

Participation and Protection: Security Council Dynamics, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Evolution of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter focuses on the political and institutional factors behind the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325. It illuminates two elements of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda: participation and protection. It argues that despite the WPS Agenda's efforts, women continue to remain underrepresented in peace negotiations and post-conflict political settlements. Further, by concentrating solely on protecting women from sexual violence, and neglecting an analysis of gender inequality and its contribution to conflict-propensity, the WPS Agenda perpetuates a protectionist narrative. This is due to opposition to the participation agenda from developing country member-states, a lack of accountability systems, and a lack of a powerful advocate within the UN bureaucratic system. The chapter concludes with suggestions for a recently formed working group under resolution 2242 to utilize, in order to better enable women's participation in peace and security processes.

Keywords: Women, Peace and Security Agenda, Security Council resolution 1325, protectionism, Security Council resolution 2242, gender, United Nations bureaucracy

This chapter analyzes the political and institutional factors that have shaped the implementation of UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325, on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), since its passage in October 2000. The focus is on differing levels of political emphasis and financial resources assigned to two different elements of the WPS Agenda—participation and protection—as it has evolved since then.

UNSCR 1325 articulated two fundamental principles: (1) that gender inequality (in social, economic, and political power) is linked to insecurity; and (2) that successfully preventing, resolving, and rebuilding after conflict requires both women's participation and the incorporation of gender-equality concerns, in local, national, and international processes. Practice has rarely conformed to either principle. First, women remain seriously underrepresented in peace negotiations and post-conflict political settlements, and there are few opportunities for women's organizations and gender experts to influence mediation processes or post-conflict planning bodies. International efforts at state-(re)building rarely strike at the legal and institutional foundations of gender inequality. This is evident in chronic underfunding for public action to increase women's economic security, whether through stand-

alone programs or gender-aware administrative provisions. Service-delivery priorities and modalities rarely address women's post-conflict needs, and there is insufficient attention to gender-specific crimes or the gendered impacts of crimes in the mandates, staffing, and operational practices of transitional justice institutions.

A second component of the WPS Agenda, less tied to the imperative of women's *participation*, concerns women's *protection* in fragile, conflict, and post-conflict situations. (p. 120) The focus here has been war's consequences for women's insecurity, not how manifestations of gender inequality themselves may contribute to conflict propensity. The energy of donor governments and UN entities engaged in peace and security work has been targeted at reducing the rate at which women are subjected to violations of physical integrity as defined under international humanitarian and human rights law.

In contrast to the Security Council's halting progress in ensuring that women's organizations and gender experts are regularly consulted in UN-mediated peace processes, the Council has in recent years responded robustly to the imperative of protecting women from conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and responding to its aftermath. The Council's country-specific instructions to UN missions are more specific on CRSV than on participation (UN Women 2015, chap. 11). Monitoring and accountability systems ensure that alleged perpetrators of CRSV are named and sanctioned, and a system champion, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), has been endowed with staff and resources to keep the issue on the radar of international bodies (operational and intergovernmental) within and beyond the United Nations. UN peacekeepers receive training in the prevention of sexual violence, and UN mediators are encouraged to ensure that it is addressed in various types of peace agreements (Jenkins and Goetz 2010).

A combination of political and institutional factors helps to explain differences in implementation between these "participation" and "protection" elements of the WPS Agenda. At the political level, the opposition to the participation agenda is part of a backlash from mainly developing country member-states against using donor-funded post-conflict state-building to advance what they consider Western agendas of social transformation. At the bureaucratic level, issues of women's participation in peace-building have lacked a powerful champion within the UN system, as well as functional accountability systems to ensure that entities charged with advancing women's participation have sufficient incentive to fulfill their responsibilities. In this chapter we review the divergence between participation and protection in the WPS resolutions, show how this reflects political differences between Security Council members, and how the divergence is being institutionalized within the UN bureaucracy.

Participation and Protection

UNSCR 1325 does not specify what the proportion of women among peace and security decision-makers should be, or how to achieve that goal. Nor does it say what a "gender perspective" entails. UNSCR 1325 was in part driven by gender essentialism, in which women are conceived of as inherently peaceful (Otto 2006). Essentialist arguments were subsequently backed with evidence to support the suggestion that women make a positive difference to the project of peace-building. For instance, quantitative studies have found that peace processes involving civil society last longer than closed, exclusive processes (Nilsson 2012). Peace processes that involve women, and agreements that (p. 121) include provisions for women's post-conflict political participation, last even longer (O'Reilly, Sullebhain, and Paffenholz 2015; Stone 2014). However, the precise direction and dynamics of causality between women's participation, gender equality, and peace remain unclear. In general, it appears that

basic security, the rule of law, and functioning governance institutions are prerequisites for building gender equality, not the other way around.

By 2005, it was apparent that neither the Council nor the United Nations' lead peace and security departments were taking UNSCR 1325 seriously. Although on other thematic issues on the Council's regular agenda—refugees, protecting civilians, and Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)—the initial, broadly defined “breakthrough” resolutions were swiftly followed by additional resolutions establishing institutional mechanisms for implementation and accountability, this was not true for 1325. Indeed, in 2005, less than a third of relevant Security Council resolutions that year (on country situations, sanctions regimes, etc.) even mentioned 1325, let alone included implementation instructions (Butler, Mader, and Kean 2010). While the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) had deployed senior gender advisors to some UN missions, it still lacked standardized training for peacekeepers, or guidance on how to improve the security environment for women in conflict situations. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA), which supports conflict resolution and post-conflict elections, relied primarily on a loose network of “gender focal points,” whose responsibilities for women's participation was an add-on to their regular jobs.

The deficit of accountability mechanisms linked to the WPS Agenda was thrown into sharp relief when evidence of the lack of international response to the exceptionally high levels of sexual violence in conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Darfur triggered condemnation from observers (Lewis 2007). Lacking a core institution with the mandate or operational capacity to address this issue, the UN treated CRSV as a humanitarian problem, addressed only after attacks had taken place, not as a feature of fighting, meriting a tactical response. In 2007 a group of mid-level bureaucrats from several UN agencies formed a coalition (eventually including twelve UN entities) called UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict. Among other things, it encouraged DPKO to charge peacekeepers with preventing sexual violence. It also pressed DPA to encourage greater attention to CRSV in internationally mediated peace processes (UNIFEM et al. 2009).

UN Action sought to reframe CRSV as a tactic of warfare, not an unfortunate but inevitable byproduct of war. When viewed as a tactic, CRSV could be met with preventive deployments and other strategies; command responsibility could be invoked in seeking prosecutions; CRSV could be identified as a prohibited act in ceasefire agreements; and measures could be taken to address its long-term consequences. In early 2008, it suddenly seemed possible to promote a new Security Council resolution built around this understanding of CRSV. The initial draft came from the UK and US missions, with support from within the United Nations and from prominent civil society networks. UNSCR 1820, passed in April 2008, enumerated Council, UN, and member-state responsibilities for preventing and responding to “widespread or systematic sexual violence in conflict.”

(p. 122) After UNSCR 1820 was passed, further resolutions on CRSV came relatively quickly, creating the kinds of implementation and accountability mechanisms that were still lacking with respect to the women's-participation/gender-perspective commitments specified in UNSCR 1325. UNSCR 1888 (2009) created the office of the SRSB-SVC. UNSCR 1960 (2010) empowered the SRSB to monitor conflicts worldwide and maintain an annually updated list of warring parties credibly suspected of engaging in CRSV to be presented to the Security Council. After the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary made CRSV a personal priority in 2012, UNSCR 2106 (2013) was passed, addressing impunity and other concerns. Since then, CRSV has been the main focus of Council instructions to peacekeeping missions, crowding out other issues faced by conflict-affected women. Statements by Council members in WPS debates increasingly focused on CRSV (e.g., Gasana 2013).

The participation agenda had not entirely disappeared, and indeed a reaction against the over-focus on sexual violence had been developing momentum. UNSCR 1889 (2009) presented by Vietnam called for improved responses to women's needs for basic public services, economic security, and access to decision-making. UNSCR 2122 (2013) urged improved reporting from UN field missions on women's participation in elections and greater member-state support to women's organizations in conflict situations. Other proposals—a requirement that newly deployed UN envoys establish consultations with women's organizations within thirty days, or that gender quotas in post-conflict elections be regularly advocated—were dropped during the 2122 negotiations because of a view, shared by some member states and DPA, that the idiosyncrasies of conflict situations militate against imposing formal participation requirements on mediators or governments. Another “participation” resolution, 2242, which passed on October 13, 2015, while falling short of establishing mandatory procedures to ensure women's participation in peace or recovery processes, laid the ground for an oversight mechanism to track the Council's performance in this area, an informal working group on WPS, which could not only ensure consistent Council responses to abuses of women's rights, but also spur it to promote women's engagement in conflict resolution and recovery.

Council Dynamics and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

The implementation of the “participation” component of the WPS resolutions is extremely sensitive to existing divisions in the Council between members that favor a broader “human security” approach to peacebuilding, and those seeking to minimize the scope of external influence on the choices facing post-conflict authorities. By contrast, the “protection” component is widely regarded as more firmly within the Council's mandate. By linking peacebuilding with the long-term project of gender equality, UNSCR 1325 could be understood to implicate the Council in a major project of social ^(p. 123) change. As a result, some Council members have criticized what they regard as Council “mission creep” into “developmental” (and even cultural) matters. During the annual Open Debate on UNSCR 1325, Russia and China have regularly reminded the Council that the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council, and other bodies are more appropriate forums for discussing women's rights and empowerment. They are joined periodically by non-permanent Council members, including many non-aligned states and the G77, who consider women's empowerment a development or human rights issue, not a matter of international peace and security. This group includes the most vocal advocates of Security Council reform—notably India, Brazil, and South Africa—all of which seek permanent membership.

This concern is linked to the broader worry that the Security Council will use new human rights-related doctrines to expand its mandate and, potentially, justify military intervention. The Council's 2011 authorization of air strikes in Libya was a major influence on this thinking. This intervention invoked the international community's “responsibility to protect” and was subsequently seen by Council members such as India as having transformed into a mission to effect “regime change”—that is, to overthrow Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. India and other countries expressed outrage at this turn of events. This sense of betrayal spilled over into debates over matters such as the Council's approach to the WPS Agenda.

Russia, China, and other Council members from the G77 have long resisted creating anything that might resemble an accountability mechanism for ensuring compliance with UNSCR 1325. However, UNSCR 1889 (2009), perhaps because it was sponsored by Vietnam, a country with impeccable anti-imperialist credentials, did call for

the UN system to develop a set of statistical indicators to track the implementation of WPS commitments (see Castillo Díaz and Cueva Beteta, Chapter 14 in this volume). As a result, since 2010, the Secretary-General's annual 1325 report to the Council has included data that highlights trends in, for instance, the number of women in peace processes, the extent to which peacekeeping operations adopt measures to improve the security environment for women, and the degree to which national human rights bodies address conflict-related crimes against women. Each step on the gradual path toward institutionalizing this feature of the annual report has been fiercely resisted by G77 states. For instance, during 2012, when India and Pakistan both served on the Council, the two countries displayed unusual diplomatic unity in opposing (unsuccessfully) the further development of these indicators.

An important source of information regarding the Council's commitment to the protection and participation aspects of WPS is the instructions or "mandates" it issues to UN missions. Mandated actions for UN missions determine staffing and funding decisions and affect the balance between protection and participation on the ground. In principle, the content of these mission-specific resolutions are informed primarily by the regular reports to the Council from UN missions that contain recommendations for UN actions. One analysis of the mission reports to the Council found that less than 18 percent of those issued between 2000 and 2003 made multiple references to gender issues, and when they did, women were rarely mentioned as "potential dynamic (p. 124) actors," as opposed to victims of violence (OSAGI 2003). By 2013, according to "Security Council Report" (SCR), an NGO that analyzes the Security Council, references to gender issues were found in most reports to the Council, though nearly 40 percent of these were non-substantive mentions of "women and girls" (SCR 2014). Only one-third of UN field mission reports to the Council in 2013 contained a specific dedicated section on gender issues. Since the passage of the first resolution on sexual violence in 2008, however, these reports contain far more detail on sexual violence than on women's political participation and engagement in post-conflict priority-setting (SCR 2014).

Most country-specific resolutions passed by the Security Council—of which there were thirty in 2013—mention at least one WPS resolution in their preambular paragraphs. What matters, however, are the operational paragraphs (OPs). These contain specific instructions that trigger staff-appointment and funding-allocation mechanisms. Three patterns marked the Council's 2013 resolutions (SCR 2014). First, operational instructions relating to gender issues increasingly, often exclusively, address sexual violence. Second, when resolutions do mention women's participation as a mission responsibility, concrete instructions are noticeably absent. Third, instructions on gender issues are sometimes missing completely or are included inconsistently. The 2013 mission mandate renewals for Abyei (Sudan and South Sudan) and Iraq made no mention of women's participation in their operational paragraphs (SCR 2014).

Even when mandates on women's participation are substantive and specific, the Security Council rarely follows up with close scrutiny of the mission's performance to determine whether these instructions were carried out. For instance, the April 2013 resolution 2100 for Mali instructs the UN mission (MINUSMA) to work with the Malian government to ensure women's meaningful participation in the upcoming national political dialogue and elections. Despite MINUSMA's many implementation shortcomings on WPS issues, Security Council members failed to question UN officials about them in Council meetings.¹ This failure to monitor the implementation of mandated actions in this specific area sends a signal that UN missions can safely ignore this issue because a lack of action will be neither noted nor condemned.

The 2014–2015 period saw a shift at least at the rhetorical level in the attention the Council devoted to the issue of women's participation. In part, this came from the focus on issues of participation highlighted in negotiations over

resolutions 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015). In part, it was a response to international debates on women's participation by women's groups to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the passage of resolution 1325 in October 2015. While a detailed analysis of this heightened attention to participation on recent Council actions has not yet been conducted, we would predict an improvement in the number and quality of instructions regarding women's participation in elections and in governance reform processes in mission contexts since the end of 2013. This is particularly likely as the composition of the Council in 2014 and 2015 included countries that made a point of insisting on attention to women's rights—countries like Australia, Chile, Argentina, South Korea, and Spain. Unfortunately, the incoming non-permanent members in 2016 included fewer gender-equality champions and some that have aligned themselves to conservative negotiating blocs at the United Nations, such as Egypt and Malaysia.²

(p. 125) If women's participation is not to be held hostage to the random chance of a favorable alignment of gender-equality champions on the Council, it is critical that within the UN system itself there is clear support for the women's participation agenda and consistent supply of relevant information on which the Council can base its instructions to missions. However, the flow of data and analysis to the Council on the full range of issues relevant to implementing the WPS resolutions is remarkably uneven. This reflects considerable variation in institutional investment in WPS capacities at UN headquarters, where the leading peace and security institutions—notably DPA and DPKO—have few incentives to prioritize gender issues, and in the field, where the positioning and professional background of gender advisors in UN missions, whatever form their deployment takes, are often inadequate to ensure the collection of necessary data, the production of high-quality gender and conflict analyses, or the delivery of critical information to the Council.

Bureaucratic Politics and the UN System

The analytical and operational capacity of UN bodies with a mandate to promote women's empowerment is of central importance to the implementation prospects of Security Council WPS resolutions, and helps explain the tension between their protection and participation elements. UN system entities have a strong interest in providing data, analysis, and recommendations for actions to Security Council members. Doing so can help to sustain international attention to the group, process, or issue in question (e.g., refugees, children, mediation, the environment), and can validate the work of the entity in question, thus ensuring donor support and inclusion in key policymaking forums.

However, providing these inputs is a challenge for some UN entities, particularly agencies, funds, and programs that operate outside the UN secretariat. DPKO and DPA are the key Secretariat entities on peace and security: DPKO coordinates and manages UN peacekeeping missions and delivers assessments from these missions to the Council of threats of conflict escalation or prospects for resolution and mission draw-down; DPA conducts analytical work on country situations (including technical assessment missions to support post-conflict elections) and provides experts—including mediators—to support conflict-resolution efforts. Most UN agencies, by contrast, are not nearly as well structured to support the Security Council's normative and operational work, focusing instead on country-level programming. One constraint on their capacity to provide objective information to the Council is that they are governed by executive boards composed of UN member states that prefer not to see information about their country's performance aired in intergovernmental forums.

This perverse institutional incentive led the Security Council to create specialized reporting positions (SRSGs) on specific abuses, including on Children and Armed ^(p. 126) Conflict in 1999, and a decade later, on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SVC). Offices for these SRSGs monitor and report on abuses and brief the Council periodically. A lesser-known function is to support the inclusion of mandate language in country resolutions so that UN missions have instructions to take action to prevent atrocities. There is no UN entity providing the same “service” to the Council on issues of women’s participation and empowerment, whether in terms of simply providing text, or providing valuable political analysis, data, and arguments to support the case for women’s inclusion. Up to 2010 there was no agency dedicated to advancing the rights of women equipped with the same resources, or mandate to provide services ranging from advocacy to humanitarian relief to long-term development assistance, as for instance UNICEF has enjoyed in its work on behalf of children. This was precisely the rationale for the creation of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (UN Women) in mid-2010. UN Women has the same status as other major UN agencies—its chief executive is an Under Secretary-General who participates in all of the UN’s top decision-making forums. But UN Women lacks adequate funding—falling far short of the estimated minimum half billion dollars needed to meet its mandate—and the kind of field presence that can make a difference on the ground (Bunting 2011).

UN Women’s founding mandate provides for the organization to inherit the mandates of its precursor entities, but these were relatively weak on peace and security—1325, for instance, and UN Women’s relationship to the Security Council are not mentioned in its founding General Assembly resolution (United Nations 2010). UN Women set out to concretize its mandate on WPS via country-level programming to support women’s peace organizations and to ensure that gender issues were addressed in transitional justice, security sector reform, and post-conflict electoral processes. It also worked with OHCHR to add WPS to the CEDAW framework, supporting the consultations and production of draft text for General Recommendation 30 (2013) on “Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations” (CEDAW 2013; Swaine and O’Rourke 2015).

Most striking was an increasingly ambitious engagement with the Security Council itself, via UN Women’s annual responsibility to draft the Secretary-General’s report to the Council on women and peace and security. This was used strategically to recommend priority actions to advance women’s participation (many of which are included in resolutions 2122 and 2242) and to intensify the Council’s focus on women’s voice in conflict resolution, for instance through securing invitations by the Council for briefings from the UN Women executive director. Staff of UN Women’s small “Peace and Security” section also functioned as the Secretariat for the production of the 2015 Global Study on the implementation of 1325 (which was called for in resolution 2122). And these same individuals identified the political opening provided by the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 to insert a Council working group on WPS in the draft of resolution 2242. This is an institutional innovation, with the potential to balance the protection and participation elements of the WPS Agenda. The working group will be “informal,” which means it will have much more flexibility than the Council’s formal working groups on sanctions against regimes or on thematic issues such as Children ^(p. 127) and Armed Conflict or Conflict Prevention in Africa. While it will lack authority to *require* (as opposed to *recommend*) Council actions, it will be free to bring a wide range of information on WPS to the Council’s attention, information not subject to the legal evidentiary requirements that circumscribe the knowledge base and actions open to other working groups.

UN Women’s limited funding and thin field presence means that it has not been able systematically to engage with the Security Council to the extent needed to ensure consistency or timeliness in the information base on which country-specific Council recommendations are made. UN Women also still lacks the ability to provide the direct service to Security Council members offered by the Office of the SRSG on SVC—that is, to offer on a routine

basis precise, carefully formulated language (and justifications) for instructions to be contained within Council mission mandate renewals.

While UN Women is an obvious actor to offer gender-relevant political analysis to the Council, it lacks the field presence to provide the gender advisors in peacekeeping and political missions with useful intelligence to feed into regular reporting to the Council. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA), by contrast, is much better positioned to generate data on women's engagement in conflict resolution and recovery. DPA's country desk officers conduct analyses of "fragile" situations; its officials and special envoys convene national dialogue and peace processes; and its Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) draws on the considerable expertise of its regional missions and (where present) country-level political missions to assist post-conflict countries in organizing elections. Despite this wide-ranging remit, DPA has never provided the Security Council with a dedicated briefing on women's role in preventing, resolving, and recovering from conflict, not even in the now defunct periodic "horizon-scanning" briefings (introduced in 2011), in which the Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs provided the Council with conflict trend analysis on topics such as elections in Africa, concerns with instability, or power-sharing mechanisms.

Yet, DPA has power within the system to avoid taking action on agenda items that it deems of lesser priority, and it has clearly signaled that this is the case with regard to gender. Beyond a lack of leadership commitment, institutional design and culture explain why gender issues have received such low prioritization within DPA. DPA's gender unit is not located in the core areas of country-specific political analysis (the country desks under the regional divisions), but in its peripheral Mediation Support Unit, and is not funded by its core budget. Its gender policy formulation relies, to an unusually large extent, on inputs from external consultants on non-permanent contracts, most of whom face few incentives for engaging in the difficult task of pressing upper management for a more robust approach.

While we have focused here on the deficit in gender and conflict analysis to broaden Council attention beyond issues such as sexual violence, it is nested within a broader crisis in the quality of political analysis of conflict situations within the United Nations. This issue rose to international concern in 2015, where the low capacity of the UN to identify both spoilers and social forces supportive of peace-building in UN mission contexts was identified in two massive investigations as a major reason for the high failure rate of (p. 128) peace-building efforts. In *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace*, the much-anticipated report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2015b), a key recommendation is to strengthen the United Nations' conflict and political analysis capacity. Astonishingly, this report's political analysis section does not address the need to incorporate an analytical capability on gender issues in conflict contexts (Goetz and Jenkins 2015). A second major assessment, the 2015 Peacebuilding Architecture Review, similarly neglects this issue (Goetz and Jenkins 2015; UN Advisory Group 2015a).

Both reports do, however, mention the need to improve the performance of gender advisors in field missions, who are frequently marginalized from mission decision-making. However, while these two reports mention UN Women's potential role in building field-mission capacity in this area, they remain vague about how UN Women, puny in resources and institutional clout in relation to DPA and DPKO, might achieve this. During inter-agency consultations to input to the peace operations review in early 2015, UN Women suggested that this could be accomplished by adopting a similar model used by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), but adapted so that UN Women would support the recruitment of gender expertise in the missions, and provide technical support to the experts as needed in the areas of strategic assessment, planning, design,

benchmark creation, deployment, implementation, and evaluation, but with a single line of accountability to the head of mission and no budgetary implications (UN Women 2015). However, the suggestion was met with considerable resistance, leaving UN Women, the main interested party, on its own to handle this difficult negotiation for improved collaboration with DPA and DPKO.

Conclusion

The differing levels of enthusiasm with which two aspects of the WPS Agenda (women's protection and participation) have been implemented reflect trends in the domains of both bureaucratic and intergovernmental politics. In terms of bureaucratic politics—within and across international organizations—a key factor that helps to explain the relative weakness of efforts to institutionalize the participation agenda is the performance of DPA, the UN lead on mediation and post-conflict elections, two critical elements of the participation agenda. DPA's institutional commitment to women's participation in peace processes or post-conflict elections is uneven, judging from outcomes, but is hard to assess, because the secretive nature of mediated peace talks, or of discussions with governments about the design of their electoral systems, makes it difficult to monitor DPA's actions. A lack of institutional transparency, along with resistance to UN Women's efforts to improve coherence and coordination on these matters within the UN, continues to have an adverse effect on the prospects for accountability among the actors responsible for delivering on the promise of UNSCR 1325 (Goetz and Jenkins 2016).

At the intergovernmental level, Security Council composition determines whether it invests as much in women's participation as in protection. Even when Council (p. 129) composition includes gender-equality champions, it is limited in the extent to which it can craft detailed instructions on women's participation in elections, or in transitional justice measures, or in security sector reform, because of the uneven quality and quantity of useful information on gender and conflict dynamics locally. More broadly, a narrow focus on violence against women and on protection fits more readily into widely shared assumptions about gender and conflict than does an emphasis on women's political empowerment. Some Council members not only cannot accept gender equality—even in the context of post-conflict states—as essential to international peace and security; they regard efforts to empower women as potentially triggering (or exacerbating) conflict. Afghanistan, where girls' education is viewed as inciting Taliban militancy, is a primary example. Russia, China, and several non-permanent Security Council members (e.g., India, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan in the 2012–2013 period) see the Council's embrace of women's empowerment as moving the Council far outside its remit. Russia has consistently argued that the Security Council should not get involved in issues of political participation, traditionally the prerogative of sovereign states. Such matters, they claim, should be referred to the UN Human Rights Council or humanitarian agencies (e.g., Karev 2013).

It is no surprise that protecting women from danger is a bigger winner politically than investing in their political access and capacities. It is not easy to engage in sustained coalition-building with women's organizations, or to encourage post-conflict countries to consider the benefits of adopting a nationally appropriate quota system to fast-track women into elected office. The idea of protection, on the other hand, situates women as sexually injured subjects, not agents demanding institutional changes to enhance their political participation (see Engle, Chapter 10 in this volume). Unlike victims, women leaders do not fit predefined gender-role categories. Protecting women from CRSV is not incompatible with conservative views on women's roles and rights prevailing in many countries.

Unfortunately, UNSCR 1325's emphasis on empowering women to engage substantively—including as leaders—in all aspects of peace and security work is often regarded as revealing the Council's Western bias.

While there is no avoiding the political tensions on women's rights in the Council, the informal working group on WPS to which the Security Council has now committed under resolution 2242 will perhaps force an overdue convergence of the protection and participation concerns. To be effective, the working group will need access to up-to-date analyses of gender issues and women's political engagement in situations on the Council's agenda and beyond. It will also need to monitor Council actions and request explanations for failures to advance women's participation. To combat the inevitably powerful tug of attention to sexual violence in conflict, and to balance the strong presence and capacity of the OSRSG (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict), UN Women, which functions as the Secretariat for this new group, will have to make a capacity leap in analytical and coordination capabilities. At a minimum, it will have to assemble information from across the United Nations on a wider range of protection issues than sexual violence, such as the gender-differential impact of depriving populations of food, shelter, health care, and education, (p. 130) and the deliberate targeting of hospitals and schools. It will need to generate gender-disaggregated data on forced disappearances, forced displacement, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, restrictions on dress and freedom of movement, forced marriage, and the targeting and punishment of women because of their own activism or activism by male relatives.

Beyond this, it will need a close working relationship on the ground with the DPKO/DPA gender advisors to support women's civil society organizations and to enable women's participation in peace and security processes, including through the engagement of women and gender experts in planning peace talks, donor conferences, constitutional reform, and the like. At this time of writing, eight out of the United Nations' nine integrated multidimensional peacekeeping missions lacked a senior gender advisor, indicating a crisis in the gender architecture in conflict countries. Ultimately, institutionalizing sustained attention to gender equality issues in ways that keep women's agency and empowerment at the forefront of interventions requires that the two UN entities with field leadership in conflict contexts accept UN Women's coordinating and analytical role.

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Notes:

(1.) Information learned during private communications with staff in missions of members serving on the Council.

(2.) The "Group of the Friends of the Family" is a growing collection of countries (initially eleven) that declared its intention in early 2015 to bargain as a group to defend an undefined, but implicitly conservative, version of "the family" in international negotiations, for instance at the Commission on Population and Development. See Friends of the Family, "Statement of the Group of Friends of the Family" (New York).

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