

Towards Inclusive Security in Ethiopia

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Inclusive Security: Conceptualized

In this piece, inclusive security is treated as an aspect of human security. Ever since the concept of human security was first elucidated in the UNDP 1994 *Human Development Report*, the concept has gained wide currency in discourse on international relations and security studies. In that it reaches beyond the traditional concept of state security to affirm the importance of individual security. At the heart of human security lies the relation between the state qua body politic and its citizens. Human security and state security are not mutually exclusive. They always depend on and complement each other. The Commission on Human Security's report *Human Security Now* has stressed that human security and state security are mutually reinforcing and interdependent, that without the one, the other cannot be attained. Although state security and human security are complementary and interdependent, state security does not always guarantee human security, nonetheless. The state plays a major role in guaranteeing human security, but may also be a threat to the citizenry's security.ⁱ

The concept of "inclusive security" can be traced back to divergent strands of theories in international relations. One is feminist international relations theory based on the works of scholars as diverse as Swanee Hunt, Ann Tickner, Sara Ruddick, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Judith Shapiro, and others. This theory is concerned with debunking how international politics is "gendered," that is, run by men to serve their interests and interpreted by other men, consciously and unconsciously, according to masculinized perspectives. Feminist IR theory critiques realism for being based on a masculine world view whereby the key concepts of power and security are centered on notions of self-interest, objectivity, domination and the 'political man'. The central problem for feminist IR theorists is that international politics is gender neutral and based on androcentric assumptions. This is reinforced by the virtual absence of women in key decision-making positions in national security and foreign affairs. The absence of women is coupled with the belief that women are not well-suited to the demands, pressures and responsibilities associated with peace and security issues. Almost all feminist IR theorists affirm "the laudable goal of greater female participation in all aspects of foreign relations".ⁱⁱ

In a provocative article in *Foreign Affairs*, Francis Fukuyama argued that the feminization of politics has been occurring among liberal democracies and that this development has resulted in more peaceful relations among democracies due to the increased numbers of women involved in government. Fukuyama's argument is based on the belief that there is an essential difference between the nature of men and women that is rooted in biology whereby women are naturally more peaceful while men are seen to be aggressive in nature. Given that developed democracies tend to be more feminized than authoritarian states, in terms of the female franchise and their participation in political decision-making, the article argues that it should be no surprise that the shift in sexual basis of politics should lead to a change in international relations.

Aside with his controversial assumptions about hard-wired gendered dichotomy and security implications for the West, Fukuyama's forecast that political change will accompany changes in the sexual composition of leadership is plausible. Fukuyama conceded that "The core of the feminist agenda for international politics seems fundamentally correct: the violent and aggressive tendencies of men have to be controlled... In addition, more women need to be brought into the domain of international politics as leaders, officials, soldiers, and voters. Only by participating fully in global politics can women both defend their own interests and shift the underlying male agenda."ⁱⁱⁱ Critical feminist theorists, such as Ann Tickner, Robert Keohane, Rebecca Grant and Fred Halliday, suggest that more gender neutral interpretations of what constitutes security and power must be brought into the field in order to achieve a non-gendered, inclusively human way of thinking about achieving security in the future. They argue that women treat conflict differently and place a premium on achieving consensus and reconciliation.

Arguing in favor of granting female agency rather than succumbing to the perception of women as "victims or problems", Tickner's critique draws on the work of Robert Connell to focus on "hegemonic masculinities," not essentialized men, and she recommends that we take inspiration from feminine characteristics rather than holding them as markers of female moral superiority.^{iv} Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa chime in tune with Tickner in that "inclusive security," as a concept, "emphasizes women's agency, not their vulnerability. Rather than motivated by gender fairness, this concept is

driven by efficiency: Women are crucial to inclusive security since they are often at the center of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), popular protests, electoral referendums, and other citizen-empowering movements whose influence has grown with the global spread of democracy. An inclusive security approach expands the array of tools available to police, military, and diplomatic structures by adding collaboration with local efforts to achieve peace.”^v

In the words of Swanee Hunt: “The idea of women as peacemakers is not political correctness run amok. Social science research supports the stereotype of women as generally more collaborative than men and thus more inclined toward consensus and compromise.”^{vi} Inclusive security dictates that women should be at the center-stage of the politics of war and peace, where they can bring their experience in peacemaking to bear. Even though there are more women MPs than used to be, women are still seriously underrepresented in the highest echelons of political and military hierarchies. The presidents, prime ministers, cabinet ministers, generals, diplomats, and party leaders, are overwhelmingly men. The national security process itself is dominated by a monolithic, strongly masculinized world view. At its core, security policy-making is based on such premises as strength, power, autonomy and rationality – virtues which are typically associated with men and masculinity. In this gendered view, security and foreign policy are domains of policy-making least appropriate for women.

In view of the foregoing, the reason why I propose to treat inclusive security as an aspect of human security is because inclusive security advocates for full and equal participation of women in state security apparatus and for their protection against any possible threats to their security and beyond emanating from both within and without the state. Precisely because, unlike the traditional approach to security, epitomized by the realist school of international relations, that views territorial integrity and continued survival of the state as most sacred, and therefore trumping other security concerns, inclusive security in line with human security puts people first.

Policy Framework for Inclusive Security in Ethiopia

The EPRDF-led Government has declared its commitment to gender equality first with the issuance of the National Policy on Women (NPW) in 1993, later with the promulgation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

(FDRE) in 1995, and finally with the formulation of a five year National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) in 2006 in keeping with the FDRE Constitution and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees all persons equality before the law, and prohibits any discrimination on grounds of gender. Besides, Article 35 of same elaborates on the rights of women, conferring on them equal rights as men across the board, including equal rights in inheritance and marriage as well as rights to land and property. Moreover, women are entitled to affirmative action in order to heed them “special attention” and “so as to enable them to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions.”^{vii}

A Women’s Affairs Office with the rank of minister without portfolio within the Office of the Prime Minister was also established in 1992 with mandate to coordinate and facilitate conditions to promote gender equality and to formulate and follow up a gender equality policy. The Women's Affairs Office was charged with responsibilities to oversee and coordinate activities leading to the effective implementation of the policy. Since 2005, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA) with the rank of minister with portfolio has been established by virtue of Proclamation No. 471/2005. The NPW acknowledges that “the discriminatory political, economic and social rules and regulations prevailing in Ethiopia have barred women from enjoying the fruits of their labour”. The first priorities of the government are thus: to improve the level of income of women by facilitating opportunities and women-friendly conditions in the work-place; to improve the health and nutrition of mothers and their children; and to upgrade and improve their education.

The NPW put forth three distinct, but inter-related, objectives:

To facilitate conditions conducive to the speeding up of equality between men and women so that women can participate in the political, social, and economic life of their country on equal terms with men, ensuring that their right to own property as well as their other human rights are respected and that they are not excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour or from performing public functions and being decision makers;

To facilitate the necessary condition whereby rural women can have access to basic social services and to ways and means of lightening their workload;

To eliminate, step by step, prejudices as well as customary and other practices, that are based on the idea of male supremacy and to enable women to hold public office and to participate in the decision making process at all levels.

In addition to the municipal policy framework outlined above, albeit in an all-too-sketchy manner, there is also an international policy framework for the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of public life, not excluding peace and security. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) that emerged from the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, marks an important milestone in the international community's evolving recognition of women's rights and roles in peace and security. The BPFA states in pertinent part that "full participation [of women] in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all other peace initiatives [is] essential to the realisation of lasting peace."^{viii} Besides, the BPFA recommends member states, inter alia, to increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and to promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.^{ix} Moreover, the 2000 Beijing +5 Political Declaration and "Outcomes" document also reaffirmed member states' commitments to the BPFA.

In October 2000, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted unanimously resolution 1325 that recognized gender equality as an integral component of peace and security. UNSC 1325, being the first solemn recognition of the role of women in the hitherto male dominated 'high politics' of peace and security, marks a watershed. This resolution is the most important commitment made by the international community with regard to women's participation in the maintenance of national and international peace and security. The resolution spells out actions needed by all actors, including governments and the UN, to ensure the participation of women in peace processes and improve the protection of women in conflict zones. It calls upon the Security Council, the UN Secretary General, member states and all other parties to take action in four interrelated areas: 1) the participation of women in decision making and peace processes; 2) integration of gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping; 3) the protection of women; and 4) gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems and programmes.

Although the National Policy on Women has been in place since 1993, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) had to wait until 2006. Even if gender

equality has been constitutionally guaranteed since 1995, equality did not materialize, as it does not come by mere constitutional enshrinement. Besides, a constitutional scheme of affirmative action, aiming at reversing the effects of a history of gender injustice, can never realize its goals unless it is accompanied by elaborate executory statutes and action plans detailing quota, activities, strategies, time-line, and specific situations for implementation in all sectors, private or public. Moreover, the policy itself is not free of problems. A closer perusal of the policy document reveals that its scope is limited. For instance, it fails to make a systematic analysis of the various ramifications of the absence of women from decision making positions in all sectors, esp. in peace and security, albeit it talks of the need to get women into decision making positions. The NAP-GE, with its unprecedented emphasis on development and economic empowerment of women, again overlooks the place of pride privileged to gender parity in the arenas of peace and security by UNSC 1325. Hence, Ethiopia's failure to draw up a national action plan to implement UNSC 1325 has sidelined the rights and roles of women in peace and security.

That said, despite the existence of a legislative and policy framework for gender equality, the ratio of women in public life is still low. Women remain to be underrepresented in decision-making positions at all levels of the federal and regional governments. The NAP-GE (2006-2010) attributes this gloomy reality to the following factors, to wit:

No indication that a well-thought-ought policy, programme or action, to increase the number of women at decision-making and leadership positions exist;

The constitutional commitment of the government to grant Affirmative Action has not been translated into concrete action at all levels;

The number of elected women representatives is still low;

More and more women are engaged in formal employment, but are underrepresented in middle and higher management positions;

The number of women leaders and decision makers at the various level of the decentralized government structure is still very low;

The election law and electoral process is not gender friendly^x.

Gender Equality in Ethiopia: Implications for Inclusive Security

Following the first national and regional elections in 1995, out of 548 seats, in the House of Peoples Representatives 2.3% was occupied by women. The House of Federation, which had a woman as its speaker, consisted of 7 women among its 128 members. At the Woreda councils, the number of women in office reached 8%. The goals set for the second national and regional elections in 2000 were to reach 15% at the federal and 20% at regional level.^{xi}

According to the 2000 Election Commission Report, there were only 7.7% women parliamentarians in the House of People's Representative, 6% in the House of Federation, 12.9% in the Regional State Councils, 7.1% in the Woreda councils, and 13.9% in the Kebele Councils. Although the number of women in the national legislature has increased slightly, but had been below the expected 30%.^{xii}

The third national and regional elections of May 2005 in Ethiopia brought about a dramatic increase in the number of women parliamentarians in the House of People's Representatives and Regional State Councils. The proportion of women has risen to 21.2% in the House of People's Representatives, 50% in Tigray Regional State Council, 44% in Amhara Regional State Council, 38% in Oromia Regional State Council, and 33% in SNNP Regional State Council. Even so, it still remains far below the 30% target. In the executive branch of the government (Ministers, Vice Ministers, etc), women constitute 13%. In the Civil Service, women occupied only 24.3% of the higher positions (Directors, Division Heads, Ambassadors, etc). In the judiciary, among judges of the Supreme, High and First Instance Courts of the Federal and Regional State governments, women represent 13% whilst they used to account for 25.5% in 2003.^{xiii} In the Cabinet, at the top of the echelon, there was only one woman heading a line ministry (Education).

Ironically, according to Ms. Saba Gebrekidan, a prominent civil society leader, the dramatic rise in the ratio of women representatives in the Federal parliament or the Regional State councils was not an outcome of the government's legislative or policy measures at gender parity. Rather, it was a consequence of a decision by EPRDF qu party aiming to reach a critical mass of 30% women in the 2005 national and regional elections.^{xiv} The fact that the increase was registered in four of the Regional States of

Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and SNNP which are dominated by the four members of the EPRDF coalition corroborates the claim.

Notwithstanding a National Security Council (NSC), pursuant to Proclamation No. 257/2001 and a white paper, officially known as Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy (FANSPS), were constructed in 2003, neither the NSC involved a woman nor did the FANSPS recognize salience of the gender dimension of foreign and security policy. With respect to the involvement of women in the foreign affairs and national security sector, Ethiopia saw very few women peacemakers, apart from a handful of women diplomats such as Ambassadors Sahlework Zewde, director general of the African Affairs Directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who has recently been appointed as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General heading the United Nations Integrated Peace Building Office (BINUCA) in Central African Republic (CAR), Konjit Sinegiorgis, Halima Mohammed, and Guenet Zewdie, a Cabinet-minister-turned-diplomat.

Conclusion

The Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy must extend full recognition to the role of women in peace-making, peace-building, and security. The Government should demonstrate its commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. In this regard, the Foreign Ministry must come up with the long overdue action plan for the implementation of UNSC 1325. The UN Secretary-General as early as 2004 called upon Member States, including Ethiopia, to prepare their own national action plans to implement the resolution, which was again reaffirmed in a statement of the Security Council Chairman on 7 March 2007.

Consequently, it should recruit more qualified women to the diplomatic services; nominate more women to international diplomatic assignments, specifically to senior positions (UN special representatives, peace commissions, fact-finding missions, etc.); increase the percentage of women in delegations to national, regional and international meetings concerned with peace and security, as well as in formal peace negotiations; and include women in all reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, peace building, and conflict preventive posts. Moreover, the Government should bring women into the National Security Council and Cabinet.

In fine, the Government should work aggressively to get a critical mass of women into leadership positions in contemporary Ethiopian political life in keeping with its commitments to the Constitution, the Beijing Platform for Action, and UNSC 1325. To that end, the Government must enact a gender conscious electoral law, and elaborate and workable appointment policy and procedures in the near future. Meanwhile, I urge all political parties, whether the incumbent or opposition, across the ideological spectrum to put forward gender-balanced lists of candidates to the National Electoral Board until the Governments comes to realize and actually enacts a gender conscious electoral law.

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ⁱ UNESCO, Human Security: Approaches and Challenges, STEDI MEDIA, Paris, 2008, pp. 73-75

ⁱⁱ Francis Fukuyama, Women and the Evolution of World Politics, Foreign Affairs, Volume 77 No.5, September/October 1998, p.33

ⁱⁱⁱ *Id.*, p.35

^{iv} Ann Tickner, Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving International Security. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 137.

^v Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa, Women Waging Peace: Inclusive Security, Foreign Policy, May/June 2001, P. 38

^{vi} *Id.*, p.41

^{vii} Article 35(3) of the FDRE Constitution.

^{viii} Fourth World Conference on Women, The Platform for Action; Global Framework, Article 23. New York: United Nations, 1996, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#framework.

^{ix} *Id.*

^x National Action Plan for Gender Equality(2006-2010), Ministry of Women's Affairs, p.11

^{xi} Women Watch, United Nations, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/> accessed on 16 January 2010

^{xii} National Action Plan for Gender Equality(2006-2010), Ministry of Women's Affairs, pp11-12

^{xiii} *Id.*

^{xiv} Conversation with the author.