The Women, Peace and Security Agenda: The Unfinished Story of Feminist Revolution versus Compromise in Global Politics

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Abstract: The adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (WPS) in 2000 has prompted the development of an extensive WPS scholarship within the field of feminist International Relations. The dynamic scholarly debate is characterised by certain tensions between two feminist groups – the radical revolutionary one which advocates a redefinition of the global order and is more sceptical of the agenda, and the pragmatist one accentuating the compromise towards the existing peace and security governance. This article explores the two main subjects of the WPS research – the discourse and implementation, as they have been informed by the revolutionary and pragmatist approaches. The article shows that while the academic inquiries into the WPS discourse reveal disappointment with the compromises made regarding the revolutionary vision, this disappointment is also present in the literature on implementation. The latter literature nonetheless acknowledges feminist pragmatism as a way forward given the realities on the ground.

Keywords: UNSCR 1325, Women, Peace and Security Agenda, feminist critique, revolution, pragmatism

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During the last two decades, the global peace and security governance has seen an unprecedented spread of new gender norms falling under the umbrella of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS). This agenda's very foundation lies in the transnational women's activism, which led to the adoption of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325[1] in 2000, the first ever resolution that calls for women's participation and inclusion of gender perspective in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery. It is also the first of such thematic Resolutions of the Security Council, the world's highest international body in charge of peace and security. On these grounds, this achievement was applauded as a milestone, a watershed (e.g. Anderlini 2007: 7), a revolutionary moment or a potentially revolutionary moment, as it could

transform ways of understanding how security is conceived, protected and enforced (Cohn et al. 2004: 137). From this platform, it was possible to imagine a radical reform of peace and security governance, and it was celebrated as such (Kirby – Shepherd 2016a: 249).

The WPS agenda is centred around the key pillars of implementation, defined as the areas of action – participation, protection and prevention, the gender perspective and relief and recovery.[2] In 19 years, the normative WPS framework was augmented to include ten Resolutions,[3] influencing advocacy, policy-making and practise across the globe. The WPS agenda has also been extensively explored by academics, and the research grew into the new sub-field of feminist International Relations (IR). Engagement with the WPS agenda has not been uniform in theory, concept, or practise and there is no consensus either on the desired direction of progress or on which part of the agenda is the most crucial to such progress (Kirby – Shepherd 2016a: 250). The underlying characteristics of the WPS scholarship are certain tensions stemming from the diverse forms of feminist knowledge present in the academic debate. Louise Olsson and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (2015: 2) observe that at the basis of these critical debates on UNSCR 1325 lies the fact that from an early period in the emergence of 1325, an uneasy alliance formed between those who seek to understand and reform the international community's work to contribute to gender equality, and those who strive for a more radical reorganisation of the world structure. The resulting tight spots, variously referred to as epistemological differences between feminist discourse and empirical research (Olsson – Gizelis 2014: 2), between the two broad feminist camps of peacebuilding sceptics and critically engaged pragmatists (Duncanson 2016: 10), or, similarly, between feminist revolution and pragmatism (True – Davies 2019: 6), can be traced throughout the extensive WPS scholarship, having evolved since the adoption of the foundational Resolution 1325.

In other words, whereas one group of feminist scholars is more empirically- or practise-oriented, seeking WPS reforms in favour of women on the ground, the other, more radical group calls for a reorganisation of the contemporary peace and security order to pursue the feminist vision of peace. The radical or revolutionary approach of the latter envisions a paradigm shift away from the neoliberal model of governance that is seen by revolutionary feminist scholars as prioritising profit over people, exacerbating inequalities, supporting militarism and patriarchy, and furthering war, conflict, environmental degradation and climate change (WILPF 2014 as cited in Duncanson 2016: 67). Duncanson (2016: 11) nonetheless argues that both of these camps are critical scholars wishing to transform the current political, social and economic structures. The divide is more about how to achieve the transformation – whether to work as *insiders* or *outsiders* to the contemporary international order and its security institutions (see Hawkesworth 2006 as cited in Duncanson 2016: 11).

The concept of transformation, transformative agenda or transformative change is indeed very frequently used in the WPS literature by both groups. "Transformation" can refer to the internal changes within the existing peace and security structures, as well as to the more radical one *"beyond the power of internal strategy"* (Kirby – Shepherd 2016b: 392), meaning the paradigm transformation mentioned above. That said, the concept of transformation is more frequently used, sometimes interchangeably, with the revolutionary approach, although not explicitly. It is not that the critical pragmatists lack a transformatory agenda, but they might vary in the degree to which they advocate for transformatory change (Duncanson 2016: 11). To make it more complicated, it is not always entirely clear how scholars envision transformative change or transformative potential within the WPS framework. There is no consensus among feminist scholars about the extent to which the transformation of global governance is possible, what form it should take, and indeed to what ends global governance could and should be transformed (Waylen 2008: 254). To give an illustration from the broad WPS community, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), an organisation at

the heart of the WPS agenda, envisions transformation in revolutionary terms as a total worldwide disarmament, including the dismantling of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (Kirby – Shepherd 2016: 390–391), while those advocating a more compromised approach focus on an insider's engagement in transformative changes within such institutions as NATO (e.g. Bastick – Duncanson 2018; Wright 2016).

In this article, I review the WPS debate in the light of these two approaches to the global peace and security order, the pragmatist one accentuating compromise, and the radical revolutionary one, which is much more sceptical to the WPS agenda. More precisely, I strive to explore how the agenda's potential to either be co-opted by the existing order of international peace and security governance, or radically redefine and revolutionise this order is viewed by scholars who researched two traditional spotlights of the WPS scholarship – the discourse and implementation of the WPS agenda. The focus is thus on how the literature sees the specifics of the WPS discourse and implementation and their differences and commonalities in compromising with or counteracting the international peace and security order. The article shows how the disappointment with the WPS being too much about compromise at the expense of revolution, which is apparent in the conceptual enquiries into the WPS discourse, is reflected also in the academic assessment of the WPS implementation practises. Nonetheless, there is an apparent shift in the latter literature towards acknowledging feminist pragmatism as a way forward given the realities on the ground.

By mapping the WPS literatures' approach to the international peace and security order, I aim to streamline the debate for those who seek to understand this complex and dynamically evolving feminist agenda, be it emerging scholars, policymakers or practitioners. The literature is approached chronologically, in accordance with the development of the WPS scholarship from the early conceptual critique to the more recent empirical research assessing implementation. Since the number of academic books and articles on WPS is enormous, the focus is especially on literature that touches upon the tight spots of the WPS debate.

The article proceeds in three steps. First, I introduce the genesis of Resolution 1325 and place it in the context of the revolution versus compromise debate. Second, I discuss how the literature views the WPS agenda's conceptual framework while focussing on its official discourse, and third, I look at how it views implementation, considering in both cases the divide between the pragmatist and revolutionary approaches. The concluding text summarises the WPS debate in the context of the existing tensions and unanswered questions and touches on possible avenues for advancing the WPS research.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE WPS AGENDA

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000 is widely regarded as a historical moment which gave a foundation to the broader WPS agenda. The genesis of 1325 is well documented in the literature, with emphasis given to the role of advocacy networks, as well as to the global security climate of the 1990s, which provided the preparatory ground. Understanding the WPS agenda and the acclaimed revolutionary potential envisioned by advocates of UNSCR 1325, nonetheless, requires placing it against the background of the international peace and security processes vested in the powerful Security Council.

Many scholars emphasise that Resolution 1325 was not adopted in a vacuum (e.g. Chinkin 2019: 26). The post-Cold War environment supported women's movements and emancipatory opportunity structures that allowed for the production of normative agendas such as Children in Armed Conflict and Protection of Civilians (Tryggestad 2014: 54). UNSCR 1325 was among the group of these thematic resolutions adopted between 1998 and 2000, which marked the beginning of a new era of UN peacebuilding (Klot 2015: 730; Chinkin 2019: 26). Seeing it in retrospect, it was also still the time of the decade of optimism before the turn back towards militarism and national security in the wake of

the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Chinkin 2019: 34). The role of feminist advocacy networks in the genesis of 1325 is widely recognised and documented (e.g. Cohn et al. 2004; Cockburn 2012). Cockburn (2012: 49) considers Resolution 1325 as *our* feminist achievement, explaining that it may well be the only Security Council Resolution for which the preparatory groundwork was entirely done by civil society and non-governmental organisations.

However, it would be misleading to consider this agenda new to the women's movement. Rather, Resolution 1325 brought it to the highest security institution but its history goes back to the 1915 Hague Congress of Women, which outlined the vision of general disarmament and *permanent peace* (Otto 2018: 105; Kirby – Shepherd 2016a: 250). The Congress established the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace, the predecessor of WILPF, which was at the centre of the advocacy network for UNSCR 1325. Members of this network were organisations with different profiles, and it is worth mentioning that out of these, only the Hague Appeal for Peace and WILPF are explicitly anti-war, anti-militarist, and pro-disarmament, and of the two, only WILPF also explicitly identifies itself as feminist (Cohn 2008: 196). While the groups in the network advocated as a coalition, talking about the international arms trade, *militarism*, or, even worse, militarism's relation to masculinities, as WILPF wanted to do, was deemed by these groups to be too *political* (Cohn 2008: 197). It is significant to note that the self-censorship of this coalition foreclosed even the possibility of conversation with member state delegations about these issues (Cohn 2008: 197). It is therefore not surprising that some women from this network were self-critical afterwards for its failing to address these issues, especially after seeing what the Resolution has become in practise (Cockburn 2012: 49, 55). The critiques of militarism, military budgets and military priorities were curtailed and reformulated into positive calls for women's participation and a gender perspective in peace and security, to fit the practises and expectations of the UN and the Security Council (Gibbings 2011: 532), where the dominant paradigm holds a world made up of states that *defend* state security through military means (Cohn 2008: 197).

The institutional processes leading to the adoption of UNSCR 1325 further diluted the radicalism in UNSCR 1325. According to Felicity Hill and Maha Muna, who were both involved in the campaign to pass the Resolution as part of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security (NGO WG), NGOs sought to shift the focus from women as victims, though without losing this aspect of conflict, to women as effective actors in peace and peace building (Cohn et al. 2004: 132). Nonetheless, the message of the NGO WG had been diluted in the process of working in a coalition with UN bureaucrats and officials of Member States, who at every stage pressed realism on the activists, stressing the limits of what the Security Council was likely, at best, to take onboard (Cockburn 2007: 148). To push their agenda forward, the NGO WG adopted the UN's positive and uplifting language norms of women as peacemakers (Gibbings 2011: 533).

It seems from these accounts that the WPS agenda has from its outset departed from the revolutionary path, albeit still being regarded as potentially revolutionary. The price of bringing the pillars of women, peace and security into the security agenda of the UN Security Council may have been the high one of losing the transformative potential sought by civil society (Otto 2015, as cited in Chinkin 2019: 34). However, the following parts of the article show that the tension between revolution and compromise has remained an unfinished story, preoccupying the WPS scholarship from discourse to the research on WPS implementation.

THE WPS DISCOURSE

The global success and promotion of UNSCR 1325 as a breakthrough policy and advocacy tool was, soon after its adoption, overshadowed by academic critiques problematising the Resolution's discursive construction of gender and security. Most of this literature is

guided by the feminist vision of peace, building on the revolutionary change envisioned by advocates of 1325. These critiques largely dismiss UNSCR 1325's potential for a radical redefinition of the international peace and security system and the gender power relations that maintain this system, warning instead that its problematic conceptualisation maintains the status quo and allows the agenda to be co-opted by militaries. A similar critique persists towards the follow-up WPS norms, although the most recent Resolutions are viewed with some optimism.

The Foundational Resolution 1325: Feminist Activism Co-opted by the Security Establishment

In the years following the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the relevant scholarly critique concentrated on the discursive construction of gender in this Resolution, problematising its grounding on essentialism and binary opposites. With the concept of gender inextricably linked to the one of security in UNSCR 1325, a further feminist critique emerged contesting the norm's conventional framing of security. Especially in the course of the norm's diffusion and adoption by various organisations, including militaries, and with the slow progress achieved on the ground, WPS scholars started to question UNSCR 1325's silence on militarisation, militarised masculinity, and the war system in general. These lines of critique constitute the basis of the revolutionary approach which is widely present in the feminist academic production on Resolution 1325.

One of the most common critiques of UNSCR 1325 questions the Resolution's representation of women as vulnerable, and often coupled with children and civilians (e.g. Carpenter 2005; Charlesworth 2008; Otto 2006; Shepherd 2008; Vayrynen 2004). Feminists have long argued that fixing 'womenandchildren' (Enloe 1990) as eternally protected is closely related to the maternalist discourses that see *women*, by virtue of their association with motherhood, as *naturally* more nurturing, peaceful and protective (Shepherd 2008a: 119). Moreover, the language which emphasises women's role as mothers is linked to an assumption that they are inherently peaceful, situating women (but not men) as civilian caregivers (Carpenter 2005: 306). This essentialist view of women as mothers, nurturers, and communal peacemakers has the potential to push post-conflict societies back to the status quo in terms of traditional gender roles (Hudson 2009: 61). This representation also functions to define men as responsible for protecting *their* women and children and the nation as a whole (Shepherd 2008: 115).[4]

The sceptical group of scholars has further identified some passages of 1325 as problematic for considering gender as a women's issue while also ignoring its relational and intersectional value (Charlesworth 2008; Heathcote 2014; Otto 2006; Shepherd 2008; True 2010; Vayrynen 2004). For some scholars, through the productive discursive power of its framings, 1325 produces certain types of masculinities and femininities, normalising binaries and fixed ideas about gender practises (Vayrynen 2010, quoted in Duncanson 2016: 35). So, whilst the Resolution was hailed as a transformatory triumph, the relations of inequality remain uncontested in it, which in reality means the Resolution is used as a way of co-opting gender activism to preserve the existing gender status quo (Puechguirbal 2010: 184). What is more, the Resolution represents women as a uniform group with uniform needs, failing to address the complex intersections of gender with race, ethnicity, sexuality, physical ability and religious privilege, and how this manifests in specific post-conflict communities (Heathcote 2014: 52). This is further reinforced by the invisibility of men as diverse and differently privileged actors (Heathcote 2014: 52). The word men is not used in the document, despite its textual representation of gender (Shepherd 2008: 116). The crucial point of this critique is that if ideas about women are to change, ideas about men must also change (Otto 2006: 160). Scholars challenge also the the fixing of women as victims of violence as it functions to reproduce a conceptualisation of both gender and violence that is theoretically and practically dangerous (Shepherd 2008: 123). This

gendered construction denies women the agency extended by Resolution 1325 while perpetuating the feminisation of peace, and pacification of women (True 2010: 199).

All the sceptical accounts above suggest that the Resolution's discursive construction of gender prevents the realisation of the revolutionary potential envisioned by the advocates of the norm. This critique caused some frustration among feminists from the UN and NGOs focusing on effective implementation of the norm, who see it as an overanalysing or abstract theorising which does not lead to strategies for action (Duncanson 2016: 36, 42). Even some scholarly responses written in the first several years after the adoption of 1325 still try to elevate its positive aspects, arguing that the Resolution simultaneously acknowledges the very real horrors of women's experiences in war and the scandalous lack of attention to women's need for protection, while also making women's agency vibrantly visible (Cohn et al. 2004: 139). Nonetheless, even the more optimistic feminists such as Cohn soon became disillusioned, seeing the revolutionary limits of the norm in its approaches to security (Cohn 2008; Cockburn 2012; see also Duncanson 2016: 33).

Many feminist scholars guided by the revolutionary approach emphasise that with militarism left in place, UNSCR 1325 is dependent on existing militarised structures and processes of international peace and security (Cohn 2008; Cockburn 2012; Olonisakin at al. 2011). These authors argue that to change the relationships between the masculinised protectors and the feminised protected would ultimately require a profound transformation and reordering of the international structures that promote peace and security (Willet 2010: 147). In view of that, many scholars point at the contradictions inherent to 1325 (Cockburn 2012; Cohn 2008; Otto 2014). Cockburn (2012: 54) warns that whilst the UN was created to put an end to war, 1325's wording and provisions leave it co-optable by militarism. Duncanson (2013: 28) explains that these feminist sceptics see not only an inherent contradiction in using soldiers to achieve peace, but also that the problem is that soldiers defend and in part constitute a system which is fundamentally unjust. These critiques suggest that such a system is left unchallenged by UNSCR 1325 and hence, the revolutionary opportunities are missed. In her widely cited lines, Cohn (2008: 198) argues that the focus on protecting women in war, and insisting that they have an equal right to participate in the processes and negotiations that end particular wars, both leave war itself in place rather than pushing for an intervention that would try either to prevent war, or to contest the legitimacy of the systems that produce war.

In a similar vein, a number of authors highlights the WPS agenda's failure to re-conceptualise security in feminist terms to include not just physical, but also structural, economic, and environmental security.[5] This means that the root causes of conflict and violence are ignored (Basu – Corfontini 2016; Ruby 2014; Otto 2014), albeit addressing these is seen as key to sustainable peace together with demilitarisation and disarmament (Chowdhury Fink – Davidian 2018: 161). The frequent criticism here targets the neoliberal macroeconomic policies of the existing peacebuilding framework. The main point of critique is that UNSCR 1325 fails to adequately challenge a global system in which neoliberal notions of development are married to and dependent on militarism and militarisation (Basu – Corfontini 2016: 15). Duncanson (2016: 11), however, argues that this group of feminist sceptics has too often focussed on identifying neoliberalism as the problem that prevents progress without considering how to challenge it, and that their critique is too harsh and dismissive of the importance of the small wins. She tries to build on both the revolutionary and the pragmatist camps, suggesting their potential synergies and increased collaboration (Duncanson 2016: 11).

The Follow-up WPS Resolutions: From Problematic Protection to Meaningful Participation

The scholarly critique of the conceptual framing of the WPS norms continues, as the agenda has expanded to a total of ten Resolutions by 2019,[6] although these are not analysed

in such detail and to such an extent in the literature as UNSCR 1325. Foremostly, the revolutionary camp problematises the predominant focus of the Security Council on prevention of and protection from sexual violence in conflict, arguing this approach reinforces the militarised approach to security at the expense of a long-term prevention. The Security Council largely reverted to its protective script of women as victims of the sexual violence of armed conflict in its second thematic WPS Resolution, UNSCR 1820, adopted in 2008, and later reaffirmed it in UNSCR 1888, UNSCR 1960 and UNSCR 2106 (Otto 2014: 163). By choosing to focus on sexual violence, the Security Council reasserts its role as the protector, reinvigorating a narrative of gender that supports militarism and justifies the hegemonic use of power in a crisis, both deeply anti-feminist projects (Otto 2009: 17). Chloé Lewis (2014: 215) acknowledges certain progress in Resolution 2106's explicit reference to men and boys, including male survivors, but she further argues that overall, the Resolution still reinforces the problematic narrative of male perpetrators/female victims. Scholars also stress that the Security Council's main focus on protection has come at the expense of strengthening participation and women's agency. As Kirby and Shepherd (2016b: 380) note, only UNSCR 1889 and 2122 focus primarily on participation issues, while four of the remaining WPS Resolutions address violence prevention and protection (Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106); the exception here is UNSCR 2242, which is relatively balanced.

Some scholars writing from the revolutionary position note that the overwhelming focus on protection and violence prevention has detracted the WPS agenda from long-term prevention. Prevention was originally framed as conflict and war prevention, yet over the years it has been changed to prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (Anderlini 2010: 15), steadily shifting from a general opposition to war to a limited focus on civilian victimisation and war crimes, and even to an accommodation with military operations in cases where it was deemed sufficiently cognisant of *human security* (Kirby – Shepherd 2016b: 391). It is the *prevention* in the sense of sustained social change to undo the conditions that produce violent conflict in the first place which is absent (Kirby – Shepherd 2016b: 391). There is almost nothing in the agenda on the root causes, the political economy of violence and its role in preventing participation, in contrast to the weight given in the WPS Resolutions to women in the security sector, and conflict-related sexual violence as a weapon of war and later a weapon of terror (Chinkin – Reese 2019: 24).

On the other hand, there is an apparent tendency to elevate the transformatory potentials of the follow up WPS norms. Scholars, for instance, acknowledge that some of the follow up Resolutions provide opportunities for transformative change, as there is a certain shift towards the language of empowerment and agency. In UNSCR 1888, women are recognisable as positive actors and putative agents, whose participation is expected to transform the security sector, which continues in a similar vein in UNSCR 1889 (Shepherd 2011: 508). Otto (2018: 114) refers to two *empowerment resolutions*, arguing they work hard to make up for some of the lost ground: UNSCR 1889 particularly demands attention to improving women's socioeconomic conditions through access to education, justice, and basic health services, and UNSCR 2122 affirms that sustainable peace requires a holistic approach that integrates political, security, development, human rights, the rule of law and justice activities. Heathcote (2014: 12) similarly argues that UNSCR 2122 opens some transformative possibilities but adds that the focus on women's participation needs to shift to addressing the problem of the over-representation of men in post-conflict institutions, resisting gender essentialism by responding to the diversity of women's lives, and acknowledging the gendered normative assumptions of the Security Council itself. Some progress is apparent from the most recent Resolutions' language of *meaningful participation*, as advocated by NGOs such as WILPF, which illustrates the evolving meaning-in-use of WPS (Davies – True 2019: 12). There is clearly some optimism in these accounts of the transformative potential provided by the discursive constructions of the newer

Resolutions. At the same time, however, as Shepherd (2011: 511) cautiously notes, recognising women as actors does not automatically ensure that those same women necessarily have the agency-capacity to act.

Scholars also respond to the emerging areas of concern covered by the newer Resolutions. Ní Aoláin (2016: 276) notes, for instance, that with UNSCR 2242, the WPS agenda leaves the line of conventional conflict for the first time as it is expanded to include the context of terrorism and countering violent extremism (Ní Aoláin 2016: 276). The emphasis on women's participation in the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism in 2242 changes the nature of prevention as it has been constituted thus far in the adopted Resolutions (Shepherd 2019: 107). Some authors nonetheless warn of the risk of instrumentalisation and securitisation of women's rights in the efforts of countering terrorism and violent extremism (Ní Aoláin 2016; Chowdhury Fink – Davidian 2018). Then again, Shepherd (2019: 106) indicates an important shift in Resolution 2242 – from the articulation of women as agents of violence prevention to the articulation of gender equality and women's empowerment as a precondition for effective violence prevention, which seems to be in line with Cora Weiss's idea of *"abolishing war"* rather than *"mak[ing] war safe for women"* (Shepherd 2019: 106). There is also an emphasis in 2242 on the engagement of men and boys as partners in promoting women's participation, which represents new possible futures for the WPS agenda (Shepherd 2019: 107). Chowdhury Fink and Davidian (2018: 162) similarly describe UNSCR 2242 as an opening, explaining that if the WPS principles were applied, the increasing convergence could be an avenue to ensure a focus on prevention, demilitarisation, and human rights. These arguments seem to suggest that some of the revolutionary ideas have been projected into Resolution 2242.

But overall, the literature on the conceptual framing of the follow up WPS Resolutions goes from strong scepticism to a softer tone with some optimistic accounts and less opposition to the current peace and security architecture. Kirby and Shepherd (2016b: 391) argue that the narrowing of the WPS aims regarding prevention mentioned above, is one of the consequences of the radical WPS voices being muted in the contemporary WPS discourse. In other words, while the WPS framework has been expanding, the revolutionary voices, which were so present in the academic discourse on 1325, were toned down. Otto (2018: 106) also admits that the WPS agenda has come at some costs to feminist goals, one of them being the softening of the feminist opposition to war, evidenced by the shift from aiming to end all wars to making wars safer for women. On a similar note, Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011: 493) conclude ten years on that rather than transforming international security agendas, 1325 marginalises the more radical anti-militarist feminism in advocating for international peace and security. This development is closely linked to the implementation of the WPS agenda, which is discussed in the next part. As Kirby and Shepherd (2016b: 391) point out, the state-centrism and bureaucratic frameworks behind the agenda make a revival of the radical WPS practically impossible, as it would require a fundamental redefinition of the very idea of peace and security, and of the actors competent to bring it about.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPS AGENDA

The implementation of the WPS agenda has come under academic scrutiny more recently with the growing evidence-based research. The implementation debate builds to some extent on the conceptual critiques, demonstrating that the problematic narrative of the WPS Resolutions has translated directly into policies and practises on the ground. Nonetheless, even though the radical starting points are not entirely absent, there is an apparent shift among scholars towards a more pragmatist approach when assessing the WPS implementation in various contexts. As said by Davies and True (2019: 6), a feminist pragmatist approach is an opening that was not there before and would not be there if we pushed for a *perfect* version of what the normative WPS agenda should look like in a local

adaptation. Hence, there are many scholars critiquing the protection focus or the neoliberal peacebuilding, while at the same time suggesting pragmatic solutions within the existing peace and security frameworks. To best reflect the evolving critique of WPS implementation, this part is organised according to the persistent debate on the key pillars of WPS and also according to the main actors engaged in the agenda from its international, regional, and national to its local implementation.

The Pillars of Implementation: The Narrow Focus on Violence Prevention and Protection

The underlying principles of Resolution 1325 – participation, protection and prevention, the gender perspective and relief and recovery – have informed the implementation of the WPS agenda and the scholarly research in this area. These pillars of implementation have been in various degrees projected into policy and practise. While assessing the implementation progress on the ground in different conflict-affected contexts, scholars particularly criticise the global tendency to reduce the areas for action to protection, while other pillars are side-lined. The main argument underpinning this debate is that the narrow protection focus is victimising, marginalises women's participation and undermines women's agency. This debate thus largely mirrors the earlier discursive critique of the construction of gender, as the conceptual flaws directly affect the implementation practises.

Ní Aolian (2011: 108) explains that although Resolution 1325 has been influential in the effort to bring gender mainstreaming into peacekeeping operations, it has not revolutionised actual practises in the field, nor has it served to address women's needs or unravel the masculinities inherent in peacekeeping operations, which may in part be connected to the norm's broader conceptual bias. Scholars have especially problematised the focus on protection in relation to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) at the expense of participation and prevention. This perception has been so widespread among scholars and practitioners that Kirby and Shepherd (2016b: 380) talk about a chronic protection–representation dilemma as a legacy of UNSCR 1325.

While academics do not deny the urgent need to respond to CRSV, they have gathered much empirical evidence to demonstrate that reducing WPS to protection supports women's victimisation and passivity at the expense of women's agency (Hudson 2010; Kreft 2016). Kreft (2016: 23), for instance, analyses the gender components in 71 UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs), concluding that actors appear to turn to the prevalence of sexual violence in conflict for guidance in designing gender-mainstreamed peacekeeping mandates, which is harmful because, as important an issue as it is, sexual violence captures only one dimension of gendered conflict for women. One case where this is particularly apparent is MONUSCO's[7] authorising mandate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which, in response to rampant sexual violence, emphasises the protection of women only at the expense of their participation (Kreft 2016: 23). A similar case shows that donor agencies' narrow focus on sexual violence against women in the DRC resulted in a lack of interest in maternal health care, women's economic empowerment and political participation (Eriksson Baaz – Stern 2010, quoted in Krause 2015: 112). Drawing on field-based expertise in DRC, Dönges and Kullenberg (2019: 162) conclude that despite the increased attention to gender vulnerabilities, the risk is that UN peacekeeping still implements protection with the same tools – predominantly male soldiers. The emphasis on protection has brought no considerable progress to the widespread problem of CRSV, from protection to dealing with accountability and prosecution of perpetrators, including peacekeepers (Krause 2015; Coomaraswamy et al. 2015).

This literature thus shows how the conceptual weaknesses of the gender construction, as defined from the revolutionary position, are reproduced in practise. At the same time, this implementation critique rarely challenges the existing peace and security architecture but rather, it tends to shift to compromise and to the possible solutions within this

system. Some scholars seem to search for solutions to the problem of overcoming the protection-participation dilemma. Kreft (2016: 23) suggests countering the selective activation of UNSCR 1325 by emphasising the universality of the norms of women's agency in all post-conflict contexts and divorcing these norms from the occurrence of sexual violence which can be incorporated under the theme of the protection of civilians in conflict. Others propose to pay attention to women's participation when addressing protection from sexual violence in order to strengthen gender equality and thus weaken the basis for rape (Krause 2015: 101) and also in order to recognise that women are unlikely to be able to participate effectively in peace and security governance if their immediate security environment is compromised by the prevalence of sexualised and gender-based violence (Kirby – Shepherd 2016b: 381). Kirby and Shepherd (2016b: 381) suggest a more complex and holistic approach which seems in line with the revolutionary logic, arguing for connecting protection from and prevention of violence to participation at multiple levels and across the various processes involved in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, and recognising that the WPS agenda ranges across the spheres of economics, justice, security and formal politics.

Along with this participation-protection debate, academics problematise the existing limited participation itself, principally for being instrumentalised and reduced to quantitative targets. Research shows that participation of women in peace negotiations and that in peacekeeping operations are the action areas of WPS which have shown the least progress (Coomaraswamy 2015; Miller et al. 2014; Gizelis – Olsson 2015). Overall, participation is very slowly on the rise in peace operations, and women's inclusion in peace processes lags behind (Gizelis – Olsson 2015: 12). Today, of the approximately 125,000 peacekeepers, women constitute 3% of military personnel and 15% of police personnel in UN peacekeeping missions, compared to the years between 1957 and 1989, when a total of only twenty women served as UN peacekeepers (Karim – Beardsley 2017: 17). Nevertheless, many scholars (Coomaraswamy 2015; Enloe 2017; Kirby – Shepherd 2016b) question the narrow quantitative indicators for failing to address the concrete dynamics of gendered power, reinforcing rather than challenging the essentialist ideas about women's nature being pacific and consensual (Kirby – Shepherd 2016b: 375). This goes in contrast to the earlier discussed shift in discourse which goes beyond women's mere presence towards a 'meaningful' participation, which is yet to be seen in practise (Paffenholz 2019: 157).

Women's participation has also received considerable criticism for being instrumentalised in practise as having an added value to peace (Olsson – Gizelis 2015; Cohn et al. 2004). Although academics have warned that the effectiveness argument can divert from the core problems of gender inequality in contrast to the rights-based approach (see, e.g., Olsson – Gizelis 2015: 5), it has been widely used in policy and practise. In this regard, Davies and True (2019: 5) argue from the pragmatist position that a major compromise is that between a feminist, rights-based approach that advocates for women's equal participation in peace and security and opposes military solutions, and an instrumental approach that sees gender equality as a means to the ends of security, stability and military effectiveness. Such a pragmatist approach has brought feminist scholars closer to the research on institutions of global security governance, including militaries such as NATO, which is promoting UNSCR 1325 to achieve operational effectiveness (see, e.g., Wright 2016). Here the pragmatists accept that both the rights-based and the instrumental approach have the potential to recognise gender-specific experiences and impacts of conflict as well as the need to prevent conflict in ways that enhance women's agency (Davies – True 2019: 5).

Prevention of conflict, however, has become the *"poor little sister"* of the normative WPS agenda, with a largely ambivalent approach on the part of the Security Council to women's role in conflict prevention, and likewise, with little conversation in academic and

policy-making circles on women's potential to prevent conflict (Kapur – Rees 2019: 136). During the discussion for the Global Study, women from different parts of the world expressed concerns that too much attention and resources have shifted towards militarised security and short-term protection of civilians, and too little focus has been paid to long-term prevention and structural changes, including disarmament (Coomaraswamy 2015: 190–216). Accordingly, this narrowing of the WPS agenda has failed to fulfil its transformative potential (Coomaraswamy 2015: 231). A similar situation is in the area of *relief and recovery*, as this pillar is seen as a siloed latecomer (O'Reilly 2019: 196) and the most underdeveloped, under-researched and misinterpreted of the four WPS pillars (True – Hewitt 2019: 178). Yet, relief and recovery means *"building back better"* and is thus closely linked with achieving the transformative potential by addressing the structural causes of violent conflict and building a long-term structural foundation for peace, but the efforts toward this goal have so far been a failure in the WPS agenda (True – Hewitt 2019: 178). This is something that has preoccupied WPS scholars more recently, leading to some progressive discussions among academic circles focussing on addressing structural inequalities and root causes of conflict and violence through the focus on socioeconomic conditions that affect women's participation in peacebuilding (Cohn – Duncanson 2017; Duncanson 2016; Heathcote 2014; True 2014). This scholarly debate, discussed in the following part, is largely informed by the pragmatist approach or, as Duncanson says, tries to build on both camps.

WPS in International, Regional, National and Local Practise: From Scepticism to Pragmatism

Like the debates around the key pillars of implementation, the early literature on various practises from international to local levels tends to compare the performance to the original revolutionary claims, contesting especially the liberal peacebuilding paradigm for serving as a deadlock to progress. Nonetheless, more recent scholarship is characterised by some compromises that feminists made with the current peace and security order. As Davies and True (2019: 5) put it, the feminist pragmatist approach is a middle path for the ambition of WPS against the harsh political realities. In view of that, there are tendencies to concentrate on the small wins and everyday work which can result in transformatory change (e.g. Duncanson 2016).

A considerable amount of WPS literature concentrates on the overall WPS agenda in the context of the state-based system of international peace and security, dominated by the liberal peacebuilding paradigm. It is precisely this international order that the more radical voices seek to challenge that has provided the base for implementation of the WPS agenda. Chinkin and Rees (2019: 24) argue that while the normative WPS framework exists, the implementation is painfully slow due to the combination of the systems and institutions which have undermined the agenda: the UN security system, the global arms trade system, the neo-liberal exploitative economic system and the systems for countering violent extremism and anti-terrorism systems. In this regard, academic circles question especially the prevailing political-military approaches rather than socio-economic ones, and the neoliberal economic policies that inevitably accompany post-conflict development, while being critical toward approaches of states and other international actors.

Scholars argue that the majority of international actors continue to follow the orthodox aid, trade and investment paradigm, where a donor might fund gender-sensitive peacebuilding projects inspired by 1325 but the same donor's geo-political interests often lead it to support military expansionism and/or neoliberal policies that are at odds with the overall peace and security in the very same country (Duncanson 2016: 139). This is the case with the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and, more recently, Ukraine (see, e.g., Al-Ali – Pratt 2006; Shepherd 2006; O'Sullivan 2019). The critique of neoliberalism has proliferated since 9/11, questioning especially the international discourses around the war on terror and neoliberal

interventions (see, e.g., Shepherd 2006; Al-Ali – Pratt 2006). While there has been evidence that women on the ground themselves want programmes that integrate peacebuilding with economic empowerment, the opposite usually happens in the rapid rebuilding of the post-conflict economic structures, which is often based on liberalisation of the economy and market reforms (Coomaraswamy 2015: 170). Furthermore, the academic critique scrutinises the neoliberal logic applied by international actors through WPS policies such as National Action Plans (NAPs). Shepherd (2016: 10), for instance, examines the NAPs drawn up by six countries that have considerable military involvement in an ongoing conflict and high levels of military spending, concluding that outward-facing NAPs, such as those produced by the USA, the UK and Australia, tend to focus on making 'war safe for women' rather than demilitarisation strategies and thus perpetuate the very dynamics of militarism and elite-centric security governance that the feminist revolutionary approach seeks to challenge. Also, a consistent critique is aimed at the insufficient implementation of 1325 due to the lack of political pressure and the resource scarcity associated with neoliberal peacebuilding (Coomaraswamy 2015; Olsson – Gizelis 2013; Olonisakin – Barnes – Ikpe 2011).[8]

This critique toward the system has nonetheless caused some frustration among the WPS community. Duncanson (2016: 90) explains that many scholars have been trapped in their critique by simply admitting that WPS ultimately cannot achieve the feminist vision of security because of the dominance of neoliberalism. Others, while accepting the importance of this debate, believe we need to go beyond seeing neoliberalism as the problem (e.g. Duncanson 2016; Otto 2014; Prügl 2015). There are many recent proposals to find common ground and build bridges (Olsson – Gizelis 2014) and to overcome the compromise versus revolution divides particularly by concentrating on the small wins and everyday work which can also result in transformatory change (see, e.g., Duncanson 2016; Kirby – Shepherd 2016b; Otto 2014).

Among such scholars can be counted those researching mainstreaming of the WPS agenda by insiders in institutions of global and regional security governance such as the UN (Dersnah 2019), NATO (Wright et al. 2019) or national armed forces of countries such as Australia (Wittwer 2019) or Sweden (Kronsell 2012). These pragmatists assert that although militaries and security sectors may entrench a militarised approach to WPS by using it for operational effectiveness, they are at the same time invested in WPS, which can lead to institutional transformation (Davies – True 2019: 6). A closer look at NATO's Military Gender Advisors, for instance, shows that these are far from feminists wasting their time, as the revolutionary feminists would put it, but as feminist insiders they inevitably bring small wins to the established institutions in terms of being more attentive to power dynamics between men and women, both their own and those in society (Bastick – Duncanson 2018: 20). The argument is that this alone will not achieve the transformative vision of feminist peace without war, whilst we still have a world where militaries are being used to address profound insecurity, and Military Gender Advisors may help militaries to do this better (Bastick – Duncanson 2018: 21).

Some scholars argue that NATO has made more significant progress in integrating gender in security and defence than the European Union (EU) (Guerrina et al. 2018). Emerging research shows that the EU, despite claiming to be a normative power in gender equality issues, is lagging behind in mainstreaming gender beyond employment and social affairs into its external relations (Guerrina et al. 2018; Guerrina – Wright 2016). Guerrina and Wright (2016: 309) attribute this situation to the lack of a clear EU external identity, and to the fact that the EEAS is still in its infancy. Other scholars demonstrate that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), long neglected in scholarship on gender and security, has been relatively successful in expanding its gender policy from soft to hard security, despite some challenges (Jenichen et al. 2018a; see also Jenichen et al. 2018b). Another research shows that the OSCE played a key role in bringing

attention to the widespread problem of gender-based violence in the conflict-affected Ukraine (O'Sullivan 2019: 16). The focus on these institutions of existing peace and security governance comes, nonetheless, rather late, with the implementation debate turning largely to compromise.

While trying to go beyond the revolution versus compromise dichotomy, some scholars stress how important it is for feminists to rediscover their focus on practises, initiatives and institutions on the ground, and their material effects, as well as the gendered logic in discourse (Duncanson 2016: 91). With that in mind, it is crucial to examine in concrete contexts how feminist ideas are being integrated into neoliberal rationales and logics, what is lost in the process and what is perhaps gained (Prügl 2015: 615). In other words, it is about taking neoliberalism as a starting point, and looking at *when* and *how* measures to enhance the protection and the participation of women start to transform structures of inequality in long-lasting ways (Duncanson 2016: 11; see also Bergeron et al. 2017; True 2015). In practise, for instance when it comes to the resources discussed above, these scholars suggest there needs to be more explicit attention to the way neoliberal policies have direct impact on budgets and public finance to the detriment of women's rights and security (Duncanson 2016: 125).

Importantly, this conversation within the WPS scholarship has brought attention back to the origins of feminist IR by emphasising the need to reconnect the WPS agenda with economic security, particularly by bridging the current divide between feminist security studies (FSS) and feminist political economy (FPE) (Elias 2015: 406; see also True 2015; Sjoberg 2015; Bergeron et al. 2017).[9] An FPE perspective expands the WPS agenda by directing our attention toward the long-term prevention of conflict and violence as it emphasises the gendered globalised structures that contribute to violence and conflict, such as gender-biased macroeconomic policies, supply chains, labour markets, and political norms (True 2015: 422). These structures are modifiable, and where they can be shown to be causal of violence, WPS policy changes could be devised to significantly reduce the incidence of widespread sexual and gender-based violence (True 2015: 422). Hence, the task that seems the most urgent now is to provide accounts of implementation about how specific economic processes deepen gendered structural inequalities in war/postwar contexts (Bergeron et al. 2017: 3). Otherwise there are concerns that even if the WPS agenda were ever fully implemented, gender-equitable peacebuilding would be unlikely to occur because even the best peace agreement can be (and often has been) radically undercut by the political economic processes of postwar reconstruction (Bergeron et al. 2017: 3).

There are indeed signals of growing attention to women's economic empowerment as the neglected but crucial element of engendering peacebuilding (Duncanson 2016: 152). A group of feminist scholars has been focussing on how economic and social conditions affect women's participation in peace building, aiming to dig deeper into the structural problems and root causes of conflict (e.g. Duncanson 2016; Cohn – Duncanson 2017; Heathcote 2014; True 2014; Ní Aoláin et al. 2011). There are also signs of closer cooperation among scholars and practitioners in this area, for instance the work done on social and economic rights in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mlinarević et al. 2017). Moreover, new research has been emerging on the parallel peacebuilding of grass root organisations and their interactions with international actors through financial assistance and implementation of NAPs, exposing what has worked for the local population and what has not (e.g. Reiling 2018; Bassini – Ryan 2016).

CONCLUSION

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 and the nine follow up Resolutions has prompted the development of an extensive WPS scholarship within the field of feminist IR. The scholarly debate has been very rich and dynamic as well as full of tensions arising from

the distinct feminist starting points. This article explored the two main subjects of the WPS research – the discourse and implementation, as they have been informed by the revolutionary and pragmatist feminist perspectives on international peace and security governance.

The study started by introducing the evolution of UNSCR 1325 as a potentially revolutionary agenda advocated by feminist networks. Their vision of transformatory change towards *permanent peace* has been, however, confronted with the conventional peace and security governance of the Security Council. This has been widely discussed in the WPS discursive literature, which was guided predominantly by the revolutionary approach. The presented overview of the WPS discourse first shows that academics problematise UNSCR 1325 for essentialising and victimising women and failing to challenge the militarised security structures with the feminist vision of peace. Secondly, it illustrates that the later discursive research on the follow-up Resolutions further endorses these earlier concerns about the dominant protection focus and victimising nature of the WPS normative framework at the expense of long-term prevention and participation. At the same time, there is a slight optimism among scholars about the shift in narrative of the newer Resolutions towards *meaningful* participation and women's empowerment as a prerequisite to the effective conflict prevention advocated by the revolutionary camp.

There is a relative consensus in the literature that the conceptual framing of the WPS norms has directed the focus of the implementation. As the part on implementation indicates, there is overwhelming evidence that the conceptual flaws prioritising protection from sexual violence in conflict have harmed women's agency and steered the practise away from the much-needed participation and long-term prevention, allowing the agenda to be co-opted by the militarised structures of the peace and security governance. Hence, there are many commonalities in the sceptical discursive and implementation research, suggesting that the problematic narrative based on essentialisation, victimisation and militarised security has been reproduced in policy and practise.

On the other hand, the implementation debate also reveals that given the political realities and the agenda's protection focus, the revolutionary feminist claims have been largely compromised in today's practise. The broad camp of scholars guided by the pragmatist approach suggests other possible WPS trajectories which can result in transformative changes. They emphasise the engagement of feminist insiders in institutions of global security governance, as well as local practises that bring small transformative gains. Some of these pragmatists at the same time try to overcome the revolution versus compromise divide. More precisely, rather than dismissing the problematic liberal peacebuilding, they take it as a starting point and look at the small wins that can be achieved within this peace and security framework. What is more, they highlight the socioeconomic aspects of peacebuilding, aiming for a broader feminist security that digs deeper into the structural problems and root causes of conflict, which is in line with the original feminist visions.

It is clear that the WPS agenda has been shaped by and benefited from the feminist debates and the diverse forms of feminist knowledge present in them. The indications that the discourse of the newer Resolutions has progressed in response to the feminist revolutionary critique are very important, although it would require a separate study to see how feminist knowledge indeed translated into the normative WPS framework. It is apparent that as the WPS agenda is reaching its twentieth anniversary, the story of revolution versus compromise remains unfinished and will resume as the agenda further evolves. Davies and True (2019: 6) admit that possibly the most important question of this moment is: *"Should we persist with a mainstream agenda that seeks compromise rather than revolution, and how can we pursue the mainstreaming of WPS without undermining essential reforms?"* The answer to it could be that while the implementation might be taking a more pragmatist path, it is crucial to keep the radical elements alive. In a world of increasing militarisation and anti-gender tendencies, but also increasing women's

organising and feminist foreign policies, it is important to insist on the vision of permanent peace, as it seems to be precisely the revolutionary voices supporting it that can push the agenda forward.

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[1] In the text, I variably use the terms UNSCR 1325 and Resolution 1325 when referring to this Resolution, and the terms WPS Resolutions and WPS agenda when referring to more than one Resolution from the series of ten.

[2] The literature variously refers to three or four pillars or themes, which may also include relief and recovery, the gender perspective, peacekeeping and/or the normative dimension (see, e.g., Kirby – Shepherd 2016a).

[3] Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).

[4] As J. Ann Tickner (1992: 182) argues, the relationship between protectors and protected depends on gender inequalities; a militarised version of security privileges masculine characteristics and elevates men to the status of first class citizens by virtue of their role as providers of security.

[5] Most feminists see security in mutidimensional and multilevel terms, meaning that there are different types of security: physical, structural, economic and ecological (see, e.g., Duncanson 2017; Tickner – Sjoberg 2013; True 2009).

[6] The tenth Resolution – 2493 – was adopted on October 29, 2019, at the time of the finalisation of this article.

[7] The United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[8] According to the Global Study (Coomaraswamy 2015: 373), in 2012–2013, just 6 per cent of all aid to fragile states and economies targeted gender equality as the principal objective, and in the case of peace and security specific aid, the corresponding figure was only 2 per cent.

[9] J. Ann Tickner (1992) identified three main dimensions to "achieving global security" – national security, economic security, and ecological security: conflict, economics, and the environment. Yet, as feminist IR research evolved in the early 21st century, more scholars were thinking either about political economy or about war and political violence, but not both (Sjoberg 2015: 408).

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