observations about the empirical bounds of my analysis and invitation to challenge or extend my argument by considering different cases.

My analysis isn't intended to be empirically generalizable: even in liberal democracies, supporting the troops is not a mechanistic phenomenon. I do aim, though, for analytical generalizability around the problem I see "support the troops" as addressing—that all states need to have some way of "making right" the terms of participation in state force. This is particularly acute in liberal democracies, with ideals of equality and liberty, and in states without conscription. It's true that support may not be the "new service" everywhere, nor would I expect it to be. But states everywhere will have some normative reckoning with military service (likely tangled up with gendered ideas of what it means to be a good person).

Which brings us to von Hlatky's excellent point about Québec and the co-existence of anti-war and anti-military sentiment. Rather prosaically, though I see supporting the troops as a mandatory discourse, it doesn't materially prevent the articulation of anti-military sentiment, merely its ability to be socially received as intelligible and legitimate political dissent for "good" masculine citizens. I'd be curious, then, to what extent anti-military rhetoric is intersubjectively and contextually legitimated within various communities within Québec and how that dissent in turn relates to political membership within the Canadian state. If membership within this particular political community is contested, we might likewise see the bounds of martial political obligation loosened. Similar questions could be raised about Canada's status as a "special ally"—a great observation, given the prevalence of "support the troops" discourse within Canada during the Global War on Terror (GWoT) in relation to Afghanistan—as U.S. political discourse did, indeed, frame Canada's non-participation in Iraq as a betrayal (of the United States? of the liberal imperial international order?).

This relationship between obligation, violence, and political membership also pertains to the push to consider non-war activities during the GWoT. Von Hlatky is right, that despite the recent prevalence of, for instance, "Blue Lives Matter" discourses in the United States, they don't operate the same way—an important avenue for future work. Here, I think the difference between the normative role of law enforcement within the political community (in idealized liberal understandings) and that of the military is important. Participation in policing is not an idealized component of political belonging and law enforcement is meant to keep the peace, rather than use violence. These differences in relationship to citizenship and sacrifice—as well, of course, as historical and contemporary experiences of racist, sexist, trans- and homophobic state violence—give law enforcement, immigration, and state surveillance a different political inflection.

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The United Nations Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, more than twenty years on from Security Council Resolution 1325, has developed from an initial (hard won) declaration of the centrality of gender equality to war and peace to a complex, wide-ranging, and technical policy architecture embedded (if inconsistently) across states and international organisations. This process, as Stéfanie von Hlatky interrogates in this important book, has resulted in a situation wherein military institutions, predominantly tasked with collective force, are now also asked to act as transformative agents of gender equality.

Drawing upon a fine-grained analysis of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's implementation of the WPS agenda, von Hlatky argues that the feminist principles of WPS are subject to "norm distortion", wherein agents (militaries) are able to redefine norms via implementation away from, or even in contrast to, the intent of their principals (NATO states) (pp. 7-9). Specifically, *Deploying Feminism* argues that militaries focus WPS implementation on the ability of gender—in the form of deployed women or context-based gender analysis—to improve operational effectiveness, rather than broader gender equality (pp. 11-12; 50; 154-5). Von Hlatky thus tackles a particularly thorny, high-stakes iteration of what feminist IR scholars refer to as the "dual agenda" that accompanies gender mainstreaming: an institution is meant to hold "two aims simultaneously: first, the promotion of gender equality and gender justice as an end in its own right; and second, making mainstream policies more effective in their own terms by the inclusion of gender analysis" (see Sylvia Walby, "Gender Mainstreaming: Productive Tensions in Theory and Practice," *Social Politics* 12[3], 2005, p. 3).

It's perhaps worth mentioning that I have also (occasionally) done WPS activities with NATO and military institutions. I nodded along with von Hlatky's, careful explication of the typical talking points (and cul-de-sacs) within military institutions: there must be more women but militaries cannot (or will not) specifically recruit/deploy more women; a sense of bafflement as to what gender analysis is and gender advisors are meant to do; the

substantial if quixotic interpretations of WPS by specific commanders; and the tempting path to institutional credibility offered by the instrumentalization of gender in operational effectiveness. The strength of von Hlatky's analysis and the clarity of her writing will have many academics, practitioners, and policy-makers who have banged their head against the wall of WPS and operational effectiveness likewise experience the thrill and discomfort of recognition provided by the text. As definitively established by the impressive insider access, interviews, and close readings of policy within the book, von Hlatky is completely right. This is how WPS works within NATO (or doesn't).

This is the book's central contribution. *Deploying Feminism* offers a nuanced empirical analysis and intricate mapping of NATO's complex command structure and its labyrinthine relationship to NATO's WPS policies, tracked across three paradigmatic missions: KFOR in Kosovo, eFP battlegroups in the Baltics, and NMI in Iraq. Von Hlatky's expertise in military organisations, developed across a career as a prominent academic-practitioner, clearly undergirds her three years of fieldwork and over one hundred interviews with military and civilian officials. Both the data and its analysis are invaluable resources to academics and policymakers—gender experts or otherwise —seeking to engage with NATO and other international security organisations. *Deploying Feminism* surpasses its aim of "bridging the gap" between policymakers and academics, putting a substantial dent in the academic/ civilian "credibility gap" in military institutional literacy. It will also hopefully, given the confusion von Hlatky documents throughout the book, raise awareness within NATO and amongst military personnel as to the aims, scope, and system for WPS implementation within the alliance.

Understandably, given its aims and audience, the book takes a light touch to substantive theorising, using only those concepts essential for bringing across the central diagnosis of WPS norm distortion. It's significant, then, that von Hlatky introduces policy audiences to the feminist underpinnings of the WPS agenda and the tensions between (some forms of) feminism and the pursuit of gender equality within martial institutions. The book's framing of the pursuit of operational effectiveness as not only diverting WPS commitments from their original aims of transformative equality, but as actively militarising WPS (pp. 153-54) is pleasingly direct and potentially radical. It's also meaningful that though the book offers concrete, pragmatic, and likely workable solutions to NATO's specific gender policy failures—another massive contribution—it doesn't shy away from the big, troublesome question that informs all military gender work: "Why should a military alliance be tasked with promoting gender equality? Why should the military be involved?" (p. 154).

This internal, institutionalist focus also underlies the limitations of the book, which follow from its use of the principal-agent frame. In understanding members states as the principal within the alliance (p. 14), with military commanders offered room for "distortion" at the tactical level, von Hlatky is obliged to make two important assumptions. The first is that member states as principals are civilian and civilian-ness, in turn, is the source of gender equality. While this tracks with NATO's commitment to the democratic control of armed forces, it also reifies a binary account of civil-military relations, precluding analytical and empirical consideration of the potential for military actors to act subversively, destabilise conventional gender norms, and, in small ways, change military culture (Matthew Hurley, "The 'Genderman': (Re)negotiating Militarized Masculinities When 'Doing Gender' at NATO," *Critical Military Studies*, 4[1], 2018; K.A. Wright, M. Hurley, and J.I.G. Ruiz, *NATO, Gender and the Military: Women Organising from Within,* 2019). It misses how gender advisors, gender focal points, and even commanders may act as "good" agents of WPS and "bad" agents of military culture through less formal, indirect practices (see Aiko Holvikivi, "Contending with Paradox: Feminist Investments in Gender Training," *Signs*, 48[3], 2023).

The second, implicit assumption is that NATO member states—and civilian NATO officials'—commitment to gender equality is not only genuine but also obvious and uniform in its meaning. Put differently, though the theoretical discussion of the book highlights a plurality of feminisms, the book also takes the meaning of gender equality within NATO policy as read, thus implicitly adopting the alliance's empirical definition of gender equality as the definition of gender equality/WPS.

The treatment of gender-equality-as-given has three corollaries. First, *Deploying Feminism* does not incorporate its interlocutors' implicit accounts of gender equality —such as KFOR personnel's emphasis on domestic violence and women's victimisation (p. 80), NMI's emphasis on "role modelling" in public communications (pp. 147-8; 135-6), or the Baltic eFP's focus on preventing sexual harassment within NATO forces (p. 100)— into the analysis. These positions are treated as imperfect or incomplete implementations of WPS, alongside and facilitated by militaries' broader obsession with operational effectiveness, rather than analytically meaningful contestations or alternative interpretations of gender equality per se. This elision places the text in the position of critiquing accounts of WPS that focus solely on the operational benefits of women soldiers (pp. 30-38), while also calling for NATO to request more women to close the "credibility gap" inherent to promoting gender equality without gender parity in its deployed forces (pp. 160-1). Women's participation in NATO/the

military remains instrumentalised, in the service of liberal equality rather than martial violence.

Second, the book considers quite briefly how gender operates within the alliance. Von Hlatky importantly notes that not all member states hold the same position on gender equality (p. 166). The framing of member-states as the principal of WPS norms, however, reinforces a presumption that NATO countries are gender equal. This assumption is also reflected in the book's empirical material with, for instance, an interlocutor noting that their WPS training was more difficult to translate to Latvia than to Iraq or Afghanistan, as "female-male dynamics are very similar to back home in Canada" (p. 120), rendering the training less applicable. I was left wondering whether there are instances in which the principal-agent relationship operates internally, with NATO using WPS policies to socialise potentially-reluctant militaries (or even states) into a particular liberal version of gender equality. Hints of this dynamic are seen in von Hlatky's documentation of subtle resistance to women's participation in the military as potential "positive discrimination" (p 64).

Third, the principal-agent frame also limits the book's ability to engage with the racialised and colonial dynamics of WPS (see Nicola Pratt, "Reconceptualizing Gender, Reinscribing Racial–Sexual Boundaries in International Security: The Case of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security,'" *International Studies Quarterly*, 57[4], 2013; Marsha Henry, "On the Necessity of Critical Race Feminism for Women, Peace and Security," *Critical Studies on Security*, 9[1], 2021). Many of von Hlatky's interlocutors frame gender equality policy or the presence of women as necessitated by the "culture" of host states. One notes, for instance, that "in this part of the world, it's not like in the United States or other countries … We were told Albanians are Muslim, they have more rigid gender roles" (p. 87), an invocation of essentialised cultural difference that mirrors racialised tropes of Global North states (and women) "saving" women of the Global South (see Lila Abu-Lughod, *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, 1998). This is not, importantly, the perspective put forward by von Hlatky. The uniform treatment of gender equality, however, limits the text's ability to consider that NATO might, indeed, be deploying a particular form feminism—one not unlike the imperial, civilisationalist version of feminism upon which the invasion of Afghanistan was justified (Ann Russo, "The Feminist Majority Foundation's Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid: The Intersections of Feminism and Imperialism in the United States," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 8[4], 2006).

I learned an immense amount from *Deploying Feminism* and am compelled to hear more. It's essential reading for not only civil-military policymakers, but also the pragmatics of on-going debates about feminism, militarisation, and co-optation.

Response to Katharine M. Millar's Review of *Deploying Feminism: The Role of Gender in NATO Military Operations*

— Stéfanie von Hlatky ⓘD

Long before writing *Deploying Feminism*, I was studying NATO deterrence and military cooperation. And then in 2007, something new came along with the first NATO Policy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). I found this particularly intriguing because it seemed at odds with how I understood NATO to be working. The WPS agenda was inspired by feminist principles of gender equality; NATO was a predominantly male and militaristic organization. To investigate this normative shift, I thought, one would need a deep dive into NATO's inner workings. Indeed, introducing new ideas can be more complex than introducing new weapons, especially when those ideas run against the grain of a deeply entrenched military organizational culture. And so, tasking NATO militaries to take gender considerations into account when they plan operations was never going to be easy.

In reading Katharine Millar's review, I see that the most important contributions she identifies were at the heart of my project: writing an accessible text for academics, policymakers, and servicemembers alike that would still offer analytical and empirical depth for those familiar with the topic. She is right that I have opted for a "light touch" when introducing the concepts, theories, and literature that anchor my argument on norm distortion; it was not only my preferred writing style but it was also compatible with my objective of reaching a broader audience, with clear takeaways for civilian and military practitioners. I acknowledge that there are trade-offs and limitations to doing that and I'll focus on three in particular.

First, choosing a principal-agent framework takes some attention away from the subtle and subversive actions of military actors, as documented in the work of Aiko Holvikivi and Matthew Hurley. Instead, I propose a detailed record of processes, procedures, and military practices that accompany the implementation of WPS policies and directives, from the strategic to the tactical level. Then, while I draw from feminist contributions, I adopt an institutionalist lens which means that I, myself, remain quite agnostic about the project of closing the gender gap in military operations. Instead, the book points out that the representation and participation of women is explicitly articulated as a NATO objective, that the Alliance is not really interested in pressing its own member states to achieve it, and this