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The UN Security Council and the Political Economy of the WPS Resolutions

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As of June 2017, there were eight United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) on "women and peace and security"— UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, and 2242. These UNSCRs recognize the gendered nature of armed conflicts and peace processes. They propose institutional provisions geared mainly toward protecting women and girls during armed conflicts and promoting their participation in conflict resolution and prevention.[1] In addition, in March 2016, the Security Council adopted UNSCR 2272, which recommends concrete steps to combat sexual exploitation and abuse in

1. For the text and overview of WPS resolutions, see PeaceWomen (2017).

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United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, an issue that is of significant concern for women, peace, and security (WPS) advocates. The volume of resolutions and policy literature on WPS would suggest that UNSCR 1325 and the follow-up UNSCRs have become central to the mandate of the Security Council. Yet there is a paucity of financial resources to pay for implementation of the resolutions; this has been described as "perhaps the most serious and persistent obstacle … over the past 15 years" (UN Women 2015, 372).

In addition to this first charge about UNSCR 1325 being a "cost-free" resolution for the Security Council and related intergovernmental institutions as well as member states, two additional aspects of the political economy of WPS resolutions have featured in feminist critique. The second concern relates to silences around the question of economic rights and well-being of women in the provisions of the earlier resolutions, which were addressed to a limited extent in some of the later ones. Third, the political economy of the WPS resolutions has also been linked to their association with neoliberal peacebuilding, which frames the broader approach to international peace and security that characterizes the work of the UN, including the Security Council (Pratt 2013, 779).

This contribution to the forum links these themes, which dominate discussions of the political economy of the WPS resolutions — funding, economic rights of women, and neoliberal peacebuilding — to a fourth dimension that has remained largely unexplored in feminist international relations scholarship so far: the materiality of the Security Council. Particularly in light of the attention paid to UNSCR 1325 in a number of contributions to the previous *Politics & Gender* forum on feminist security studies (FSS) and feminist political economy (FPE), this contribution presents the council as an arena in which the meeting of the two strands of feminist international relations can yield valuable insights about the trajectory of the WPS resolutions. It considers not just the politics of financing the provisions of the WPS resolutions but also the broad frames of understanding — of market, state, and society — within which the resolutions are conceived at the council.

FEMINIST CONCERNS

First, of course, there is a need to actually set aside resources to implement the provisions of the WPS resolutions. From UNSCR 1325 onward, most

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of the WPS resolutions, including |UNSCRs 1888, 1889, 2106, 2122, and 2242, called for necessary allocation of resources — financial, technical, logistical, and human — for the implementation of the WPS resolutions. But the rhetoric of WPS does not translate into dedicated budgeting for relevant staff such as gender advisors, policies, and the resources necessary for monitoring and evaluating these initiatives (Anderlini 2007, 217). Even as WPS advocates seek to get the Security Council to develop stronger implementation, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms, it is important to note that the council does not have access to substantive resources — financial or military — to realize the same. Indeed, in light of such limitations, Vreeland and Dreher ask, "By what authority does the . . . [Council] take these actions?" (2014, 2). In response, they recognize that the "UNSC has a certain moral force codified in international law, and it also serves as an informational focal point for the citizens of the world" (2).

Material support for peacekeeping operations, the context in which the implementation of WPS resolutions is often invoked, comes from a separate peacekeeping budget of the UN. Member states are required to contribute to this budget based on the peacekeeping assessments scale; the permanent five (P5) Security Council members are expected to pay a surcharge in addition to their regular dues (Laurenti 2004, 295–99). In practice, the dues are not always paid, and peacekeeping missions have increasingly come to rely on voluntary contributions (Mathiason 2007, 20).[2] Tracing this trend to the 1990s, when the UN's peacekeeping role grew manifold, Gharekhan writes, "these [voluntary] funds became the legitimate instruments for the developed countries to run the UN" (2006, 35). On the issue of financing, then, the demands made of the Security Council to implement the WPS resolutions, in reality, have to do more directly with political and economic power (and interests) of the P5 and donor member states and may require more advocacy at the national level (on a related note, see Hudson and Goetz 2014, 341).

The second aspect relates to the provisions of the resolutions: one of the major silences in UNSCR 1325 is about "the gendered socio-economic inequalities that make women more vulnerable during conflict and post-conflict situations" (True 2011, 84). Yet, as scholars have pointed out, securing economic rights of women and working toward their economic empowerment is crucial in postconflict peacebuilding. Gender inequality

2. Troop-contributing member states also do so on voluntary basis. The majority of these are developing countries that have a much more limited say on peacekeeping mandates.

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in inheritance and property rights in most postconflict countries has been a key concern (see Chinkin and Charlesworth 2006, 950–51).

The absence of this component from UNSCR 1325 can be largely explained with reference to turf boundaries in the UN such that member states — both inside and outside the Security Council — were against the council addressing socioeconomic issues that come under the purview of the UN Economic and Social Council. In this way, member states outside the Security Council have sought to limit the mandate of the infamously undemocratic Council. The response among the P5 member states has been mixed, with Russia and China generally being against expanding the scope of the council's work (Basu 2016, 267, 279). There is also, however, historical precedence for the boundaries between security and economic arenas at the UN — historian Paul Kennedy suggests that "great powers selectively employed fragmentation from the outset to prevent the Economic and Social Council ... from competing with the Security Council for dominance and fostering the integration of security and economic policy" (cited in Benevenisti and Downs 2007, 598).

UNSCR 1889 is celebrated for being the first WPS resolution to articulate some of the concerns highlighted here (see, e.g., Otto 2010, 103). However, quite possibly because of the existence of turf boundaries, Vietnam — which tabled this resolution — was unable to gather enough support "for the inclusion of direct references to the economic and social dimensions of women's vulnerability in post-conflict situations" in the resolution (Heathcote 2011, 8). Still, UNSCR 1889 recognizes the need for "ways to ensure their [women's] livelihoods, land and property rights, [and] employment" and goes on to urge member states and other actors to, among other matters, provide support for "better socio-economic conditions" for women (UNSC 2009). But, as discussed later here, the overall context of postconflict reconstruction and peacebuilding within which the economic dimension of the WPS agenda is considered can also be a cause for concern (see also Suzanne Bergeron, Carol Cohn, and Claire Duncanson's contribution to this forum).

The third and final point that has featured in political economy analyses of WPS resolutions relates to the argument that UNSCR 1325 is complicit in promoting neoliberal peacebuilding and postconflict reconstruction. It is notable that prior to the establishment of U.S. hegemony following the end of Cold War, "UN debates about women's status revolved around a critique of capitalism" (Harrington 2011, 563). Later, the recognition of violence against women as an "international security issue" in the 1990s and the subsequent passage of UNSCR 1325 were tied into, and a rationale for,

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international "militarized projects" that sought to respond to the "new wars" of the late twentieth century (Harrington 2011, 565–66). The responses were also defined by neoliberal logic that understood market-driven policies for economic development as the panacea for conflict as well as postconflict reconstruction. In the post–Cold War period, there appeared to be a general agreement among all key international actors, including the UN, that neoliberal reforms was the way forward for postconflict societies (see Duffield 2001).

While WPS advocates did not necessarily subscribe to this approach, the agenda was certainly developed in line with this ideological shift at the UN, including in the Security Council and, more broadly, in the international peace and security arena. Market-driven policies such as structural adjustment programs that entailed, for instance, privatization of previously state-owned industries and services are not in the interests of women in postconflict societies; these may place "greater burden on women's unpaid labour in the household" (Seguino 2008, 44, cited in True 2010, 46) and force women "into a rather precarious informal sector" (Hudson 2012, 446). If economic rights of women are not taken seriously, as has often been the case in the implementation of the WPS agenda, their lives are made insecure by such programs, which are ostensibly for the betterment of societies emerging from conflicts (see Chinkin and Charlesworth 2006, 946).

Efforts are made to implement WPS resolutions without posing any fundamental challenges to the hegemonic neoliberal frameworks. Indeed, funds disbursed by donor governments and agencies for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 are seen to bring other actors such as civil society organizations into these structures (Pratt 2013, 9); that, on a broader scale, these resources may be attached to conditionalities that benefit the "rich donor countries" has also been of concern to some postconflict countries (True 2011, 86). To the extent that member states are unable or unwilling to pay their dues to the peacekeeping budget, as noted vis-à-vis the first theme, the implementation of WPS resolutions would be increasingly donor-driven with all attendant limitations. Considered together with the ideological leanings of the UN and the Security Council, the direction of the implementation of WPS resolutions seems preordained.

BRINGING IN INTERNATIONAL "HIGH POLITICS"

There is an extensive feminist literature that uncovers the ideational links between the provisions and prevalent interpretations of the WPS

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resolutions and the Security Council (see, e.g., Otto 2010; Shepherd 2008). More recent efforts to bring insights from FSS and FPE to bear on analyses of the resolutions also need to take into account the politics within, and indeed the political economy of, the council. This contribution has highlighted some of these links — for instance, the council's reliance on member states for personnel and financial resources that are necessary to implement the mandate of UN peacekeeping operations, including in relation to gender-related provisions. Such institutional aspects of the council, which entail both political and economic considerations, may constrain or enable effective implementation of the WPS resolutions. In conclusion, scholarly research that employs FPE to examine WPS resolutions — which, in turn, has been an empirical focal point of FSS scholars since the passage of UNSCR 1325 in 2000 — would be richer with a deeper understanding of the material dimension of the Security Council.

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Feminist Global Political Economy and Feminist Security Studies? The Politics of Delineating Subfields

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When considering possible conversations, synergies, overlaps, similarities, conflicts, and distinctions between two subfields or “camps” (Sylvester 2010), the question of limits looms large. Where, why, and how are the limits of feminist security studies (FSS) and feminist global political economy (FGPE) currently being drawn, and to what effect? Building upon previous conversations about the relationship between FSS and FGPE, particularly as they were discussed in the Critical Perspectives

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