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Gendering Security: Connecting Theory and Practice

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Gendering Security: Connecting Theory and Practice

Over the past 30 years, feminist approaches to International Relations have become an integral part of the discipline, recognizing the subject and the objects of international relations as deeply gendered. Feminist IR scholars have made particularly important contributions to critical security studies, encouraging not only analytical attention to “non-traditional” security threats but also advocating deep reflection on how gendered hierarchies between masculinities and femininities are constructed parts of war, peace, and violence. The development of the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda at the United Nations Security Council since 2000 and its diffusion across regional and national institutions has been a particular, empirical focus of feminist scholarship. This introduction briefly summarizes core intellectual tenets of feminist IR in its relation to security studies, thereby providing the intellectual backdrop to the seven contributions of this special issue. These contributions critically unpack the framing of the WPS agenda, the extent to which its diffusion leads to diverging understandings in regional and national contexts, and broader questions related to the detrimental workings of gender constructions in post-conflict scenarios.

Keywords: gender, security, conflict, feminist security studies, WPS agenda

Introduction

This special issue of *Global Society* examines the meanings and applications of gender and security in international relations. Since the pioneering work of Cynthia Enloe’s *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarisation of Women’s Lives* in 1983, Jean Elshtain’s *Women and War* in 1987, and J. Ann Tickner’s *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* in 1992, the field and practice of international relations has changed considerably.¹ While Enloe, Elshtain, Tickner and other early feminist scholars struggled to convince mainstream International Relations (IR) scholars, particularly (neo)-realist security scholars, of the validity and necessity of incorporating feminist perspectives to security scholarship and practice, feminist research is now a vital part of IR. The international community’s commitment to the eight United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) (from 1325 in 2000 to 2242 in 2015) that comprise the UN’s “Women, Peace and Security” (WPS) agenda,²

¹ Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarisation of Women’s Lives* (London: Pluto Press, 1983); Jean B. Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); and J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

² The UN had in fact recognised the links between women, peace and security decades prior to the 2000 resolution. The UN’s first decade for women (1975-1985) was given the theme ‘Equality, development and peace’, echoing the concluding thoughts of the 1975 World Conference of the International Women’s Year that achieving greater equality for women would strengthen world peace (see the UN ‘Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace’, E/CONF.66/34, 2 July 1975). The 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi recognised women’s vulnerability in conflicts, called upon women to promote peace and further acknowledged that peace required equality between men and women (see “Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace”, New York: United Nations, 1986). Throughout the 1990s, further advancements were made

along with the publication of numerous contributions developing and applying feminist perspectives on security,³ are testament to the changing discourse and altered political and research environment that accepts gender as a legitimate and necessary area of concern.

This perspective draws attention to the ways in which gender (understood as the socially constructed, hierarchical, produced and performed traits and symbols associated with masculinity and femininity) shapes and is shaped by the social norms and practices that constitute the subject area of IR. Masculine and feminine traits and symbols are not seen as fixed, rather, they vary over time and across social settings, and interact in complex ways with race and other categories of identity to produce multiple fluid masculinities and femininities.⁴ One common feature of gender identities is the subordination of feminine traits to masculine traits, so that the nurturing, empathetic and caring traits associated with a version of femininity are less valued by societies and states than the strong, aggressive, “leadership” traits associated with a form of masculinity, particularly because these traits are associated with the warrior ideal portrayed as necessary to protect the state.⁵ Our understanding of gender is so profoundly constituted by the protector/protected (the archetypal just warrior/beautiful soul) roles assigned to men and women which are at the centre of gendered state institutions and practices that Laura Sjoberg argues “it is only possible to fully understand gender in the context of war and conflict”, just as war, conflict, and security can only be fully understood through a gender lens.⁶

Security is assigned multiple meanings in IR literature, incorporating levels from the individual to the state and the globe, with traditional conceptions referring narrowly to the absence of threats to state borders, while others widen the concept to

towards the women, peace and security agenda through the condemnation of war time rapes and sexual violence in the war crimes tribunals in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The 1995 World Conference on Women held in Beijing mobilized activists on the issue of women and armed conflict and called for women to be full participants in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and identified the need to protect women in situations of armed conflict (see Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, The Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995). For an introduction to the WPS agenda, see Louise Olsson and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis, “An introduction to UNSCR 1325”, *International Interactions*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2013), pp. 425-434; for an overview of the eight resolutions, see Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, “Reintroducing Women, Peace and Security”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (2016), pp. 249-254.

³ This article references some of the many publications on the topic of gender and security.

⁴ Paul Higate’s examination of the meaning of masculinities in the context of Private Militarized Security Companies in Afghanistan provides an illuminating example of the intersection of race, religion, and hegemonic masculinity. See Paul Higate, “Drinking Vodka from the ‘Butt-Crack’: Men, Masculinities and Fratriarchy in the Private Militarized Security Company”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (2012), pp. 450-469.

⁵ Joshua Goldstein’s work demonstrates that the links between masculinity and warrior ideals are widely cross cultural and valid over time. See Joshua Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). The typical hegemonic military masculinity associated with the male warrior is changing, according to Joachim and Schneiker. See Jutta Joachim and Andrea Schneiker, “Of ‘True Professionals’ and ‘Ethical Hero Warriors’: A Gender-Discourse Analysis of Private Military and Security Companies”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (2012), pp. 495-512.

⁶ Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, War and Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), p. 5.

include threats to economic, food, climate, the environment, and human security.⁷ Feminist scholarship challenges traditional notions of security by drawing attention to the gender bias inherent in key concepts such as war, violence, military, peace, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, rendering women visible in practices of security, and further questioning *who* is being secured by security practices. In this, feminist research draws attention to the harmful links between militaries and masculinities in war and in peacekeeping,⁸ examines, and also contests, the relationship between women and peace,⁹ and argues that insecurity results from the norms and practices that reinforce patriarchal orders as much as from threats of conflict.¹⁰ Feminist security scholarship

⁷ For a discussion of traditional, critical, and human security, see Tickner, *op cit.*; Lene Hansen, “The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School”, *Millennium*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2000), pp. 285-306; and Heidi Hudson, “‘Doing’ Security as Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2005), pp. 155-174.

⁸ Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Cynthia Cockburn, Laura Sjoborg (ed.), *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2009); Maya Eichler, “Militarized Masculinities in International Relations”, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2014), pp. 81-93; Sandra Whitworth, *Men, Militarism and Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004); Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, “Explaining Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions: The Role of Female Peacekeepers and Gender Equality in Contributing Countries”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 53, no. 1 (2016), pp. 100-115.

⁹ See for example, Laura Sjoborg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women’s Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2007), and the follow-up text, Laura Sjoborg and Caron E. Gentry, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking About Women’s Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2015). Meredith Loken, for example, disproves the argument that including women as combatants will lower the incidence of rape within conflicts. See Meredith Loken, “Rethinking Rape: The Role of Women in Wartime Violence”, *Security Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2017), pp. 60–92. Other feminist research challenges the idea that women are more peaceful: Hilary Charlesworth, “Are Women Peaceful? Reflections on the Role of Women in Peace-Building”, *Feminist Legal Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2008), pp. 347-361. Cynthia Cockburn’s work examines the role of women activists in anti-war movements, see for example, Cynthia Cockburn, “Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization in and War: A Feminist Standpoint”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2010), pp.139-157. Ismene Gizelis’ research, on the other hand, demonstrates that peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts may be more likely to succeed in states with higher levels of equality for women. See Theodora-Ismene Gizelis, “A Country of Their Own: Women and Peacebuilding”, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 28, No. 5 (2011), pp. 522-542.

¹⁰ An increasing body of literature has demonstrated that patriarchal norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequalities and lead to women’s insecurity also create a situation of instability and insecurity for the state and global society. See, for example, Mary Caprioli, “Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (2005), pp. 161–78; Valerie M. Hudson, Mary Caprioli, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Rose McDermott, and Chad F. Emmett, “The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States”, *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2009), pp. 7-45; Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, *Sex and World Peace*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); and Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea M. den Boer, “A Feminist Evolutionary Analysis of the Relationship Between Violence Against and Inequitable Treatment of Women, and Conflict Within and Between Human Collectives, Including Nation-States”, in Todd Shackelford and Viviana

further enriches the field of security studies by adopting an approach that places individuals as the referent of security, giving voice to the everyday experiences of women (and men) facing violence and conflict.¹¹

Viewing security through a gender lens is not a matter of “add women and stir” or advancing a new list of threats. Rather, it requires a more fundamental change of perspective in that we observe and understand the multiple issues that create insecurity beyond militaries and state violence. As Tickner argues,

If we were to include women's experiences in our assumptions about the security-seeking behavior of states, how would it change the way in which we think about national security? Given the sexual division of labor, men's association with violence has been legitimated through war and the instruments of the state. Feminist perspectives must introduce the issue of domestic violence and analyze how the boundaries between public and private, domestic and international, political and economic, are permeable and interrelated.¹²

Viewing security from the perspective of individuals requires removing barriers between the international and the national, the public and the private: how secure are women, for example, in states where it is a customary practice to beat your wife, or where raping one's spouse is legal and/or common?¹³ Unlike traditional security scholarship, there is no single narrative to research within feminist security studies and the understanding that sources of insecurity are related to patriarchal norms and practices increases the complexity of working towards security. As Steve Smith has noted, “looking at security from the perspective of women alters the definition of what security is to such an extent that it is difficult to see how any form of traditional security studies can offer an analysis”.¹⁴

Feminist insights help us to understand that security from the perspective of women requires radical revision of the institutions and practices that constitute state and international security architecture. The domain of security provision has traditionally been male dominated—men predominantly make decisions to go to war or defend the state, men act as soldiers, and women are relegated to supporting roles

Weekes-Shackelford (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 301- 323.

¹¹ See, for example, Annick Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach* (London: Routledge, 2011); Megan MacKenzie, *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security, and*

Post-Conflict Development (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Swati Parashar, “Feminist International Relations and Militant Women: Case Studies from Sri Lanka and Kashmir”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2009), pp. 235–56; Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, “Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC)”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2009), pp. 495-518.

¹² Tickner, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹³ In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, South Sudan and Vanuatu, for example, over 50% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual domestic violence in their lifetime. See UN Women, Global Database on Violence Against Women, available: < <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries>> (accessed 1 September 2018). Available data shows that there are 78 states where marital rape is a significant problem with high prevalence. See LRW-Scale-8 in the WomanStats Database available at www.womanstats.org (accessed 1 September 2018).

¹⁴ Steve Smith, “The Increasing Insecurity of Security Studies: Conceptualizing Security in the Last Twenty Years”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1999), p. 92.

and are viewed as more vulnerable and in need of protection. As Tickner explains, “defined as those whom the state and its men are protecting, women have had little control over the conditions of their protection”.¹⁵ Reflecting the norms, values, practices and views of the (predominantly) men who created them, security institutions and policies are revealed as gendered constructions, products of patriarchal hierarchies that reinforce the power imbalances across genders.¹⁶ The institutions designed to maintain security perpetuate gender inequality through assigning key roles to men aligned with particular masculinities and discriminating or excluding women. As a result, these institutions can often be a source of insecurity and violence for women as attested by the growing literature on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict states,¹⁷ and evidenced by research into sexual harassment and assault as practices of socialisation within the military.¹⁸

The UN’s WPS agenda recognises many of the problems described above, from the need to revise our understanding of security to enabling women to participate in the practice of security. As Jacqui True explains, “This agenda is the most significant international normative framework addressing the gender-specific impacts of conflict on women and girls including protection against sexual and gender-based violence, promoting women’s participation in peace and security processes, and supporting their roles as peace builders in the prevention of conflict”.¹⁹ This normative framework, which is binding upon UN members, has diffused to regional actors (such as the African Union, the EU and NATO) as well as to individual states through the adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs) in support of UNSCR 1325.²⁰ The WPS agenda widens

¹⁵ Tickner, *op. cit.*, 28.

¹⁶ For a good discussion of the gendered institutions within security practices see Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping. Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 28-34.

¹⁷ It should be noted that sexual violence is also perpetrated against men in conflict. See, for example, Sandesh Sivakumaran, “Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict”, *European Journal of International Law* Vol. 18, No. 2 (2007), pp. 253-276; and Dara Kay Cohen, “Female Combatants and the Perpetration of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil War”, *World Politics* Vol. 65, No. 3 (2013), pp. 383-415. See also Laura Sjoberg and Jessica Peet, “A(nother) Dark Side of the Protection Racket: Targeting Women in Wars”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2011), pp. 163-182; Ariel I. Ahram, “Sexual Violence and the Making of ISIS”, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (2015), pp. 57-78; Megan Mackenzie, “Securitizing Sex? Towards a Theory of the Utility of Wartime Sexual Violence”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2010), pp. 202-221; Anette Bringedal Houge, “Sexualized War Violence: Knowledge Construction and Knowledge Gaps”, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 25 (2015), pp. 79-87; and Donna Pankhurst, “‘What Is Wrong with Men?’: Revisiting Violence Against Women in Conflict and Peacebuilding”, *Peacebuilding*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2016), pp. 180-193.

¹⁸ Elisabeth Jean Wood and Nathaniel Toppelberg, “The Persistence of Sexual Assault Within the US Military”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (2017), pp. 620-633; Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Rape as a Practice of War: Toward a Typology of Political Violence”, *Politics & Society* (2018).

¹⁹ Jacqui True, “Explaining the Global Diffusion of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda”, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2016), p. 307.

²⁰ As of September 2018, 76 states (39% of UN members) have adopted National Action Plans and 11 regional actors have Regional Action Plans. See Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, “Member States”, (September 2018) available: < <https://www.peacewomen.org/member-states>> (accessed 17 September 2018). For diffusion to the EU, see for example, Nadine Ansorg and Toni Haastrup, “Gender and the EU’s Support for Security Sector Reform in Fragile Contexts”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol 56,

the concept of security to view violence against women as a security issue, recognises that peace is only achievable through the empowerment and full participation of women, and acknowledges a broader global security environment that includes refugees, internally displaced persons, climate change, global health, terrorism and extreme violence.²¹ Feminist scholars and activists have viewed the WPS agenda as a significant tool to advance gender equality and achieve security, but have also recognised the problems associated with the framing of gender and women in the UN Security Council resolutions, the problematic links between women and peace, and the difficulties of convincing all UN member states of the importance of addressing gender in security practices.²²

The seven articles of this special issue contribute to ongoing debates in feminist security studies by examining both the theory and practice of gender in security situations. They span from analyses of the WPS agenda in international and national contexts to examinations of gender, masculinity, and sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. The first set of four articles question how mainstreaming gender in security is understood by the international community and how these understandings filter through (regional) institutions and actors to become practice. Wearing feminist lenses, and using a range of methodological tools, the authors demonstrate the need to research the WPS agenda from both critical theoretical perspectives, which highlight tensions within the key concepts and terms of the agenda itself, as well as empirical perspectives, which reveals the problems found when implementing the agenda. Critical analyses of the UNSCR documents which point to the ambiguity of gender in the UN's resolutions are echoed by those engaged in WPS as a practice who find that security actors do not share the same meaning of gender or the same understanding of its role in security. The second set of three articles explore gendered responses to violence, including sexual violence, through examining the gender strategies of rebel groups, the impact that these strategies have on gender relations and prospects for peace as well as through analysing how individuals, institutions, and society respond to sexual violence.

Gina Heathcote's analysis of UNSCR 2242, passed in 2015, provides a critical overview of the UN's approach to WPS in each of its resolutions from 1325 to 2242. Heathcote draws attention to the liberal feminist framework that permeates UNSCR 1325 in particular, which assumes a universal feminist agenda that fails to recognise power and difference. Her analysis further points to the problem of focusing too much on sexual violence as a gendered issue because of the associated dangers of victimising women and ignoring women's economic or other needs. The focus on terrorism within UNSCR 2242, she explains, brings new challenges to the WPS agenda as it risks being

No. 5 (2018), pp. 1127-1148; Toni Hastrup, "Creating Cinderella? The Unintended Consequences of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda for EU's Mediation Architecture", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2018), pp. 218-237.

²¹ The broadening of the security environment is particularly found in UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (S/RES/2242), October 2015.

²² See, for example, Carol Cohn, Helen Kinsella, and Sheri Gibbins, "Women, Peace and Security Resolution 1325", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2004), pp. 130-140; Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe, "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2011), pp. 489-503; Laura J. Shepherd, "Sex, Security and Superhero(in)es: From 1325 to 1820 and Beyond", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2011): 504-521; and the special issue in *International Affairs* edited by Paul Kirby and Laura Shepherd in March 2016.

co-opted by anti-terrorist strategies that may be incompatible with feminist goals. Heathcote's critique goes beyond a focus on the WPS agenda to reflect on the broader problems of colonial and racial power structures within the UN itself.

Heathcote's critique of the liberal WPS framework is echoed in Maria Martin de Almagro's article, which further deconstructs the concept of the "woman participant" in WPS discourse. De Almagro's article is one of three in this issue to critically investigate the consequences of implementing the WPS agenda. Based on in-depth interview material, these contributions cast this process of diffusion as dynamic, political, and multi-faceted, working with a range of analytical concepts such as narratives, subjectivities, and practices. De Almagro's contribution centres on the practical application of the WPS agenda, concentrating on UN-mandated national action plans (NAPs). Combining arguments from poststructuralist and postcolonial feminist literature and drawing on women's stories obtained through interviews with security actors in Burundi, Liberia and DRC, the article presents a critical reading of how the WPS-specific security discourse as represented in NAPs is productive of a narrow set of hierarchically-situated subject positions for local participants, revolving around gender, race, and class.

Maria-Adriana Deiana and Kenneth McDonagh consider the practical implementation of the WPS agenda through gender advisors in the European Union, in particular in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (EU CSDP) and its peacebuilding missions. Through their interviews with EU peacekeeping personnel and adopting a feminist institutional framework, the authors demonstrate how the practical enactment of the EU's policies on WPS is constituted by how they are understood by personnel in the field. This leads to a call for a nuanced, micro-level understanding of international, "macro" agendas, particularly regarding the meaning of gender-sensitive approaches in security contexts. As Deiana's and McDonagh's research demonstrates, despite the diffusion of WPS as an international normative framework, some security institutions and actors persist in seeing security as gender-neutral.

Matthew Hurley's work examines the practices of story-telling surrounding WPS at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a particular, limiting form of sense-making. His analysis of two key stories told and retold at NATO demonstrates a weak institutional attempt to mainstream gender in security work. In their attempt to make the WPS agenda relevant for NATO as an organization, Hurley finds that institutional story-tellers' uncritical focus on narratives of success end up reproducing and normalizing entrenched, essentialist gender perspectives.

With Phoebe Donnelly's investigation of the relationship between gender and strategy in non-state armed organisations we move from an examination of the implementation of the WPS agenda to explore gendered responses to violence. Donnelly's research makes a strong theoretical and empirical contribution to the literature on gender and conflict. Through a case study utilising interviews conducted with former members of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, Donnelly explains how women's participation in the conflict altered gender dynamics within the armed groups and also influenced rebel strategies: the abduction and recruitment of women was used strategically to pacify and retain male soldiers (through forced marriages) but also produced changes to existing gender roles and hierarchies.

Maïke Messerschmidt delves into the relationship between the use of sexual violence in armed conflict and prospects for sustainable peace, using insights from criminology. Like Donnelly, Messerschmidt argues that gender identities can be altered by violence in conflict, but drawing on Judith Butler's understanding of gender as performative, Messerschmidt contends that the practice of sexual violence in conflicts

reshapes the gender of combatants towards a harmful, violent hyper-masculinity. In the absence of efforts to re-socialise combatants that addresses their masculinity, Messerschmidt argues that the likelihood of re-mobilisation and conflict renewal increases.

Finally, Debra DeLaet and Elizabeth Mills examine national responses to sexual violence in the US and South Africa, reflecting on positivist law frameworks and the meaning of justice in the context of sexual violence. While UNSCR 1820 speaks of the need to strengthen justice mechanisms for victims of sexual violence, their research shows that this aspect of the WPS is underdeveloped. Their argument develops around the theme of silence—silence in the law and silence as an act of resistance and response to sexual violence. DeLaet and Mills’ research reminds us that the search for justice for survivors of sexual violence is not only a problem of post-conflict societies—it is a global problem. In the US, seeking redress for sexual violence is complicated by the law’s silence on the meaning of consent. The South African case points to silences in the law as well as women’s silence in reporting, both during the truth and reconciliation commission trials and in the present. DeLaet and Mills encourage us to think more deeply about the meaning of silence and the limits of justice for sexual violence survivors.

Concluding thoughts

The research in this special issue reinforces the need for a more nuanced approach to the WPS agenda that moves beyond the liberal framework to address intersectional issues of race, class, and sexuality and to further question the meaning of the participant and referent of security. References to gender in the UN’s resolutions are generally substitutes for women, thus it is not surprising that regional security organisations and states seeking to implement the WPS agenda experience difficulty. Adding gender in to security policies is far from a straightforward exercise—not everyone (from security scholars to practitioners) is convinced that gender is even relevant to security, nor do they understand what gender means. The articles demonstrate that the UN’s broadening of the security agenda to include a wide set of issues carries its own risks, particularly when policies link women too closely with securing the state from terrorism or extreme violence. Furthermore, although the UN Security Council Resolutions identify a broad set of threats and formulate plans to contain them, the UN fails to see how insecurity arises from within the very institutions and practices that are designed to provide security: there is too much focus on women and peace in the UN’s architecture rather than the problems of particular masculinities and war.

Further research is needed to better understand how gender, and masculinities in particular, are affected by practices of militarisation and conflict to determine, as Cockburn argues, whether “power imbalance of gender relations in most (if not all) societies generates cultures of masculinity prone to violence. These gender relations are like a linking thread, a kind of fuse, along which violence runs”.²³ Or, is it the case, as Messerschmidt suggests, that conflict alters masculinities so significantly that it ruptures any connections with previous masculinities and makes post-conflict peace less stable as a result? How do we explain the extreme violence committed by some men (and women) in conflict situations and not others in the same situations?

²³ Cynthia Cockburn, “The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace” in Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (eds.), *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 44.

What is missing from the UN's WPS agenda is a deeper understanding of how to address gender inequality in post-conflict states in such a way that gender relations can be transformed. Calling for women's participation and greater attention to women's rights is a start, however research has demonstrated that not all women's rights are equal and increasing women's employment and education will not result in women's empowerment unless the institutions buttressing patriarchal norms, laws, and practices are radically altered to remove men's privileges.²⁴ As Cynthia Enloe explains, "To craft only a gender analysis without an accompanying (informing) feminist analysis is to turn away from the workings of power".²⁵

²⁴ Patriarchal practices, such as patrilineality and patrilocality, are associated with inequitable laws that favour men, with the result that women are undervalued within families and societies. The subordination of women in patriarchal societies leads to a host of negative consequences from increased violence and insecurity to state instability. See for example, Valerie M. Hudson, Donna Lee Bowen, and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen, "Clan Governance and State Stability: The Relationship between Female Subordination and Political Order", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (August 2015), pp. 535–555; Andrea den Boer and Valerie Hudson, "Patrilineality, Son Preference, and Sex Selection in South Korea and Vietnam", *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2017), pp. 119-147; and Valerie M. Hudson and Hilary Matfess, "In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage Between Brideprice and Violent Conflict", *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2017), pp. 7-40.

²⁵ Cynthia Enloe, "Foreword", in Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (eds.), *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), p. xii.