 2016), pp. 1–13.
  49. Frank Brundtland Steder and Nina Rones, "'Why Make a Special Platoon for Women?' An Assessment of the Jegergruppen at the Norwegian Special Operations Commando (NORSOC)", *Special Operations Journal* (Vol. 5, No. 1, 2019), pp. 53–58.

## Risk Analysis of Failing to Consider Gender

existed in the inventory of gender-related resources, what could be created or emplaced quickly and how much that might cost, and have an implementation plan to bring these assets on line and be able to assess whether they were having the desired effect in mitigating the risks. On this basis, the commander and staff could then allocate a deliberately chosen portion of their limited resources against the risks posed by gender factors in the area of operations, in the context of the entire menu of risks which they needed to address.

These steps, while not simple themselves, could only come about if military forces make a significant investment in updating operational doctrine to include the operational relevance of gender in meaningful and practical ways. Military education and training based on this doctrine must give officers and soldiers the background and the opportunity to test gender issues in realistic ways in exercises. Further, in the field, intelligence collection methods must be modified to gather sex and gender-disaggregated data and feed it to analysts trained in the operational relevance of gender. The analysis they develop must be actionable not just by GENAD staff, but by commanders and staffs at all levels.

As shown by the devastating world-wide spread of the coronavirus and the increasing pace of climate change's negative effects, the world is rapidly changing, and the security of entire populations is being stressed. In addition, populations continue to be subjected to gendered patterns of warfare, as tragically shown by the actions of Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria,<sup>50</sup> and the depredations of the Islamic State against Yazidi women and girls in Iraq.<sup>51</sup> Formulating a military plan that does not account for the reality that women's and girls' security needs will often be different from those of men and boys is at best half a plan.

Importantly, looking at gender from the perspective of risk to the mission and its personnel might also help to address the longstanding and troubling tendency to view women and girls in operational settings as victims because they are 'vulnerable' – that is, inherently weak – in both international humanitarian law<sup>52</sup> and in current military doctrine.<sup>53</sup> They are not – but they are often at-risk because of the marginalisation they endure because of gender biases in their societies.<sup>54</sup> Further, proper understanding of the operational relevance of gender in any operation cannot be accomplished solely through the analysis of a single variable – gender is simply too complex a human experience to allow such an approach to work.<sup>55</sup> Conventional operational gender analysis will still have an important role to play in capturing this complexity, and an operational risk assessment of the failure to consider gender cannot be developed without it. Until gender moves fully into the military planning mainstream, however, and is able to express itself in terms of risk to the mission and its personnel if it is ignored, the full scope of UNSCR 1325's provisions to increase the protection of women and girls in armed conflict situations are not likely to be met. ■

**Jody M Prescott** is a lecturer at the University of Vermont, where he teaches environmental law, energy law and climate change, and cybersecurity law and policy. He is also an adjunct scholar at the Modern War Institute at West Point for the academic year 2020/2021. This article reflects the views of no government organisation.

ORCID

Jody M Prescott <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2824-8257>

- 
50. Hilary Matfess, *Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses* (London: Zed Books, 2017).
  51. Meredith Tax, *A Road Unforeseen: Women Fight the Islamic State* (New York, NY: Bellevue Literary Press, 2016), pp. 40–42.
  52. Prescott, *Armed Conflict, Women and Climate Change*, pp. 177–93.
  53. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 'Peace Operations', Joint Publication 3-07.3, 2018, p. II-22. ('Peace operations may be conducted to protect and secure the human rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups, which often include women, children, the elderly and infirm, and certain identity groups').
  54. Prescott, *Armed Conflict, Women and Climate Change*, pp. 17–30, 36–54.
  55. Sara E Davies and Jacqui True, 'Reframing Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: Bringing Gender Analysis Back In', *Security Dialogue* (Vol. 46, No. 6, 2015), pp. 501–08.