

Feminist Approaches to Peace and Conflict Studies

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers an overview of feminist contributions in peace and conflict studies, emphasising how utilising feminist perspectives can enhance our understanding of peace and violence. Feminism, viewed in its diverse forms, not only addresses the fight against sexism but also highlights the need to challenge all systems of domination and oppression. Incorporating feminist perspectives into the peace and conflict studies offers an opportunity to move beyond the binary and understand the dynamic and nuanced relationship between peace and violence, from everyday life to exceptional circumstances.

This chapter is organised into three key sections. First, it explores feminism and feminist peace research (FPR), highlighting the potential of feminist methodologies to ask different and novel questions within peace and conflict studies. Second, it examines how feminist approaches challenge traditional understandings of peace and violence. Third, it discusses the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda as an international tool where the core concepts and theories discussed in the chapter are applied.

FEMINISM AND FEMINIST PEACE RESEARCH

Feminism is a name with many surnames, enhanced through the diversity of critiques, debates, disciplines and geographical viewpoints. Feminism is also a verb, always on the doing and a work in progress. As Ahmed (2017, p. 2) states, 'to live a feminist live is to make everything into something that is questionable'. Feminism is also personal as each person interprets it differently. In this section, we discuss some of the core concepts, including feminism, the feminist movement and feminist thought (or theoretical growth).

Feminist Movement: A Brief Genealogy

According to hooks (2000, p. 24), feminism is 'a struggle to end sexist oppression'. For centuries, women have fought against the discriminations they experienced. It was in 1987 that the term feminism emerged, used in its French version (*féminisme*) by the Frenchman Charles Fourier (Magnan, 2019, p. 1). The term gained popularity in the US and Britain to refer to a movement that aimed to eradicate sexism and oppression faced by women due to

patriarchy, characterised by male domination, and to establish legal, economic and social equality between the sexes (Magnan, 2019, p. 1).

The feminist movement is commonly classified in the West as successive linear Waves.¹ Each Wave had its own debates and had been taken from different stands, which can be classified as liberal feminism, radical feminism, or Marxist/Social feminism.² The political activism of suffragettes was a strong voice of first-wave feminism, which took place from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1950s. The second wave, between 1960s and 1970s, focussed on the political visibility of women with the slogan 'the personal is political'. The resistance to essentialist constructions of woman and the willingness to accommodate diversity and change were the essential features of the third wave feminism. Two key contributions of this third wave where, problematising of the category woman, in Butler's (1999) seminal work 'Gender Trouble', and the activism of women of colour in early 1990s (Fernandes Boots & Tong, 2018, p. 193).

On the one hand, Butler's (1999) contribution, inspired by post-structural thought,³ emphasised the constructiveness of gender and sex. The author also criticised assumptions regarding normative heterosexuality. In this vein, underscore the role of the queer movement and theory in shaping contemporary feminist thought by challenging heterosexual norms and power focussing on sexuality (sex and sex moralism). According to Otto (2018, p. 1), queer is a concept that encourages 'taking a break from the politics of heteronormative injury, in order to celebrate human sexuality and gender expression in all its diversity and fluidity, beyond the dualistic confines of heterosexuality/homosexuality and male/female'. On the other hand, women of colour extended analysis of the category women. The term 'of colour', as Fernandes Boots and Tong (2018, p. 84) explain, means non-white and this group emphasised the oppressions of women as female and as people of colour. A key concept introduced by this movement is intersectionality,⁴ which draws attention to 'the complex relationships that make up our social world' (Phipps, 2021, p. 7). An intersectional analysis contemplates multiple identity markers, such as race, class and gender, with their associated oppressions, in this case racism, classism and sexism.

Feminist history and diversity show ongoing theoretical growth, with global feminisms emphasising voices from the Global South and being critical towards Western-centric views. As Tong and Fernandes Boots (2018, p. 1) argue, 'feminist thought is old enough to have a history complete with a set of labels'. These labels are incomplete and contestable, although also useful to understand

the plurality of feminist ideology and mark its 'number of different approaches, perspectives, frameworks and standpoints'. Feminist movements have also been categorised based on the issues they were addressing, such as ecofeminism and feminist peace (discussed further below). The movement claims its own theoretical frameworks, which are not static but evolve through their inherent tensions and fluidity. Therefore, feminism is described as 'a theory in the making' (hooks, 2000, p. 10).⁵

The relevance of feminism extends beyond its diverse schools of thought, including the geographic locations from which the movement originates and evolves continuously. Thus, geographical diversity is essential for understanding the complexity of the movement and its theoretical companions. For example, Tong and Fernandes Boots (2018, p. 103) named global, postcolonial and transnational feminisms when addressing feminism(s) in the global arena. Feminists from the Global South, also named 'Third World feminists',⁶ had a strong voice, starting in the 70s, on the critique of how feminists based in the West were side-lining causes, such as economic maldistribution or imperialism, and having paternalistic attitudes and actions towards them.⁷

An important development in the international arena, particularly significant when examining the history of the feminist movement along with its link to peace and conflict studies, was the incorporation of feminism within the UN. This occurred when the feminist movement took force during the second wave of the 1960s and 1970s, and the UN proclaimed the global Decade for Women from 1975 to 1985 (see, for instance, Cockburn, 2007, p. 135).⁸ After that, the UN organised World Conferences on Women in different locations: Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). At the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1994, the topic of women and armed conflict was examined, and discussions were compiled in Chapter IV of the resulting declaration (United Nations & Department of Public Information, 2014). It is worth noting that the Women's Movement also had a significant impact on UN thematic conferences worldwide, specifically at the conferences on the environment (Rio, 1992), human rights (Vienna, 1993) and population and development (Cairo, 1994).⁹ Women contributed significantly to each conference, with impactful slogans, such as the 'women's rights are human rights' that gained traction in Vienna (1993).¹⁰

Feminist curiosity: Driving the Feminist Analysis

Feminist curiosity can be defined as the need of a lively curiosity and genuine humility.

These are key tools to conduct a gender-curious investigation focussing on ‘the workings of masculinities and femininities as they each shape complex international political life’ (Enloe, 2014, p. 5). It means going beyond the construction of masculinity and femininity and explore ‘how those meanings determine where women are and what they think about being there’ (Enloe, 2014, p. 8).

Enloe brought critical feminist questions in the field of peace and conflict, crafting the notion ‘feminist curiosity’.¹¹ In her well-known book ‘Bananas, Beaches and Bases’ (1989), Enloe asked a simple question with a complex answer: ‘Where are the women?’. In this book, inspired by second-wave feminism, the author emphasises the political identity of ‘woman’ while also expands the slogan of ‘the personal is political’ to encompass ‘the international’. Enloe (2014, p. 8) also underscored that ‘conducting a feminist gender analysis requires investigating power’. In her books, the author emphasises that it is essential to acknowledge the role of power in the relationship between men and women, masculinities and femininities.

Consideration of gender is crucial for feminist analysis. As Carver et al. (2003) noted, focussing on gender does not necessarily imply a feminist approach. Gender is often used as a synonym of women, which can be seen as the influence of the second wave when the visibility of women as a political subject was emphasised.¹² When using gender as a synonym for women, or referring to ‘natural’ sex differences, scrutiny is escaped by ‘gendered power structures in social life, political institutions, and economic development policies’ (Corredor, 2019, p. 624). Moreover, there is a failure in recognising ‘the relational quality of gender representations’ (Otto, 2006, p. 160). Myrtilinen et al. (2014) define gender as a ‘concept that refers to the roles and relations, that work in particular contexts which are constructed through the power relations between and among men, women and sexual and gender minorities’ (see Myrtilinen & Daigle, 2017, pp. 9–10).¹³

Duncanson (2016, p. 8) emphasises that gender constructions influence our perceptions of various societal elements beyond male/female relationships, even when they are unrelated to male or female bodies. The author exemplifies this by linking concepts such as ‘war as masculine, peace as feminine’ or ‘brave as masculine, vulnerability as feminine’ (Duncanson, 2016, p. 8). Thus, ideas about gender also influence the understanding of and approaches to peace and armed conflict. As Puchguirbal (2012, p. 1) has asserted: ‘wars are gendered’, and dynamics in which men are seen as protectors and women as the ones who need protection are still perpetuated. Peace is also gendered. The terms peace and women have a long tradition

that has put them together, often following essentialist arguments. It is important to challenge these arguments as women have been involved and lead peace movements with strong political claims. This is exemplified by the organisation, presented in more detail later in this chapter, that emerged in the outbreak of the First World War, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). A gender-sensitive approach to peace and conflict is a step forward from conventional peace research, as it sheds light on the gendered consequences of war, emphasising that not everyone in conflict is impacted equally. It also highlights the special needs of people who identify with different gender identities. It is crucial to acknowledge the power dynamics between different subjects, seen as socially constructed rather than falling into essentialism and biological explanations. FPR is a key approach that challenges simplistic conceptualisations and perspectives on peace and violence.

Feminist Peace Research

FPR can be defined as ‘all research, thinking, and action that uses, implicitly or explicitly, feminist insights to understand and act upon the world in ways that foster peace with justice’ (Väyrynen et al., 2021a, p. 2). It is a political project with broad justice demands (Confortini & Wibben, 2023, p. 315). According to Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic (2021, p. 40), FPR is grounded in ethical concerns and arises from ‘the critical questions posed by feminist peace scholars that challenge masculinised narratives of war, unmask power relations in peace orders, and aim to expose gendered constructions, of peace and peace-building, and of victims and perpetrators’. The FPR field ‘sits within the critical interventions into studies of peace’ (Haastrup, 2022, p. 57),¹⁴ and ‘asks questions about unequal gender relations and power structures within any given conflict environment’ (Wibben et al., 2019, p. 86). In addition, Yadav and Fordham (2022, p. 168) underscore that FPR is about ‘addressing the root causes of problems’. This also includes efforts to decolonise approaches and methods, going beyond the topics or the subject matter. For instance, broadening the authorship from the Global South and critically engaging with scholarship from the Global South, whose work is significant, although they may not have been cited or well-known (Väyrynen et al., 2021a, p. 3).

Building on these principles, the Routledge Handbook of Feminist Peace Research outlines three specific objectives that clarify the approaches to FPR (Väyrynen et al., 2021a). First, it highlights the variety of perspectives and

methods found in critical feminist peace research and how these can address issues of violence, justice and peace involving academic scholars, activists and artists. Second, it offers a critical analysis of conventional peace studies approaches, particularly those that have marginalised and/or suppressed certain theories, methodologies and subjects, bringing to light various prejudices, such as those based on gender or colonialism, which have facilitated the erasures. Third, the handbook presents a critical feminist approach to peace-making that considers postcolonial encounters and decolonial practices. These objectives demonstrate how FPR not only challenges traditional narratives but also promotes inclusive and transformative methodologies in peace research, thereby aligning with its broader justice demands and ethical foundations.

In summary, FPR is an ethical, politically driven project, which challenges traditional violence and war narratives and the power dynamics in peacebuilding. It aims for peace with justice and uses gender as a key analytical tool to address root causes of the problem. It also promotes decolonial approach to research and citation practices. A relevant contribution from FPR scholars is how they complicate and challenge the classical constructions of two key concepts, peace and violence. On the one hand, peace is approached as *lived*, relational and 'constantly in the making' (Wibben et al., 2019). On the other hand, violence is seen as a continuum (Yadav & Horn, 2021). The idea of continuum unpacks dichotomies such as private vs public and peacetime vs wartime (Yadav & Horn, 2021). The following sections delve deeper into how feminist approaches have broadened the understanding of peace and violence.

PEACE AND VIOLENCE: FEMINIST CONTRIBUTIONS

Feminist approaches to peace and violence offer a unique perspective, emphasising the non-conventional aspects of armed conflict dynamics and going beyond state-centric perspectives. As Väyrynen et al. (2021b, p. 11) affirm, 'there is no single feminist approach to peace and violence; neither a single feminist theory nor methodology'. This section examines the concepts of peace and violence, beginning with an exploration of the historical connections and contributions made by the feminist movement regarding these concepts. It continues by offering an analytical framework to broadly explore peace and violence. This framework integrates the main elements discussed in the previous section, including feminist curiosity, the

recognition of gender as one of the key analytical aspects and efforts towards decolonising research practices.

VIOLENCE

Notably, feminist researchers have presented a novel understanding of violence, looking at it in non-conventional ways and prioritising people in the analyses of its impact and origins (Parashar, 2023). Notably, Parashar (2023, p. 385) argues that gendered bodies and experiences are shaped by violence within the patriarchal universe we live. Violence constitutes a politics of 'injury' (physical, psychological, emotional, cultural), the impact of which extends beyond individual harm. Although the gendered aspect of violence can be identified within every type of violence, it is important to note that feminist scholars have examined particular kinds of violence. This has been the case for conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

CRSV has received considerable attention in recent years, although these studies are limited to certain types of conflicts and contexts. The category CRSV must be distinguished from gender-based violence, which is 'violence directed at individuals based on their gender identity' (Yadav & Horn, 2021, p. 105), and can be experienced in different forms. Importantly, gender-based violence goes beyond violence against women, as it includes men, boys and people for their perceived or real diverse sexual orientation and gender identity (see, for instance, Loken & Hagen, 2022). The CRSV category was introduced into the international legal sphere in the context of former Yugoslavia (1990) and continued with the conflict of Rwanda (1993). It was in this moment, during the 90s, when the aforementioned 'women rights are human rights' movement and slogan was taking force, that women's rights advocates focused more heavily on CRSV (Engle, 2020, p. 13).¹⁵ As Engle (2020, p. 50) exposes, 'the ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia offered feminists the terrain upon which to dispute the political and legal meaning of the rapes'. In this context, calls for intervention were, on the one hand, advocating for military action on the basis of humanitarian grounds. On the other hand, the UN Security Council took an unprecedented step and on the 25th of May 1993, it established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), instead of opting for military response. The ICTY dynamics led to new narratives that created a dependency path on how CRSV would be addressed in international law and within the UNSC (Engle, 2020, p. 80).

Notably, the dynamics in which feminists engage with the military, either as critics or supporters, utilise international legal frameworks to address violence that predominantly, though not exclusively, affects women.¹⁶ This has been broadly discussed by feminist scholars. For instance, regarding military issues, Enloe has been an inspiring author to identify and analyse female roles within military bases (1989, 2014). The theme of the military has been approached by feminist security studies with authors such as Åhäll, who introduced novel approaches from a feminist perspective to examine militarisation logic through aesthetics and affect (see, for instance, Åhäll, 2016, 2019). On international law, some authors have discussed the tensions between the inclusion of women and other gendered subjects within international law mechanisms and the instrumentalisation of law (see, for instance, Otto, 2009).

Analysing Violence

There are diverse feminist approaches to analyse violence across a broad range of disciplines. Underscoring the work of Harvard citation: Parashar (2023) and her analysis of violence could be useful when approaching violence in conflict from a feminist perspective:

- i. Normalisation of gendered myths, such as man-violence and women-peace (or man protector, woman in need of protection), which contributed to the normalisation of a gendered story of violence that constructs violence as inevitable or even natural. Normalisation also allowed the localisation of violence out there, within the geographies of the Global South.
- ii. Gender erasures and colonial violence, which illustrate how 'violence is not a product but a process' (Parashar, 2023, p. 391). As Spivak (1994) exposed, there has been a continuum of the dynamic in which 'the brown women need saving from the brown men', where it goes implicit 'by Western benefactors'.
- iii. Slow violence vs spectacular violence: notably, Parashar (2023, p. 394) brings attention to the fact that there has been an overemphasis on 'certain kinds of war violence (rape, direct combat, disappearances) at the cost of those others that are perhaps not 'masculine', 'exceptional' or 'mainstream' enough'. According to Parashar, feminists, by changing the focus from peace to war, have over-researched 'certain wars and war bodies, at the cost of others'. These are 'the slow, un-aesthetic and ordinary deaths of ordinary lives' (Parashar, 2023, p. 393).

In summary, Parashar (2023) work highlights crucial feminist perspectives on violence,

emphasising the normalisation of gendered myths, the processual nature of violence intertwined with colonial dynamics and the need to recognise and address both slow, less visible and spectacular forms of violence.

PEACE

The advocacy for peace, understood beyond the absence of violence which emphasises on social justice,¹⁷ has a long tradition within feminist movements. Despite early evidence of women's involvement in peacebuilding,¹⁸ formally the feminist peace campaigning in the West began in 1915 with the International Women's Congress convened in The Hague. This happened during the early stages of the First World War to end the war and promote permanent and sustainable peace.¹⁹ Notably, during the 2nd Congress in 1919, WILPF was established with the aim to create 'a continuing organisation' that could 'advocate for a women's peace and a people's peace' (Cockburn, 2007, p. 134).

After some difficult times for WILPF and other peace movements particularly during the 30s, the link between women's rights and peace movements reappeared in the 1990s, with Former Yugoslavia and CRSV concerns (mentioned in the previous section). In this case, the movement focused on combating violence. According to Otto (2004, p. 4), global atrocity revelations, such as violence in Yugoslavia and during the Second World War, drove women's peace activists to collaborate with women's human rights advocates, highlighting the pervasive violence against women in both wartime and peacetime, revealing significant links between militarism, militarised cultures and women's sexual abuse. The organisation WILPF continues to function today, with multiple branches around the globe and strategies for action.²⁰ A key tool that WILPF, together with other organisations, advocated for is the WPS agenda, which will be described in more detail later in the chapter.

Despite the establishment of WILPF, often viewed as a Western-centric movement and criticised for its postcolonial dynamics,²¹ it is important to recognise that there are other peacebuilding initiatives around the world, each with unique approaches. For instance, in an article written by Lyytikäinen et al. (2021), the authors presented a new feminist genealogy for peace scholarship that includes diverse theorists, oral history, utopian writing and indigenous knowledge production. They go beyond a single story and underscore the diversity of archives rich in cultures and languages of peace.

Peace and the Local Turn

The concept of the local turn ‘has an elastic meaning’, as Mac Ginty and Richmond underscore. The local is ‘differentiated from the national and international’ but, at the same time, ‘not necessarily exclusive’ [of the national and international] (2013, p. 770). Thus, ‘local actors, whether elites, societal groups or individuals, are regionally and globally aware and connected’ (Lee, 2020, p. 773). However, the local turn challenges Western rationality and the dominant ways of thinking about peace, with Global South practitioners playing a key role on it (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). It requires a ‘decolonisation of knowledge about peace making and peace building’ (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p. 765; see also Wolff, 2022). According to Wolff (2022, p. 9), the current challenge is to recognise and engage Southern actors as creators of knowledge and analysis. This also means to rethink ‘the very practice of doing research’, presenting alternative approaches such as collaborative work between scholars from the Global South and from the Global North (Wolff, 2022, pp. 10–11).

As Wolff argues, the local turn is a remarkable attempt to ‘transform both research on and the practice of international peacebuilding’ (Wolff, 2022, p. 1). Nevertheless, as the voices of the field have been identified, there is often a gap between academic debates and field practitioners (Lee, 2020 p. 26). It is important to note how the local turn emphasises the positive aspects of everyday activities, such as how engaging in routine tasks can foster connections between individuals and communities from different backgrounds, leading to a demystification of ‘the other’ and a reestablishment of contextual legitimacy (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p. 769). Concepts such as the everyday are relevant for feminist approaches, particularly FPR, and the understanding of peace happening in the everyday of violent events, as well as violence occurring in supposed peacetimes.

As presented in this section, peace and violence are complex concepts that cannot be addressed in a dichotomous or binary terms. Moreover, gender is an essential concept to be analysed when looking at peace and violence, as all forms of violence are gendered. Peace needs to be built around ordinary things, those happening on the everyday in local experiences, rather than an abstract notion. Particularly, working to address violence and building peace needs to acknowledge colonial forms of domination, which are not reminiscent of the past but are still very present. In the next section, we discuss the WPS agenda as a case study to reflect on feminist contributions to peace and conflict studies.

WPS AGENDA

The WPS agenda is a tool aimed to mainstream gender in international peace and security. It was crafted within the UN Security Council, the organ responsible for ‘the maintenance of international peace and security’ (1945, Article 25). The WPS agenda started with the Resolution 1325 (UN Security Council, 2000), and it was the first time that the UN Security Council discussed women and gender in the context of peace and security (Cohn, 2008). Currently, the agenda has ten resolutions approved between 2000 and 2019.²² Each new resolution included ‘a focus on substantive issues’ (O’Rourke, 2020, p. 81; see, also Lyytikäinen & Yadav, 2022). Although the resolutions are the WPS agenda’s architecture, this can be seen as ‘a diverse field of practice’, as it is composed of numerous actors, activities and artefacts that are moving it forward (Hamilton et al., 2021, p. 739). Consequently, Kirby and Shepherd (2021) have named the WPS agenda a policy ecosystem.

Historically, it is possible to identify three particular phenomena, mentioned in the previous sections, that prepared the terrain for the approval of Resolution 1325. First, the link between women and peace movements, particularly connected with the organisation WILPF. This has its roots in the first International Congress of Women celebrated in The Hague in 1915, in which it is possible to identify the pillars of action that structure the WPS agenda (O’Rielly, 2019, p. 193).²³ Second, the emergence of the Human Rights Project (1948), which provided a new language for the feminist movement. As previously mentioned, the rise of the feminist movement within the Anglo-Saxon world during 1960–1970 was responded by the UN proclaiming a global Decade for Women from 1975 to 1985 and with a series of World Conferences on Women. The aforementioned 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1994) and its resulting declaration, with a chapter ‘devoted to women and armed conflict’ (United Nations & Department of Public Information, 2014), were key to the development of the WPS agenda. Also, Windhoek Conference on ‘Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations’, which happened in Namibia in May 2000, and its consecutive Declaration (see, Press United Nations 2000).²⁴ Third, the creation of the category CRSV within international law as a result of armed conflicts occurring during the 1990s – specifically, in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (see, for instance, Engle, 2020). Since the approval of Resolution 1820 (2008), which recognises CRSV as a tactic of war, the agenda has directed its efforts towards addressing sexual violence in conflict.

Feminist Approaches and Gender

As previously mentioned, the feminist movement has been characterised by its difference in approaches and stands. The influence of different feminist perspectives can be observed in the way how the WPS agenda is composed, and the dynamics happening around it. Pratt (2013, p. 773) explored how particular stands of feminist knowledge appear reflected in the WPS agenda. First, liberal feminism can be observed in the claims of having more women representation in official bodies. Second, difference or cultural feminism, subfield from radical feminists,²⁵ and the insistence that women (as women per se) play a key role in rejecting war and peacebuilding actions. Third, radical feminism is reflected in the agenda's efforts to address violence against women and girls. The definition of gender, key to the inclusion of feminist approaches, is also relevant for understanding the dynamics of the agenda. Some parts of the WPS resolutions apply gender as a synonym of women (Otto, 2006, p. 16).²⁶ In other parts, as Werner and Stavrevska identify, gender becomes as a descriptor, for instance, when asking for the incorporation of 'gender perspective' and to take into account 'gender considerations' (Kenny Werner & Stavrevska, 2020).²⁷ Despite being ambiguous, this second use provides the potential for the reform and transformational use of the WPS agenda.²⁸

The reform of the agenda and how it approaches gender should encompass at least three specific directions, identified in WPS agenda critiques from different scholars. First, the concept of women should not be seen as a homogenous group; instead, an intersectional perspective should be applied to the agenda (see, Smith & Stavrevska, 2022). Second, the WPS agenda should encompass other gender identities affected by social hierarchies based on sex and gender, with a specific focus on addressing violence experienced by sexual and gender minorities because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity (see Hagen, 2016). Third, by recognising the relational quality of gender representations (Otto, 2006, p. 160), the resolutions should consider how men and masculinities are affected differently (Myrttinen, 2019). This includes recognising men not only as victims, acknowledged in the latest resolutions²⁹ but also as 'causes of women's insecurity' (Cockburn, 2007, p. 148). As Cockburn (2013) suggested, it is important to address the link between men and masculine cultures of violence.

Violence

Violence is a key issue on the WPS agenda. Resolution 1325 'calls on all parties to armed

conflict' to consider 'measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict'.³⁰ Notably, in the second resolution 1820 (2008), the focus was exclusively on CRSV (see, Engle, 2020, p. 123). Applying the key points identified by Parashar (2023) analysis of violence, the following can be observed:

- i. Gendered myths: women are assumed to be victims of CRSV. Consequently, men are seen as perpetrators (heteronormative logics). Engle (2020) underscores that feminist work dealing with CRSV 'has aided in the production, or at least reinforcement, of particular types of 'proper' sexuality (heterosexual, of a certain age, monogamous, within the same ethnic group, etc.).' As victims of CRSV, men have been neglected until more recent resolutions,³¹ and LGBTQIA+ victims of CRSV and other types of violence have been side-lined and not yet mentioned in the resolutions.³²
- ii. Gender erasures and colonial violence: Post-colonial feminist scholars have criticised the agenda because it appears to be crafted primarily by actors from the Global North, while those in the Global South are mainly seen as recipients of the agenda (Basu, 2016; Hagen & Haastrup, 2020; Parashar, 2019). Pratt (2013) observes a new dynamic in the agenda, which gives a little twist to Spivak (1994): White (Western) men (also women) are saving, together with brown (women) allies, the brown women from the brown men.
- iii. Slow violence vs. spectacular violence: as López and Myrttinen (2022, p. 51) observed, 'the misconception that WPS relates mostly to war' doesn't allow the agenda to look at 'much broader issues of how women are affected by and influence both peace and (in)security'. Therefore, the focus on war and wartime sexual violence has led to the neglect of gender-based violence outside of war contexts (López & Myrttinen, 2022, p. 54); these authors illustrate this problem through their analysis of small arms violence and climate change. The exclusive focus on war and post-war scenarios also results in peace being approached through neoliberal dynamics, with short-term responses that are highly securitised and militarised (see, for instance, Smith & Yoshida, 2022).

Peace

The WPS agenda was born with a 'vision for equal and durable peace' (True & Davies, 2019, p. 12), and it has grown not only via the adoption of new resolutions but also through a trial-and-error process that has moulded practical actions. Despite the critiques mentioned above, it is crucial to recognise the revolutionary nature of Resolution 1325. This became a ground-breaking

document with the potential to protect women in armed conflicts and allow for their participation in post-conflict reconstruction efforts (Mujika Chao, 2021, p. 17).

Some authors have applied the approach previously discussed about peace and the local turn within the WPS agenda. Scholars Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran present their respective local case studies, looking at the WPS implementation in and on the UK and Iraq, to explore 'the wider implications of defining and locating the local for the construction of WPS policy and advocacy, as well as for WPS scholars' (2020, p. 596). These authors aim to 'offer insights into how WPS scholars and practitioners might better conceptualise and use the designation of the local in WPS' (2020, p. 596). Specifically, Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran revealed the following:

It is vital that WPS scholars and practitioners pay closer attention to the local and, rather than homogenising it, unpack the term in all its complexity, and across different WPS contexts and interconnected scales of political space and decision-making. (2020, p. 604)

The article of Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran (2020) can also be an example of rethinking 'the very practice of doing research' (Wolff, 2022, p. 10), being a piece of collaborative work between a scholar from the Global South and another from the Global North (also see Lyytikäinen & Yadav, 2022).

CONCLUSION

FPR makes an important contribution to the field of peace studies by centering gender as a key analytical tool, offering critical insights and a decolonial approach to peace research. It expands classical views of peace and violence by framing peace as a process and violence as a continuum. FPR has evolved into a significant subfield within peace and conflict studies. The WPS agenda is pivotal in defining and applying gender considerations in armed conflict and post-conflict scenarios, offering transformative potential. Ways to advance the agenda include incorporating intersectionality, addressing the specific violence faced by sexual and gender minorities, broadening the definition of violence beyond war and sexual violence, and tackling the post-colonial dimensions inherent in the agenda.

Integrating feminist approaches into peace and conflict studies involves interrogating dominant narratives, such as the dichotomous portrayal of women as victims and men as protectors or

perpetrators, which serves to center certain subjects while marginalizing others. Additionally, feminist approaches emphasize the importance of recognizing the impact of silences, particularly within armed conflict and post-conflict settings. The application of FPR is crucial for examining the underlying roots of conflicts, which often manifest in contemporary forms of colonial domination. Building on Enloe's premise, there is a call to foster feminist curiosity to uncover both visible and invisible power dynamics in conflict and post-conflict scenarios. This perspective understands peace and violence not as isolated events but as dynamic phenomena that occur not only during wartime but also in everyday life.

Notes

- 1 The classification in waves has been criticised for its Western-centric character (particularly from the Anglo-Saxon world, by several authors. See, for instance, Kathleen A. Laughlin et al. (2010).
- 2 For an extensive explanation of the different feminist traditions and schools of thought, see Fernandes Boots and Tong (2018). Here a brief and simplified summary, to exemplify the different schools of thought: first, liberal feminism has been centred on gender equality and equal opportunities for women; radical feminists believe that gender or sex equality cannot be achieved within a patriarchal system and a focus of action was the insistence on the control of men over women's sexual and reproductive lives; Marxists feminists underscore the role of class on women's oppression and socialist feminists move beyond class, understanding women's oppression together with other aspects of identity, like race/ethnicity or sexual orientation.
- 3 The poststructuralist tradition, commonly utilised by feminist theorists and postcolonial scholars, extends from the ideas of structuralism. Post-structuralist scholars focus on comprehending the process of meaning production rather than explaining the reasons behind events. See, for instance, Åhäll (2018). See footnote 12 on the influence of poststructuralist thought in feminism.
- 4 The concept was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) and developed further by diverse feminist scholars.
- 5 On feminist theory, see, for instance, hooks (2000, p. xi) who exposes that 'initially feminist theory was a site for the critical interrogation and for re-imagining sexist roles' – approached differently than feminist scholarship, preoccupied on the recuperation of 'past history, forgotten heroines, writers, etc.' or working on the documentation 'from a social science perspective' of contemporary women living experiences.

- 6 The designations *First*, *Second* and *Third World*, from the Cold War-era, were criticised as patronising and solidifying a hierarchical marginalisation of citizens from nations with reduced wealth and ongoing development. Third world has been changed by the labelling Global South and the term South, in this context, refers to nations characterised by middle-to-low-income economies during the late 20th and early 21st centuries, rather than those located in a specific geographic region. See Byrne and Imma (2019).
- 7 For a critique towards Global North feminism during the 90s, with the emergence of the women's rights 'as human rights movement' see, Ong (1996); on more recent reflections about 'paternalistic attitudes', in the book addressed as 'missionary feminism', see Khader (2019).
- 8 This was, as exposed by Cockburn (2007, p. 135), a moment in which 'women' began to get a profile, 'worldwide'; within the UN system the impact can be seen, for instance, with the creation of the 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women' (CEDAW), signed in 1979.
- 9 Underscore that during that period, as a consequence of the successful achievements that the women's movement was taking, a 'gender' countermovement emerged; this was silent (but present) during 1992 and 1993 but started influencing, strongly, during Cairo conference in 1994. The claims of the countermovement, formed by the 'Global right', (composed, but not limited, by 'the Catholic Church, Evangelical Christians, conservative Muslims, right-wing politicians, as well as politically and socially conservative think tanks and organizations') impacted negatively particularly on women and LGBTQAI + rights. For a more detailed explanation, see Corredor (2019).
- 10 For literature on the women rights as human rights movement, while also on the impact of introducing women's rights into human rights arena, see, for instance Bunch (1990), Charlesworth (1994) or Rielly (2019).
- 11 *Feminist curiosity* is a concept that Enloe moves forward in her book 'The Curious Feminist' (Enloe, 2004)
- 12 Shepherd (2013, p. 13) presents three definitions of gender based on three different feminist perspectives: essentialist, constructivist and post-structuralist theories. Essentialist theories collapse gender into sex categories and view women as systematically victimised by violence due to gender characteristics. Constructivist theories recognise sex as a biological marker but also acknowledge gender as a social power relationship shaped by experiences and assumptions. Post-structuralist theories challenge binary views of gender and sex, seeing them as socially constructed continuums, influenced by political and discursive factors, as argued by Judith Butler in the book 'Gender Trouble'.
- 13 *Sexual and gender minorities* can be defined as people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex as well as those whose sexual orientation and gender identity are characterised by non-binary and/or fluid constructions of gender and sexuality; using the term minority does not indicate marginality but is connected with the access to societal power of such population (Myrntinen & Daigle, 2017, pp. 9–10).
- 14 For critiques on FPR field and its European character, see (Haastrup, 2022); in this chapter, the author demonstrates how FPR is still exclusive and has consequences for the hierarchies of knowledge production.
- 15 Note that, as Zarkov (2017) exposes, that the European ethnocentrism made Bosnia, and the women in Bosnia, more central within Western feminist scholars than Rwanda.
- 16 On critiques regarding the assumptions about sexual violence in conflict affected settings affecting only women see, for instance, Céspedes-Báez (2016) and Dolan (2014).
- 17 A key scholar that defined peace beyond the absence of violence is Galtung, who crafted the concepts *positive* and *negative* peace; for a review of Galtung's work from a feminist perspective, see Confortini (2006).
- 18 For instance, Magallón and Blasco, mention Berta Von Suttner, the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905, or Swiss Maria Goegg-Pouchoulin in 1867, who had participated in the creation of La Ligue Internationale pour la Pax et la Liberté, founded one of the first international women's organisations, the Association Internationale des Femmes (Blasco & Magallón Portolés, 2020, p. 21).
- 19 According to Tickner, 'the principles adopted at that meeting similarly noted the violence that women, and civilians more generally, suffered in times of war; the need for women to participate in peace-making; and the desire to build what women defined as 'positive peace', a peace that includes social justice, not just the cessation of hostilities' (Tickner, 2019, p. 15).
- 20 To know more about the current work of the organisation, see <https://www.peacewomen.org>
- 21 For a critique on WILPF Western-centric and postcolonial dynamics, see, for instance, Blasco and Magallón Portolés (2020). These authors expose how the names of women activists from Spain and Latin American countries have been often removed when telling the history of WILPF.
- 22 See United Nations Security Council agenda on Women, Peace and Security resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888, (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2013), 2106

- (2013), 2493 (2019), 2467 (2019) available at https://www.unwomen.org/en/whatwe-do/peace-and-security/global-norms-and-standards#_WPS_resolutions
- 23 The relevance WILPF's work has been acknowledged by diverse scholars, being a key movement within the history of feminist peace research (Cockburn, 2007; Wibben, 2021).
 - 24 Contrarily to the Beijing Platform for Action, the Windhoek Declaration 'is articulated [only] as part of the documentary heritage of resolution 1325' but never mentioned again within the WPS agenda resolutions. This, as mentioned by Shepherd (2021, p. 47), reveals the geopolitics of the agenda.
 - 25 Radical feminists have been divided in two general camps, radical-libertarian and radical-cultural; cultural feminists affirmed women and its *femaleness*, claiming that women should not be like men but be *more like women*, with its own values and virtues that have been culturally associated with women (Tong & Fernandes Boots, 2018, p. 40). A key author from the radical cultural feminist thought is Mary Daly, with well-known books such as 'Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism' (Daly, 1978).
 - 26 In paragraph eight of resolution 1325, it is very clear the use of *gender* as the equivalent for women; see (Bell & McNicholl, 2019).
 - 27 In the Annex of this publication, there is an 'Overview of the Use of "Gender" in the WPS resolutions'. As the authors mention, *gender* is used as a descriptor – for instance, when mentioning 'gender approaches', 'gender issues' or 'gender dimension'. The WPS agenda does not offer any clear definition of gender nor the compounded terminology that appears along the WPS resolutions. However, Werner and Stavrevska (2020, pp. 16–18) determinate that the associations to such 'compound terms' can be relevant for the contribution to legal weight and force.
 - 28 See, for instance, Shepherd (2008, chapter 5) review of the use of gender in resolution 1325.
 - 29 The preamble of the WPS resolution 2106 (2013) and more concretely the resolution 2467 (2019) recognise men and boys as possible victims of CRSV.
 - 30 Find resolution 1325, and the consecutive resolutions that compose the WPS agenda here: <https://peacemaker.un.org/wps/normative-frame-works/un-security-council-resolutions>
 - 31 Despite the initial silence from the WPS agenda on CRSV being suffered by men, such violence occurs systematically, rather than being a 'rare occurrence' (Hagen, 2016, p. 317; see also Dolan, 2014; Schulz & Touquet, 2020)
 - 32 For example, De Greiff, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation

and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence, observed that an 'overly narrow focus on sexual violence' should be avoided because the 'troubling picture' of human rights violations is broader, including 'arbitrary detention, intimidation and harassment of LGBT persons' (Coomaraswamy, 2015). See also Davis and Stern (2019).

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