



Beyond the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda: Why We Need a Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace

Carol Cohn

Director

Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights

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This paper sketches some of the thinking behind the development of the “Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace” project. It starts by describing the current “Women, Peace and Security” (WPS) agenda, which can be seen as potentially one of the most promising developments in the field of peace and security in the last couple of decades. However, its promise remains largely unfulfilled. In part, this is due to massive resistance to its implementation, despite heroic efforts everyone from grassroots activists to high level feminist bureaucrats. But I argue that beyond limited implementation, there are limitations in the scope of the agenda itself that suggest that even if the agenda were fully implemented, the central goal behind it – that is, gender equitable, sustainable peace – would be unmet. This paper analyzes why that is the case, and proposes an initiative, the Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace, which I believe would go farther to meeting that promise.

In the context of the increasing numbers of complex and seemingly intractable armed conflicts in multiple regions of the world and of increasing controversy about the values and effectiveness of Western peacebuilding models, one of the most promising developments of recent years has been the emergence of the so-called “Women, Peace and Security” (WPS) agenda. The WPS agenda, which grew out of United Nations Security Council’s unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000 (UNSC 2000), focuses on the protection of women and girls from war’s violence and calls for women’s participation in decision-making about peace and security at all levels. Critically, it also stresses that gender equality is integral to the attainment of peace and security. While reasonable criticisms abound—e.g., implementation has been a painfully slow uphill battle, with only extremely modest results (Coomaraswamy 2015; Olsson and Gizelis 2015); politicians have focused on women as victims of conflict-related sexual violence and largely ignored women as political actors (see e.g. Aroussi 2016; Kirby 2015)—it is nonetheless true that doggedly repeated, tireless advocacy has resulted in at least some gains, including attention to (or at least rhetorical acknowledgment of) the need to increase women’s participation in formal peace processes and in peacebuilding. Perhaps most significantly, the WPS agenda has been a catalyzing focal point and frame for women peacemakers’ organizing throughout conflict and post-conflict zones around the globe, as well as for advocates in multilateral organizations, national governments and nongovernmental organizations, thus creating a vigorously active transnational advocacy network of extraordinary breadth, depth and diversity.

Can the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the huge advocacy network organized around it then be used not “only” to advance women’s rights, but also as a transformative force to end wars in a way that leads to more effective peacebuilding and to sustainable peace itself? To answer that question, I will first review the basic elements of the WPS agenda; then I will move in 2 different directions, first exploring the limitations of the agenda that stem from its political and institutional history, and then examining the ways in which that limited agenda itself has become further narrowed. Next, given that the goal of getting women to the peace table has

come to be seen, within the WPS agenda, as the principle mechanism for creating more sustainable, gender equitable peace, I will explore some of the assumptions that underlie that hope, and offer some caveats. Finally, I will discuss some of the critical global processes and dynamics that are *not* addressed by the WPS agenda, but which have the potential to radically undercut the formal political gains that WPS implementation might accomplish. In response, a Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace is proposed as a necessary strengthening and deepening of the WPS agenda, and as a requisite for achieving a more transformative, just, equitable and sustainable peace.

Key Elements of the Current WPS Agenda

Since the UN Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 in October of 2000, 1325 has been repeatedly hailed as a "landmark" or "groundbreaking" resolution, and with good reason. It represents the first time the Security Council (SC) turned its full attention to the subject of women and armed conflict. Before 1325, women rarely appeared in SC resolutions at all, when they did, it was only in passing reference to women as victims, or women as a "vulnerable group," (along with children, the aged and disabled); it was never in reference to women as active agents (Cohn et al. 2004; Otto 2004). Further, 1325 makes the radical move of putting women in the heart of security matters, by articulating the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. More specifically, 1325 breaks new ground in that:

- It recognizes that women have been active in peace building and conflict prevention;
- It recognizes women's *right* to participate -- as decision-makers at all levels -- in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building processes.
- It calls for *all* participants in peacekeeping operations and peace negotiations "to adopt a gender perspective."
(It does not explicitly address the question of what exactly "a gender perspective" means, but in the context of resolution it appears to include attention to the special needs of women and girls during disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as measures supporting local women's peace initiatives.)
- It recognizes that women are disproportionately victimized in wars, and calls upon all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to
 - respect women's rights,
 - to protect women from gender-based violence, and
 - to end impunity for crimes of violence against women and girls.
- It calls for gender training for peacekeepers and others involved in peace operations.
- And it calls for more equitable representation of women throughout the UN system itself

Of course, a skeptic might reasonably question how much this (or any) Security Council resolution matters, as there is no real power of enforcement, and SC resolutions often seem to be ignored. However, 1325 has not suffered the fate of many resolutions, thanks to the prolonged and intensive mobilization of advocates both inside and outside the UN (Cohn 2008; True 2016; Tryggestad 2009). Due to their work, 1325 has become the basis of the major rhetorical and conceptual framework through which the topic of women, war, and peace is thought about and addressed in international policy institutions, national governments, and NGOs from the

international to the local level. This framework, commonly called the “Women, Peace and Security Agenda,” has also affected the funding priorities of some bilateral donors and foundations, and the programming of some development and humanitarian agencies. And women’s civil society organizations around the world have taken it as a tool for organizing, as well as for trying to hold governments accountable. In short, 1325 and its successor WPS resolutions *do* matter¹.

But how sturdy a vehicle is the WPS agenda for the many activists and advocates who have hung their hopes and organized their energies and activities around it? One way to address the question is to look at the degree to which there exist mechanisms to institutionalize it, in the form of budgets, positions, departments, standard operating procedures, and so on, and there the news is not great (see e.g. Coomaraswamy 2015). But there is also an important prior question, which concerns the content of the agenda itself: does the WPS agenda address the necessary issues to enable it to achieve its ends? In other words, we need to ask not only what is included in the agenda, but also, what is not?

Limitations in Scope

As groundbreaking and useful as 1325 has been, it is critical to realize that it is also, in many ways, quite limited in its scope, and that while the impetus for the resolution came from women in war-affected regions, it does not reflect some of their central concerns. This is in some key ways an artifact of advocates’ strategic decision to aim for a Security Council resolution. That decision was a new and daring one for women’s advocates, who historically tended to focus on influencing the General Assembly or the substantive Commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The decision stemmed not only from the goal of trying to directly affect the functioning of the security apparatus of the UN, but perhaps even more importantly, from the recognition that the Security Council is considered the most serious and powerful part of the UN. The familiar privileging of “hardcore,” militarized state security, a domain both symbolically masculine and overwhelmingly male, made this the highest status body of the UN, and thus the location where the acknowledgement of the links between women, peace and security would have the highest impact (Cohn 2008; Hudson 2009).

But the decision to bring this issue to the SC brought not only “seriousness” and institutional weight; it also brought the need to restrict the content of the resolution to issues seen to fit within the SC’s mandate, and to issues which were viable within the SC’s politics. Regarding the SC’s mandate, “maintaining international peace and security” (in the specific state-centric ways that term has been interpreted by the Council over the years): many of the things that women identify as jeopardizing their security in wartime were viewed as outside the Council’s mandate, and thus not acceptable to include in the resolution (Cockburn 2007; Cohn 2008). These threats to women’s security include corruption, the lack of property and inheritance rights, the lack of citizenship rights and economic rights (such as right to open bank account in one’s own name),

¹ The successor resolutions include: 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015)

the destruction of livelihoods, and the patriarchal systems that view women as men's property (and thus make rape of a woman a way for one man to attack another)

In addition to the limitations stemming from the Council's mandate, there are further limitations stemming from the SC's politics. For example, women from war-affected areas frequently identify the surfeit of weapons that flood their communities as a critical issue (see e.g. Cockburn 2007), but the global arms trade, both licit and illicit, is simply not something that the Council is willing to address. (Notably, the Council's five permanent members are five of the six biggest state arms dealers in the world.) Nor are the dynamics of global capitalism and the political, economic and social inequalities underlying armed conflict a prominent part in the Council's deliberations. In fact, the causes of war were not mentioned in the WPS resolutions at all, until 13 years after 1325, when resolution 2122 (2013) offered a preambular, nonoperational recognition of "the need to address the gaps and strengthen links between the United Nations peace and security in the field, human rights and development work as a means to address root causes of armed conflict and threats to the security of women and girls in the pursuit of international peace and security."

Limitations in Implementation

While the move to bring the issue to the Security Council narrowed the issues that could be represented in the WPS agenda, due to both the Council's institutional mandate and politics, it is also important to understand that further narrowing has occurred in the efforts to implement 1325. There is first a narrowing of the *range of issues* which get attention, a further narrowing in the *degree of implementation* of even those issues, and yet another shrinking when it comes to the *mode of implementation* (Cohn 2014; also see Kirby and Shepherd 2016).

Regarding the *range of issues* -- although the recognition of women as political actors in security matters was one of the most important achievements of 1325, in the years after 1325's passage the SC and other international organizations have focused far more on "women as victims" than on women's political agency (see e.g. Puechguirbal 2010). And even this "protection mandate" has been construed extremely narrowly, with the lion's share of attention being given to conflict-related sexual violence; that is, to physical, sexualized violence against women's bodies,² rather than to any of the other forms of violence against women's bodies, or to gender-based violence more broadly, or to violence committed against women's households, domiciles, property, animals and other aspects of women's livelihoods. Nor does protection extend to the full range of women's human rights, even though WPS resolution 2122 (2013) does, for the first time, note that women's vulnerability during and after conflict, especially in relation to forced displacement, is aggravated as a result of prior unequal citizenship rights, gender biased application of asylum laws and lack of identity documents.

But the relatively narrow range of issues that garner attention is only one of the ways in which implementation narrows the funnel from the already-constrained content of 1325. Even for the issue given the most attention – conflict-related sexual violence – rhetoric has been plentiful, but true political will, and institutional commitment in the form of human and budgetary resources,

² The resolutions do not address sexual violence against men at all, although this form of sexual violence is also widely practiced in wartime.

have been in short supply; as a result, the *degree of implementation* has been anemic. To the extent it has occurred, it has required the tireless mobilization of both civil society advocates pushing from the outside and femocrats pushing from within international, regional and national governance institutions. On the whole, implementation has depended more on individual champions within institutions (only transiently in their positions), rather than committed leadership from the top and meaningful institutionalization in the form of budgets, positions, job requirements and performance evaluation criteria, and transformed policies, procedures and institutional cultures.³

Beyond the degree of implementation, a further narrowing occurs in the *mode of implementation*, which tends to be highly militarized (Hudson 2012; Pratt 2013; Shepherd 2016). So even after “protection” takes precedence over “political participation,” and protection itself is too often narrowed to protection against conflict-related sexual violence, much of the institutional thinking about the *means* for providing that protection is disturbingly narrow, focused on militarized responses. An example would be the “firewood patrols” established by UN peacekeeping forces to accompany women venturing out from the Kalma refugee camp in Darfur to fetch wood for fuel (Montesquiou 2008). While it was unquestionably a hard-won achievement to get international actors to be aware of women’s vulnerability to rape when they leave the camp to collect firewood, and further, to see it as a problem that they should respond to, one has to wonder whether a column of military men in armored personnel carriers escorting women walking six miles into the rocky hills near the camp to search for sticks and twigs is actually the best response. Yes, the women may be safer with this armed escort, but it is easy to imagine less militarized and more effective responses (e.g., provide fuel within the camp, as well as livelihood options, so the women needn’t leave the relative safety of the camp in the first place). Why are ideas of protection so militarized, especially since in the end, it is protection against the consequences of war itself that is at issue? And since peacekeepers themselves have too often sexually abused women, rather than protected them (see e.g. Westendorf and Searle 2017)? The answers may be familiar. You use the tool you have; when societies invest heavily in armed forces and fail to invest equally in other sectors of society, militaries become the most powerful tool at the country’s disposal and it seems “natural” to use it whenever a crisis calls for some kind of action. Also, there seems to be a general over-estimation of the efficacy of military action as the most efficient way to get something done, much experience to the contrary notwithstanding. But if women in the Kalma camp and other women affected by war were asked what their own community-based notions of protection were, it is likely that they would have other answers than being shadowed by more men in uniforms with guns.

The militarization of implementation can also be seen in the emphasis on security sector reform (SSR), and the goal of increasing women’s participation in the security sector. Again, this may not be surprising: reform of the security sector is among the highest of priorities in mainstream international prescriptions for postwar peacebuilding, and it attracts early and sustained attention and funds that many other aspects of peacebuilding do not (Sedra 2016). Add to this the facts that members of state militaries and police, whether as combatants or peacekeepers, are often the

³ This is not to say that nothing has happened. Many countries now have WPS National Action Plans, and many multilateral institutions and NGOs have gender action plans, “gender advisors” and a proliferation of gender checklists, but most of these are in their own ways extremely limited (a longer discussion) and they do not represent anything like thorough-going institutional change. For examples see Cohn 2008.

perpetrators of sexual violence, and that police (as well as courts) often ignore the violence against women perpetrated by both family or community members and strangers, and it makes *gendered* SSR a crucial piece of the “protection” part of the WPS agenda. But interestingly it is also here, rather than in peace and security decision making roles, for example, that the “participation” aspect of the agenda seems to get the most play. In everything from the UN encouraging troop- and police-contributing countries to deploy more women in peacekeeping operations, to the United States valorizing the use of “Female Engagement Teams” in its military, the resolution that sought women’s engagement in bringing peace has been used to legitimate greater participation of women as armed, militarized agents of the state.

Which Women’s Participation in What?

Returning, then, to the question of how sturdy a vehicle is the WPS agenda for building gender equitable, sustainable peace, there are clear limitations both in its initial scope and in the political decision-making around which issues to emphasize and how to approach their implementation. The area of the agenda, though, which seems to continue to hold out the most hope for changing the prospects for peace is 1325’s call for the participation of women in peace and security-related decision making “at all levels.” To be sure, this “participation mandate” has gotten less attention and even less action than protection from conflict-related sexual violence has, and women’s advocates inside and around the UN were been frustrated by the glacial progress in this regard under the leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon (although António Guterres, who took office as Secretary-General on January 1, 2017, has done better in this regard.) For the wider range of women in civil society organizations, there has been more focus on trying to ensure women’s participation at the peace table, but throughout the years since 1325 was adopted, the responsibility for gaining access to those tables has been nearly entirely on the shoulders of the women themselves. This was recognized in the 2013 resolution, 2122, which finally, officially placed the onus on the Security Council, Member States, and envoys, mediators, negotiators and facilitators to get women to the peace table. Despite that rhetorical change, however, securing women’s participation in any peace process since then has remained a frustratingly uphill battle.

Why Women at the Peace Table?

The goal of getting women represented in peace negotiations has been seen by activists as such a central component of the WPS agenda, it is worth stopping to ask the question is *Why?* Why should women be at the peace table? As self-evident as it has appeared to powerful men across time and space that there is no reason whatsoever for women to be represented, it is equally self-evident to some women and men that women belong there – but self-evident for what reason? There are different answers. For some, it is simply an issue of women’s rights -- women have a right to political representation, and being present in decision making bodies and processes is a gender equality issue (de Alwis et al. 2013). But it is important to note that in the Security Council, as well as in many other male-dominated and masculinist institutions that have long marginalized both women and issues related to gender equality, rights-based arguments are typically considered irrelevant intrusions – at best, “moral niceties” that have no place in or are diversions from accomplishing whatever the institution’s core mission is. (In the US military, for example, both racial integration and gender integration were resisted as “social engineering” that would detract from the military’s core mission of war fighting.)

For other advocates, the most salient point is that the political settlements hammered out in peace processes are about more than cessation of armed hostilities and power sharing arrangements: peace processes set the foundation for the postwar society. They represent a moment of fluidity, when transformation is still possible -- but that moment quickly passes, and if you're not there when the decisions are being made, then you're going to have a lot more trouble adding in progressive, transformative initiatives later on. So if your goal is to ensure women's rights and gender equality provisions in the postwar society, participation in peace processes and transitional governance is crucial (Ní Aoláin et al. 2011; Bell 2013; Bell and O'Rourke 2010: 947-8).

Other advocates focus more on the ways that women's participation can serve the cause of making peace (Coomaraswamy 2015: 41). That is, they frame the issue in terms that might lend themselves more to instrumentalist arguments, portraying women's participation as a route to more successful peace processes and peacebuilding. Here, at least three different emphases might be distinguished. First, many WPS advocates believe that women's participation in formal peace talks makes reaching an agreement more likely, both because women tend *not* to be among the actors who benefit from a war's prolongation (e.g. through amassing political power and/or economic profit) and because the impacts of war's destruction on women's families, communities and livelihoods strongly motivate many women to bring war to an end (O'Reilly 2016). And although the data are limited – women's participation in peace processes is still quite low, even with “participation” broadly construed as including observer status in negotiations and the actions of women's civil society organizations in lobbying and monitoring – recent research finds that peace processes in which women participated are more likely to result in a peace agreement, and that the peace agreements are more likely to be implemented (O'Reilly et al. 2015; Paffenholz et al. 2016).

A second emphasis is on the point that successful peacebuilding depends not only on the existence of an agreement – and its implementation – but also on its content. WPS advocates argue that the inclusion of women and other civil society actors in peace negotiations will result in agreements whose content not only addresses women's rights, but socioeconomic inequalities, social inclusion, and human security issues more broadly (Porter 2003; Bouvier 2016). A focus on health, education, minority rights and access to livelihoods, in turn, can lay the basis for a post-conflict state that can garner from its citizens more loyalty and hope for the future, and consequently, less violence. It should be added that if gender inequalities and levels of violence against women are addressed through post-conflict processes in a meaningful way, evidence suggests those states will, in fact, be more peaceful, both internally and externally (Hudson et al. 2012)

Third, even reaching a good peace agreement is not the same as reaching peace, and is in many ways only the start of peacebuilding. And here WPS advocates point to women's under-acknowledged, undervalued and under-resourced day to day work of building peace across communities throughout wartime – which not only could have benefits at the peace table, but could also be a tremendously valuable part of the ground-level work of reconciliation, of re-integrating ex-combatants back into communities, of overcoming distrust and division, and generally knitting the social fabric back together (Bouvier 2016; Krause and Enloe 2015). (Of course, this would require recognizing this “women's work” as skilled, political, valuable, and a critical part of peacebuilding, and then resourcing in a way that reflects that importance.)

Aside from the question of which if any of these arguments have a meaningful impact on the men who control access to peace processes, they still leave a number of issues unaddressed, including issues related to the peace table itself as a location, and the meaning of participation and representation. I hasten to add that this is quite understandable; women's inclusion in formal peace talks has been so repeatedly and overwhelmingly resisted that advocates have had to spend huge amounts of time and political energy in trying to 'get women to the table.' And the more that advocates are stymied from achieving this most basic demand, this first step, the more resistance they meet, the more getting women to the table may functionally almost become an end in itself, rather than a part of a larger goal and process.

The Peace Table as Location

But of course the massive amounts of advocacy expended on the effort to get a few women to the peace table is itself a sign of the overall exclusion of women from business-as-usual political decision making. On the one hand, this can make their presence at the peace table all the more important, as it may be the first and only time they have any chance at all of affecting the political outcomes. But on the other, a very real chance exists that by the time women get to the table, almost all of the significant decisions will have already been made (Bell 2015; Coomaraswamy 2015: 48). After all, the specific location of the peace table is a delimited, crystallized moment of a much longer and wider political process. That is to say, we know that peace processes are far more extensive, both temporally and spatially, than the formal peace negotiating table. First, a peace process does not merely begin when warring parties sit down to peace talks nor does it end with the signing of a peace agreement. Second, it does not only involve the warring parties and facilitating parties but also encompasses a wide swathe of local, national, regional, and international institutions and actors, many of whom have been working behind the scenes to enable these talks to happen over an extended period of time, sometimes decades (Bell 2015; Coomaraswamy 2015: 54); and "enabling these talks to happen" often means coming to many agreements in advance, including agreeing on what will and won't be up for discussion in the formal peace table negotiation (O'Reilly et al. 2015).

A third reason that the peace table itself should be understood as inherently offering very limited scope lies in the conceptualization of peace processes themselves. Peace processes, like all other social processes, are deeply gendered and often reiterate gendered and other power hierarchies and inequalities (de Alwis et al. 2013; Bell 2015: 9). So the very conceptualization of the peace process itself can, de facto, make women's participation appear superfluous and make their comments appear irrelevant. That is, within conventional politics, how peace processes are conceptualized is very much naturalized, seen as "realist" and self-evident (e.g., "Of course the negotiation and agreement has to be between the warring parties – they are the ones who have to stop fighting!"). But choices about issues such as who should be included and excluded, and who gets to make those decisions, and which topics are and aren't considered appropriate to prioritize – all of these are not somehow self-evident "natural facts." That they appear so is a sign of the ways that masculinist power hierarchies and other forms of inequalities are so determinative and taken for granted that these things don't even appear as choices to be made. So in this already-gendered context, the issues women may wish to raise and the ways they might want to frame them can easily appear utterly irrelevant. But to the extent that the women conform to the unwritten rules that govern acceptable, "realist" prioritization of peace table content and

behaviors, they sacrifice much of their power to add the transformative perspectives and perceptions that outsiders can bring.

The Meaning of Participation and Representation

A second key issue regarding women's participation at the peace table (but also relevant for women's participation in peace processes more broadly conceived) concerns issues of "meaningful" participation and representation, about which there is a growing conversation in at least parts of the WPS community (Paffenholz et al. 2016). Put simply, having someone with a woman's body sit at a peace table does not necessarily mean that "women's interests" (which, critically, are not homogeneous to start with) will be represented in that peace process, nor in its outcomes (Ellerby 2016).

In essence, the expectation that "women's participation" will reliably result in a different kind of peace process and peace agreement rests on a chain of "even ifs." Even if (some number of) women are allowed to participate in peace processes, and even if they are not brought in late, as an afterthought, but actually participate in the pre-negotiation processes and in the smoky rooms outside the peace table where many of the decisions are made, *which* women are there? From which class, political party, ethnic or tribal group? To represent whose interests? Those of their political parties, non-state armed groups, husbands, fathers, brothers -- or "women's interests." And even if they intend to represent "women's interests," (how) do they deal with the fact that women are enormously diverse in their socioeconomic status, their racial, religious, ethnic or tribal identifications, their ages, their regions, their rural or urban locations and livelihoods, their familial and sexual identities, etc., and so can have quite different interests? And even if they acknowledge this diversity, do they have (and can they get the financial resources for) a political process engaging different groups of women to ascertain how diverse women define their own interests and the issues they most care about? And even if such a process occurs (as it did in the Guatemala peace process), and the woman participant is ready to represent that platform in peace negotiations, is she allowed to speak? And even if she speaks, will anyone pay attention and take her seriously? And even if somehow she is heard, *and* if some of the provisions she champions make it into the peace agreement, is the agreement -- or those parts of the agreement -- actually implemented?

Why We Need a Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace

The vision behind that string of "even ifs" is very much the vision that motivated the activists who fought for the adoption of 1325: they believed that women's participation in peace processes could be transformative both in ensuring women's rights and in reaching a more just and sustainable peace (Cohn et al. 2004; Cockburn 2007). But are all of the elements of the WPS agenda as it now stands sufficient for accomplishing that goal?

I would argue that they are not. And this becomes evident when we ask the following question: When women -- and men -- who aim to transform gendered and other structural inequalities finally get *to* the table (whether that is the table of formal peace negotiations or the tables in the countless other rooms where decisions about peacebuilding are made), what do they put *on* the table? For what kinds of policies and provisions should they advocate? This is a particularly urgent question because while attention in peace processes tends to focus on repairing the effects

of the war, it is often in the effects of the peace that the stakes are even higher, where even the most socially inclusive peace process can founder, and the WPS agenda drastically undermined.

That is to say, in the aftermath of the formal political settlement of an armed conflict, a raft of predictable processes and dynamics are set in motion. Some of these are already on the agenda in most peace processes, as well as the subject of WPS advocacy and research – e.g., security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of fighters; the creation of transitional justice mechanisms; power-sharing and transitional governance arrangements. However, many others garner far less attention. While the specifics will differ from country to country, these processes and dynamics include:

- external revenue will be raised for reconstruction and governance (including loans from international financial institutions, multi-lateral and bi-lateral ODA, typically associated with various conditionalities)
- there will be greater integration into the global economic system, including pressure from donors to ‘open up’ national markets to international trade;
- private multinational economic actors will take the country’s increased stability as an opportunity to come in (or intensify pre-existing projects) to extract resources such as oil, gas, timber and minerals, or to amass large tracts of land for the production of biofuels or other crops for export;
- physical infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, energy) will be rebuilt (at least to some degree and in some form);
- there will be an artificial separation of peacebuilding, political, economic and social planning processes
- displaced populations will need to be repatriated or resettled;
- issues of lack of livelihoods and deficits in health and education will in some way need to be addressed

And critically, for all of these, a plethora of international actors will play a major role in how these processes do – and don’t – occur. And the specific logics of a global capitalist economic system and its key institutions will be shaping, and in many cases determining, the outcomes, often far more than any national democratic process or set of political agreements in a peace settlement (Berdal and Zaum 2013; Boyce and O’Donnell 2007; Del Castillo 2017).

We need then, when thinking about peace processes and peacebuilding, to highlight two, related disjunctures. The first is between the national or binational scope of most peace agreements, and the internationality of the factors contributing to the war, and shaping the conditions of the postwar society. That is, no matter how much an armed conflict is framed as a “civil war” or “insurgency,” there are increasingly and inevitably cross-border forces feeding the war, from personnel, weapons and remittances, to the reliance on embeddedness in global political alliances and global economic market relations (both licit and illicit) for funding the fighting (Pugh et al. 2004; Andreas 2004). When national political settlements are made by the immediate “parties to the conflict,” those extra-national forces do not disappear, and additional ones crowd in. So any group hoping to shape social, political and economic relations in the postwar society, including advocates of the WPS agenda, must be taking those extra-national forces into account, and analyzing how best to engage with them.

The second disjuncture is between formal political agreements and the material conditions required for their realization. Some of this is very familiar – realization of postwar settlements requires not only political commitment, but both state capacity and economic resources; fighters won't easily put down their arms without disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, as well as alternative means of livelihood; security and justice sectors of the state won't act in ways that support the new political landscape without reform, retraining, capacity strengthening, etc. And in these cases, it is probably fair to say, many international actors would see their own roles as supporting these processes or helping close the disjuncture.

But when viewed through the lens of the WPS agenda, another facet of this disjuncture comes into clearer focus. While WPS advocates expect that women's participation in peace processes and postwar governance will result in the inclusion of women's human rights and other socially transformative provisions, the *realization* or enjoyment of human rights requires more than formal political guarantees. First, it requires changes in how people *think* about gendered power relations, and this requires long term support for transformations in educational and media institutions, as well as for the grassroots women's civil society organizations which are often active in working to transform patriarchal ideologies.

But, crucially, the enjoyment of rights requires more than a belief in those rights: it also requires a set of *material conditions*. And here, unfortunately, is where many of the international political economic dynamics, processes and actors referenced above can have the effect of undermining the transformative provisions women and other civil society participants have fought for in peace agreements (Duncanson 2016). For example, while women participants in peace processes might fight for inclusion of provisions ensuring women's land rights, and/or ensuring indigenous people's rights to their ancestral territories, these rights can be negated by the actions of transnational extractives corporations or agribusiness companies (Doss et al. 2014;). Examples of these international actors subverting local communities' land rights and access abound, from the Guatemala Nickel Company, a subsidiary of Canadian Hudbay Minerals, employing rape of indigenous women in northern Guatemala as a method of dispossessing indigenous communities of their land (Mendez Gutierrez and Carrera Guerra 2015; Imai et al. 2014), to biofuel companies in Sierra Leone and Liberia negotiating solely with male village elders to gain access to lands traditionally used by women (as well as men) in the community⁴.

Or, to choose another of these dynamics, the economic prescriptions of international lenders and donors, when they include shrinking and/or privatizing state services, have the effects of closing down a key source of women's employment (since in many countries women's employment is heavily weighted in the state sector) and of increasing women's subsistence and care burdens (Peterson 2009; True et al. 2017) (whether privatization of the local water supply increases the amount of time women need to walk to access water, or the defunding of nearby health services mean that the care of wounded and disabled relatives becomes wholly women's responsibility) (Elson 1989). In these and other cases, the sheer time burden women face makes their social, economic and political participation in the postwar society far more difficult and less likely (Lowndes 2004), a direct counter to the WPS agenda's goals of increasing women's political participation and empowerment.

⁴ Caitlin Ryan, personal communication about research-in-progress.

Overview of the Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace Project

The examples above are only two of many, but they should serve to illustrate the point: many predictable postwar global political economic processes and dynamics can have the impact of cementing or deepening the structural inequalities, marginalization, exclusion and lack of prospects that pre-existed and contributed to the armed conflict – or can even create new ones. Therefore, their effects must be carefully analyzed, and peacemaking and peacebuilding processes must, with foresight, take them into account if the end goal is sustainable peace.

Thus, for the WPS agenda to be truly effective and transformative, its advocates, from international policy institutions and national governments supporting peace processes, to participants in peace negotiations and post-conflict governance, to civil society advocates and grassroots activists, need at least three things:

- *Forward-looking, expert knowledge of postwar transnational political-economic processes and dynamics*
- *Analysis of ways in which they impact gender relations and other structural inequalities*
- *Recommendations for how to engage and modify those processes in ways more supportive of the societal transformations critical to building peace which is politically, socially, economically and environmentally sustainable*

That knowledge and analysis, along with policy recommendations and a strong and long emphasis on strategic dissemination, is what the **Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace** will provide.

The Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace (FRSP), an initiative of the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, will be created through an international collaborative knowledge-building process. The knowledge generation phase is centered on a series of intensive international workshops which will bring together extremely diverse sets of actors from South and North, from the worlds of research, policy and practice, and with very different fields of expertise.

Workshops will emphasize topics that tend to be invisible in discussions of the WPS agenda or within peace processes, and yet which are, in our judgment, utterly critical for each because of their high impact on the possibilities for both negative and positive structural transformation. Participants in an exploratory test-of-concept workshop in June 2015⁵ highlighted topics including the following as key areas to address:

- the economic recovery prescriptions of international lenders and donors, and a deepening integration into the global economy
- infrastructure reconstruction (including transportation, energy, water, communications, and so-called “massive infrastructure projects”)
- natural resource management, exploitation and extraction
- land rights, land tenure systems, large-scale land acquisition and land-grabbing

⁵ This workshop was held in Oslo, in partnership with and supported by NOREF, the Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution,

- disaster risk reduction and response
- sustainable livelihoods
- public finance (the ways in which states generate and spend revenues)
- environmental degradation and climate disruption

Many of these topics are interrelated; climate disruption, for example, is a topic that must be addressed as a key dimension of any of the other topics. Taken together, they can be seen as offering an examination of the gendered political economy of building peace, and they will offer a guide to building peace in ways that are sustainable, both politically and environmentally.

On the Method for Creating the Roadmap

Our method for developing the Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace is based on our theory of knowledge building. We see the causes and dynamics of war, as well as the processes of building sustainable peace, to be extraordinarily complex, and always context-specific; the problems they present do not conform to and are not susceptible to resolution within the narrow bounds of academic disciplines, nor within the “siloes” divisions of international institutions and NGO policy and practice.

We also understand knowledge as perspectival, which means that researchers from South and North, policy shapers at the international headquarters of multilateral institutions and policy practitioners with decades of work “on the ground” in parts of the world will all bring different questions, different experience, different priorities and different hard-won knowledge when looking at the same set of phenomena. For these reasons, we believe that building the Roadmap is best done through a collaborative international knowledge-building process, bringing together thinkers from South and North, from the worlds of research, policy and practice, and with very different fields of expertise, to think together, across boundaries, about a common problem.

More specifically:

- Because much of the knowledge that we believe needs to be brought into the arc of peace processes and peacebuilding currently exists in fields that are considered “outside” of the WPS (or peacebuilding) agenda, content experts will include economists, development experts, feminist geographers and urban planners, lawyers with constitution-drafting experience, humanitarian assistance experts, infrastructure specialists, disaster, environment and climate change experts.
- Workshops will include both Southern and Northern researchers and practitioners with experience in multiple conflict zones and reconstruction processes, and participants from across multiple sectors.
- Workshops will combine participants from theoretical and research backgrounds, participants with extensive “on the ground” experience, and participants from policy institutions. So from the beginning the project will build in the knowledge needed for effective translation between research, policy and practice.

On the Form of the Roadmap

The knowledge-building phase will result in a comprehensive framework document, with chapters that each:

- describe common postwar dynamics, processes and actors we see as key in either dashing or improving the prospects for successful peacebuilding and sustainable peace;
- analyze where and how these processes are driven, where decision-making power lies, and where the critical leverage points for change are located;
- examine the ways these processes and the institutions driving them are gendered, as well as their impacts on gender relations and other structural inequalities;
- and provide recommendations for policies that can lead to transformative change.

This document, in turn, will be the foundation for a series of targeted policy briefs, toolkits, and action guides, which will be central in the project's extensive phase of strategic dissemination. Based on a strategy developed throughout the workshops, we will engage with influential policy makers at relevant national and international institutions, as well as with civil society networks, to make them aware of Roadmap recommendations and to highlight the opportunities for them to implement its principles and proposals. Based on these meetings, constituency-specific materials will be further developed.

This is critically important because a crucial element of the project is a sustained phase of extensive, strategic dissemination. So the analysis done at each workshop will include not only identification of key locations of decision-making power and influence and where the critical leverage points for change lie; it will also identify which constituencies therefore need to be targeted; what kinds of change strategies might be effective for them; and, therefore, what forms of communication it would be important to create. So developing those targeted materials is the crucial next step after the analytic foundation is laid.

On Terminology

Many institutions and individuals are far more comfortable (at least overtly) with the terms “gender” or “gender perspective,” than the term “feminist.” Why, then, is it a part of the title of this project? The unfortunate reality is that all three of the terms actually mean very different things to different people, each has been used in a multiplicity of ways, and all three often evoke hostile or dismissive responses, even though “gender” is frequently used because it is thought to sound more neutral and less partisan than “women’s” or “feminist” perspectives. In this project title we have chosen the word “feminist” for its analytic power. To us, “feminist” connotes the understanding of gender as a structural power relation which is one of many intersecting structural power relations in a society, including race, ethnicity, caste, class, religion, tribe, age, sexuality, and physical ability. So a feminist gender analysis does not mean a simple focus on women, nor gender disaggregation of data, but rather compels a close engagement with the structures that shape the distribution of power and resources in a society, and that create the inequalities, exclusion and marginalization that underlie armed conflicts. That said, how our final products will be named in the dissemination stage is an open question – and one we will answer by consulting with “end users” as we go, with an eye to ensuring maximum uptake.

Conclusion

The WPS agenda, even in its initial framing, is far from realized. But it already both embodies and catalyzes an important paradigm shift in how we approach peacebuilding, and it has generated far and away the most extensively organized and committed network of actors who are not only devoted to bringing civil society into peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, but also to the transformation of the structures that produce the inequalities, marginalization, exclusion and lack of prospects that underlie armed conflict. With dedicated advocates in a wide range of multilateral policy institutions, with states such as Norway and Sweden committed to championing the agenda in their foreign policy and diplomacy, with committed networks of international NGOs and huge numbers of women's civil society organizations in every conflict-affected area around the globe, it has enormous potential to be exactly the kind of innovative, transformative approach to peacebuilding that is now so urgently needed. But to become that, the WPS agenda itself needs some supportive innovation and transformation. The Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace will provide that strengthening, through greater attention to and gender analysis of the political economic dynamics, processes and structures that shape postwar societies, identifying the ways they too often both deepen old and create new inequalities and exclusions, but also providing recommendations for how they can be transformed to better support the social, economic and political processes that are required for building a more just and sustainable peace.

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