

Gender and Human Security

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International Peace and Security

- 'Security means nothing if it is built on others' insecurity.'

Women's International Peace Conference, Halifax, Canada, 1985.

What is security?

- Traditionally state-centric
- In so far as traditional security has any bearing on the people within the state, it is largely with regard to the elites
- Within the traditional parameters, security requires a sense of urgency and legitimacy to use extraordinary means
- The military is the tool of security, emerging swiftly, responding to unfairness, conquering space
- The possibility of altering the existence of the state is what is equated to security.
- Therefore security exists to secure the state, largely regardless of, and disconnected, from its 'contents'.

Using the gender lens

- Why gender? It is a *subjective* perspective, and does not assume that there is one view of the world
- Difference between 'women' and 'gender'
- one tries to include women in processes, get women's 'input', meet particularly women's needs, protect women
- the other tries to recognize the *use and practice* of gender in everything we do and understand in society, open it up, dismantle it, use it in different ways, illustrate construction and de-construction
- Exposes POWER – power where it is often not recognized

Gender = Women?

- Feminisms are probably most popularly known expression of gender issues
- Relationship between men and women as a problematic power dynamic has been recognized in a consistent way since mid-1700s
- Feminisms have since given rise to power awareness in other gender perspectives (like masculisms, etc)

Gender and Security:

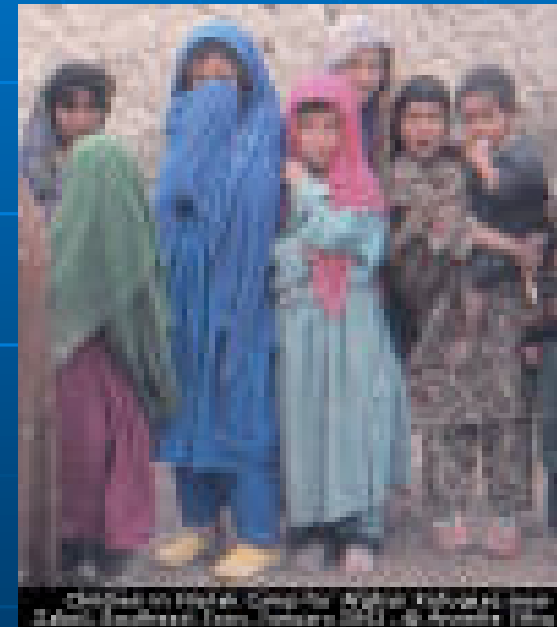
- There is no one method of understanding the relationship between gender and security, and as such no one understanding of what is security – depends very highly on cultures and experiences – in other words, context

Security does not always mean Peace, but

- Negative security for some can often mean 'no peace' for others (security from Iraq?)
- Security can be a threat itself (against the other)
- It can also be positive – security to
- Security and peace dependent upon one another (especially when seen positively)
- Gender perspectives makes visible the power relations between dominant and non-dominant groups, and therefore exposes views of security from "below"

What is 'Human Security'?

- Expanded notion of security
- Popularized in 1994 in the UNDP Human Development Report
- 'Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want'
- Identified 7 broad categories of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political
- Individual, not state, is focus



Traditional versus Human Security

- HS too broad – all ‘motherhood and applepie’, and means nothing
- Cannot identify all security needs of all individuals – need to restrict
- ‘Security’ is different from everyday security – High politics, state-oriented, urgent action of extraordinary means (usually military)



Legitimizing Human Security



- Canadian way – make it as close to traditional security without losing focus on individual
- Allow for 'freedom from fear, freedom from want', but within 'reason' (focus on most objectively desperate situations of famine, war, poverty)
- Current HS foreign policy approaches are still deaf to those who are most insecure (women, indigenous peoples, etc) – HS determined by elites (therefore gets legitimacy from the state)

Gender informed HS

- HS can express power relations between dominant and non-dominant groups, and therefore start hearing articulations from the margins
- Practically speaking this re-routes the relationship in human security foreign policy terms from a 'we, the secure, will help you, the insecure' situation to 'we recognize insecurity originates in all spaces and time and need to work together to increase security'.

Gender and security

- Gender is a part of the security dynamic, particularly through societal security and the articulation of identities
- Gender identity exposes poverty, violence, limited access to resources, restricted freedoms
- Gender articulates security needs that demand and find responses (positive security as well as negative) – by the state, by communities, by individuals



Gender and food security
- FAO



Is societal (identity) security important?

- societal security is recognized as a security sector independent of state security but important to the dynamic of state legitimacy (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998)
- identity is an important part of the security dynamic, and is a valid “security strategy.”
- Gender is one of our most influential identities but usually goes unrecognized in the societal security rhetoric
- Security as a democratic process gives greater potential to voice identities and give them space in the security agenda

Human Security – as prevention?

- When the least secure define security, they often identify interests which are not recognized by elite security (human or traditional) interests – poverty, environmental, food, women, indigenous peoples (not always in war-torn situations) - identities.
- Left unrecognized as 'securities', conflicts often result
- Possibility? Recognize these diverse securities – preventative effect