

**Scheuermann, Manuela, and Anja Zürn, eds. 2020.**  
***Gender Roles in Peace and Security. Prevent, Protect, Participate.***  
**Springer International Publishing, 219 pp. €93.08**  
**(e-Book)**

The volume *Gender Roles in Peace and Security. Prevent, Protect, Participate*, edited by Manuela Scheuermann and Anja Zürn from the University of Würzburg represents a unique contribution to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.<sup>1</sup> The book is a result of the 2017 workshop “Prevent, Protect, Participate! Women’s Roles in Peace and Security”, which took place at the University of Würzburg and gathered prominent scholars and practitioners from the area of gender and security with the goal to tackle the most pressing issues in the field, prior to marking the two decades of the United Nations Security Council Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325 or UNSCR 1325).

The volume addresses two important research gaps: the lack of a comprehensive approach when dealing with the WPS implementation and the fact that knowledge of activists and practitioners often remains excluded from evaluations of WPS success. Therefore, the publication looks at the role gender plays within the wide range of peace processes and thus shifts the research focus towards the “*general and systemic challenges in the field*” (p. 4), rather than simply focusing on individual challenges to the WPS implementation in specific countries. Secondly, by including contributions of the practitioners and activists in addition to those of academic experts, the volume bridges the gaps between theory and practice, academia and fieldwork in the area of women, peace and security. The book bridges gaps between academic disciplines by bringing pieces ranging from feminist theory to organisation and management that utilise case studies, field interviews and participant observation.

The editors underline that the goals of the publication are not “purely academic, but also political” (p. 4). Such intention of the authors comprises both the critical scrutiny

---

<sup>1</sup> The WPS agenda represents a normative framework developed within the UN at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the aim of promoting gender equality in the area of peace and security. The starting point of the Agenda was the UN Security Council’s Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security, also known as UNSCR 1325 or simply Resolution 1325. After the 2000’s Landmark Resolution, in the period 2009–2019, nine resolutions on more specific issues within the field have been adopted, thus filling in the ‘gaps’ left after the UNSCR 1325. For more on these resolutions, see Zürn’s contribution to this volume.

of women's position in the security sector and peace processes (first part of the book) as well as concrete policy recommendations to advance the WPS implementation (second and third part of the book). The latter is not surprising, bearing in mind that the book was released at the time when one of the greatest advocates of UNSCR 1325 – Germany<sup>2</sup> – was partaking in the UNSC as a non-permanent member (2019–2021). Thus, the key questions authors aim to answer in the volume are: Which institutional factors prevent the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on different societal levels (national, regional and international) and (possibly as a precondition for this task) what roles are most often attributed to women dealing with peace and security?

With regards to the first question, several authors in the volume assess that at the level of international (IOs) and regional organisations a certain 'box-ticking,' 'business-as-usual' or 'standardised' approach poses one of the key challenges to WPS's effective implementation (p. 135, 162). As an example, in the case of the UN police peacekeepers' gender training,<sup>3</sup> *standardisation* refers to renouncing innovative training approaches, such as story-telling and rather insisting on a unified approach across all police-contributing countries (PCCs), even if the latter comprises complicated legalistic terms and formalised language (pp. 140–142).

In the case of the EU's transitional justice documents, *standardisation* refers to *not* taking into account "the plurality of actions already taking place on the ground" by grassroots activists when proposing the measures for the advancement of the WPS implementation (p. 160). Further challenges to WPS implementation include lack of financial resources for the implementation of the WPS initiatives (p. 157); inadequate support/inclusion of civil society organisations (CSOs) in implementation (p. 177); inadequate monitoring and evaluation procedures (p. 143) and unpreparedness to address the cases of sexual violence committed by the IO officials (p. 138).

Interestingly, the IO which is most traditionally connected with 'hegemonic masculinity' (p. 166), the NATO, ranks very well in terms of 'gender infrastructure' within its circles (pp. 173–174). A valuable example thereby is the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), which comprises both Gender Advisers (GENADs)<sup>4</sup> in its Headquarters as well as Female Engagement Teams (FETs) within most Regional Commands<sup>5</sup> (pp. 172–173). Nevertheless, the extent to which such mechanisms

---

2 Germany is one of the countries which declared both its foreign and domestic policy to be based on human rights and gender equality (p. 203) and which proved particularly sensitive to the pressure of the international community and civil society at times of its UNSCR tenure (p. 206).

3 These trainings are aimed at sensitising the UN police so that they support the post-conflict reconstruction in a 'gender-responsive' (p. 129) manner.

4 The aim of the Gender Advisers is "to incorporate a gender perspective into operations" and advice on gender-mainstreaming within the operations (p. 172).

5 The aim of Female Engagement Teams is to gain a better understanding of the local – especially women's – security situation and thus provide gender-sensitive support for the local women (p. 173).

contributed to gender mainstreaming to become an internalised norm within the NATO still remains unclear and requires further research (p. 174).

When it comes to the implementation challenges on the national level, the third part of the book points out the inconsistency in German foreign policy, which on the one hand is entirely based on human rights and gender equality, but on the other hand still includes a small number of female diplomats in its external service, and none of them in conflict areas<sup>6</sup>. Bearing in mind that such fact seriously undermined Germany's global credibility at the important moment of Germany's temporary tenure at the UNSC in the period 2019–2021, the authors in this section propose (amongst other measures) introducing more favourable work-family conditions in order to motivate women to undertake jobs in distant areas (p. 208).

Potential causes of the above-mentioned implementation challenges are depicted in the first part of the book, and according to the authors, are tightly intertwined with the gender roles attributed to women participating in the area of peace and security. In IOs, marginalisation of female personnel stems from conservative organisational culture, which includes practices such as 'homosociality,' informality and alcohol consumption amongst overwhelmingly male diplomatic personnel (pp. 35–56).<sup>7</sup> The patriarchal gender role allocation within the IOs, which are perceived norm-diffusers and agenda-setters of the WPS (p. 174) has repercussions for the women outside IOs, such as the victims of conflicts. Thereby, insufficient attention has been granted to multiply marginalised victims such as women belonging to a particular ethnic or racial minority, internally displaced women nor is an intersectional approach adopted in both research and practice (pp. 11–31). Finally, and once again owing to the patriarchal gender role allocation, women are still largely perceived as victims of conflicts (p. 212), especially in terms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), rather than as combatants, peacekeepers or peacebuilders which is why the category of Protection, often has primacy over the Participation and Prevention pillars of the WPS agenda.<sup>8</sup>

One small point of criticism could refer to the fact that in spite of the equal treatment of the three pillars (Prevention, Protection, Participation) within the WPS agenda, the reader sometimes gets the impression that the Prevention pillar, which encompasses deep culturally ingrained social norms, is less emphasised in the publication than Protection and Participation. For example, although some of the practices such as 'homosociality' have been recognised by the authors, a clear understanding of how to unlearn/amend

---

<sup>6</sup> By comparison, one of the front runners in this regard is Australia, which has a special strategy of attracting women into its foreign and defence services. See more: Australian Government n.d.

<sup>7</sup> Although the male diplomatic staff not tolerant to alcohol might find itself equally marginalised. See more: Bjerten-Günther (35–56).

<sup>8</sup> The WPS agenda comprises four basic pillars (also known as the four Ps): Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief and Recovery. Some schools of Gender Studies add the fifth pillar, the one of Political Economy of Peace and Security (See p. vii of this Volume).

them and transform them into gender-inclusive, a task crucial for the Prevention pillar, still lacks (p. 53).<sup>9</sup> Such “lacks” might leave certain readers with an impression of the book’s insufficient critical positioning, bearing in mind that measures under the Prevention pillar often come at serious political or power-sharing costs.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, it might be useful to consider including the pillar of Political Economy of Peace and Security, by the Australian and New Zealand School of Gender Studies (p. vii), in the volume. This pillar is just briefly mentioned in the volume’s introduction where it is defined as “addressing fundamental economic challenges that create conflict and prevent enduring peace” (p. vii). However, including political economy could not only theoretically contribute to the transdisciplinary approach the book is undertaking, but also seem helpful for the prevention pillar, as it focuses on the systematic inequalities in pre- and post-conflict phases due to which women remain marginalised.

The significance of the book for regional security stems from the fact that its case studies shed light on gender dynamics and Resolution’s implementation within *regional* organisations such as NATO (p. 165) or the EU (p. 149) as well as within concrete countries belonging to a particular world region (i.e. Africa, p. 79). What is more, two contributions in the volume, by Popović and Antonakis (pp. 103–126) and by Jonjić-Beitter *et al.* (pp. 177–199) analyse National Action Plans of various European, African and Asian countries, thus enabling the comparison between different regions regarding the effectiveness of different practices, initiatives and strategies undertaken with the aim of WPS agenda implementation. Such an approach is certainly surpassing the individual-country accounts prevalent in the research and represents another innovation this volume brings.

Ultimately, the book offers a comprehensive account of the challenges which women encounter in peace and security processes and points to the element of organisational culture as a key cause for the persistence of such challenges. Owing to its theoretical richness, transdisciplinary approach, but also plethora of fieldwork data, the volume is a precious source not only for students and scholars interested in the area but also for practitioners and policy advisors.

**Ivana Dinić** is a Master Student at the University of Regensburg, Master Program European Studies. E-mail: [dinivannah@gmail.com](mailto:dinivannah@gmail.com).

---

<sup>9</sup> That Prevention is widely underestimated or even ignored by stakeholders and actors responsible for the realisation of the WPS agenda, especially on the local levels was one of the main conclusions reached by young scholars from Kosovo and Serbia who took part in the Forum 1325 and 2250 – Women and Youth for Peace and Security, organised by the Dialogue Academy and OSCE Mission to Kosovo. The Forum was held in an online format in October 2022, to mark the 22nd anniversary of the Landmark resolution in the context of complex Serbian-Kosovo relations. For more information on the project, see: Women’s Network 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Prevention pillar includes, for instance, prosecuting those responsible for violations of international law; strengthening women’s rights under national law; and supporting local women’s peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes. See: United States Institute of Peace n.d.

## References

- Australian Government. n.d. *Department of Defence Annual Report 2019–2020*. Accessed June 10, 2022. <https://www.transparency.gov.au/annual-reports/department-defence/reporting-year/2019-20-56>.
- United States Institute of Peace. n.d. “What is UNSCR 1325? An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security.” Accessed June 10, 2022. [https://www.usip.org/gender\\_peacebuilding/about\\_UNSCR\\_1325](https://www.usip.org/gender_peacebuilding/about_UNSCR_1325).
- Women’s Network. 2021. “KWN Part of 1325 & 2250 Forum, Women and Youth for Peace and Security.” Accessed June 10, 2022. <https://womensnetwork.org/kwn-part-of-1325-2250-forum-women-and-youth-for-peace-and-security/>.