

# Introduction: WPS 20 Years On: Where Are the Women Now?

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To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Resolution 1325, this introduction discusses the state of the field in the women peace and security (WPS) agenda and outlines the challenges to implementation. It begins by introducing the current gaps we see in WPS practice, many of which are driven by insufficient data and lack of funding. The section that follows provides a brief discussion of the global diffusion of the WPS agenda. We highlight the important contribution the Global South has made in implementing the agenda in the absence of great power leadership and the stultified progress of the Global North. We argue that the WPS agenda remains hampered by poor national implementation, a lack of support for civil society initiatives and a failure to recognize the importance of its application in context. The final section introduces the articles in this issue, showing how they advance an emerging human security agenda: integrating WPS into UN-led security initiatives like R2P, and the challenges of the implementation of the WPS agenda in varied local and national contexts. We conclude by arguing that to meet future challenges, the WPS agenda must be broadened to include areas outside traditional conceptions of security and embrace the full remit of evolving security threats; in particular, structural barriers that prevent the empowerment of women across the board.

Pour commémorer le 20<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Résolution 1325, cette introduction aborde l'état de la situation du programme Femmes, Paix et sécurité et expose les défis de sa mise en œuvre. Elle commence par présenter les lacunes actuelles que nous constatons dans la mise en pratique du programme Femmes, Paix et Sécurité, nombre d'entre elles étant dues à des données insuffisantes et à un manque de financement. La section suivante propose une brève discussion sur la diffusion mondiale du programme. Nous soulignons l'importante contribution apportée par les pays du sud dans la mise en œuvre du programme en l'absence de leadership des grandes puissances et dans le contexte de la stagnation des progrès des pays du nord. Nous soutenons que le programme Femmes, Paix et Sécurité reste entravé par une mauvaise mise en œuvre nationale, un manque de soutien des initiatives de la société civile et une non-reconnaissance de l'importance de son application dans le contexte. La dernière section présente les articles de cette édition en montrant la manière dont ils avancent un programme de sécurité humaine émergent en abordant : l'intégration du programme Femmes, Paix et Sécurité aux initiatives de sécurité de l'ONU comme la R2P, et les défis de la mise en œuvre de ce programme dans des contextes locaux et nationaux variés. Nous concluons en soutenant que pour relever les défis futurs, le programme Femmes, Paix et Sécurité devra être élargi pour inclure des domaines hors des conceptions traditionnelles de la sécurité et englober le cadre complet des menaces de sécurité en évolution, en particulier les obstacles structurels empêchant l'autonomisation des femmes à tous les niveaux.

Para conmemorar el 20.<sup>o</sup> aniversario de la resolución 1325, esta introducción analiza el estado del campo en la agenda sobre mujeres, paz y seguridad y resume los desafíos para la implementación. Comienza presentando las deficiencias actuales que observamos en la práctica de la agenda sobre mujeres, paz y seguridad (Women, Peace and Security, WPS), muchas de las cuales se ven motivadas por los datos insuficientes y la falta de financiamiento. La sección siguiente proporciona un breve debate sobre la difusión global de la agenda sobre WPS. Destacamos la contribución importante que ha realizado el hemisferio sur al implementar la agenda a falta del liderazgo de una gran potencia y el progreso anquilosado del hemisferio norte. Sostenemos que la agenda sobre WPS continúa obstruida por la mala implementación a nivel nacional, una falta de apoyo a las iniciativas de la sociedad civil y el hecho de no reconocer la importancia de su aplicación en contexto. La sección final presenta los artículos en este problema y demuestra de qué manera promueven una agenda emergente sobre la seguridad humana: integrando la WPS en las iniciativas de seguridad dirigidas por la ONU, como la responsabilidad de proteger (Responsibility to protect, R2P), y los desafíos de la implementación de la agenda sobre WPS en diversos contextos locales y nacionales. Concluimos sosteniendo que, para afrontar futuros retos, la agenda sobre WPS debe ampliarse para incluir áreas que no pertenecen a las concepciones tradicionales de la seguridad y adoptar toda la jurisdicción de las amenazas a la seguridad en evolución, particularmente los obstáculos estructurales que evitan el empoderamiento de las mujeres de manera global.

## Introduction

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda arising from United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 has reached a critical juncture in its short 20-year history. Despite comprising ten resolutions designed to bolster the agenda and expand its scope and normative power, serious

challenges to the implementation of WPS remain.<sup>1</sup> These challenges range from the conceptual to the practical, spanning problems relating to the slow development of National Action Plans (NAPs); the failure to mainstream WPS proposals in local and national contexts; and disagreement at the international level on the expansion of the WPS agenda. It appears that as efforts to enhance and implement the WPS agenda multiply, so too do failures to

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<sup>1</sup>Specifically, United Nations Security Resolutions (UNSCR): 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). In addition, while UNSCR 2538 is not specifically listed under the WPS rubric, it deals heavily with women in peacekeeping and as such can be said to be contributing to it.

consolidate gains over this period, resulting in desultory progress at best, and at worst, outright resistance. In this special issue, we provide a summary of the state of the field in the implementation of the WPS agenda, highlighting where the agenda has made progress 20 years on. At this juncture it is important to note that two of the biggest obstacles that impact the implementation of the WPS agenda are (1) a lack of consistent funding; for example, UN Women does not receive core funding and must regularly fundraise, making consistent long-term campaigns hard to execute;<sup>2</sup> and (2) a lack of gender-disaggregated data on women, which greatly inhibits the ability to quantitatively evaluate progress over the short, medium, and long terms.<sup>3</sup>

In this issue we respond to calls to stop treating women as a homogenous group,<sup>4</sup> and concur with Singh who makes the critical point that: “The challenge is to bring to fore the varied experiences of women while preserving the importance of gender as a category of analysis.”<sup>5</sup>

This issue highlights in particular the importance of context and its influence on how the implementation of the WPS agenda occurs. In both the Global South and North,<sup>6</sup> context is the critical spoke in the wheel of implementation. In this issue we discuss some of the contexts in which the agenda operates, illustrating how the potential for agency differs in each space.

Despite two decades of work across international civil society, within states, and various UN agencies and the UN Security Council, progress with regard to the WPS agenda continues to move slowly and unevenly. While officially a UN initiative, we highlight a disconnect between the incremental development of 1325 among member states at the political level and the embrace of WPS ideas and principles by local actors at the civil society level. This has created a tension between local and statist visions of how the WPS agenda should be implemented. As Rajagopalan (2016) notes, “in security policy-making there is still a huge disconnect between those who make the decisions and those who live with them.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, while civil society initiatives multiply, we still see a lack of implementation of WPS at higher levels among member states. We point to the limitations of a static application of WPS through UN resolutions which, as the articles below illustrate, serve to foreclose opportunities, rather than open new spaces for women’s empowerment and ultimately liberation.

Nowhere is the lack of high-level engagement more apparent than in peacemaking, where we find the lowest levels

of women’s participation.<sup>8</sup> Despite findings that the presence of women in peace negotiations significantly increases the chances of a sustainable peace,<sup>9</sup> the numbers of women involved in peace negotiations remain dispiritingly low; for example, Aggestam and Svensson’s recent finding that women were engaged as mediators in only 8 percent of cases between 1991 and 2014.<sup>10</sup> This absence in large part can be attributed to the gendered nature of diplomacy.<sup>11</sup> For example, currently 85 percent of ambassadors in the world are men.<sup>12</sup> It was not until 2013 that the United Nations appointed its first-ever female mediator;<sup>13</sup> and of the nine EU special representatives in the European Union External Action Service, currently only one is a woman.<sup>14</sup> The oft-cited 2012 UN Women report states that globally only 2.5 percent of all chief mediators and 9 percent of all negotiators are women in peace processes.<sup>15</sup> As Krause et al. point out, “the [total] number of women who signed peace agreements has not increased since UNSCR 1325 has been adopted.”<sup>16</sup> The 2015 report on WPS by the UN Secretary General notes that this trend is improving: by 2014, 50 percent (of the 16) peace agreements concluded that year included gender or women provisions compared with 30 percent in 2012 and 22 percent in both 2010 and 2011.<sup>17</sup> However, peacemaking provisions for women are qualitatively different from gender equality. Recent literature continues to lament the quantitative and qualitative lack of female participation, noting that the mere presence of women at the table is not enough to ensure women’s voices are heard

<sup>8</sup> Standfield, Catriona. 2020. “Caught Between Art and Science: the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in United Nations Mediation Narratives.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22 (5): 629–51.

<sup>9</sup> Adjei, Maxwell. 2019. “Women’s Participation in Peace Processes: A Review of Literature,” *Journal of Peace Education* 16 (2): 133–154; Myrntinen, Henri. 2016. Women’s Participation in Peace Processes: State of Civil Society Report. International Alert (2016). Accessed November 24, 2020. <https://www.civicus.org/documents/reports-and-publications/SOCS/2016/Womens-participation-in-peace-processes.pdf>;

United Nations. 2015. “Women Too Often Omitted from Peace Processes, Despite Key Role in Preventing Conflict, Forging Peace, Secretary-General Tells Security Council.” Accessed November 24, 2020. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12561.doc.htm>; Gizelis; Theodorazmen. 2009. “Gender Empowerment and United Nations Peacebuilding.” *Journal of Peace Research* 46 (4): 505–23; Nakaya, Sumie. 2004. “Women and Gender Equality and Peacebuilding.” In *Building Sustainable Peace*, edited by T. Keating, and W. A. Knight, 143–66. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press and United Nations; Byrne, B., R. Marcus, and T.P. Stevens. 1995. “Gender, Conflict and Development, Volume II: Case Studies: Cambodia; Rwanda; Kosovo; Algeria; Somalia; Guatemala and Eritrea.” BRIDGE Report No. 35, 1–148. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

<sup>10</sup> Aggestam, Karin, and Isak Svensson. 2018. “Where Are the Women in Peace Mediation?” In *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*, edited by Karin Aggestam and Ann Towns, 149–68. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Towns, Ann, and Birgitta Niklasson. 2016. “Gender, International Status, and Ambassador Appointments.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 13 (3): 1–20.

<sup>13</sup> Aggestam, Karin. 2019. “WPS, Peace Negotiations and Peace Agreements.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Women Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 815–28. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>14</sup> European Union External Action Service, “EU Special Representatives.” Accessed November 12, 2020. [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/3606/eu-special-representatives\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/3606/eu-special-representatives_en).

<sup>15</sup> UN Women. 2012. “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence.” Accessed November 1, 2020. <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2012/10/wpssourcebook-03a-womenpeacenegotiations-en.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Krause et al. 2018, “Women’s Participation” p. 987.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2015. “Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security.” Accessed October 31, 2020. [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/716&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/716&Lang=E).

<sup>2</sup> See UN Women. “Government Partners.” Accessed November 25, 2020. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/donor-countries>.

<sup>3</sup> Newby, Vanessa, and Clotilde Sebago. 2020. “Gender Sidestreaming? Analysing Gender Mainstreaming in National Militaries and International Peacekeeping.” *European Journal of International Security*, forthcoming. 1–23 (2020), doi:10.1017/eis.2020.20doi:

<sup>4</sup> Krause, Jana, Werner Krause, and Piia Brånfors. 2018. “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace.” *International Interactions* 44 (6): 991.

<sup>5</sup> Singh, Shweta. 2017. “Re-thinking the ‘Normative’ in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Perspectives from Sri Lanka.” *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 4 (2): 219–38.

<sup>6</sup> We acknowledge that the terms Global South and North are problematic in and of themselves; however, in this article we wish to problematize the differences between wealthier states in Europe, North American, Australasia, and the rest of the world in relation to the WPS agenda. As such we feel these terms are applicable.

<sup>7</sup> Rajagopalan, Swarna. 2016. “The 1325 Resolutions: From Thought to Action.” In *Openings for Peace: UNSCR 1325, Women and Security in India*, edited by Asha Hans, and Swarna Rajagopalan, 8–32. New Delhi: Sage.

and incorporated into the peace process.<sup>18</sup> For example, Standfield finds that two different approaches to mediation both negatively impact the incorporation of gender in UN-brokered peace negotiations.<sup>19</sup> This example also resonates with our findings below, which is that the Global North is not a frontrunner when it comes to gender mainstreaming.

In focusing primarily on the implementation of the WPS agenda, we take inspiration from recent scholarship which has called for an expansion of the scope of what constitutes WPS. As Shepherd asks in a recent special issue on WPS at 20 years, how we can know where the boundaries of WPS research begin and end? She correctly notes that the topics of investigation on WPS have primarily been focused on: "...women's participation in peace and security governance; women's agency in peacebuilding and conflict prevention; and the dynamics of sexual violence in conflict."<sup>20</sup> She contends that there is space for the use of more diverse methodologies,<sup>21</sup> across a wider remit of subject matters, stating "that there is no essential WPS agenda, nor narrow delineation possible of what counts as a WPS topic."<sup>22</sup> We concur with this view noting that in particular, in recent years the field of research on women as security actors has grown exponentially.<sup>23</sup> The recently published Oxford Handbook and others illustrate the growing range of subject matter being considered in WPS research both within traditional conflict and outside of it.<sup>24</sup> The responsibility to protect (R2P);<sup>25</sup> protection of civilians (POC);<sup>26</sup> counter-

ing violent extremism and counterterrorism;<sup>27</sup> transitional justice;<sup>28</sup> climate change;<sup>29</sup> disaster risk reduction and recovery (DRRR);<sup>30</sup> internally displaced persons (IDPs);<sup>31</sup> and indigenous rights.<sup>32</sup>

This special issue addresses some of these new applications of the agenda, illustrating that the difference between war and peace is not a simple dichotomy and is in fact, more of a continuum as noted by Cynthia Cockburn.<sup>33</sup> Bina d'Costa introduced the concept of "violent peace" in reference to the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the impact that militarized spaces have on peace and security.<sup>34</sup> Natural hazards and other changes in the environment can trigger an increase in threats to women outside of conflict, such as intimate partner violence (IPV) and a lack of viable income.<sup>35</sup> Turshen exposes how the political economy of

Press; Baldwin, Gretchen. Expanding Gendered Understandings Key to Protection Concerns. IPI Global Observatory, 15 November 2019. Accessed November 11, 2020. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/11/expanding-gendered-understandings-key-to-protection-concerns/>.

<sup>27</sup> See for example: Rothermel, Ann-Kathrin. 2020. "Gender in the United Nations' Agenda on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22 (5): 720–41; Aoláin, Fionnuala Ní. 2016. "The 'War on Terror' and Extremism: Assessing the Relevance of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda." *International Affairs* 92 (2): 275–91; Joana Cook, *A Woman's Place*; Patel, Sofia, and Jacqueline Westermann. 2018. "Women and Islamic-State Terrorism: An Assessment of How Gender Perspectives Are Integrated in Countering Violent Extremism Policy and Practices." *Security Challenges* 14 (2): 53–83.

<sup>28</sup> Martín de Almagro, María. 2020. "Mainstreaming Gender in European Union Transitional Justice Policy: Towards a Transformative Approach?" In *Gender Roles in Peace and Security*, edited by Manuela Scheuermann, and Anja Zurn, 149–64. Cham, Switzerland: Springer; Martín de Almagro, María. 2017. "Transitional Justice and Women, Peace and Security: a Critical Reading of the EU Framework." LSE Women, Peace and Security Working Paper Series.

<sup>29</sup> See for example: Carol Cohn and Claire Duncanson "Women, Peace and Security in a changing climate," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Online First (2020) DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2020.1843364; Kronsell, Annica. 2019. "WPS and Climate Change." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True, 726–36. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Smith, Elizabeth. 2020. "Climate Change in Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans." SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security. Stockholm: SIPRI; Krampe, Florian, and Malin Mobjörk. 2018. "Responding to Climate-Related Security Risks: Reviewing Regional Organizations in Asia and Africa." *Current Climate Change Reports* 4 (3): 330–7.

<sup>30</sup> Nair, Tamara. 2020. "Gender, Humanitarian Emergencies and Security." In *The Gender and Security Agenda*, edited by Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, and Michael E. Brown, 176–95. Abingdon: Routledge; Martin, Sarah, and Devanna de la Puente. 2018. "WPS and Humanitarian Action." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True, 628–42. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Nair, Tamara. 2018. Upscaling Disaster Resilience in Southeast Asia – Engaging Women Through The WPS Agenda. Policy Report, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technical University.

<sup>31</sup> Holvikivi, Aiko, and Audrey Reeves. 2020. "Women, Peace and Security After Europe's 'refugee Crisis'" *European Journal of International Security* 5 (2): 135–54; Ferris, Elizabeth. 2019. "Protecting Displaced Women and Girls: The Case of Syria." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 501–15. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Hall, Lucy. 2019. "WPS, Migration and Displacement." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True, 643–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>32</sup> This issue remains under-researched. See this issue Csevár; Dunn, Michelle Elizabeth. 2014. "Localising the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: A Matter of Justice." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 68 (3): 285–99; Csevár, Szilvia, and Christine Tremblay. 2019. "Sexualised Violence and Land Grabbing: Forgotten Conflict and Ignored Victims in West Papua." LSE Women, Peace and Security Blog.

<sup>33</sup> Cockburn, Cynthia. 2010. "Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12 (2): 139–57.

<sup>34</sup> D'Costa, B. 2014. *Marginalization and Impunity: Violence Among Women and Girls in the Chittagong Hill Tracts*. Dhaka: Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission.

<sup>35</sup> Jenkins, Pam, and Brenda Philips. 2008. "Battered Women, Catastrophe, and the Context of Safety After Hurricane Katrina." *NWSA Journal* 20 (3): 49–68; Parkinson, Debra. 2017. "Investigating the Increase in Domestic Violence Post Disaster: An Australian Case Study." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*

<sup>18</sup> Ellerby, Kara. 2016. "A Seat at the Table is Not Enough: Understanding Women's Substantive Representation in Peace Processes." *Peacebuilding* 4 (2): 136–50.

<sup>19</sup> Standfield 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Shepherd, Laura J. 2020. "Knowing Women, Peace and Security: New Issues and New Modes of Encounter." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22 (5): 625–8.

<sup>21</sup> Several articles in this special issue introduce new methods of knowledge production see Wright, Hannah. 2019. "Masculinities Perspectives: Advancing a Radical Women, Peace and Security Agenda?" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22: 652–674; Standfield, 2020; Pauls, Evelyn. 2020. "Female Fighters Shooting Back: Representation and Filmmaking in post-conflict Societies." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22 (5): 697–719; Waller-Carr, Florence. 2020. "Affect and Its Instrumentality in the Discourse of Protection." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22 (5): 675–96.

<sup>22</sup> Shepherd, 2020, Knowing Women

<sup>23</sup> Cook, Joana. 2020. *A Woman's Place: US Counter-Terrorism Since 9/11*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Karim, Sabrina, and Kyle Beardsley. 2017. *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping: Women, Peace and Security in Post-Conflict States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Pruitt, Lesley J. 2016. *The Women in Blue Helmets: Gender, Policing and the UN's First All-Female Peacekeeping Unit*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Kronsell, Annica. 2012. *Gender, Sex and the Post-National Defence: Militarism and Peacekeeping*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Kronsell, Annica, and Erika Svedberg. 2012. *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices*. Abingdon: Routledge; Carreiras, Helen. 2006. *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies*. London: Routledge; Vermeij, Lotte. 2020. *Woman First, Soldier Second: Taboos and Stigmas Facing Military Women in UN Peace Operations*. Washington: International Peace Institute.

<sup>24</sup> Basu, Soumita, Paul Kirby, and Laura J. Shepherd, eds. 2020. *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*. Bristol: Bristol University Press; de Jonge Oudraat, Chantal, and Michael E. Brown. 2020. *The Gender and Security Agenda: Strategies for the 21st Century*. Abingdon: Routledge.

<sup>25</sup> See for example, White, Sabrina. 2020. "Centering Gender in Conflict: R2P, WPS and the Importance of the Everyday." *Civil Wars* 22 (1): 137–53; Davies, Sara E. and Sarah Teitt, 2012. "Engendering the Responsibility to Protect: Women and the Prevention of Mass Atrocities." *Global Responsibility to Protect* 4 (2): 198–222; Davies, Sara E., Sarah E. Teitt, and Zim Nwokora. 2015. "Bridging the Gap: Early Warning, Gender and the Responsibility to Protect." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 50 (2): 228–49; Bellamy, Alex J., and Sara E. Davies. 2019. "WPS and Responsibility to Protect." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 585–97. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>26</sup> Hultman, Lisa, and Angela Muvumba Sellström. 2019. "WPS and Protection of Civilians." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True, 598–607. Oxford: Oxford University

violence occurs, arguing insufficient attention is currently given to "...how larger regional and globalized trade relations, both legal and illicit, manipulate gender dynamics, gender relations and gender-based violence." These dynamics manifest as resource extraction, illicit trade and arms trafficking,<sup>36</sup> a topic Szilvia Csevar explores in this issue.

The erroneous conception of the dichotomy of peace and war leads to another critical point: when discussing women's security, we cannot maintain the liberal principle of differentiating between public and private space. As Carol Hanisch famously noted, "the personal is political," a point taken up by Cynthia Enloe in her work on gender and security.<sup>37</sup> Important work on WPS has expanded on this concept: Valerie Hudson et al. contend the space where women first experience prejudicial treatment is in the home and this has enormous impact on the peace and security of women and states.<sup>38</sup> Meredith Turshen in her expose of the political economy of violence in Africa asks how we should interpret and interrogate the myriad types of protracted gendered violence occurring in parts of the developing world drawing attention to the blurring for women between different types of gendered violence—conflict-related sexual violence and IPV asking: "Are these examples of interpersonal violence or the violent behavior typical of those who abuse their power and privilege?"<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the roles of victim and agent become blurred in the conflict space as scholarship from South Asia on Kashmir,<sup>40</sup> Sri Lanka,<sup>41</sup> and India has illustrated.<sup>42</sup> Here, articles from Oo and Davies and Lucy Hall demonstrate how women in specific contexts resist patriarchal norms and cultures, in the process traversing the public and private space as they enact their agency.

This special issue evaluates the implementation of the WPS agenda 20 years on by taking up three main themes that the agenda must engage with on the road to gender equality: (1) challenges in gender mainstreaming in a major UN-led global security initiative R2P;<sup>43</sup> (2) the vertical challenges inherent in integrating the agenda (at international, national, and local levels); and (3) the importance of con-

text in facilitating women's agency in driving, controlling, and implementing the WPS agenda at all levels. We have conceived of these themes based on the gaps in the existing literature; also the emerging evidence from the field, particularly with regard to the progress of the WPS agenda among Global South countries. Given that implementation of WPS has not quite yet reached a tipping point as an international norm,<sup>44</sup> we conceive of the WPS agenda here in analytically different ways producing new visions and understandings of women's agency in practice, but also hypothesizing on how the WPS agenda can be revitalized and read more broadly. Concurring with Pratt and Richer-Devroe, we critique the universality of 1325, problematizing and conceptualizing its various dimensions and, in particular, the static ways in which it has heretofore been implemented.<sup>45</sup>

This article proceeds as follows. The first section provides a brief discussion of the diffusion of 1325, illustrating the dominance of some pillars over others and providing some data on the implementation of NAPs worldwide. In doing so we highlight how the WPS agenda has been conceptualized, highlighting that the focus is currently on the participation pillar of the agenda, which some scholars contend is still being constructed in neoliberal terms.<sup>46</sup> We discuss how the current international environment has shaped WPS discussions and importantly, show how the Global South has contributed to the advancement of the agenda and conversely that the Global North is currently stalled in the participation pillar. In addition, we highlight the disparity between the level of action on WPS in civil society compared with national and international engagement with the agenda. The final section then provides an introduction to the articles in this issue, discussing the three research themes and their intersectionality: integrating WPS into the UN-led security initiatives, and the vertical implementation of the WPS agenda in varied local and national contexts as part of the broadening of the WPS agenda.

### Diffusion of the WPS Agenda at the International Level

UNSCR 1325 has been conceived of as an agenda that seeks to create sustainable peace and transform the meaning of security.<sup>47</sup> However, competing visions of what the WPS agenda is and should be, make it a contested concept.<sup>48</sup> There have been nine resolutions passed on the WPS agenda since 2000 and the first 12 years were dominated by a heavy focus on protection and prevention. Resolutions, 1829 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013), took as their main focus the protection of women and girls from conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), although

lence 34 (11): 2333–62; True, Jacqui. 2016. "Gendered Violence in Natural Disasters: Learning from Haiti, New Orleans and Christchurch." *Aoteroa New Zealand Social Work Journal* 25 (2): 78–89; Moreira Diana Nadine, and Mariana Pinto da Costa. 2020. "The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Precipitation of Intimate Partner Violence." *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 71: 101606. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2020.101606>; Agüero, Jorge M. 2021. "COVID-19 and the Rise of Intimate Partner Violence." *World Development* 137: 105217. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105217>; Buttell, F., and Ferreira, R. J. 2020. "The Hidden Disaster of COVID-19: Intimate Partner Violence." *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 12 (S1): S197–S198. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000646>.

<sup>36</sup> Turshen, Meredith. 2016. *Gender and the Political Economy of Conflict in Africa: The Persistence of Violence*, p.6. London: Routledge.

<sup>37</sup> Hanisch, Carol. 1970. *Notes From the Second Year: Women's Liberation: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists*. New York: Radical Feminism; Tickner, J. Anne. 1992. *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>38</sup> Hudson, Valerie, Donna Lee Bowen, and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen. 2020. *The First Political Order: How Sex Shapes Governance and National Security Worldwide*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>39</sup> Turshen, Meredith. 2016. *Gender and the Political Economy of Conflict in Africa: The Persistence of Violence*, p.7. London: Routledge.

<sup>40</sup> Husain, S. 2019. *Love, Loss, and Longing in Kashmir*. New Delhi: Zubaan.

<sup>41</sup> Singh. "Re-thinking the 'Normative'"

<sup>42</sup> Parashar, S. 2014. *Women and Militant Wars: The Politics of Injury*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

<sup>43</sup> Currently, research on how to mainstream gender into the protection of civilians initiative is at a very early stage. See Hultman, Lisa, and Angela Muvumba Sellström. 2019. "WPS and Protection of Civilians." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True, 598–607, p. 605. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Baldwin, "Expanding Gendered Understandings Key to Protection Concerns."

<sup>44</sup> True, Jacqui. 2016. "Explaining the Global Diffusion of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda." *International Political Science Review* 37 (3): 307–23, p. 320; Davies, Sara E., and Jacqui True. 2019. "WPS: A Transformative Agenda?" In *The Oxford Handbook of Women Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 3–14, p. 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>45</sup> Pratt, Nicola, and Sophie Richter-Devroe. 2011. "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13 (4): 489–503, p. 499.

<sup>46</sup> Arat, Zehra F. Kabasakal. 2015. "Feminisms, Women's Rights, and the UN: Would Achieving Gender Equality Empower Women?" *American Political Science Review* 109 (2): 674–89; Hudson, Heidi. 2012. "A Double-Edged Sword of Peace? Reflections on the Tension Between Representation and Protection in Gendering Liberal Peacebuilding." *International Peacekeeping* 19 (4): 443–60; Whitworth, Sandra. 2004. *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

<sup>47</sup> Cockburn, Cynthia. 2010. "Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12 (2): 139–57.

<sup>48</sup> Standfield 2020.

some also reiterated the need for the full implementation of 1325.

While these resolutions were essential and long overdue, until recently, the focus of resolutions on CRSV and SEA was on the perpetrators and not the survivors. It was only in 2019, with the passing of Resolution 2467, that a survivor-centered approach emerged, but there is still much more to be done to make approaches to the prevention of IPV and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) more participatory, and not solely victim focused. As Rajagopalan notes “The feminist challenge is to see not just the trauma of violence, but also the agency exercised by women in the face of this violence—in rebuilding their lives, in helping others heal, in being complicit in the silence and, indeed, in perpetrating violence.”<sup>49</sup>

The upshot of the predominant focus on CRSV and SEA in the early years after 1325 meant the WPS agenda came to be viewed as a protection and prevention mandate above all else viewing women as victims rather than participants.<sup>50</sup> Resolution 2242 in 2015 provided a welcome refocus on participation and a moving away from the women as victims narrative, although how this should be achieved is a hotly debated issue.<sup>51</sup> In terms of UN activity, two key reports emerged that highlighted the lack of women’s participation in UN security initiatives: The High-Level Panel on Peacekeeping Operations the (HIPPO Report)<sup>52</sup> and the Global Study on the Implementation of Women Peace and Security by UN Women. The HIPPO Report noted a number of areas in which UN peacekeeping operations are falling short. It specifically acknowledged that “15 years on [since the adoption of UNSCR 1325] there remains a poor understanding of the potential of both integrating a gendered perspective and increasing the participation of women at all levels of political and civil life, most especially at the leadership level.”<sup>53</sup> The Global Study’s main findings were that lack of implementation occurred as a result of “lack of political will, accountability and resources, and the existence of institutional and attitudinal barriers.”<sup>54</sup> A key outcome of debates around this time was the above-mentioned UNSCR 2242 which launched the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS in an effort to coordinate the UN’s effort to implement 1325.<sup>55</sup> As Hannah Davies argues in this issue, the internal implementation of WPS by the UN remains weak, producing significant internal friction between the competing interests and identities held by UN member states.

In addition to weak momentum on implementing the agenda, several scholars have critiqued the WPS agenda and implementing agencies—such as the World Bank—

for propagating liberal feminism at the expense of other feminisms and women.<sup>56</sup> Currently, this is particularly noticeable in the security sector. Since the launch of the ELSIE fund initiative, a great deal of research has gone into increasing women’s participation in national militaries and peacekeeping.<sup>57</sup> Arat makes the point that the goal of gender parity and equality is incompatible with the meaningful participation of women across all aspects of society because of the absence of calls for structural change by liberal feminists and the different contexts in which women—as a nonhomogeneous group—function. Hudson argues that there is an inherent tension between visions of women as agents and victims in liberal feminism and she concludes that for women, agency is deeply tied to basic protections and the two concepts are not mutually exclusive.<sup>58</sup>

The dominance of liberal feminism also extends to the recent inclusion of WPS in other security initiatives such as R2P, which some feminists view as problematic owing to R2Ps statist approach which some argue instrumentalizes and militarizes the WPS agenda prioritizing the security of the state over women’s needs.<sup>59</sup> As two articles in this special issue show, gender language has been largely absent from the literature on R2P until recently. Hudson notes that WPS has been used instrumentally in western interventions which were justified on the basis of protecting women from misogynist regimes. However, in the postintervention phase, the patriarchal structures of those regimes have not been dismantled.<sup>60</sup> Other research has found that neoliberal attempts to increase women’s representation in security institutions have resulted in placing women in increased danger.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, these initiatives are believed by some scholars to be inherently patriarchal in design with confusion over what role women can play in such structures without being reduced to essentialist stereotypes: victims in need of protection or “superheroes” capable of raising the alarm.<sup>62</sup> In this issue, Stefan contends deeper integration of the four WPS pillars with those of R2P will help to ameliorate the problems discussed above, whereas Hall calls

<sup>56</sup> Arat, “Feminisms.”

<sup>57</sup> Vermeij, “Woman First, Soldier Second”; See also <https://elsiefund.org/dcaf/>.

<sup>58</sup> Hudson, Heidi. 2012. “A Double-Edged Sword of Peace? Reflections on the Tension Between Representation and Protection in Gendering Liberal Peacebuilding.” *International Peacekeeping* 19 (4): 443–60.

<sup>59</sup> Manchanda, 2020; Pearson, 2020; Cockburn, 2013; Duncanson & Woodward, 2016.

<sup>60</sup> The Taliban negotiations are a very painful example of this. See Hudson (2012). Bush, L.W. 2001. “Radio Address by Mrs. Laura W. Bush, Crawford, TX. Accessed November 17, 2001. <https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/articles/2013/02/radio-address-by-mrs-laura-w-bushcrawford-tx-november-17-2001.html>; Shepherd, Laura J. 2006. “Veiled References: Constructions of Gender in the Bush Administration Discourse on the Attacks on Afghanistan post- 9/11.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8 (1): 19–41; Pearson, Elizabeth. 2020. “Between Protection and Participation: Affect, Countering Violent Extremism and the Possibility for Agency.” In *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Soumita Basu, Paul Kirby, and Laura J. Shepherd, 91–109. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

<sup>61</sup> Manchanda, Rita. 2020. “Difficult Encounters with the WPS Agenda in South Asia: Re-scripting Globalized Norms and Policy Frameworks for a Feminist Peace.” In *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Soumita Basu, Paul Kirby, and Laura J. Shepherd, 133–52. Bristol: Bristol University Press; Nordland, R., Faizi, F., and Abed, F. 2019. “Afghan Women Fear Peace with Taliban May Mean War on them.” *The New York Times*, 27 January. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/27/world/asia/taliban-peace-deal-women-afghanistan.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Laura J. Shepherd. 2011. “Sex, Security and Superhero(in)es: From 1325 to 1820 and Beyond.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13 (4): 504–21; see also Arat 2015. This critique has been similarly applied to conceptions of women’s role in CVE, see Pearson 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Rajagopalan, “From Thought to Action,” 17.

<sup>50</sup> For the problems with this approach see among others, Cohn, Carol, Helen Kinsella, and Sheri Gibbings. 2004. “Women, Peace and Security Resolution 1325.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 6 (1): 130–40.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2015. “Resolution 2242.” Accessed November 27, 2020. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2242>. See for example, Arat, 2015; Standfield 2020, 2011; and Hudson 2012.

<sup>52</sup> United Nations. 2015. *Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People*, Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). New York: United Nations Publication Office.

<sup>53</sup> HIPPO Report, 7.

<sup>54</sup> UN Women. 2015. *Fact Sheet: The Global Study On 1325: Key Messages, Findings, and Recommendations*, 1–11, p. 1. UN Women: New York. <https://wps.unwomen.org/resources/fact-sheets/Fact-Sheet-and-Key-messages-Global-Study-EN.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Susan Willett highlights that by splitting the task of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping between different UN agencies, the UN has created a “system that has ascribed responsibility to implementing 1325 to all but has held no one accountable.” See Willett, Susan. 2010. “Introduction: Security Council Resolution 1325: Assessing the Impact on Women, Peace and Security.” *International Peacekeeping* 17 (2): 142–58, p.143.

for a less statist approach to R2P to incorporate women's voices.

## WPS in the Current International Environment

### *The View from the Global North*

Sarah Percy (2019) notes that the behavior of powerful states alone cannot guarantee a norm's diffusion.<sup>63</sup> Twenty years after UNSCR 1325, it is worth asking if we are witnessing ongoing regular progress in the development of the WPS agenda as an international norm or stagnation that will ultimately result in an unimplemented norm.<sup>64</sup> Given the aforementioned global lack of gender-disaggregated data, this is hard to know. The general impression, however, is one of backsliding and lip service to the agenda by states.<sup>65</sup> Currently the great powers are proving to be some of the most recalcitrant when it comes to applying the WPS agenda, as seen recently in the passing of Resolution 2493 where the United States resisted the term "full implementation of the WPS agenda" on the basis that it contradicted US foreign policy on women's sexual and reproductive health.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, neither China nor Russia were prepared to accept any inclusion of the term "women human rights defenders" in the final resolution.<sup>67</sup>

In the passing of a preceding WPS Resolution (S/RES 2467) in April of the same year, which focused on a survivor-centered approach to preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict, China and Russia abstained. The main source of contention for Russia and China has been any suggestion of an expansion of the WPS agenda that includes the recognition of rights for LGBTQI persons. In addition, the work of the IEG on women peace and security<sup>68</sup> is viewed by China and Russia as too overtly political.<sup>69</sup> Of equal concern is Russia's recent attempt to drive its own version of WPS. On the twentieth anniversary of 1325, Russia attempted to pass a WPS Resolution in the UNSC which so watered down the language on several areas of WPS focus areas it failed to reach consensus.<sup>70</sup> American leadership on WPS all but dissipated in the time of Trump and its credibility on this issue was severely reduced by its decision to remove support from all humanitarian projects offering advice on women's sexual and reproductive health.<sup>71</sup> While the Biden Administration

recently reversed this decision, the strong antiabortion movement in US domestic politics means that the permanence of such a move cannot be taken as guaranteed in the long term. Within Europe, the rise of the far right and strongmen political leaders have posed threats to the WPS agenda, with many Eastern European states opposed to the WPS agenda on the grounds it threatens traditional family values<sup>72</sup> and religious norms.<sup>73</sup> This has led to some serious rollbacks for women such as the recent law all but banning abortion in Poland and the decriminalization of IPV in Russia.<sup>74</sup>

### *The View from the South*

Amongst Global South actors, a more dynamic approach and response to WPS and its implementation can be distinguished. Historically, leadership among Global South countries such as Mexico, Kenya, Nigeria, and India on the question of women's rights has been fundamental to the progression of gender equality worldwide.<sup>75</sup> From the League of Nations to the inception of the UN, Global South state and nonstate actors have played an important and yet understudied role in driving forward the agenda of women's rights.<sup>76</sup> With their first formal joint initiative at the San Francisco Conference in 1945 to the first conference of the UN Decade for Women held in Mexico City in 1975, through the debates of the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi right up until the declaration that women played an essential part in creating sustainable peace at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, activism on the issue has largely been led by women from the Global South. By the time that Resolution 1325 was being negotiated in 2000, the pattern was well established. It was Namibia, then President of the Security Council, which led the way, working with civil society actors (such as the NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security) across the Global South and North through an Arria Formula meeting which led to the Security Council and eventually to the passing of Resolution 1325.<sup>77</sup>

This dynamism is maintained when it comes to the implementation of WPS where Global South states have shown strong leadership in the development of NAPs and the application of the agenda.<sup>78</sup> There is in fact widespread activism from both civil society and state actors within this

<sup>63</sup> Percy, Sarah. 2019. "What Makes a Norm Robust: The Norm Against Female Combat Norm." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4 (1): 123–38.

<sup>64</sup> Percy, Sarah. 2014. "The Unimplemented Norm: Anti-Mercenary Law and the Problems of Institutionalization." In *Implementation and World Politics: How International Norms Change Practice*, edited by Alexander Betts, and Phil Orchard, 68–84. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>65</sup> O'Rourke, Catherine, and Aisling Swaine. 2019. "Heading to Twenty: Perils and Promises of WPS Resolution 2493." *LSE Women Peace and Security Blog*. Accessed November 20, 2020. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/wps/2019/11/12/heading-to-twenty-perils-and-promises-of-wps-resolution-2493/>.

<sup>66</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2019. "In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2493 on Women, Peace and Security." Accessed November 10, 2020. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2019-12/in-hindsight-negotiations-on-resolution-2493-on-women-peace-and-security.php>.

<sup>67</sup> In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2493 on Women, Peace and Security, n.p.

<sup>68</sup> See *ibid* and United Nations Security Council. 2019. "In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2467 on Sexual Violence in Conflict." Accessed November 10, 2020, <https://www.whatsinblue.org/2019/05/in-hindsight-negotiations-on-resolution-2467-on-sexual-violence-in-conflict.php>.

<sup>69</sup> UNSC. "In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2493 on Women, Peace and Security."

<sup>70</sup> Ford, Liz. 2020. "Russia Loses UN Vote Over Women's Rights in Conflict Zones." *The Guardian*.

<sup>71</sup> Allen, Louise, and Laura J. Shepherd. 2019. "In Pursuing a New Resolution on Sexual Violence Security Council Significantly Undermines Women's Reproductive Rights." *LSE Women Peace and Security Blog*. Accessed November 10,

2020. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/wps/2019/04/25/in-pursuing-a-new-resolution-on-sexual-violence-security-council-significantly-undermines-womens-reproductive-rights/>.

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Security Council. 2019. "In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2493 on Women, Peace and Security." Accessed November 10, 2020. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2019-12/in-hindsight-negotiations-on-resolution-2493-on-women-peace-and-security.php>.

<sup>73</sup> In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2493 on Women, Peace and Security, n.p.

<sup>74</sup> See *ibid* and United Nations Security Council. 2019. "In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2467 on Sexual Violence in Conflict." Accessed November 10, 2020, <https://www.whatsinblue.org/2019/05/in-hindsight-negotiations-on-resolution-2467-on-sexual-violence-in-conflict.php>.

<sup>75</sup> Buonfiglio, Chiara. 2016. "The First UN World Conference on Women (1975) As a Cold War Encounter: Recovering Anti-Imperialist, Non-Aligned and Socialist Genealogies." *Filozofija I Društvo XXVII* (3): 521–41; Olcott, Jocelyn. 2010. "Cold War Conflicts and Cheap Cabaret: Sexual Politics At the 1975 United Nations International Women's Year Conference." *Gender & History* 22: 733–54; Zinsser, Judith. 2002. "From Mexico to Copenhagen to Nairobi: The United Nations Decade for Women, 1975–1985." *Journal of World History* 13: 139–168.

<sup>76</sup> Adami, Rebecca. 2020. *Women and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. London: Routledge.

<sup>77</sup> Pratt and Richter-Devroe, "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325," 491–492.

<sup>78</sup> Basu, Soumita. 2016. "The Global South Writes 1325 (too)." *International Political Science Review* 37 (3): 362–74.

group. Among those Global South states who have developed NAPs and sought to implement the WPS agenda more broadly, there is clear regional leadership at the political level. As Csevar and Oo and Davies argue in different contexts, it is possible to trace the emergence of different forms of entrepreneurship around 1325. In certain cases, local actors (usually women) have gone beyond merely implementing the tenets of WPS and have actually sought to develop different structures and forms of cooperation to overcome their distinct local, national, and regional challenges.<sup>79</sup> We view these efforts as interpretations of the WPS agenda within specific contexts to develop sets of ideas that offer women a scaffold to mobilize, enact their agency, and create forms of nonviolent resistance. The enactment of women's agency at the local level in different Global South contexts below demonstrates that as a framework for action, WPS needs to be considered as a flexible instrument open to myriad interpretations, rather than as a static set of principles which must be thrust into an action plan. This draws on existing work from Rita Manchanda who has previously argued that "women's collectives have innovated an every-day resistance politics."<sup>80</sup> We argue that this innovation largely springs from women in the Global South, whether individually or collectively at the local level, as they interpret WPS principles on their own terms and within their own specific contexts.

In highlighting this issue, we address the problem of the invisibility of Global South agency in shaping women's rights in particular and the international system in general.<sup>81</sup> As Soumita Basu argues, the assumption that the norms and practices developed from 1325 are Western-driven has not only served to ignore the agency of Global South actors but actually limits the potential of the WPS agenda by creating the impression that it is incompatible with local norms and different cultural values.<sup>82</sup> We argue that the parameters of analysis of WPS in their current form are also problematic since the coloniality of knowledge around the experiences and activity of Global South actors on this issue tends to obscure or even erase their contributions toward shaping the agenda. Further, in highlighting this gap in the existing literature, we seek here to focus on some of the ways in which Global South actors have implemented the WPS agenda on their own terms. Their efforts in doing so represent the power of women's agency in crafting forms of nonviolent resistance to challenge the patriarchal structures and cultural norms that often serve to limit their agency.<sup>83</sup>

At the international level too, Global South members continue to push for further development of the agenda. Most recently, while holding the Presidency of the Security Council, South Africa championed the latest WPS resolution 2493. Despite the reservations of other members that the global environment had become incompatible with the advancement of WPS, members voted in favor of the resolution which urges all states to further implement 1325, and crucially, encourages regional organizations to convene multi-stakeholder meetings to "identify practical and measurable

steps for fully implementing the agenda."<sup>84</sup> Regional organizations responded to this call, particularly across the Global South where ECOWAS and the African Union subsequently convened meetings to mark the twentieth anniversary of WPS. These meetings produced respectively the Dakar Declaration and ECOWAS Plan of Action for the Implementation of UNSCES 1325 and 1820 in West Africa,<sup>85</sup> and the African Union Commission Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa report.<sup>86</sup> There has also been a surge of critical scholarship on the lack of diversity in perspectives and analyses of WPS and its emancipatory potential particularly in feminist security studies.<sup>87</sup> This echoes calls from feminist scholars to rethink the formal economy of knowledge, not just to include more Global South scholars but to remake the relationship between feminism and the global economy of knowledge.<sup>88</sup> In theory and in practice therefore, Global South practice not only emerges at times as more dynamic than that of the Global North, but it can be viewed as inventive and multi-faceted across all levels of activity. In time, perhaps also proving even more effective. Here, we connect knowledge and critiques of WPS emanating from the Global South, with very real innovation around the application of those principles in those contexts, in an effort to produce new ways of knowing and thinking about WPS and as a call for further scholarship in this vein.

### National and Local Implementation

At the national level meanwhile, a key mechanism for the progress of the WPS agenda are the NAPs, which as True (2016) notes, while not ends in themselves, do indicate national policy commitments and provide an important accountability mechanism for civil society actors.<sup>89</sup> In addition, as Hudson notes, they "create dialogical spaces that do not necessarily produce emancipatory outcomes, but at least in a small way facilitate a conducive environment for the change to happen."<sup>90</sup> Thus far, the number of NAPs

<sup>84</sup>United Nations Security Council. 2019. "Resolution 2493." <https://undocs.org/S/RES/2493>. See also United Nations Security Council. 2019. "In Hindsight: Negotiations on Resolution 2467 on Sexual Violence in Conflict." Accessed November 10, 2020, <https://www.whatsinblue.org/2019/05/in-hindsight-negotiations-on-resolution-2467-on-sexual-violence-in-conflict.php>.

<sup>85</sup>1325+10 Women Count for peace in West Africa, The Dakar Declaration and ECOWAS Plan of Action for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 in West Africa, Outcome Documents of the regional forum on Women Peace and Security, Dakar, September 2010. [http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/dakar\\_declaration\\_0.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/dakar_declaration_0.pdf).

<sup>86</sup>Abdulmelik, Semiha. 2016. *African Union Commission Implementation of the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Africa*. (Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission: African Union Commission, 2016), <https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/pubs/2016womenpeacesecurity-auc.pdf>.

<sup>87</sup>Horst, Cindy. 2007. "Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda? Somali Debates on Women's Public Roles and Political Participation." *Journal of Eastern African studies: the journal of the British Institute in Eastern Africa* 11 (3): 389–407; Kodila-Tedika, Oasis, 2017. "Women in Power and Power of Women: the Liberian Experience." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19 (1): 86–101; Lee-Koo, Katrina, and Trojanowska, Barbara K. 2017. "Does the United Nations' Women, Peace and Security Agenda Speak With, for or to Women in the Asia Pacific? The Development of National Action Plans in the Asia Pacific." *Critical Studies on Security* 5 (3): 287–301.

<sup>88</sup>Hastrup, Toni. 2019. "WPS and the African Union." In *Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Jacqui True, and Sara E. Davies. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Roberts, Celia, and Connell, Raewyn. 2016. "Feminist Theory and the Global South." *Feminist Theory* 17 (2): 138–9.

<sup>89</sup>True, "Global diffusion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda."

<sup>90</sup>Hudson, Heidi. 2017. "The Power of Mixed Messages: Women, Peace, and Security Language in National Action Plans from Africa." *Africa Spectrum* 52 (3): 3–29, p. 24.

<sup>79</sup>Csevar this issue; Oo and Davies this issue.

<sup>80</sup>Manchanda, "Difficult Encounters" 69, 76.

<sup>81</sup>On opening the discussion of how Global South actors have historically shaped the international system see O'Malley, Alanna. 2018. *The Diplomacy of Decolonisation, America, Britain and the United Nations during the Congo crisis 1960-64*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; Prashad, Vijay. 2008. *The Darker Nations, A People's History of the Third World*. New York: The New Press.

<sup>82</sup>Basu, "The Global South," 362–363.

<sup>83</sup>For further on this see Ni Aolain, Fionnuala, and Valji, Nahla. 2019. "Scholarly Debates and Contested Meanings of WPS." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women Peace and Security*, edited by Sarah Davies, and Jackie True, 53–66. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

adopted worldwide has grown to 92 constituting just over 47 percent of all states and illustrating that there remains considerable room for progress.<sup>91</sup> The following table provides a breakdown of the global take-up of WPS NAPs.

Region <sup>92</sup>	UN member states in each region <sup>93</sup>	Number of NAPs	Percent of region with a NAP
Africa (Sub-Saharan)	47	26	55
Oceania plus Australia & New Zealand	14	3	21
Latin America & the Caribbean	35	6	17
North Africa & West Asia <sup>94</sup>	23	10	43
Central & South Asia	14	4	28
Europe & North America <sup>95</sup>	45	38	84
East & South East Asia	16	6	37.5

From the above table we can see that the vision of the WPS agenda as a global norm is yet to be realized in some regions, in particular in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific. Despite earlier findings that democracy increases the likelihood of a state producing a WPS NAP,<sup>96</sup> the NAP map provided by *Our Secure Future* shows that the connection between democracy and gender equality in peace and security has yet to be made explicit given that many states claiming to be democratic have yet to develop plans such as Malaysia and Israel.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, how these NAPs are being applied is questionable. The lack of consistent application of NAPs is beginning to draw attention from scholars and practitioners who argue that NAPs lack accountability measures,<sup>98</sup> and in many cases fail to address structural inequalities that precipitate the need for the protection of women.<sup>99</sup> While Europe and North America lead the regions in terms of NAP saturation, critiques have emerged of how NAPs are conceived, and in particular the tendency of European states to project policy initiatives outwards to the Global South rather than evaluating existing domestic structural inequalities,<sup>100</sup> placing too much

emphasis on traditional security priorities such as militaries and national security<sup>101</sup> and for perpetuating “white savior” narratives around peace and security institutions.<sup>102</sup>

The renewed focus after 2015 on women as security actors has illustrated dwindling national level momentum on the participation pillar of the agenda. In national militaries, for example, we see women’s participation hovering around 11 percent in most states despite the fact that the initial documents that precipitated Resolution 1325 contained considerable detail on how to mainstream gender in national security institutions.<sup>103</sup> The Namibia Plan of Action, now broadly known as the Windhoek Declaration provided explicit instructions on how to increase women’s representation in peace operations, policekeeping,<sup>104</sup> and leadership. Currently in all these areas, the Global North shows no greater advancement than the Global South.<sup>105</sup> However, as noted above, given the inherently androcentric nature of the military, feminists outside of liberal feminism may not see increased women in the military as progress.<sup>106</sup>

Where we see the most activity on WPS is in track III at the level of civil society, perhaps in part because the WPS agenda was initiated and has always been heavily shaped by civil society actors.<sup>107</sup> The Women’s International League for Peace and Justice (WILPF) and the NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security were central to the passing of Resolution 1325 and development of the WPS agenda. Civil society activity is essential to the on-the-ground implementation of the agenda but it relies on strong and clearly worded mandates to guarantee accountability.<sup>108</sup> Despite the vast proliferation of civil society organizations (CSOs) working on WPS globally,<sup>109</sup> there remains a disparity between action on the ground and policy action by national and international actors.<sup>110</sup> While this dynamic is not unique to WPS,<sup>111</sup> in this issue Lucy Hall examines this

<sup>91</sup> Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WIPLF). “National level implementation.” Accessed 10 November 2020. <https://www.peacewomen.org/member-states>.

<sup>92</sup> These regions match UN regional assignments used by the United Nations for assessment of the SDG goals. They have been adjusted slightly to collapse the categories of Oceania with Australia and New Zealand, see United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. “SDG Indicators: Regional Groupings Used in Report and Statistical Annex.” Accessed December 2, 2020. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups/>.

<sup>93</sup> See footnotes below for two exceptions.

<sup>94</sup> In itself, whole numbers do not tell us too much about the saturation in each region, so percentages here are more useful. Only UN member states have been counted within each region with two exceptions, the UN classification of North Africa and West Asia also includes Palestine to reflect the fact that Palestine has a WPS NAP.

<sup>95</sup> Kosovo has been included in the Europe and North America region to reflect the fact that Kosovo has a WPS NAP.

<sup>96</sup> True, “Global diffusion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.”

<sup>97</sup> *Our Secure Future*. “National Action Plan Map.” Accessed November 11, 2020. <https://oursecurefuture.org/projects/national-action-plan-mapping>. Please note this map does not appear to have been updated to reflect the most recent NAP adopters or revisions in some states.

<sup>98</sup> Greener, B. K. 2020. “Championing the WPS Agenda?” *International Peacekeeping* 27 (3): 445–66.

<sup>99</sup> Hudson, “The Power of Mixed Messages.”

<sup>100</sup> Carol Cohn. 2004. *Mainstreaming Gender in UN Security Policy: A Path to Political Transformation*. Consortium on Gender, Security, and Human Rights. Working

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<sup>101</sup> Shepherd, Laura J. 2016. “Making War Safe for Women? National Action Plans and the Militarization of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.” *International Political Science Review* 37 (3): 324–35.

<sup>102</sup> Hastrup, Toni, and Jamie J. Hagen. 2020. “Global Racial Hierarchies and the Limits of Localization via National Action Plans.” In *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Soumita Basu, Paul Kirby, and Laura J. Shepherd, 133–52, p. 135. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

<sup>103</sup> Newby and Sebag, “Gender Sidestreaming.”

<sup>104</sup> See Day, Graham, and Christopher Freeman. 2005. “Operationalizing the Responsibility to Protect—the Policekeeping Approach.” *Global Governance* 11 (2): 139–46, p. 141.

<sup>105</sup> Newby and Sebag, “Gender Sidestreaming.”

<sup>106</sup> Arat, “Feminisms.”

<sup>107</sup> Björkdahl, Annika, and Johanna Mannergren Selimovic. 2019. “WPS and Civil Society.” In *Oxford Handbook of Women Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 428–38. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Hill, Felicity, Mikele Aboitiz, and Sara Poehman-Doumbouya. 2003. “Nongovernmental Organizations’ Role in the Build-up and Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28 (4): 1255–69; Joachim, Jutta, and Andrea Schmeiker. 2012. “Changing Discourses, Changing Practices? Gender Mainstreaming and Security.” *Comparative European Politics* 10 (5): 528–63.

<sup>108</sup> Shepherd, Laura J. 2019. “WPS and Adopted Security Council Resolutions.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Women Peace and Security*, edited by Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True, 98–109. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>109</sup> For a list of civil society organizations that work on WPS agenda issues, see the extensive list provided by Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WIPLF), “Civil Society Organizations Database,” accessed 12 November 2020. <https://www.peacewomen.org/cso-database>.

<sup>110</sup> Paffenholz, Thania. 2014. “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Beyond the Inclusion-Exclusion Dichotomy.” *Negotiation Journal* 30 (1): 69–91.

<sup>111</sup> Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”: 69–91.



disconnect using a gender lens offering a new explanation for why we see a lack of bottom-up transmission from CSOs to track I and II on WPS issues.<sup>112</sup>

It is at the level of civil society, however, where we find the granular examples of how WPS is implemented in the continuum of war and peace. Examples from Africa and South Asia illustrate the importance of context in how participation versus protection and agent versus victim play out on the ground,<sup>113</sup> and the inadequacy of purely statist approaches to WPS. For example, Singh found that religious and societal norms led to a double victimization of women at two levels in the post war environment in Sri Lanka: punishment by the state and punishment from the family and society.<sup>114</sup> First person narratives from Africa by female peacebuilders highlight the enormous mix of societal norms, customary laws, and familial pressure women need to overcome prior to engaging in peacebuilding activities.<sup>115</sup> Turshen brings these challenges to the fore by highlighting the use of sexualized violence used to disenfranchise women politically and economically in Uganda.<sup>116</sup> She illustrates state complicity in these practices and the need for careful policymaking in order to produce real compensation for women in the postconflict environment, showing how state level reparations bypass ordinary women and fail to improve their economic and social status.<sup>117</sup> As Manchanda notes, the state can be both predator and protector, so the need to avoid a purely statist approach when implementing the WPS agenda is critical (2020).<sup>118</sup>

In sum, the implementation of the WPS agenda has been very uneven. What we see currently are reticence and roll-backs at international and national levels contrasting with high levels of activity within civil society and insufficient engagement between the three levels. We also find local contexts constraining progress in the implementation of WPS. The COVID-19 pandemic has now made explicit the gendered structural inequalities that exist in Global North societies as much as the Global South.<sup>119</sup> The reluctance of Global North states to acknowledge this in their NAPs should be of great concern.

### WPS Implementation and the Articles in This Issue

To illuminate new visions and different conceptions of WPS and to demonstrate the significance of regional approaches to the agenda, our articles cluster around three separate themes. First, addressing efforts to mainstream the agenda,

<sup>112</sup> Hall, Lucy. *Logics of Gender, Peace and Security: Theorizing Gender and Protection at the Intersections of State and Civil Society*. This Issue.

<sup>113</sup> Meredith, Turshen. 2000. "The Political Economy of Violence Against Women During Armed Conflict in Uganda." *Social Research* 67 (3): 803–24; Singh, "Rethinking the Normative."

<sup>114</sup> Singh, "Rethinking the Normative."

<sup>115</sup> Anderson, Shelley, Euphemia Akos Dzathor, Crystal Kwadwa Tettey, and Densua Mumford. 2010. *Every Woman Has a Story: Personal Stories by African Peacemakers. IFOR/Women Peacemakers Program Africa*. Accra, Ghana: Afram.

<sup>116</sup> Meredith, Turshen. 2000. "The Political Economy of Violence Against Women During Armed Conflict in Uganda." *Social Research* 67 (3): 803–24.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Manchanda, Rita. 2020. "Difficult Encounters with the WPS Agenda in South Asia: Re-scripting Globalized Norms and Policy Frameworks for a Feminist Peace." In *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Soumitra Basu, Paul Kirby, and Laura J. Shepherd, 133–52. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

<sup>119</sup> See for example Wenham, Clare, Julia Smith, Sara E. Davies, Huiyun Feng, Karen A. Grépin, Sophie Harman, Asha Herten-Crabb, and Rosemary Morgan. 2020. "Women Are Most Affected By Pandemics — Lessons from Past Outbreaks." *Nature* 583 (7815): 194–8; Wenham, Clare, Julia Smith, and Rosemary Morgan. 2020. "COVID-19: the Gendered Impacts of the Outbreak." *The Lancet* 395 (10227): 846–7; Subbaraman, Nidhi. 2020. "How to Address the Coronavirus's Outsized Toll on People of Colour." *Nature* 581: 366–7.

opposing views are presented by two authors: Cristina Stefan investigates how R2P has failed to incorporate WPS and gender considerations in a systematic way. Stefan seeks to further gender in R2P to advance gender equality and expand women's meaningful participation in atrocity prevention and protection. From the outset therefore, this article seeks to align these two agendas. In doing so, she investigates the expansion of the gender dynamics of atrocity crimes, proposing a cross section of the three pillars of R2P and the four pillars of WPS to interlink the two more closely.

Lucy Hall challenges this idea by interrogating two problems. First, she examines the interweaving of the WPS agenda with R2P and, in particular, determines how, despite efforts to mainstream gender through R2P, in fact the normative framework of both has the effect of disenfranchising civil society actors of their agency. Second, the paper investigates how CSOs are instrumentalized by the state, arguing that in fact a gendered relationship exists between the two which ultimately strips civil society of its operational potential which is now generated toward sustaining the dominance of the state. She argues that there is a gendered underpinning to the logic of normative frameworks that govern CSOs, maintaining that the discourse of women as local actors as gendered and has been reproduced by successive resolutions since 1325, and positions them against the "male" international.

Addressing the second theme of how to generate vertical implementation, especially within traditionally male-dominated structures at both the national and international levels, Hannah Davies examines the politics of the administrative and budgetary committees (ACABQ) and the General Assembly Fifth Committee in the area of recruitment of personnel and efforts to change staff rules to implement 1325 within the UN system in the area of peace operations. Delving into the understudied UN administrative and budgetary committees, she argues persuasively that national interest reigns supreme in this area, even more than in other UN organs, greatly hindering efforts to ensure gender parity. She questions how and whether bureaucracies, in this case the international civil service system of the UN, have equity and act as representative institutions.

Also focusing on vertical implementation, but this time at the local level, Phyu Phyu Oo and Sara Davies examine the implementation of Resolution 2467 and, in particular, the survivor-centered approach to conflict related sexual violence. Through a case study of the Shan State in Myanmar, the authors examine local civil society responses to these crimes and how local gendered norms and practices often disrupt their work and thereby access to effective modes of justice. They highlight how these actors confronted local gender norms, while simultaneously attempting to shift the normative environment, while in this case failing to do so. They argue that informal justice emerges from a highly complex conflict situation as the only option available to many survivors of GBSV. Therefore, rather than international organizations or outside humanitarian assistance, it is found that local ethnic women not only represent the voice of the community but are the only ones who can access hard to reach areas and provide support in dangerous conditions where no or very few other actors are present. These women then simultaneously play the role of double conduits as both international humanitarian servants and local rights defenders who often represent the only route toward justice for victims.

The third theme of the horizontal dimensions of WPS and the need to move the WPS agenda beyond UN structures on nontraditional and human security issues is taken

up with groundbreaking original research. Szilvia Csevar points out that WPS has not yet been applied to indigenous women who suffer greatly in traditional conflicts but still lack representation and agency given the way that the Security Council has applied the concept of security as state based. Taking the Bougainville island conflict in Papua New Guinea as a case study, she examines the role of natural resources as a source of conflict for this indigenous community and shows how it is affected by, and affects, the impact of climate change. She persuasively argues that where climate change, natural resources, violence and gender-based violence collide, traditional definitions of armed conflict are not appropriate with the effect that these situations do not come before the Security Council. This demonstrates aptly that there are conceptual omissions in the ways in which conflict is framed and defined by the UN.

### Conclusion

This special issue focuses on emerging trends in the implementation of the WPS agenda. In reviewing the resolution 20 years since the passing of Resolution 1325, we have highlighted the gaps in implementation. We argue here that the renewed focus on the increased participation of women is important to avoid reducing the WPS agenda to that of a protection regime. However, to encourage participation, more space must be made for women's agency at international, national as well local levels and these spaces for women's participation as actors in peace and conflict have to be made safe and gender responsive.

In attending to context, care still needs to be taken to avoid "adding women and stirring" particularly in the security sector.<sup>120</sup> While feminism has always been a contested space with different ideas on how to reach true gender equality, the need to avoid remaining Beauvoir's "the other" remains a key priority.<sup>121</sup> Interpreting how and where to include men in this discussion and taking a human security perspective to capture the full expression of threats to women's security will be priorities in the coming years.

As such, we conclude that in reality, for full implementation of the WPS agenda to occur, the full and meaningful participation of women in the political, economic and social aspects of states and societies also needs to occur. The inclusion of women in traditional security institutions alone will not help to ameliorate the problems we have highlighted. A more comprehensive approach that takes account of security alongside the removal of structural inequalities across society is required. In addition, as noted by prior feminist scholarship,<sup>122</sup> new conceptions of security, in particular war, will be essential in achieving the goal of

the WPS agenda which is gender mainstreaming.<sup>123</sup> At the international level, although the Global North provides the majority of funding to UN Women,<sup>124</sup> it is the Global South that leads implementation and innovation of the WPS agenda. The lack of genuine self-reflection about existing domestic structural inequalities on the part of the Global North requires more attention in policy circles.

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