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How We Have Won the Battle and Lost the Peace: Women, Peace and Security Agenda Twenty Years After

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Abstract: The Resolution “Women, Peace and Security” unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2000 fundamentally transformed discursive practices of gender equality into the fields of security, post-conflict reconstruction and peace. The twentieth anniversary was an opportunity to critically examine its impact on the gender mainstreaming of conflict, security and peace. This special issue contributes to the feminist security studies by discussing the shortcomings in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 from several research fields, including intersectionality and masculinity perspectives. After presenting the rationale and scope of the special issue, this article discusses the gender and security policy framing of the WPS Agenda, intending to conceptualise gender equality through three perspectives: the perspective of equal treatment, the women’s perspective, and the gender perspective. In conclusion, the article summarises the key contributions of this special issue and suggests some avenues for further research.

Keywords: Women, Peace and Security Agenda, UNSCR 1325, policy framing, equal treatment, gender mainstreaming

Introduction

When the idea of the special issue of the JRS was born more than two years ago, no one imagined that yet another war would break out in 2022 in a world still paralysed by the financial and pandemic crisis. Nevertheless, the war in Ukraine confirms the need to recall the original commitments of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, ‘Women, Peace and Security’ (UNSCR 1325), and critically examine its achievements and shortcomings.

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Undoubtedly, the UNSCR 1325 is one of the essential documents governing women's human rights implementations globally. It represents a significant step forward in understanding security issues outside the traditional context of state security and, accordingly, states as central actors in both peace and conflict issues. The UNSCR 1325 represents years, if not decades, of negotiations around gender and security, including women's rights and gender mainstreaming into the peace, security and post-conflict international policy framework.¹ The vast knowledge of the UNSCR 1325 recognises it as the most successful joint venture of the transnational women's peace movement, the adoption of which would not have been possible without a broader alliance from different sectors, different levels of influence and power.²

The UNSCR 1325 is a precursor to the still evolving and more complex overall Agenda of Women, Peace and Security, consisting of ten Resolutions in total so far (WPS Agenda).³ This complex agenda addresses two significant areas where the UN Member States must make visible progress. One area is increasing women's participation in conflict prevention, management and peace talks (Resolutions 1325, 1889, 2122, 2224, 2493), and the other is violence against women and girls in conflict (Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960, 2160, 2493). The two thematic areas are elaborated under four pillars, the *participation* of women in peace and security governance; the *protection* of women's rights and bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations; the *prevention* of violence, including sexual violence in conflict; and *relief* and *recovery*, which involves gender-sensitive humanitarian programming, disaster relief and emergencies, and the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction. The four pillars are implemented and operationalised in local, national, and regional contexts as National Action Plans (NAPs).⁴ However, despite the growing academic literature on NAP operationalisation and implementation,⁵ the knowledge of the overall impact of the Resolution(s) on gendered transformative change in security sector governance, international security and peace studies and inclusive understanding of the human security concept is still scarce. Thus, this Special Issue discusses the theoretical and the practical impact of the WPS Agenda on knowledge production in feminist security studies and policy changes in conflict-affected and non-conflict contexts. More specifically, two case studies of the current implementation challenges of the UNSCR 1325 in Albania⁶ and Ukraine⁷ examine discourses, practices and actors involved in security policymaking in the local, national and regional National Action Plans. Building on the evolving scholarship in the Feminist Security Studies,⁸ this special issue introduces the critical reading of

1 Anderlini 2019.

2 Hunt and Nderitu Wairimu 2019; Coomaraswamy 2015.

3 United Nations Peacemaker n.d.; UN Women n.d.b.

4 LSE-WPS National Action Plans n.d.

5 Miller, Pournik, and Swaine 2014; Ormhaug 2014; Myrntinen, Shepherd, and Wright 2020.

6 Jusufi *et al.* 2022.

7 Dudko and Langenhuisen 2022.

8 Cohn 2011.

the WPS Agenda from the intersectional perspectives⁹ and new security threats such as terrorism.¹⁰ It explores in more detail how a more intersectional and comprehensive approach to gender could improve the WPS Agenda by strengthening the 'peace' element of it.¹¹

This introductory text for the special issue re-examines the impact of the UNSCR 1325 and accompanying WPS Agenda, including new perspectives deriving from men and masculinity studies and the ethics of care approach to human security. Theoretically informed by the concept of critical policy framing,¹² this article will review how gender equality is framed in the WPS Agenda and UNSCR pillars in particular.

The rest of the article unfolds as follows: first, I will analyse how prevention and protection pillars are framed in the WPS Agenda and provide arguments why neither the equal treatment nor the women's perspective¹³ are sufficient to prevent conflict and gender-based violence and ensure gender-transformative durable peace. Then, I will show how these two predominant gender equality policy frames in the WPS Agenda enable maintaining and perpetuating existing gender inequalities in the remaining UNSCR 1325 pillars: participation and post-conflict relief and reconstruction. Part of the problem is that policy-makers usually involved in security policy framing (more often national states, global and regional security actors than women's peace activists) still apprehend the conflict, security and gender nexus in an intellectual tradition of realism, which means gender-blindness. I will conclude that, despite the undeniable influence that the adoption of UNSCR 1325 has had on the change of the security paradigm both in a practical and a theoretical sense, its actual impact on conflict prevention and transformation towards peace on the local, national and international level, remains limited.

Conceptualising Gender Equality in Peace and Security

The UNSCR 1325 and the entire WPS Agenda have attempted to respond to the gender inequalities in the domain of international security, conflict and peace initiatives. Various feminist theories have conceptualised differently the strategies in which gender equality could be achieved in all spheres of life, including security, conflict prevention and peace-building. There are at least three predominant gender equality policy frames in the contemporary feminist theory and practice. The first entails equality as sameness linked to the *strategy of equal treatment in the laws*. Analogous to the metaphor of feminist waves, the first approach belongs to liberal feminism, which started with the suffragette movement and the equal treatment battle e.g., right to vote. It is still ongoing today across the

9 Jayakumar 2022.

10 Jiménez Sánchez 2022.

11 López and Myrntinen 2022.

12 Dombos *et al.* 2012.

13 Booth and Bennett 2002.

globe where women *de jure* do not have the same rights as men. Achieving equality in this approach means introducing legal affirmative measures, such as quotas in politics, the military and the business sector.

The second focuses on affirming differences from the male norm linked to the *strategy of equal opportunities* and positive actions. This approach assumes making and adopting policies that identify the specific needs of women compared to men. By highlighting the existing differences between women and men, this approach includes measures to acknowledge that, for example, women bear children and are therefore potentially exposed to particular forms of violence, discrimination and control arising from this specific situation. This approach also focuses on the position of women that belong to marginalised groups. Corresponding to the wave metaphor, it belongs to radical feminism. It takes a specific position on peace and security known as maternal politics where “motherhood and violence are mutually exclusive”¹⁴ and women/mothers are considered as immanently peace-loving.¹⁵ It claims that enabling military service for women actually means militarising women, rather than achieving gender equality. Simultaneously, it warns about violence against women in conflict as a form of warfare tactics and a practice endangering women’s lives and security in peace.

The third approach is about transforming all established norms and standards of what is/should be female and male. It is associated with the *gender mainstreaming strategy*.¹⁶ This approach scrutinises the policies of similarities and differences tending to transform the very binary, heteronormative organisation of society, social and gender relations, and hierarchies. This approach does not consider differences between genders *per se* as problematic but discrimination and violence on which these differences are grounded. It strives to transform social systems, organisations and institutions generating inequalities, that is, the very logic of power relations and hierarchies they are grounded on.¹⁷ It is most often linked with the third wave of feminism or the feminism of deconstruction. In the security theories, this approach is often linked to the human security concept, which focuses on the individual and his/her/they personal perception of security.¹⁸ The gender is seen as a critical analytic category for improving understanding of conflicts and preventative political and policy action in attaining peace.

14 Ruddick 1995.

15 *Ibid.*

16 Verloo 2007, 23–24.

17 True 2013.

18 Antonijević 2013.

How Transformative is Prevention in UNSCR 1325?

One of the foci of the WPS Agenda and the UNSCR 1325 pillars is preventing and protecting women and girls from (sexual) violence in conflict. From a gender-transformative perspective to prevent conflict and protect against violence against women in conflict, two concepts are exceptionally important: human security and the early warning system (EWS).

The human security concept largely overlaps with the concept of feminist security.¹⁹ Both are opposite to the national security concept that relies on armed forces and security services to protect state borders, that is, on the realist theory in International Relations and security studies.²⁰ Both human security and the feminist concept of security are based on several principles. First, the frame is shifted from high-level security issues to the security challenges of individuals and communities, where the responsibility for attaining and safeguarding security is shared by all members, regardless of their political power and influence. The second principle is guided by the idea that security threats can be removed by systemic and reformative solutions, which lead toward building democratic institutions and combating poverty and exclusion, rather than military action and the use of arms. The third principle also refers to security from the perspective of (women's) individual, or collective experiences within the community and state, but also family and intimate partner relations.²¹ Therefore, the feminist position on the issues of prevention includes, the first of all, education in peaceful conflict resolution at all levels of schooling, eradication of the culture of violence, sexism and misogyny, not only by sanctioning violence through the penal system but also symbolically, through education, media and culture.²²

Against this backdrop, policy solutions transposed from the UNSCR 1325 and the WPS Agenda to the NAP level, most often include awareness-raising, primarily within the security sector (military, peacekeeping missions, less often police) on gender-based violence in conflict, neglecting the masculine and militarised nature of the organisations that are to implement such policies embedded in their discourse and practices.²³ Even including women in the security sector is instrumentalised for 'pacifying' the system itself, rather than transforming it. Simultaneously, there is no discussion in the security sector institutions, about sexual violence within, and limited preventative action in transforming patriarchal and masculine organisational culture. In this way, both as actors and as victims, women are only 'added' to the WPS Agenda, rather than using gender as an analytic category to have preventative and transformative effects on the causes of inequalities. Both practically and symbolically, the role of women is passive, either as a victim or an 'addition,' the very presence of whom should reduce violence and influence the change of

19 Ferree 2013.

20 Cockburn 2004; Enloe 2007.

21 Antonijević 2013.

22 *Ibid.*

23 López and Myrtilinen 2022.

organisational culture. Such an approach to conflict prevention and protection against violence conceptualises only two actors involved in this process: men as protectors (and perpetrators) and women as victims. Some authors claim that in this way the WPS Agenda is militarised and securitised.²⁴ The vision of prevention shared by feminist activists when creating the WPS Agenda and opening the possibility to adopt UNSCR 1325, was primarily focused on the prevention of armed conflict in general, and how to make peace durable and sustainable for all.²⁵ How has the implementation of the WPS Agenda failed to achieve this transformative vision of conflicts is elaborated in more detail in Castañeda and Myrntinen in this issue.²⁶

Shaping the gender equality policies in conflict and gender-based violence prevention and achieving durable peace in the context of post-conflict reconstruction of the society, has remained in the domain of favouring protection over prevention programmes. Therefore, it can be said that the first and second UNSCR 1325 pillars remain at the level of equal treatment strategy, which aims to open the security sector to women and other minorities.

Simultaneously, programmes integrating the women's perspective are sporadic, often marginalised compared to the so-called 'high-level politics,' while the gender perspective, the gender mainstreaming strategy, is lacking completely. In this sense, the WPS Agenda itself does not deviate from the essentialist understanding of women, who can, with their maternal policy, change the aggressive, the 'male' security policy, regardless that history has shown that the mere fact of sex does not imply automatic inclination to life/peace, or death/war.²⁷ Consequently, framed in such a way, the WPS Agenda 'naturally' excludes those who do not fit into the essentialist picture, such as the racially or ethnically marginalised, non-hegemonic men, LGBT+ or women who have joined DAESH, even when they are victims of violence, patriarchal and militarist policy. In this special issue, Jayakumar²⁸ and Jiménez Sánchez²⁹ speak about the gaps and challenges of the WPS Agenda and UNSCR 1325, excluding the intersectional perspective.³⁰

In addition to human security, the early warning system (EWS) is the second concept with gender-transformative potential. Namely, EWS enables to, by collecting and analysing gender-sensitive data, identify the root causes and trends warning against the possibility of armed conflict. Some of the recommended indicators³¹ are the percentage of participation of women in decision-making positions and the labour market, women's education

24 Shepherd 2016 and 2020.

25 Sjoberg 2016.

26 López and Myrntinen 2022.

27 Zaharijević 2010.

28 Jayakumar 2022.

29 Jiménez Sánchez 2022.

30 Crenshaw 1989.

31 UN Women n.d.a.

level, forms and frequency of violence against women, etc. EWS aims to establish an integrated system of monitoring, prediction and assessment of potential threats, to anticipate and remove them in time, and for the community to build resilience to them.³² In gender theories and practice, EWS is mainly connected with proactive conflict prevention strategies and the notions of disaster management and resilience. However, this approach is almost completely lacking from the transposition of the WPS Agenda in the local context.³³ Namely, reducing or limiting human and women's rights are often not experienced as an immediate danger to the safety of communities but rather as a part of traditional or cultural practices. The reforms eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence are often treated as less important to the overall development or democratisation and not seen as a part of the inclusive security sector reforms (SSR). It is particularly visible in the differences between NAPs tended to incorporate a broad spectrum of comprehensive reforms in education, health and the economy (e.g. NAPs in Western Balkan countries),³⁴ and not only in the security sector and/or foreign policy.³⁵ In this sense, the understanding of security goes beyond the 'real' and 'current' conflicts but rather involves analysing and identifying security risks in all spheres of social and even private life by applying EWS and the human security approach. Security understood in this way was mainly found in NAPs that aim for comprehensive social reform, including SSR, where security is the key but not the only factor influencing the entire community's well-being. It is different from the NAPs oriented towards gendering military, security interventions and cooperation through foreign policy aiming to support gender policy framing in the countries in conflict. NAPs oriented in this way understand the meaning of the implementation of the WPS agenda exclusively in countries under conflict.³⁶

Such an approach to an extent betrays the UNSCR 1325 idea that gender mainstreaming in security issues goes beyond the existing conflict. On the other hand, human security and the EWS approach help understand security issues in a more comprehensive way so that NAPs contribute to gendering security in countries and territories that are not directly involved in the conflict but are examples of fragile and failing states. Two texts in this special issue elaborate on such examples. In this special issue, Jusufi, Zenelaj Shehi and Vila Zeka³⁷ provide a critical overview of the discursive framing of security in Albania from the perspective of a fragile state that has not been in an open conflict. Langenhuizen and Dudko observe how WPS Agenda concepts are localised in NAPs in the context of the active conflict in Ukraine and which actors have had the biggest role in the process framing.³⁸

32 ODIHR 2009.

33 Miller, Pournik, and Swaine 2014; Ormhaug 2014; Myrntinen, Shepherd, and Wright 2020.

34 Antonijević and Gavrić 2020; Jusufi *et al.* 2022.

35 Miller, Pournik, and Swaine 2014; Ormhaug 2014; Myrntinen, Shepherd, and Wright 2020.

36 López and Myrntinen 2022; Jusufi *et al.* 2022.

37 Jusufi *et al.* 2022.

38 Dudko and Langenhuizen 2022.

How Transformative is Protection in UNSCR 1325?

The WPS Agenda has also permanently influenced the change in understanding of several key terms in International Relations and security studies, such as violence, conflicts, security and peace.³⁹ UNSCR 1325 has introduced the gender perspective in understanding conflict and security and the inextricably linked notions of peace and violence. Peace and security and conflict and violence have a gender dimension, which is suggested by world statistics for both interpersonal and violence in war. The world statistics on violence, for example, report that in even 95 per cent of the cases men are perpetrators of murders committed against other men.⁴⁰ When it comes to violence against women, the same statistics indicate that one-half of the women victims knew their murderer or were in a family or intimate partner relationship with him. The interpersonal and domestic violence statistics show that in over 80 per cent of the cases, perpetrators of these criminal acts are also men.⁴¹

The notion of conflict and violence are also inextricably interlinked both symbolically and materially. Even though there is no one and unique definition of violence, feminist violence studies⁴² conceptualising violence beyond merely physical as it is, for example, defined by the World Health Organisation.⁴³ For the feminist understanding of peace and security, it is key to understand violence as a continuum and specific domain/regime,⁴⁴ not only as an accidental, occasional, pathological individual or collective behaviour. The gender perspective of violence entails conceptualising it through asymmetric power relations, which could result in one group of people being exposed to violence by another group. The conflicts on larger and smaller scales become a threat to both the economic and the environmental security. The effects produced by violence, according to this understanding, do threaten not only human beings but also nature. In this respect, violence presents a threat also to our survival on the planet.⁴⁵

Such an understanding of violence has led to a different conceptualisation of peace. Galtung, for example, defines positive peace as an absence of all forms of violence, whether it is manifested as physical violence or limitations to people in their everyday lives through structural and cultural violence.⁴⁶ In other words, peace is not only the absence of violence

39 Sjoberg 2016.

40 Walby *et al.* 2017; Hearn and Connell 2013.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Walby 2013.

43 "Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation." (WHO n.d.).

44 Cookburn 2004.

45 Hearn *et al.* 2020; Strid *et al.* 2021.

46 Galtung 2013.

and threats of violence but all forms of structural restraints, such as poverty or social exclusion.

Feminist theoreticians broaden the understanding of peace as the absence of asymmetrical gendered power relations and symbolic violence through discursive practices in private not only the public sphere.⁴⁷ The absence of peace is seen as an objective threat to individual well-being not only societal development. In this sense, feminists broaden the meaning of Galtung's positive peace from the community or group of people to the individual safety and absence of fear, considering the home and the family often the most unsafe place for women. It has considerably expanded the definition of peace, the 'repertoire' of the forms of violence, and actors appearing as victims or perpetrators of violence, or those who bring peace or cause conflict and war. Therefore, for feminists, peace activists, and theoreticians, the central issue of conceptualising peace is recognising the phenomenon known as the continuum of violence against women where all forms of violence are seen as interrelated and mutually reinforced.⁴⁸ As Bunch point out, "The institutionalisation of male dominance is maintained by violence and the threat of violence, leads us to question whether the term 'peacetime' provides an accurate description of the lives of most women."⁴⁹

When complex inequalities, which entail other personal characteristics intersect with gender, are considered within the phenomenon of violence, it stretches beyond the traditional focus on war, other forms of armed conflicts and/or violence within crime and often includes non-criminalised forms of interpersonal violence.⁵⁰ The modern state has legal and legitimate means of domination over its citizens, including violence.⁵¹ In other words, the state was established as modern by criminalising certain forms of violence and establishing the penal system of institutions punishing violence, such as the police, judiciary and military, which maintain the system of control over violence. Feminists criticise this thesis, claiming that no state can be modern as long as interpersonal gender-based violence exists and is maintained. In other words, no state is modern or can have legitimacy, before it criminalises and successfully implements the eradication of gender-based violence against women.⁵²

Women's perspective is included under the UNSCR 1325 pillar on protection from violence, particularly sexual violence in conflict. This is understandable, considering women are in the largest part the victims of violence and sexual violence in conflicts, but also outside of conflicts. A transformative gender perspective is lacking, not only in understand-

47 Tickner 1995; Forcey 1995.

48 Cockburn 2004; Krook 2020; Lombard 2018.

49 Bunch 2002.

50 Over 30 countries worldwide have still not criminalized rape in marriage, and 20 countries allow rapists to avoid punishment if they marry their victims! (See also: Kujundžić 2022).

51 Weber 1946.

52 Walby 2009.

ing violence as a continuum in the lives of women and girls in conflict and outside of it but also in understanding gender outside the binary categories and heterosexual norms. The intersectional perspective is lacking to contribute to a better understanding of violence regarding the new security challenges and social categories produced by them. Jiménez Sánchez shows it explicitly in her text in this special issue regarding the women in DAE-SH.⁵³ Other neglected intersectional social categories are children born out of sexual and ethnic violence – the case of Yazidi women,⁵⁴ migrants in areas under armed conflict or climate migrants and many more.

In relation to this, the nexus between conflicts, (un)sustainable peace, militarism and construction of masculinity has only recently become a topic both in academic and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) circles working on the WPS Agenda. The lack of the ‘masculinity perspective’ in the WPS Agenda inhibits a better understanding of the construction of masculinity in conflict and the importance of its deconstruction for peace-building.⁵⁵ Critical studies on men and masculinity,⁵⁶ for example, discuss the need for a masculinity perspective to be included for a better understanding of a category of men as the ‘invisible presence.’⁵⁷ Thus, men are seen as a social, political, economic and theoretical norm that is not re-examined. However, men are a heterogeneous, spatially (culture) and temporally (history) gendered category, which is reproduced through all spheres of public and private life. Therefore, masculinity perspectives in the WPS Agenda should focus on the deconstruction of the nexus between men, war, militarism and unequal power relations producing gender-related, racial and all other intersectional inequalities and violence. The aim of such an approach is to focus interventions within the WPS Agenda and all four pillars of the UNSCR 1325 on the hegemony of men constituting and constructing them both as a social category and predominant social actors.⁵⁸ Namely, those who reap social, political and economic dividends from patriarchal power relations, and thus also from militarism and violence.⁵⁹

53 Jiménez Sánchez 2022.

54 Global Justice Center. n.d.

55 Wright 2020.

56 Hearn 2004.

57 *Ibid.*

58 Hearn 2004, 50.

59 Connell 2005.

How Transformative Is Conflict Management, Relief and Recovery in UNSCR 1325?

A lot has been written about the participation of women in peace and security governance, and critically, taking into account the gender-transformative perspective.⁶⁰ Namely, the most important objective of a large number, if not the majority of NAPs is gender balance and the participation of women in all levels of security governance and leadership.⁶¹ The most important steps have been made in this field in respect of the number of women in the armed forces and security institutions. However, as many papers on this topic show, this has not contributed significantly to reducing conflicts or attaining durable peace.⁶² One of the most prominent reasons given is the insufficient participation of women in conflict management and peace reconstruction, as well as the gender blindness of peace agreements to the needs of women.⁶³

The usual approach to participation of women in conflict prevention, management and peace reconstruction involves an increased number of women in decision-making and leadership positions in peace processes and partnerships with civil society organisations, especially women's organisations and human rights defenders. The participation also includes an increased number of women in the UN peacekeeping forces or the positions of gender advisors in peacekeeping operations. However, under both pillars, the role of women is defined exclusively through gender balance and participation, that is, through equal treatment and equal opportunities strategies.⁶⁴

Activities implemented to increase the number of women in peace negotiations include various conflict mediation training courses aimed at women. This actually means that the insufficient training of women in negotiations and mediation is (mistakenly) perceived as the main policy issue, rather than the masculine and militarist policy, which finds conflict resolution in the defeat of one and the victory of the other side, rather than achieving compromising solutions through mediation. Understood in this way, the gender policy frame to a certain extent re-examines critically the perspective of women being immanently peacemakers and mediators, who actually do not need additional skills, because this is part of their 'nature'.

Another set of activities within the participation of women in conflict prevention, management and peace reconstruction includes a partnership with civil society organisations, especially women's organizations and human rights defenders. This is simultaneously the least implemented objective of the third pillar of UNSCR 1325 because the impact and participation of civil organizations, especially women's organizations, in the processes of

60 Basu, Kirby, and Shepherd 2020; Gentry, Shepherd, and Sjoberg 2019; Shepherd 2010.

61 Miller, Pournik, and Swaine 2014; Ormhaug 2014; Myrntinen, Shepherd, and Wright 2020.

62 Confortini 2010; Ruddick 2001.

63 'Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes: A Toolkit' n.d.

64 Verloo 2001.

reconciliation and mediation are insufficient, and the position of human rights defenders, especially women, is threatened. Human rights defenders, particularly if engaged in the issues of transitional justice, are in an extremely difficult situation. The special report on the situation of human rights defenders worldwide emphasises that those “who challenge social and cultural norms, do not fit stereotypes and prescribed roles, or who challenge power structures in society – such as defenders of sexual orientation and gender identity rights, women defenders, and defenders working on the rights of minorities and indigenous people – are often stigmatised and subjected to threats and attacks from members of society because of who they are or what they do”.⁶⁵ The Report underlines the need for gender-sensitive protection and needs-responsive measures for defenders-in-risk that are active in conflict zones and in occupied territories. Considering their specific situation, they are more vulnerable and exposed to continuous threats.⁶⁶

In order for the issues of conflict prevention, management and peace reconstruction in the WPS Agenda to be fully gender transformative, activities cannot focus only on women mediators but also on the substantial inclusion and monitoring of gender-sensitive issues in peace agreements. This is why the participation of women from the civil sector needs to be increased, and the interests of women and intersectional identities placed in the very centre of the peace agreements.

The gender-transformative perspective has only recently been included in relief and reconstruction programmes, that is, the fourth pillar of the WPS Agenda. Even though women have had a major role as members of armed forces and groups in all wars, especially the national-liberation and post-colonial wars, only recently has the academic literature started dealing with the issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).⁶⁷ In this literature, women are not only mentioned as victims but also as active participants in conflicts, and the latest academic research has also been leaning towards reintegration and support for men victims of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence in conflict – especially child soldiers. The issue of reintegration in the post-conflict context is a particularly difficult one for gender non-stereotypical conflict participants, such as women and children. Their participation in armed conflict and guerrilla wars is often accompanied by specific trauma, stigmatization, and social exclusion, because of the very expectation that they would integrate into the society in their traditional roles, which most often is not possible. Reintegration programmes represent a particular problem, as often they are not adjusted to the changed life circumstances and experiences of women and children who were active participants in conflicts. In order for these programmes to be successful, the gender perspective must be included. It is necessary to direct activities not only at reintegrating and healing the trauma of former combatants but also at working with the entire community on their acceptance without gender prejudice or stereotypes.

65 OHCHR n.d., 6.

66 *Ibid.*

67 Hauge 2020.

Conclusion

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 was a great step forward in gender mainstreaming of the security field. However, twenty years on, the expected gender transformation of the SSR, conflict management and peacebuilding is still lacking. Although the transnational women's movement has welcomed transposing the WPS Agenda into NAPs, policy measures are largely based on equal treatment and equal opportunities for women, as two case studies in this special issue justify. As Langenhuizen and Dudko show in this special issue, focusing on protection rather than participation may jeopardize the inclusiveness of Ukrainian NAPs, especially at the local level. Jusufi, Zenelaj Shehi and Vila Zeka⁶⁸ explore discursive practices in implementing the UNSCR 1325 in Albania. They proved that the impact of the WPS Agenda on SSR and security studies in Albania is less influential due to the wrong assumption that UNSCR 1325 is specific to conflict or post-conflict countries. Both studies highlight the role of various political actors, from international organizations to local women's initiatives, and their conflicting understandings of the WPS Agenda. Nevertheless, the limited transformation of traditionally understood security paradigm occurs, or essential gender mainstreaming of security governance.

The articles in this special issue contribute to the debate on the securitisation⁶⁹ of the WPS Agenda as an attempt to 'make conflicts bearable for women.'⁷⁰ They consider that focusing on the protection and participation makes the security sector 'more efficient and operational' but less truthful to the original idea of the WPS Agenda.⁷¹ In practice, this approach has actually led to the significant inability of the WPS Agenda to fully consider and address the root causes of gender-based discrimination, violence and conflicts, that is, patriarchal gender relations and militarism. In their text in this special issue, Castañeda and Myrntinen⁷² focus on two areas of importance for gender and security: gender-related violence perpetrated with small weapons and arms and climate change. They elaborate on the narrow interpretation of the four pillars of the WPS Agenda, keeping in mind the more often neglected concept of the 'continuum of violence' and new gendered security threats such as climate changes and environmental challenges. They claim that the ratio between protection and participation is disproportionately on the side of protection, which in a way betrays the original idea of UNSCR 1325 and draws attention away from the gender transformative potentials of the WPS Agenda.

This is especially evident in the attempt to mainstream new security threats such as terrorism or migrant crises in Europe, for example. In her text on the DAESH women position and lack of adequate WPS Agenda response, Jiménez Sánchez⁷³ draws particular

68 Jusufi *et al.* 2022.

69 Kirby and Shepherd 2016, 380; Antonijević and Gavrić 2020.

70 Shepherd 2016.

71 López and Myrntinen 2022.

72 *Ibid.*

73 Jiménez Sánchez 2022.

attention to the lack of gender perspective in the UN and the EU counter-terrorism strategies and resolutions. It resulted in failing to recognise the ambiguous gender roles of women in DAESH, leaving them in a specific 'limbo' of non-responsive and gender-blind counter-terrorism policies. Further studies might more systematically examine how to bring back the original potential of the WPS Agenda to foster peace and enhance gender equality, including counter-terrorism, climate changes and proliferation of arms.

Most of the papers in the special issue show that equal treatment and equal perspective frames prevail and that gender mainstreaming is lacking.⁷⁴ This also relates to understanding the term gender in security policies beyond the gender binary by including the intersectional perspective (e.g. LGBT+). For example, Jayakumar⁷⁵ claims that by prioritizing strategic essentialism,⁷⁶ many NAPs fail to acknowledge non-binary gender identities and therefore have a limited impact on prevention and protection against conflict-related violence. Also, she points out that the intersectional perspective enables the deepening of the WPS Agenda and a better understanding of gender equality policies in the context of new security-related challenges (e.g., migration or cybersecurity).⁷⁷

Conflicts in which a great number of civilians die, mostly women and children, sexual violence, but also insufficient participation of women in peace talks and post-conflict reconstruction and relief reaffirm the relevance of the WPS Agenda and its ten Resolutions. The articles in this special issue not only critically re-examine the main concepts of the WPS Agenda but also explore how they could be re-framed to build new theoretical knowledge and practical implementation. There are still important gaps in understanding how policy framing of only specific elements of the WPS Agenda (mostly in the area of participation and protection) has pushed back the critical and corrective role of the civil society and women's peace groups.⁷⁸ First, women's civil society voices have been marginalised in international security. Second, the focus on 'women' forefronts only on certain women's roles, primarily as victims, pushing local peace initiatives and human rights defenders on the margins of both NAPs and international policy. The articles also provide evidence of the fact that contrary to the tendencies of the transnational feminist movement, the frame of equal treatment prevails in UNSCR 1325 and the WPS Agenda, leaning towards a balance in representation and increased presence of women in the security sector. This frame is often colourfully presented as 'add women and stir'. The transformative framework and gender mainstreaming strategy can be identified in discourse⁷⁹ but rarely in the practice of national and international peace and security stakeholders. The women's perspective is present, mostly in policies that aim at protecting from gender-based violence. A signifi-

74 True and Parisi 2013.

75 Jayakumar 2022.

76 Aroussi 2017.

77 Jayakumar 2022.

78 *Ibid.*

79 Jusufi *et al.* 2022.

cant insight here is that the WPS Agenda framing will largely depend on how local, national and international actors conceptualise gender and, consequently, which of the three strategies they deem appropriate to successfully address gender inequalities in conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction.

In the global trends of re-patriarchization, fundamentalism and radicalization, and the reduction of women's rights, how to strengthen the feminist security studies field and evidence-based policy approach to gender, peace and security? Where to focus next in the research and policy to enhance the impact of the WPS Agenda key requirements? The articles in this special issue suggest the re-articulation of the WPS Agenda by following the most vocal demands of the global women's movement. These demands include but are not limited to reducing investments/expenditures in state budgets on military and arms in favour of health, social care and education. Additional requests go in the direction of stricter national and global control of leftover arms, primarily in post-conflict situations, and zero tolerance for the violations of various forms of bans on arms exports to areas under conflict. And finally, in the area of prevention, it is necessary to continuously promote non-violent conflict resolution forms and nurture a culture of peace.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine, but also Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, show that arms exports are often used to achieve the asymmetry of power, leading to new victims instead of trying to establish the minimum requirements to start peace negotiations.

Therefore, the WPA Agenda and policies to achieve gender equality in the area of peace, conflict prevention and security need to be conceptualized differently in the future. Some of the attempts to do this are through the conceptual framework of 'global care'.⁸¹ Inter-linking the issues of international security and care in this way is of a later date, although it comes from the feminist criticism of the 'ethics of justice', which was opposed by the 'ethics of care'.⁸² Namely, "the concept of care was and remains key for the feminist project and for ending the subjugation of women and achieving gender equality".⁸³ The 'ethics of care' is a critical perspective of dominant, 'masculinist', and 'malestream'⁸⁴ concepts of justice often seen as rights-based and contractual ethics (contracts between states and citizens as bearers of rights). Although the issues of care were observed more in the context of global economic and social theories or the nexus between the family, market and state, it is only during the last ten years or so that the concept of global care has been linked more to the issues of human security, peace and peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, climate change, migration, and global health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, it is inevitable to study challenges in the context of the worldwide need for care on the one hand and the global valuation of care as the fundamental value for the

80 Antonijević and Gavrić 2020.

81 Robinson 1999 and 2011.

82 Okin 1989.

83 Sainsbury 2013, 313.

84 The expression was used for the first time by Mary O'Brien in her 1981 book, *The Politics of Reproduction*.

preservation of individual lives and the animate and inanimate life on Earth. In this sense, care can no longer be observed as a marginal or 'soft' global policy, especially when internationalised through the 'global care chains'.

On the contrary, care becomes the central security issue, and lack of care is part of the feminist continuum of violence or understanding security as human security. Therefore, "taking care seriously as the ethical and practical basis of human security will require a fairly dramatic rethinking of the nature of security and insecurity in the context of global politics."⁸⁵ In this sense, care as a fundamental ethical value, but also everyday material need, becomes a *par excellence security issue*.

Twenty years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, this special issue joins a loud call to renew its original values and objectives and increase the focus of international security policy on the peace efforts of activists in local communities. This is the only way for the WPS Agenda to fulfil its originally envisaged utopian role: to prevent conflicts and promote the politics of peace.

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85 Robinson 2011, 6.

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