How Often Does the UN Security Council Use a Gender Lens? Not Often Enough

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"When people ask me, 'What does gender mainstreaming mean?' I'll ask, 'give me a context.' It's not, mainstreaming is, you can mainstream anything, but gender should be mainstreamed with a point. There's got to be an end goal in mind, there's got to be a practical ramification that needs to occur, and while I think that mainstreaming occurs on many different thematic issues, with gender we forget what we're trying to achieve in the end, and it ends up being, 'let's add more women,' or, 'let's make sure a woman comes to this meeting,' the optics of it or whatever it is, rather than, 'I want to make sure that the voices and opinions of women on the ground are actually transferred to the Security Council.'" —Interview, UN Officer, July 2015

The above statement represents one policymaker's reflection on a key element of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda: gender mainstreaming. The WPS agenda was instituted in October 2000 via the unanimous passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, which marked the first formal acknowledgement that armed conflict affects women differently from men, underscoring the importance of women's participation and the need to include gender perspectives in negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping efforts, and peacebuilding and governance. Gender mainstreaming is a central component of the WPS agenda's goals. While "gender mainstreaming" is a contested concept with multiple meanings in practice (Krook and True 2012, 121; Lombardo and Meier 2006, 161–62; Prügl 2009, 175), it is defined formally and institutionally within the UN context as applying "a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively" (United Nations 1995, para. 189). The goal of mainstreaming is to "alter the existing social and political order that leads to gendered outcomes" (True and Mintrom 2001, 33). UNSCR 1325 more broadly provides a normative framework for addressing the impact of conflict on women, promoting women's participation, and supporting women's involvement in conflict prevention. Prior to UNSCR 1325's passage, there had been no explicit consideration of women's needs and roles in international policymaking at the UN.

Throughout the text of UNSCR 1325, gender mainstreaming is described as pivotal to achieving the agenda's goals. UNSCR 1325 addresses the importance of gender mainstreaming vis a vis the inclusion of gender perspectives at six different points. Within the resolution, the Security Council:

- Recognizes "the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations" (para. 2);
- "*Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations" (para. 5);
- "*Calls* on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective…." (para. 8);
- "*Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women…." (para. 15);
- "*Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution" (para. 16);

- and "*Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls" (para. 17).

These calls in UNSCR 1325 reflect the general goal of gender mainstreaming to both incorporate gender perspectives and to develop strategies "to prevent inadvertent marginalization" (United Nations 1995, para. 308). The question arises as to what extent gender mainstreaming has been effective in the Council. How much has the WPS agenda really affected the course of UNSC policymaking? Has the WPS agenda only had occasional influence evident in WPS UNSCRs? Or, has the WPS agenda influenced diplomats' approaches to policymaking more broadly as the agenda aims to do?

In this article, I provide a systematic and quantitative analysis of UNSC meeting transcripts to assess the influence of the WPS agenda, specifically the WPS agenda's goals pertaining to gender mainstreaming, on *non*-WPS portfolio items. I illustrate that the WPS agenda has yet to transform UNSC permanent member-states' approaches to UNSC concerns more broadly, i.e., regarding non-WPS policy matters. This is not to say that the WPS agenda has had *no* influence on other SC agenda items, but rather that the WPS agenda's influence is intermittent insofar as its effects are more apparent in some issue areas than others.

This article proceeds as follows: First, I detail the WPS agenda's scope and intended influence by providing a brief synopsis of UNSCR 1325—the agenda's founding resolution—and its situation in the history of the UN. Second, I provide a quantitative analysis of UNSC meeting transcripts from 1994 to 2013 to examine the WPS agenda's apparent influence on non-WPS meeting topics. Third, I consider potential extensions of this analysis of the WPS agenda. This article is significant insofar as it demonstrates the potential to use meeting transcripts to analyze quantitatively an institution's policy developments.

What Is the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda?

The WPS agenda's introduction in the Council, while undeniably groundbreaking in the course of USNC policy, was tied to growing international attention to matters of gender and security leading up to 2000. SCR 1325 was situated in an international political environment where women's issues were becoming increasingly important. Heightened concerns with women's issues, for instance, were indicated by increasing attendance at the UN World Conferences on Women, which happened every five years since 1975, even before 1325's establishment (Steans 2003). At the largest Conference on Women yet in 1995, participants in the forum created the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)—a key document for women's rights in international politics (Naraghi-Anderlini and El-Bushra 2004, 13; Shepherd 2008b, 387). In May 2000, following the BPFA's creation, the Women and Armed Conflict caucus and Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) met and discussed obstacles to successful implementation of the BPFA (Hill, Aboitiz, and Poehlman-Doumbouya 2003, 1256; Shepherd 2008b, 387). After this meeting, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security (NGOWG) was created by, and emerged from, NGOs that participated in the caucus (Hill, Aboitiz, and Poehlman-Doumbouya 2003, 1257–58). Pre-1325 members of the NGOWG included Amnesty International, the Hague Appeal for Peace, International Alert, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

It is important to acknowledge that the WPS agenda was passed not only because Council members pushed for the WPS agenda to be added to the Council's portfolio, but also because of shifts in the Council's concerns leading up to 2000. Soumita Basu (2016) explains that SCR 1325 was adopted "along with resolutions on children and armed conflict, protection of civilians in armed conflict, and HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations, also passed during the period 1999-2001" (261). SCR 1325's introduction was tied to the Security Council's concern with *human* security matters by 1999 (Golberg and Hubert 2001, 224; MacFarlane and Khong 2006; Shepherd 2008b, 392). The WPS agenda's novel acceptance in the Council was nested in an institutional environment that increasingly welcomed human security concerns following the Cold War. The concurrent evolution of UNSC policy concerns made the newness of 1325 more acceptable.

SCR 1325's situation in UN's broader context is evident in the way that the final resolution's utility and need were

carefully grounded in prior UNSC resolutions; international conventions and declarations; and statements, statutes, and reports (cf. Shepherd 2008a, 108). SCR 1325 also cites numerous international conventions. In Article 9, it specifically mentions the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Refugee Convention of 1951, and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. SCR 1325's Preamble also mentions the BPFA, demonstrating the resolution's intention to build on the Beijing Platform's goals, especially with respect to empowering women.

Most relevant to this article, SCR 1325's emphasis on gender perspectives was situated in the context of BPFA's and ECOSOC's work on gender mainstreaming. The UN definition of gender mainstreaming appears in ECOSOC Report A/52/3 (1997) to the UNGA:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (ECOSOC 1997, IV.I.A)

Gender mainstreaming entails assessing implications of policies for both women *and* men. Through these efforts, the UN aspires to attain gender equality, meaning that men and women benefit equally in political, economic, and societal areas. UNSCR 1325 deploys the idea of gender mainstreaming in its discussion of the need for a "gender perspective" to be incorporated and mainstreamed in peacekeeping operations and in negotiating all peace agreements (UNSC 2000, sec. 5 and 8). UNSCR 1325 heightened the importance of gender mainstreaming for UN projects by making it not only key in all economic and social programs, but also UN policies regarding security. Further, the WPS agenda's inauguration in the Council increased gender mainstreaming's importance globally because the Council is the most important organ of the UN (cf. Hurd 2008).

In the context of the UNSC, gender mainstreaming should be apparent in SC efforts that assess the implications of policies for women and men. UNSCR 1325 compels the Council to not only incorporate gender perspectives in WPS-agenda items, but in *all* portfolio items. This means that a way that gender mainstreaming should be evident in the UNSC is in the regular discussion of both men *and* women in SC meetings on all matters, even those not directly on the WPS agenda. Truly implementing the goals of SCR 1325 would, in theory, entail regular assessments of "the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels" (ECOSOC 1997, IV.I.A).

Data

To assess the degree to which the WPS agenda's goal of mainstreaming has been realized, I turn to investigate quantitatively the WPS agenda's influence on non-WPS UNSC policy issues. To do this, I use *all* UNSC meeting transcripts and resolutions from 1994 to 2013, *excluding* WPS meetings; this article provides the first analysis of transcripts from WPS specifically, as well as from any one thematic topic in the UNSC. I exclude meetings that are specifically on WPS issues to assess the horizons of the WPS agenda's influence on non-WPS-specific agenda items. Doing so, I measure how the WPS agenda's introduction and consequent implementation has, or has not, influenced the UNSC broadly, i.e., in other issues of the Council's portfolio. It is valuable to analyze meetings from 1994 to 2013 for a few reasons, one being that 1994 is the first year that UNSC meeting transcripts are publicly available. More relevant to this project, 1994-2013 contains the year that the WPS agenda was initiated (2000). The time period analyzed here includes all non-WPS UNSC meetings from the WPS agenda's inception until the last WPS UNSCR (UN Security Council Resolution 2122, in 2013) before the agenda's 15-year anniversary, and consequent Global Study (UN Women 2015). Studying these nineteen years reveals a significant arc of the agenda, giving us purchase on how the Council was affected by the WPS agenda's introduction and how deliberations following the WPS agenda's creation have evolved.

This data set consists of approximately 48,000 unique statements made during Council meetings, and it was generated using a unique PERL program that scraped UNSC meeting transcripts for mentions of specific words,

sorting mentions by meeting number, as well as by individual speaker. The entire data set includes counts for every time an individual speaker uses any kind of gender language (sorted by speaker name, country and meeting number). The PERL program can be revised to pull mentions of any word or phrase in each individual statement. In this article, I focus just on one component of this gender language: mentions of women and, conversely, mentions of men. By assessing UNSC meetings for mentions of women and men, I provide a general assessment of how often UNSC debate participants are actively incorporating the most elementary of gender lenses—a lens in which women as well as men are acknowledged in discussions and policy decisions. I, therefore, use the mention of women and/or men as an indicator of gender mainstreaming in the Council meeting.

As discussed in the last section, one way of achieving the goal of gender equality is to consider men and women in programs and projects. Using my dataset, I assess the degree to which gender mainstreaming is evident in daily UNSC deliberations outside of the WPS agenda, thereby providing a picture of how impactful the goal of gender mainstreaming is broadly. I discuss extensions of this data set and what could be learned about the WPS agenda from further analysis in this note's conclusion.

Analysis

Although WPS resolutions repeatedly compel policymakers to recognize addressing gender as key to *all* policy decisions, these calls have not translated to diplomats integrating WPS concerns in *all* matters of peace and security the Council discusses. In fact, most Council meetings *not* specifically on the WPS agenda do not consider women. The below scatter plot depicts the total number of times women and men were mentioned in each UNSC meeting *not* specifically on the WPS agenda between January 1994 and December 2013. The vertical red line indicates the meeting during which UNSCR 1325 was officially adopted, providing a visual marker that separates the Council's language before and after the WPS agenda was adopted.

Most meetings *not* specifically on the WPS agenda include no, or very few mentions of women (the mode for "mentions of women" is 0). Between January 1994 and December 2013, the mean number of times women were mentioned is 2.285, and the mean number of times men were mentioned is 2.404. Interestingly, women are sometimes mentioned more frequently than men. Why is this? Hypothesizing that it had something to do with the passage of UNSCR 1325, I conducted a single-sample t-test to compare mentions of women in meetings before and after SCR 1325's creation. Assuming an alpha-level of .05, I can reject the null hypothesis that there is *not* a significant difference in the mean mentions of women during meetings before SCR 1325 (M=1.331, SD=5.657) and meetings after SCR 1325's creation (M=2.619, SD=8.180); t=-4.2605, p=0.000. Following UNSCR 1325, there was a noteworthy change in the mean number of times women were mentioned.

Relatedly, I conducted a single-sample t-test to compare mentions of men in Council meetings before and after SCR 1325's creation. Assuming an alpha-level of .05, I can reject the null hypothesis that there is *not* a significant difference in the mean mentions of men during meetings before 1325 (M=1.961, SD=4.125) and meetings after 1325 (M=2.560, SD=4.434); t=, p=0.0003. Again, following UNSCR 1325, there was a notable change in the mean number of times men were mentioned.

Recognizing that both mean mentions of women *and* mean mentions of men statistically significantly increased after 1325, one might wonder what exactly caused this shift. It is unlikely, but nonetheless possible, that UNSCR 1325 motivated increased mentions of women and men in meetings. One potential explanation is that there were simply more SC meetings between January 2000 and December 2013 than there were between January 1994 and January 2000, and if a larger sample size of meetings prior to SCR 1325's creation would show similar trends to the post-1325 meetings. Another explanation is that the Council's concern with human security developed most rapidly in the years after 2000; the Council became increasingly concerned with human security in 1999. It makes sense that the Council would be talking about people as "men" and "women," and not broadly referring to them as "civilians," in the years after 1999. The increase in references to men and women from 2000 onward is likely a consequence of more humanistic security concerns.

To better understand what has motivated the Council to address women in the postdesign phase, it is worthwhile to

take a closer look at the meetings with notably frequent mentions of women. Exploring these meetings with higher counts can help us understand the context for considering women more frequently. It can also help us understand how these mentions of women either challenge or perpetuate dominant norms of addressing and considering women in the United Nations.

Between 1994 and 2013, there were four meetings with extremely high counts of mentions of women. First, there is a spike during meeting 4124 on 7 April 2000 (S/PV.4124), which is the only spike prior to UNSCR 1325's passage. UNSC meeting 4124 was on the topic of "The Situation in Afghanistan," and women were mentioned 124 times. 42 of those 124 times were mentions not of just women, but rather "women and girls." The Council's focus on women during the meeting on Afghanistan was motivated by the Report of the Secretary-General (S/2000/205) on Afghanistan, which addressed extensively the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan. Diplomats' concerns with women centered on their victimization and ways to help them in times of crisis.

The second spike occurs during meeting 6396, which took place on 13 October 2010, and was on the topic of "Post-conflict peacebuilding" (S/PV.6396). Women were mentioned 176 times—the greatest mentions of women in any non-WPS SC meeting. Moreover, unlike the 2000 meeting on Afghanistan, women were only grouped with girls in a "women and girls" construction in 4 of the 176 mentions. In the 2010 meeting on peacebuilding, women were discussed as more active participants in political processes than they were in meeting 4124. The impetus for considering women so extensively in meeting 6396 was the Council's consideration of Secretary-General's Report on women's participation in peacebuilding (S/2010/466).

Likewise, the third spike (S/PV.6897) was a meeting on the topic of "Post-conflict peacebuilding," held on 20 December 2012. As during meeting 6396, delegates were responding to, and commenting on, a recent Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding processes (S/2012/746), which emphasized the role of women in peacebuilding processes. Women are mentioned 99 times in total, and only 3 of these times are they grouped with girls. Like meeting 6396, women were discussed as more active participants in political processes.

The fourth and final spike occurs at a meeting (S/PV.6917) on the topic of "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," held on 12 February 2013. Women were mentioned 97 times in total. Women are discussed throughout the meeting in a variety of roles: as victims, agents, individuals, peacekeepers, etc. Unlike the earlier three meetings where women are frequently mentioned, mentions of women in meeting 6917 are not overwhelmingly focused on women as either victims *or* active participants. It is also different from earlier meetings heavily focused on women because there was no report from the Secretary-General that focused on women and was the center of discussion. Rather, the focus on women appears to be motivated entirely by delegations and the Secretariat.

Based on this simple analysis of count data on mentions of women and men, it cannot be ignored that women *are* often mentioned in Council meetings. In fact, women are mentioned with more frequency than men in some SC meetings. However, the above scatter plot also makes it abundantly clear that discussions of women, or WPS matters, are relegated to specific topics of discussion—especially discussions on *protection*—or, more often, not discussed at all. It is interesting to note that most meetings (12 out of 18) that had between 40 and 90 mentions of women were meetings on the "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict." The other 6 were on the situation in the Middle East (1 in 2006); post-conflict peacebuilding (1 in 2011); UN peacekeeping operations (1 in 2013); and the situation in Afghanistan (3 in 2013). Since meetings that have the greatest references to women often focus on women as being victims who need protection, women are infantilized and not represented or discussed as active political participants. Merely mentioning women with more frequency does not indicate that Council members are addressing women or WPS matters with the breadth and depth that the WPS agenda intends women to be considered. In fact, the meetings with frequent references to women very often focus on women as childlike and inactive, thereby perpetuating extant norms in the UN and international relations more broadly of infantilizing women.

Moreover, the failure to consider women *at all* in most Council meetings postdesign indicates that the WPS agenda is not valued by many UNSC members. Fiona Mackay (2014) explains, "Tacit knowledge about what is valued, credible, authoritative, and strategic remain coded masculine and is widely shared among horizontal and vertical networks of power holders" (556). By *not* addressing the needs of women regularly in deliberations on matters of

peace and security, the WPS agenda is tacitly coded as feminine, whereas other topics of discussion are given more value and coded as masculine.

The lack of value assigned to the WPS agenda is also informally represented in the norm of UN organs addressing women's issues being underfunded, as documented in the Global Study (UN Women 2015). Jamie J. Hagen (2016) explains that the precariousness of organizations like UN Women can be understood when one ascribes masculine and feminine characteristics to institutions: "Women's organizations continue to be characterized as weak and to suffer from substantially limited funding when compared with the amount of money devoted to the military-based operations perceived as masculine" (319). The very issue of WPS is gendered in the UN: it is perceived as feminine insofar as it is tacitly interpreted as *not* critical to the Council's explicit task of working toward peace and security. There is an informal norm of relegating conversations about women, or gender, to the biannual formal sessions dedicated to WPS in April and October. In contrast, conversations about more militaristic topics such as terrorism and counterterrorism are not relegated to meetings dedicated to these specific topics, but are rather addressed at all times and amidst any meeting topic, including designated WPS meetings.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that through careful attention to UNSC meeting transcripts, we can gain purchase on the WPS agenda's dynamics over time. I have shown that the WPS agenda's impact *outside* of WPS-specific issues continues to be limited in scope because the vast majority of non-WPS meetings do not incorporate the gender lens mandated by USNCR 1325 and subsequent WPS SCRs. These findings are significant for a few reasons. First, this analysis makes an important contribution to the existing literature on the WPS agenda by providing substantial, rather than anecdotal, evidence of the WPS agenda's limitations. Second, this article underscores the value of studying IO deliberations broadly, and the inherent value of using meeting transcripts to study these deliberations. Meeting transcripts remain untapped resources by which scholars and policymakers alike could understand past policy development better, thereby providing avenues to alter subsequent policymaking.

Future research using the data set I generated could be used to explore questions about how women and men are perceived, and how those descriptions have or have not changed, over time in both WPS and non-WPS UNSC meetings. To do this, one could assess count data that measures the frequency with which different descriptions of women are used across UNSC meetings. Another potential avenue for future research would be to use the PERL program created to assess the influence of *other* UNSC agenda items, or even meetings within other international organizations. Text-data analysis promises to be a helpful and relevant avenue by which we can gain a greater understanding not only of policies' trajectories, but also of the degrees to which institutions change and/or resist change over time. With greater attention to the quotidian practices of institutions made possible through transcript availability, we can gain purchase on institutions, as well as the people and practices that constitute them.

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