



Under Two Patriarchal Authorities? Subordination of Female Peacekeepers by Husbands and the State: A Feminist Critique

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ABSTRACT: This research examines dual subordination of Indonesian female peacekeepers experiencing layered control from private institutions (family/husbands) and public institutions (state/military). Using critical feminist methodology through qualitative literature-based discourse analysis, this study applies feminist state theory and intersectionality analysis to reveal how the state instrumentalizes marriage institutions controlling female soldiers' professional autonomy. Findings indicate spousal permission requirements for peacekeeping assignments create dual ownership: women belong to husbands privately and the state publicly, making career advancement contingent on spousal approval rather than solely professional competence. Three operational mechanisms function: juridical domestication (codifying marital status as professional determinant), institutional collusion (domestic-military patriarchy collaboration), and internalized patriarchy (women accepting subordination systems). Comparative analysis reveals male soldiers face no equivalent requirements, perpetuating hegemonic masculinity. This study offers a new analytical framework conceptualizing dual ownership through three subordination mechanisms for understanding spousal-permission regulations in troop-contributing countries, advancing knowledge on domestic-institutional patriarchy intersections limiting women's peacekeeping participation.

Keywords: Discriminatory Policy, Gender and Military, Hegemonic Masculinity, Military Masculinity, Women Peacekeepers.



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INTRODUCTION

The international community has widely recognized the vital role of women in peacekeeping operations through various progressive UN resolutions. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 marked a paradigm shift, acknowledging women's fundamental contribution to conflict

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prevention, peace negotiations, and post-conflict reconstruction while emphasizing their equal participation as active agents rather than merely objects of protection ([Karim & Beardsley, 2017](#); [United Nations Security Council, 2000](#)).

Subsequent initiatives including the Action for Peacekeeping Initiative in 2018 and the Call to Action on Women Transforming Peace and Security in 2020 have reinforced this commitment, reflecting growing international consensus that gender equality in peacekeeping concerns both operational effectiveness and legitimacy of peace interventions ([Duncanson & Woodward, 2016](#); [United Nations Peacekeeping, 2023a](#)).

Nevertheless, implementation of women's participation agenda continues to face significant structural challenges, particularly in troop-contributing countries like Indonesia. Despite Indonesia's commitment to human rights principles through Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces, operational reality demonstrates persistent discriminatory practices. Married female soldiers are required to obtain spousal permission in written form for international peacekeeping assignments and various aspects of their professional lives ([Arby, 2020](#); [Widjonarko, 2024](#)). This practice shows what Arby (2020) identifies as dual subordination: women experience layered control from both private institutions (family and husbands) and public institutions (the state and military).

This regulatory configuration creates a phenomenon of dual ownership, wherein female soldiers' professional autonomy is simultaneously constrained by domestic authority (through spousal permission requirements) and state authority (through military institutional regulations). Women are positioned as belonging to their husbands in private spheres and to the state in public spheres—owned twice by two interconnected patriarchal systems ([Widjonarko, 2024](#)). Even as Indonesia made progress eliminating virginity testing in 2021, spousal permission requirements persist, perpetuating patriarchal structures in the professional realm and creating structural barriers that contradict formal commitments to gender equality.

This dual subordination phenomenon becomes particularly salient when examined through feminist theory, which reveals how state and family institutions collaborate in maintaining patriarchal control. According to Wesson & MacKinnon (1989), the state represents a systematic and structured form of masculine power rather than a neutral entity, strategically instrumentalizing marriage institutions to extend control over female soldiers' professional mobility and autonomy. The convergence of domestic and institutional patriarchy in regulating women's participation in peacekeeping operations raises fundamental questions about citizenship, professional equality, and structural barriers that continue to impede women's full integration into security institutions despite formal commitments to gender equality.

Nevertheless, implementation of the women's participation agenda in peacekeeping continues to face significant structural challenges. This is particularly evident in troop-contributing countries such as Indonesia, where military institutional policies and practices still maintain patriarchal control mechanisms that restrict the mobility and autonomy of female soldiers ([Rudberg, 2023](#)).

Although Indonesia has committed to human rights principles in its military law through Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces, operational reality

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demonstrates persistent discriminatory practices. Married female soldiers are required to obtain spousal permission in written form for various aspects of their professional lives ([Arby, 2020](#)).

According to Arby (2020), this practice requiring female soldiers to obtain spousal permission for overseas assignments or career decisions reflects a broader phenomenon of dual subordination. Women experience layered control from private institutions such as family and husbands alongside public institutions including the state and military.

Despite Indonesia's progress in increasing female soldier candidates following the gradual elimination of virginity testing in 2021, strict regulations remain. These regulations prohibit and limit women's full participation in security institutions, including spousal permission requirements that perpetuate patriarchal structures in the professional realm ([Widjonarko, 2024](#)).

This regulatory configuration creates a unique situation where female soldiers' professional autonomy is simultaneously constrained. Domestic authority operates through spousal permission requirements while state authority operates through military institutional regulations, resulting in a phenomenon of being owned twice by two interconnected patriarchal systems ([Widjonarko, 2024](#)).

This dual subordination phenomenon becomes particularly salient when examined through feminist theory, which reveals how state and family institutions collaborate in maintaining patriarchal control. According to Wesson & MacKinnon (1989), the state represents a systematic and structured form of masculine power rather than a neutral entity.

This theoretical perspective illuminates how spousal permission requirements in military institutions function not merely as administrative procedures but as mechanisms of control. The state strategically instrumentalizes marriage institutions to extend its control over female soldiers' professional mobility and autonomy ([Wesson & MacKinnon, 1989](#)).

The convergence of domestic and institutional patriarchy in regulating women's participation in peacekeeping operations raises fundamental questions. These concern the nature of citizenship, professional equality, and the structural barriers that continue to impede women's full integration into security institutions despite formal commitments to gender equality.

The significance of this research extends beyond the Indonesian context to contribute to broader scholarly discussions on gender and militarism. While existing literature has documented various forms of gender discrimination in military contexts ([see further: C. Enloe, 2000; Sasson-Levy, 2003; Sjoberg, 2013](#)), a critical research gap remains: the specific phenomenon of dual subordination through spousal permission requirements in troop-contributing countries remains underexplored. This gap is particularly problematic given that peacekeeping assignments represent crucial opportunities for career advancement, international exposure, and professional development within military hierarchies.

This article addresses this gap by offering a new analytical framework that conceptualizes dual ownership and identifies three operational mechanisms of dual subordination—juridical domestication, institutional collusion, and internalized patriarchy—specifically operating through spousal-permission regulations. The Indonesian case provides a compelling illustration of how

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formal policy commitments to women's participation can coexist with regulatory mechanisms that fundamentally undermine women's professional autonomy, offering insights into how postcolonial states navigate tensions between international gender equality agendas and local institutional practices ([Cohn & Duncanson, 2020](#)).

This research addresses three central questions. First, how are female peacekeepers positioned doubly as wives belonging to their husbands and as state apparatus belonging to the nation? This examines the dual identity construction imposed on female soldiers and how these competing claims shape their professional experiences.

Second, does this dual positioning reinforce patriarchal control through two levels operating in private and public domains? This investigates mechanisms through which domestic and institutional patriarchy collaborate to maintain gender hierarchies and restrict women's autonomy.

Third, how does the state utilize family institutions as instruments of control over female soldiers' bodies and professional choices? This explores the strategic instrumentalization of marriage institutions by military authorities to extend state surveillance and regulation of women's mobility beyond formal institutional channels.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist State Theory

Wesson & MacKinnon (1989) in their work *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* argue that the state is not a neutral entity. Rather, it constitutes a systematic and structured form of masculine power that operates through legal systems and institutions.

Wesson & MacKinnon (1989) asserts that the state is male, wherein state laws and institutions operate masculine perspectives as universal standards. This framework fundamentally challenges liberal conceptions of state neutrality by demonstrating how state policies systematically privilege masculine interests while marginalizing women's experiences and needs.

According to Wesson & MacKinnon (1989), the state legitimizes and enforces male dominance through three primary mechanisms. First, through juridical systems that codify masculine norms as universal legal standards. Second, through institutional practices that systematically exclude women from positions of power and decision-making authority.

Third, through ideological apparatuses that naturalize gender hierarchies as inevitable aspects of social organization. These mechanisms make patriarchal arrangements appear as natural order rather than as constructed systems of domination maintained through state power ([Wesson & MacKinnon, 1989](#)).

In military institutions, Wesson & MacKinnon (1989) theory provides crucial analytical tools for understanding how state military apparatus maintains masculine dominance while claiming institutional neutrality. Military regulations requiring female soldiers to obtain spousal permission exemplify how the state instrumentalizes family institutions as extensions of patriarchal control.

Rather than treating female soldiers as autonomous professional citizens with equal rights to career mobility, such regulations position married women as simultaneously subject to both state and domestic authority. This creates layered systems of patriarchal control that reinforce women's subordinate status in both public and private spheres.

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality theory, as developed by Crenshaw (1991), provides essential analytical frameworks for understanding how multiple dimensions of social identity interact to produce unique forms of privilege and oppression. Her groundbreaking work demonstrated that experiences of discrimination cannot be understood through single-axis frameworks examining gender or race in isolation.

Crenshaw (1991) approach requires attention to how categories of identity mutually constitute and reinforce each other to create distinctive patterns of marginalization. This theoretical approach fundamentally challenges essentialist understandings by revealing how power operates through the intersection of multiple systems of domination rather than through isolated forms of discrimination.

Collins & Bilge (2016) further develop intersectionality as an analytical framework emphasizing that systems of power operate not as discrete entities but as mutually constitutive systems. Their conceptualization highlights how intersectionality functions simultaneously as critical theory, analytical strategy, and political praxis oriented toward social justice.

In this research on female peacekeepers, intersectionality theory proves particularly valuable for analyzing how multiple identities create unique forms of subordination. Female peacekeepers experience discrimination specifically as married women in military environments where masculine norms and marital status converge to produce distinctive patterns of control.

The requirement for spousal permission exemplifies this intersectional subordination. It simultaneously invokes and reinforces gender hierarchies within marriage, professional hierarchies within military institutions, and broader societal norms about women's appropriate roles and dependencies (Collins & Bilge, 2016).

Furthermore, intersectionality theory illuminates how dual subordination operates through what Collins (2000) describes as domains of power. These include structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal dimensions that work together to maintain systems of inequality across multiple domains of social life.

Hegemonic Masculinity in Military Institutions

The concept of hegemonic masculinity, as developed by Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), provides crucial theoretical tools for understanding how military institutions maintain gender hierarchies. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the configuration of gender practices that legitimizes

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patriarchal dominance and subordinates alternative masculinities and femininities through cultural and institutional mechanisms.

Within military contexts, hegemonic masculinity operates through valorization of traits stereotypically associated with masculinity including physical strength, aggression, emotional stoicism, and hierarchical authority. It simultaneously devalues characteristics culturally coded as feminine such as nurturance, emotional expressiveness, and collaborative leadership styles ([Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005](#)).

Military institutions serve as primary sites for the production and reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. They function as what Enloe (2000) describes as masculinity-making machines that transform civilian men into soldiers through processes of militarization emphasizing masculine warrior identities.

These processes involve systematic devaluation of anything associated with femininity. Women and feminine qualities are positioned as threats to military effectiveness and unit cohesion ([Enloe, 2000](#)). The integration of women into military institutions thus represents a fundamental challenge to hegemonic masculinity.

This prompts defensive institutional responses designed to contain women's presence while maintaining masculine dominance ([Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005](#)). Mechanisms include occupational segregation, sexual harassment, and regulatory barriers such as spousal permission requirements that mark women as fundamentally different from and subordinate to male soldiers.

The absence of spousal permission requirements for male soldiers while requiring such permissions from female soldiers exemplifies how hegemonic masculinity operates. It naturalizes masculine autonomy while positioning feminine dependency, thereby reinforcing cultural narratives about women's primary identities as wives rather than as professional military personnel ([Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005](#)).

This research employs a qualitative research design utilizing critical feminist methodology to examine the dual subordination phenomenon experienced by Indonesian female peacekeepers. The choice of qualitative methodology is grounded in recognizing that understanding complex social phenomena requires interpretive approaches that can capture nuances and lived experiences.

Critical feminist methodology, as articulated by scholars including Collins (2000) and Crenshaw (1991), emphasizes the importance of centering marginalized voices and interrogating power structures. This methodological approach aligns with the research's theoretical commitments to intersectionality and feminist critique by foregrounding how institutional regulations and cultural practices collaborate to maintain gender inequalities.

The primary unit of analysis consists of institutional policies, regulatory frameworks, and scholarly literature pertaining to women's participation in Indonesian military peacekeeping operations. Particular emphasis is placed on regulations governing spousal permission requirements for international assignments.

The analysis examines formal policy documents including military regulations and administrative procedures, as well as academic scholarship addressing gender dynamics in military institutions

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and feminist theories of the state. This comprehensive approach enables triangulation across multiple data sources, thereby strengthening analytical insights.

Data collection was conducted through systematic review of peer-reviewed academic literature, policy documents, and institutional analyses addressing women's participation in military peacekeeping operations. Academic literature was identified through database searches using Publish or Perish and specialized journals in feminist security studies and gender studies.

Search terms included combinations of keywords such as women peacekeepers, gender and military, spousal permission military, patriarchal state, and hegemonic masculinity. Policy documents were obtained through government websites, international organization reports, and civil society research organizations focusing on gender equality in security sectors.

The collection strategy prioritized materials published between 2000 and 2024 to capture contemporary debates while maintaining historical depth. This timeframe corresponds with the evolution of women's participation in peacekeeping following adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Data analysis employed critical discourse analysis as the primary analytical strategy, examining how language, institutional regulations, and policy frameworks construct and maintain particular understandings (Fairclough, 2013). Following methodological guidelines established by feminist discourse analysis (Baxter, 2003; Lazar, 2007), the analytical process involved multiple stages to understand gender and authority.

These stages included close reading of collected materials to identify recurring themes, coding of data according to theoretical concepts derived from feminist state theory and intersectionality frameworks, and comparative analysis of regulatory requirements across gender categories to identify differential patterns.

Throughout the analytical process, particular attention was paid to silences, absences, and naturalizations wherein certain arrangements were presented as inevitable rather than as contested political choices. This critical attention to what remains unsaid proved essential for revealing how patriarchal control operates through normalization of masculine privilege in peacekeeping.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative research design utilizing critical feminist methodology to examine the dual subordination phenomenon experienced by Indonesian female peacekeepers. The choice of qualitative methodology is grounded in recognizing that understanding complex social phenomena requires interpretive approaches that can capture nuances of power structures and institutional practices (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991).

The primary unit of analysis consists of institutional policies, regulatory frameworks, and scholarly literature pertaining to women's participation in Indonesian military peacekeeping operations. Data sources include policy documents such as Indonesian military regulations and administrative procedures, particularly Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed

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Forces and regulations governing spousal permission requirements for international assignments. Academic literature comprises peer-reviewed scholarship addressing gender dynamics in military institutions, feminist theories of the state, peacekeeping participation, and gender equality in security sectors. Institutional analyses include reports from government websites, international organizations, particularly UN peacekeeping documents, and civil society research organizations focusing on gender equality in Indonesian security sectors.

Data collection was conducted through systematic review of materials published between 2000 and 2024 to capture contemporary debates while maintaining historical depth corresponding with evolution of women's participation in peacekeeping following UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Academic literature was identified through database searches using Publish or Perish and specialized journals in feminist security studies and gender studies. Search terms included combinations of keywords such as women peacekeepers, gender and military, spousal permission military, Indonesian female soldiers, patriarchal state, and hegemonic masculinity. Policy documents were obtained through government websites, international organization reports, and civil society research organizations focusing on gender equality in Indonesian security sectors.

Data analysis employed critical discourse analysis as the primary analytical strategy, examining how language, institutional regulations, and policy frameworks construct and maintain particular understandings of gender and authority ([Fairclough, 2013](#)). Following methodological guidelines established by feminist discourse analysis ([Baxter, 2003](#); [Lazar, 2007](#)), the analytical process involved multiple interconnected stages.

Close reading of collected materials identified recurring themes, patterns, and regulatory language regarding female soldiers' mobility and professional autonomy. Theoretical coding organized data according to concepts derived from feminist state theory ([Wesson & MacKinnon, 1989](#)), intersectionality frameworks ([Collins & Bilge, 2016](#); [Crenshaw, 1991](#)), and hegemonic masculinity theory ([Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005](#)).

Comparative analysis examined regulatory requirements across gender categories to identify differential patterns, specifically examining presence and absence of spousal permission requirements for male versus female soldiers. Throughout the analytical process, critical attention was paid to silences and naturalizations wherein certain arrangements were presented as inevitable administrative procedures rather than as contested political choices maintaining patriarchal control.

This approach proved essential for revealing how institutional regulations operationalize dual subordination through juridical domestication, institutional collusion, and internalized patriarchy mechanisms. The comprehensive methodological approach enables triangulation across multiple data sources, thereby strengthening analytical insights while foregrounding how institutional regulations and cultural practices collaborate to maintain gender inequalities in Indonesian military peacekeeping participation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Juridical Domestication: Codification of Marital Status as Professional Determinant

The first operational mechanism of dual subordination identified in this research is juridical domestication. Military regulations codify marital status as a determinant factor in women's professional rights and opportunities, representing a formal legal instantiation of patriarchal authority ([Thornton, 1991](#)).

This mechanism extends masculine control from private domestic spheres into public professional domains. The requirement that married female soldiers obtain written spousal permission for international peacekeeping assignments fundamentally transforms marriage from a personal relationship into a juridical instrument, whereby the state delegates authority over women's professional mobility to their husbands, thereby creating institutionalized dependency ([Fineman, 2004](#)).

Regulatory Mechanisms in Indonesian Context

Analysis of military regulatory frameworks reveals that spousal permission requirements operate through mechanisms that naturalize masculine authority while rendering women's professional autonomy conditional. According to Widjonarko (2024), despite Indonesia's formal commitments to gender equality, operational regulations continue to embed assumptions about appropriate gender roles.

These assumptions position women's primary identities and responsibilities in domestic spheres as wives and mothers rather than in professional spheres as military personnel ([Smith & Segal, 2013](#)). Regulatory language constructs spousal permission not as an exceptional accommodation but as a standard requirement, thereby normalizing masculine veto power over women's career decisions.

The juridical domestication mechanism operates through what Brown et al. (2021) describes as strategic deployment of law to maintain gender hierarchies while simultaneously claiming institutional neutrality. By framing spousal permission requirements as administrative procedures designed to ensure family welfare, military institutions obscure the patriarchal character of these regulations ([Cohn, 2000](#)).

This discursive strategy positions women who challenge permission requirements as selfish individualists who prioritize career ambitions over family responsibilities ([Hays, 1998](#)). It thereby mobilizes cultural narratives about appropriate femininity to legitimize institutional barriers, creating powerful mechanisms for maintaining masculine dominance through law's claim to neutrality and legitimacy ([Boyd, 1997](#)).

Institutional Collusion: Collaboration Between Domestic and Military Patriarchy

The second operational mechanism of dual subordination consists of institutional collusion, wherein domestic patriarchy embodied in marital authority structures and military patriarchy embedded in organizational hierarchies collaborate to maintain layered control over women's professional participation ([Walby, 1989](#)). This collusion manifests through regulatory configurations that grant husbands formal authority to approve or deny wives' peacekeeping participation ([Sasson-Levy, 2003](#)).

Marriage institutions are thereby positioned as extensions of military command structures, with husbands serving as informal gatekeepers of women's access to professional opportunities. As Pateman (2016) argues, marriage historically functioned as a mechanism through which men obtained rights over women's bodies, labor, and choices.

Contemporary spousal permission requirements represent continuations of this patriarchal arrangement adapted to contexts of women's formal inclusion in professional institutions. By requiring female soldiers to obtain spousal permission, military regulations effectively deputize husbands as enforcers of institutional control.

This arrangement produces what Hochschild (2012) conceptualizes as the second shift, wherein women bear disproportionate burdens of emotional labor. Female soldiers must invest time and energy in convincing husbands of the legitimacy of peacekeeping assignments, justifying professional ambitions against competing claims of domestic responsibilities. For instance, female soldiers must invest considerable emotional labor convincing their husbands about the legitimacy and importance of peacekeeping missions to Indonesia's international standing, negotiating family arrangements during deployment, and justifying their professional ambitions within domestic relationships—burdens not imposed on male soldiers.

Enforcement and Disciplinary Practices

Furthermore, institutional collusion creates enforcement mechanisms that penalize women who challenge or circumvent permission requirements while simultaneously exempting men from equivalent restrictions. There are documented cases wherein female soldiers faced disciplinary sanctions for accepting peacekeeping assignments without proper spousal documentation ([Arby, 2020](#)).

These enforcement practices reveal the strategic instrumentalization of marriage by military authorities as a mechanism for extending surveillance and control over female personnel ([Enloe, 2007](#)). By positioning husbands as legitimate authorities over wives' professional choices, military institutions ensure that women's career trajectories remain subject to masculine approval at multiple levels ([Carreiras, 2006](#)).

Internalized Patriarchy: Reproduction of Subordination Through Consent

The third operational mechanism of dual subordination involves internalized patriarchy, wherein some female peacekeepers themselves come to accept and reproduce the systems that limit their

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autonomy. Drawing on Bartky (2015) concept of hegemony as power maintained through consent, this mechanism reveals how patriarchal arrangements become naturalized through cultural narratives and institutional practices.

Some female soldiers internalize beliefs about women's primary responsibilities residing in domestic spheres. They view spousal permission requirements as reasonable accommodations for family welfare rather than as discriminatory barriers to professional equality, demonstrating how ideological incorporation operates through processes of socialization ([Bartky, 2015](#)).

Internalized patriarchy operates through mechanisms that Blair-Loy (2005) describes as competing devotions, wherein women experience genuine conflicts between professional aspirations and family commitments. Cultural narratives about good wives and devoted mothers emphasize women's responsibilities for maintaining marital harmony and prioritizing family needs.

These cultural pressures lead some women to voluntarily seek spousal approval even when not formally required or to decline peacekeeping opportunities to avoid potential marital conflicts. These internalized constraints can be as effective as formal regulations in limiting women's professional participation through self-surveillance and voluntary compliance ([Stone, 2007](#)).

The phenomenon of internalized patriarchy becomes particularly complex when examining how some female soldiers participate in reproducing systems that disadvantage them. As Scott (1985) argues, subordinated groups often develop weapons of the weak that allow them to navigate oppressive systems while appearing to consent to them.

Some female peacekeepers may strategically frame their acceptance of permission requirements as demonstrating good wife qualities, thereby gaining symbolic capital within domestic relationships. However, this strategic compliance simultaneously reinforces the legitimacy of patriarchal control mechanisms and makes collective resistance more difficult ([McNay, 1999](#)).

Comparative Analysis: Absence of Permission Requirements for Male Soldiers

A critical finding of this research emerges from comparative analysis revealing the complete absence of equivalent permission requirements for male soldiers. This exposes how gender operates as the determinant factor in differential institutional treatment rather than marital status or family responsibilities per se ([Acker, 1990](#)).

According to current Indonesian military regulations, male soldiers who are married and have children are not required to obtain spousal permission for peacekeeping assignments, international deployments, or career decisions. This indicates that institutional regulations target women specifically rather than all married personnel with family obligations, demonstrating how military institutions naturalize masculine autonomy while constructing feminine dependency ([Woodward & Winter, 2007](#)).

The absence of permission requirements for male soldiers reveals the operation of what Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) theorize as hegemonic masculinity. Particular configurations of masculine identity and practice are institutionalized as normative standards against which other gender performances are judged as deficient or problematic.

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Within military contexts, hegemonic masculinity manifests through assumptions that men are natural warriors whose primary identities and commitments reside in professional military service ([Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005](#)). These assumptions position male soldiers' participation in peacekeeping as expected and unproblematic, requiring no special accommodations or permissions ([Barrett, 1996](#)).

In contrast, women soldiers are constructed as fundamentally different beings whose participation in military service represents departures from natural feminine roles ([Herbert, 2000](#)). This requires special regulations to manage presumed tensions between professional military service and appropriate feminine behavior.

Furthermore, comparative analysis illuminates how differential treatment operates to maintain masculine privilege while appearing to accommodate family welfare concerns. The institutional narrative justifying spousal permission requirements invokes concerns about family stability, child welfare, and marital harmony, suggesting that these regulations serve protective functions ([Williams et al., 1999](#)).

However, the selective application of such concerns exclusively to female soldiers while exempting male soldiers exposes the gendered character of these justifications. As Budig (2013) demonstrates, institutional arrangements consistently advantage men while disadvantaging women through differential treatment rationalized by appeals to family welfare.

State Instrumentalization of Marriage as Control Mechanism

The findings of this research demonstrate that the Indonesian military's spousal permission requirements exemplify what Wesson & MacKinnon (1989) theorizes as the patriarchal state's strategic instrumentalization of seemingly private institutions. Rather than treating marriage as a private relationship outside state jurisdiction, military regulations actively mobilize marriage institutions as extensions of state authority.

This collapses distinctions between public and private spheres that liberal political theory typically maintains. It reveals the fundamentally gendered character of state power, wherein the state operates not as a neutral arbiter but as an active participant in producing and maintaining patriarchal gender hierarchies ([Wesson & MacKinnon, 1989](#)).

Delegation of State Surveillance

The strategic instrumentalization of marriage operates through mechanisms that delegate state surveillance and control functions to domestic partners ([Yuval-Davis, 1993](#)). By requiring female soldiers to obtain spousal permission, the state effectively outsources monitoring of women's professional participation to husbands who serve as informal gatekeepers empowered with veto authority ([Pettman, 2005](#)).

This delegation strategy proves particularly effective because it obscures state responsibility for gender discrimination ([Cohn, 2008](#)). When female soldiers are denied peacekeeping opportunities because husbands withhold permission, this appears as a private family matter rather than as state-

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sanctioned discrimination, thereby deflecting accountability and making resistance more difficult ([Sjoberg & Via, 2010](#)).

Furthermore, the instrumentalization of marriage reveals how the state strategically mobilizes cultural norms and ideological constructions about appropriate gender roles. As Cynthia Enloe (2016) argues, military institutions actively produce and reproduce particular forms of masculinity and femininity that serve institutional interests.

Spousal permission requirements participate in this gender-making process by reinforcing cultural narratives about women's primary identities residing in domestic spheres as wives subject to husbands authority ([Runyan & Peterson, 2018](#)). The intersection of state institutional power and cultural gender ideology creates mutually reinforcing systems wherein each legitimizes and strengthens the other ([Mohanty, 1988](#)).

Intersectional Dimensions of Dual Subordination

Application of intersectionality theory to the phenomenon of dual subordination reveals how multiple dimensions of identity and institutional positioning converge to produce unique forms of marginalization ([McCall, 2005](#)). Female peacekeepers experience subordination specifically as married women soldiers whose professional participation is regulated through the intersection of gender hierarchies, military structures, and marital authority systems.

This intersectional positioning creates what Crenshaw (1991) describes as structural intersectionality, wherein institutional arrangements produce distinctive patterns of disadvantage for individuals occupying multiple marginalized identities simultaneously. The experience cannot be adequately understood through single-axis frameworks focusing exclusively on gender or marital status.

The intersectional dimensions of dual subordination manifest through mechanisms that differentially impact women depending on various factors including class position, educational background, and family support systems ([Anthias, 2012](#)). Female soldiers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may possess more resources to negotiate spousal permission or to challenge refusals.

Women from more economically precarious situations may face greater pressure to accept husbands' decisions to avoid marital conflicts that could threaten family economic stability. These variations demonstrate how spousal permission policies operate through existing inequalities to produce stratified experiences of subordination Collins & Bilge (2016).

Moreover, intersectional analysis illuminates how dual subordination interacts with broader national and international contexts. Indonesia's position as a major troop-contributing country creates pressures to increase women's participation to meet international gender equality targets, while domestic cultural norms continue to maintain patriarchal control mechanisms ([Widjonarko, 2024](#)).

This tension between international commitments and domestic practices produces contradictory effects wherein women are simultaneously recruited for peacekeeping to enhance Indonesia's

international reputation while being subjected to regulatory barriers. The intersection of national identity, international relations, and gender politics creates complex dynamics requiring nuanced analysis ([Cohn & Duncanson, 2020](#)).

Implications for Gender Equality in Military Institutions

The findings of this research carry significant implications for understanding barriers to genuine gender equality in military institutions. First, the research demonstrates that formal inclusion of women in military institutions does not automatically translate to substantive equality when institutional regulations maintain mechanisms that position women as fundamentally different from and subordinate to male personnel.

Spousal permission requirements exemplify how discriminatory practices can persist even within formally integrated institutions through regulatory configurations that appear neutral or protective. This suggests that achieving gender equality requires fundamentally transforming institutional cultures, regulations, and practices that continue to embed masculine assumptions and privilege.

Second, the research highlights the importance of examining not only formal policies but also informal practices, cultural norms, and ideological constructions. Even if spousal permission requirements were formally abolished, cultural expectations and gender ideologies that position women's primary identities in domestic spheres would likely continue to constrain women's professional participation.

As Cockburn (2012) argues, transforming military institutions requires challenging not only discriminatory regulations but also broader militarized masculinities. This suggests that gender equality initiatives must address multiple dimensions simultaneously including formal policies, institutional cultures, and societal gender ideologies.

Third, the research underscores the necessity of intersectional approaches that recognize how gender inequality intersects with other systems of power. Policy interventions aimed at promoting gender equality that focus exclusively on gender risk reproducing inequalities among women while claiming to advance collective interests.

As Ridgeway (2019) demonstrates, organizational change efforts prove most effective when they address multiple dimensions of inequality simultaneously. For military institutions, this suggests that gender equality initiatives must be developed in conjunction with broader institutional reforms addressing class-based barriers and educational inequalities.

Possibilities for Resistance and Transformative Change

While this research has documented multiple mechanisms through which dual subordination operates to constrain women's professional autonomy, it is important to recognize that patriarchal systems contain contradictions and spaces for resistance. Female peacekeepers have developed various strategies to navigate and challenge permission requirements.

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These strategies include cultivating supportive relationships with partners who actively encourage professional development, building collective solidarity networks with other women soldiers, and strategically framing peacekeeping participation in ways that emphasize family benefits. These everyday practices may not immediately transform institutional structures but create important spaces for maintaining agency and contesting patriarchal control.

Furthermore, growing international attention to women's participation in peacekeeping creates external pressures on military institutions to reform discriminatory practices. The UN's emphasis on increasing women's representation and research shows women's valuable contributions provide legitimate grounds for challenging permission requirements as barriers to Indonesia's peacekeeping contributions ([United Nations Peacekeeping, 2023](#)).

Civil society organizations, women's rights advocates, and international partners can mobilize these normative frameworks to pressure military institutions for regulatory reforms. The intersection of domestic women's movements and international gender equality advocacy creates possibilities for building coalitions that can challenge patriarchal structures from multiple directions simultaneously.

However, it is crucial to recognize that achieving transformative change requires more than individual resistance strategies or formal policy reforms. Sjoberg (2013) argues, military institutions remain sites of deeply entrenched patriarchal power that resist transformation even in the face of formal equality initiatives.

Meaningful change requires sustained political mobilization, institutional accountability mechanisms, and cultural shifts that challenge militarized masculinities ([Scott, 1985](#)). It also requires creating alternative visions of security work that value diverse contributions and recognize caregiving responsibilities as legitimate concerns for all personnel regardless of gender.

CONCLUSION

This research has examined the phenomenon of dual subordination experienced by Indonesian female peacekeepers, demonstrating how they encounter layered control from both private and public institutions. The central contribution of this study is the conceptualization of dual ownership and identification of three operational mechanisms through which spousal-permission regulations systematically subordinate female peacekeepers.

Through application of feminist state theory and intersectionality analysis, the research reveals how military regulations requiring spousal permission represent systematic instrumentalization of marriage institutions. The findings identify three operational mechanisms: (1) juridical domestication that codifies marital status as a professional determinant; (2) institutional collusion between domestic and military patriarchy that legitimizes masculine authority; and (3) internalized patriarchy wherein some women accept and reproduce systems that constrain their autonomy. Spousal permission requirements create conditions of dual ownership wherein female soldiers are positioned as simultaneously belonging to husbands in private spheres and to the state

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in public spheres, making career advancement contingent on spousal approval rather than solely on professional competence.

Comparative analysis revealing the complete absence of equivalent permission requirements for male soldiers exposes how these regulations perpetuate hegemonic masculinity by naturalizing masculine autonomy while constructing feminine dependency as appropriate and legitimate. This reveals the fundamentally gendered character of military institutions that claim professional neutrality while systematically privileging masculine interests.

This research advances understanding of how domestic and institutional patriarchy intersect to limit women's full participation in global peace operations by illuminating mechanisms through which states strategically instrumentalize family institutions to maintain control over women's bodies and choices. The dual ownership framework and three-mechanism analysis offer a new conceptual lens applicable to examining spousal-permission regulations in other troop-contributing countries beyond Indonesia. The study demonstrates the analytical value of intersectionality theory for examining how multiple dimensions of identity and institutional positioning converge to produce unique forms of subordination.

Practically, the research underscores urgent need for comprehensive policy reforms. Military institutions must abolish discriminatory regulations including spousal permission requirements while simultaneously developing comprehensive gender equality frameworks that recognize caregiving responsibilities as legitimate concerns for all personnel regardless of gender. They must challenge militarized masculinities that devalue women's contributions and create institutional cultures that value diverse perspectives and experiences. International organizations including the United Nations must strengthen accountability mechanisms for troop-contributing countries regarding gender equality standards and provide technical and financial support for institutional transformation initiatives. Civil society organizations and women's rights advocates must continue mobilizing to challenge patriarchal power structures while building solidarity networks that support women's professional participation and agency.

This research acknowledges several important limitations. First, as a literature-based study relying primarily on secondary sources and policy analysis, the findings would benefit from complementary empirical research employing direct interviews with Indonesian female peacekeepers to capture their lived experiences and subjective interpretations of dual subordination. Second, the focus on Indonesian military contexts limits generalizability to other national contexts with different cultural norms and institutional structures. Future research should conduct comparative analyses across multiple troop-contributing countries to identify how various institutional configurations and cultural contexts shape women's experiences of peacekeeping participation. Third, the research has focused primarily on married heterosexual women's experiences without adequate attention to how unmarried women, divorced women, or women in same-sex relationships navigate military institutional structures differently.

Only through sustained multi-level efforts addressing regulatory, cultural, and structural dimensions simultaneously can the dual subordination of female peacekeepers be effectively challenged and dismantled. The dual ownership framework developed in this research provides analytical tools for such efforts while highlighting the persistent gap between formal gender

equality commitments and institutional practices that continue to subordinate women in military peacekeeping operations.

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