

2010

# Gender, Human Security and the United Nations: Security Language as a Political Framework for Women

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## eCommons Citation

Hudson, Natalie Florea, "Gender, Human Security and the United Nations: Security Language as a Political Framework for Women" (2010). *Political Science Faculty Publications*. Paper 53.  
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# 1 Women, peace, and security

## An introduction

I am of two minds on this regarding human rights, meaning that I believe that in an ideal world we should be caring and paying attention to and promoting and protecting human rights because they are so fundamental to the dignity of human beings not because they can become threats to security. At the same time, I know that politicians, the political establishment in general, not just the establishment, but political people who are in politics in general—whether civil society or government—they respond, their lights go up when they hear security aspects, you know, conflict. It's sort of sexy and alive, you know buzzers. And so, then what is left to strategizers like me when I have to deal with sometimes, very often, marginalized issues and peoples. I have to remind them—those politicians, whether in the UN or government or whatever—on the threat of security. So, if you don't take care of these people they are going to revolt and have a revolution—you know, briefly speaking.

Interview, UN official 2006

As the quotation above demonstrates, language is arguably one of the most powerful tools in world politics today. The words one chooses, the tone one takes, and the arena in which one speaks all constitute important decisions with often lasting political implications. Essentially, how one frames an issue matters greatly (Butler & Boyer 2003), and language must be seen as more than mere rhetoric (Cohn 1987). Framing not only determines whether and how issues get onto the political agenda, but also how issues are given meaning, operationalized, and adopted into the norm-building process even before becoming part of the official agenda (Keck & Sikkink 1998a; Joachim 2007). Framing governs the actors that are engaged and those that are excluded; frames control the issues that are on and off the agenda (Bob 2005; 2008). In this way, discursive positioning and conceptual frameworks are critical for those involved as well as those not involved in the process (Carpenter 2005; 2007). Nowhere is the power a particular discourse—the “framings of meaning and lens of interpretation” (Hansen 2006: 7)—more evident than the case of framing women's rights and gender equality as matters essential to the promotion and protection of international peace and security.

In analyzing how a particular global network of women activists has used the language of security, this research sheds light on the nature and implications of the security framework as a political process. More specifically, activists for women's rights and gender equality concerns have recently framed their concerns as security issues attempting to make them integral to the international security agenda, particularly in the context of the United Nations (UN).<sup>1</sup> From gender-mainstreaming initiatives to the "Interagency Taskforce on Women, Peace, and Security," there has been a clear push from UN agencies, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) specifically, as well as from certain middle-power national governments, such as Canada and Norway, and various non-governmental organizations, chiefly the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security (NGOWG) to put women's rights on the security agenda.<sup>2</sup> This group of state and non-state actors constitutes a dynamic transnational network, known as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS). One of the most concrete and prominent policy outcomes from this network has been UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325, the first Council decision recognizing the importance of women in international peace and security, making women and women's needs relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning refugee camps and peace-keeping operations, reconstructing war-torn societies, and ultimately making gender equality relevant to every single Security Council action (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002).<sup>3</sup> Although this project is about much more than SCR 1325, this "living document" does inform and underscore every aspect of this research as it is a "productive force" in shaping ideas and actions on women and gender as well as the discursive construction and conduct of security by the UN and the relationship between the two regimes (Cohn et al. 2004).<sup>4</sup>

This strategy of securitizing women's rights within the UN system can also be understood in the context of the broader push by many global actors to humanize security. As my research demonstrates, however, humanizing security is not necessarily the same as securitizing "non-traditional" security concerns and this has significant implications for a range of actors and issues attempting to become part of the security mainstream. Today, many complex global problems are being located within the security logic. Issues, such as the environment (Deudney 1990; Kakonen 1994; Litfin 1999) and HIV/AIDS (Price-Smith 2001; Chen 2003; Prins 2004; Elbe 2006), are just a couple of examples that demonstrate how both state and non-state actors use the security framework to draw attention to their particular concerns, challenging the conventional and narrow definitional boundaries associated with international security. This framework relies upon the utilitarian assumption that these issues need to be addressed because they are essential elements to establishing international peace and security. This justification has led to a debate on what should be considered in the realm of international security, as many scholars have made a practice out of securitizing issues that are not conventionally seen as such. And for better or for worse, this strategy of securitizing non-military matters is not limited to the academic community.<sup>5</sup> International organizations, particularly the UN, also employ this security discourse attempting to raise international awareness and policy-oriented attention toward various

issues. In light of the human security rhetoric (recognizing the individual as the referent of security), it is not surprising that the concerns of women are increasingly framed within the security discourse.

Although the purpose of this book is not necessarily to demonstrate the many ways in which the lack of women's rights and gender inequality present valid security concerns, the critical role that women and gender issues play in constructing enduring international peace and security, particularly as far as the UN is concerned, will become manifest throughout my case studies.<sup>6</sup> The aim of this book is to explore the process of securitization: whether or not it leads to audience acceptance, the ability of the securitizing actor to "break free of procedures and rules he or she would otherwise be bound by" (Buzan et al. 1998: 25), and what this process means for both the international security agenda as well as the world's women.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, invoking specific gendered understandings of security not only affects the nature of security, but such frames can impact the women's movement at various levels. Working from the assumption that the UN is a norm-influencing global governance institution, and what happens in the Security Council has real implication for the meaning and practice of security as we move into the twenty-first century, three basic questions emerge and guide the rest of the book:

- 1 How is security defined *and* practiced within the context of international organization?
- 2 In what ways, if any, has women's activism been able to challenge traditional conceptions of security?
- 3 What are the implications of the "security framework" for the broader goals of the women's movement?

Overall, these questions interrogate the meaning of security, in terms of discourse and practice, particularly from a feminist perspective. But it is not just a matter of what women or a gender perspective does for the security agenda, but understanding the implications of the security framework for the global women's movement as well.

In short, this project goes beyond a debate of security at the conceptual level to examine how the application of this security framework affects policy and practice for these non-traditional security issues and actors. In other words, does the security framework really help bring global attention to issues and groups of people that are normally marginalized? Has it meant more resources and more involvement by state and non-state actors? These questions not only have important policy implications, but normative ones as well. Should these issues be framed as security issues? Can we really assume that the security language is inherently beneficial for those concerned with empowering women around the world?

As these more normative questions suggest, there is reason to be skeptical of the security discourse as a necessarily "good" framework when it comes to women's emancipation (Whitworth 2004). How movements frame their causes

matters, in terms of outcomes, strategy, actors involved, opportunity structures, and in this case, future gender roles and relationships in societies transitioning from conflict and war. Thus, it is important to ask not only what women's activism brings to the security arena, but what the arena does for women—what does it mean to securitize women's rights and gender equality. This latter point reflects a gap in the existing research on gender mainstreaming in all arenas, as it “tends to ignore the challenge faced by feminist activists in remaining true to their political goals when they are caught up in a mainstreaming policy ‘victory’ that may be very real, but also very compromised” (Cohn 2003–04: 11). This project addresses this gap in terms of theoretical, practical, and normative consequences.

### **Research design**

This research is both theoretically driven and policy-oriented. With regard to the former, this project offers the building blocks necessary to advance theory making in three respects (Van Evera 1997). First, it addresses a real need to expand the scope of security studies beyond military–strategic research to something more reflective of the range of security threats that the world currently faces (Klare 1998). Even in the last decade, scholars were critiquing security scholarship; for example, Baldwin (1997: 9) argues, “Paradoxical as it may seem, security has not been an important analytical concept for most security studies scholars.”<sup>8</sup> This is particularly true from the perspective of feminist security theory (Blanchard 2003) and those advocating for human security (Axworthy 2001). Second, this research traces and analyzes the organizational dynamics of women's activism in the UN system and how women have come to embrace and have been impacted by the security framework, globally and locally. Lastly, this project provides insight into practical strategies utilized by transnational advocacy networks in the development and implementation of international human rights norms. From a policy perspective, this research explores the utility of mechanisms, such as the security discourse, in empowering groups advocating for women's rights and gender equality. As important, this research examines how such language may also be limiting for the world's most marginalized sect of society.<sup>9</sup>

### **Scope and limitations**

It is necessary to explain a number of caveats before proceeding in order to guide the reader's expectations in terms of the scope and limitations of this project.

### **Theory**

With regard to theory, this project utilizes three theoretical paradigms that taken together help to answer the research questions. While it is ambitious to take up three bodies of literature—critical security studies, feminist international relations theory, and women's activism as a transnational network and social movement—each provides the insights and context necessary to develop a comprehensive and

intelligent analysis. By beginning with security studies, one can easily see how traditional approaches to security have been inadequate, substantively and methodologically. Concepts, such as human security and securitization, help to demonstrate security as a process to be widened and deepened and as an analysis that serves a political and normative role. Feminist international relations theorists have long been critical of such traditional approaches to security and can help explain the conceptual, cultural, and linguistic barriers and practices that have segregated women's rights and gender equality norms from security discourse in both theory and practice. Feminist theory also provides useful warnings regarding the adoption of gender language for politically expedient ends. Lastly, by placing women's activism in the context of theory on transnational advocacy and social movement strategy, the research is able to situate the security framework within the broader goals of the global women's movement, contributing to our understanding of strategies utilized by contemporary social movements. These theoretical perspectives are explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

### *Why the UN?*

Although there are many locales to explore security discourse or women's activism, the UN is the most logical starting point for studying the two together at the global level.<sup>10</sup> The mere fact that the UN Security Council—the center of UN power and primary decision-making body in the area of international peace and security—recognized with SCR 1325 the need to adopt a gender perspective and to make women central to all aspects of the peace process, as both victims and agents of conflict and conflict resolution, is momentous. The world's largest international organization has now publicly declared that attention to women and gender is integral to “doing security.” As Carol Cohn rightly argues, “even if at this point the Security Council's re-visioning of security is more rhetorical than practical, it still puts the UN far ahead of any academic security studies or international relations programme” (Cohn et al. 2004: 139).

Furthermore, despite American feminists' general disregard for the UN, this global body remains a significant organization for many, particularly those in the developing world. It became evident in the research for this project, that for many women in many war-torn regions and the many local, national, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that those women form, what happens at the UN matters a great deal. UN activity has long had real implications for women on the ground, and women from the developing world follow the UN's work very closely (Jain 2005). As Berg (2006: 333) maintains, “work on gender could be one of the UN's most fundamental contributions to human betterment.”<sup>11</sup>

In terms of both gender equality and international security, the UN greatly contributed to the development of ideas and norm diffusion. As the United Nations Intellectual History Project (UNIHP) demonstrates, the UN is a laboratory for growing ideas that drive human progress.<sup>12</sup> Through an extensive historical analysis of both written and oral accounts, the UNIHP series illustrates how ideas formed within and among UN officials change discourse, shape institutional

development, and even influence state interests.<sup>13</sup> Given that from its inception maintaining peace and security has been and continues to be the most important function of the organization, notions of humanizing security and securitizing women's rights within the UN is significant. Shifting from approaches such as comprehensive or collective security to the latest buzzword—human security—has particular relevance for the UN and its work on women's rights and gender equality issues.

As early as 1980 with the UN-sponsored Brandt Commission, the organization was pushing an expanded understanding of security. The first of two reports, *North-South: A Programme for Survival*, calls "for a new concept of security that would transcend the narrow notions of military defense and look more towards the logic of a broader interdependence" (124).<sup>14</sup> More recently, the 2004 High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the former Secretary-General Kofi Annan concluded:

the biggest security threats we face now, and in the decades ahead, go far beyond States waging aggressive war. They extend to poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation; war and violence within States; the spread and possible use of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons; terrorism; and transnational organized crime. The threats are from non-State actors as well as States, and to human security as well as State security.

(UN 2004: 1)

As an organization committed to international peace and security, but with member states keeping national security interests of sovereign states at the top of the agenda, the UN is a prime institutional focus for studying the nature and tension of international security, its existence as a substantive policy framework, its relation to national security approaches, and the impact of such an approach on different issue areas that clearly fall under the rubric of human security. Sadako Ogata, Co-Chair of the UN Commission on Human Security argues:

The United Nations stands as the best and only option available to preserve international peace and stability as well as protect people ... The issue is how to make the United Nations and other regional security organizations more effective in preventing and controlling threats and protecting people, and how to complement state security with human security at the community, national, and international levels.

(2003: 5)

Despite its many weaknesses, the UN does play a significant role in promoting and creating certain norms, including norms and values surrounding the meaning and approaches to international security.<sup>15</sup> Given the UN's role in norm creation and its mission of promoting and protecting international peace and security, the organization is a good starting point for understanding the process of securitization and

its impact on non-traditional security concerns, such as women's rights and gender equality. This book is in part a response to Inis L. Claude Jr.'s commitment and call for serious study of the UN and the development of realistic and sophisticated understanding of the nature of the organization, its possibilities and limitations, and its merits and defects.

Above all, we need to examine the United Nations in its political context, regarding it as essentially an institutional framework within which states make decisions and allocate resources, arranging to do a variety of things with, to, for, and against each other.

(Claude Jr. 2004: xiii)

This theoretical tension surrounding the meaning of security as well as the existence of human security—at least in rhetorical form—within the United Nations is the foundation for this project.

### *Definitions and terminology*

There are several important clarifications to make regarding the concepts used throughout this project.

*Gender* is usually misunderstood and misused as the term is so often equated with “women.” This is in part because women are usually the ones to bring attention to gender issues. This can be explained by the unequal ordering of gender power that systemically and routinely disadvantages women.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the incentives for women to take up gender issues are obvious, which only further substantiates the perception that gender issues refer to women's issues only.

Rather than an oversimplified simile for women, questions about gender relate to the assumptions made about people with male or female bodies and the roles attached to those bodies that prescribe what people are like and should be like in a particular culture. Moreover, there are values placed on these roles constructing gendered hierarchies where masculinity and femininity become dependent on each other for meaning (Peterson & Runyan 1998). Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his report on “Women, Peace, and Security” defines gender as:

the socially constructed roles ascribed to women and men, as opposed to biological and physical characteristics. Gender roles vary according to socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts and are affected by other factors, including age, race, class and ethnicity. Gender roles are learned and changeable. Gender equality is a goal to ensure equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men, and girls and boys, which has been accepted by Governments.

(2002: 4)

*Women* as a group is also an oversimplified term. Thanks to the challenges posed by women of color and women of the Global South, however, feminists have



ceased to claim a common identity (Mohanty et al. 1991). Understanding that gender identities cannot be separated from race and class, it is important to ask "Which women are you talking about?" In the field of security and conflict, researchers and policy-makers have been slow to identify the diverse role that women play as community leaders, combatants, enablers, peace activists, and of course, as victims.<sup>17</sup> Problems arise when scholars and policy-makers addressing post-conflict reconstruction assume that women "naturally" fall into the latter two categories or when intersections with race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status are simply overlooked.

With the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, 183 UN Member States established *gender-mainstreaming* as a global strategy for achieving gender equality. In July 1997, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined gender-mainstreaming as follows:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.<sup>18</sup>

As this definition indicates, gender mainstreaming is more than just a Western, liberal project aimed at inserting more women in decision-making bodies and existing political structures. It goes beyond an additive approach to something with far more transformative potential because it is a "strategy to re-invent the processes of policy design, implementation, and evaluation" (True 2003: 371). From this perspective, gender mainstreaming is quite radical in that it recognizes both men and women's role in making processes, programs, and practices more gender sensitive from the very beginning.

The transformative agenda of gender-mainstreaming is best articulated in the language of SCR 1325 through which the "*Women, Peace, and Security*" network has been instrumental in drafting, proposing, and implementing. This network refers to a community of advocates in and around the UN that have been a part of getting women on the international security agenda.<sup>19</sup> The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security is the driving force in this network.<sup>20</sup> The original Working Group members include Amnesty International, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, International Alert, Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, the Hague Appeal for Peace, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).<sup>21</sup> Among UN agencies, UNIFEM—the UN Development Fund for Women—continues to be a central actor in this network.<sup>22</sup> As for UN Member States, a coalition of 23 countries led by Canada supports this network through the establishment of "Friends of 1325."<sup>23</sup> Academics from all parts of the world have also been a large part of this network, as individuals and as

organized groups.<sup>24</sup> An example of the latter is the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights.<sup>25</sup> As this list demonstrates, this network includes state and non-state actors, activists and academics, and rights-based groups and peace-based groups.

This network has come to be the driving force for defining and applying the *Security Framework* for women's rights and gender issues. The security framework refers to the type arguments made and the justifications set forth to draw attention to and prioritize women's rights and a gender-sensitive perspective. The framework operates from the premise that women's rights and gender equality situated in a human rights frame or even a moral frame are not enough and simply not as effective in generating awareness, response, and commitment. Therefore, the framework highlights how protecting and promoting the rights of women is a fundamental component of establishing international peace and security—the driving mission of the UN.<sup>26</sup> The idea is that security needs women, as much as women need security. The security language serves as a framework for action through discursive positioning that situates women as central, or at least part of, the security agenda. This frame highlights how women's rights and gender equality can contribute to international peace and security, and therefore constitute vested interest for many national and international leaders. As Sanam Anderlini (2000: 3) argues, it is not a matter of what women stand to gain from inclusion into the peace process, but rather “what peace processes stand to lose when women's wealth of experiences, creativity, and knowledge are excluded.”

With this framework, targeting the UN Security Council became critical. As Carol Cohn argues, “The ideas of mobilizing to influence the Security Council, and to get a Security Council Resolution on women and armed conflict, represents a new and important strategy” (Cohn 2004: 8). Although this strategy is new in terms of its target, as the Security Council in a very non-conventional arena for those advocating gender equality and women's rights, it does, however, rely upon very traditional stereotypes of women as peacemakers and nurturers of society.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, the notion of women as more peaceful or collaborative serves a political function in terms of narrow national interest, rather than any sort of moral or altruistic obligation.<sup>28</sup> In this sense, the security framework presents the integration of women and a gender perspective as an untapped resource that can greatly improve the UN's ability to establish and maintain international peace and security.<sup>29</sup>

### *Methodology*

Data collection for this study relied on several sources. Most importantly, the analysis relies on interviews with scholars and policy-makers that have been a part of the UN system and/or the WPS network since its inception.<sup>30</sup> Most interviews were conducted in New York during numerous interview trips.<sup>31</sup> Interviewees included current and former UN personnel, staff from relevant NGOs, and scholars professionally affiliated with the UN. Phone and email interviews have been conducted in cases where interviewees were outside the United

States. Interviewees represented a diverse group, ranging in nationality, gender, and status/experience within the UN. Using the “snowball sampling method,” the number of interviews exceeded thirty-five (Ackerly et al. 2006: 11).

This project also relies heavily on textual analysis and archival research of UN documents, both public and internal.<sup>32</sup> These include but are not limited to annual reports, committee reports, convention and conference reports, independent assessments, relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and declarations, and Secretary-General statements. These primary sources as well as select secondary sources also help form a robust structural analysis of relevant UN agencies and funds in terms of administrative changes, budgetary allocations, leadership shifts, and the often complex relationship that exists between these groups. Thus, the strategy of this project was to “incorporate material and ideational factors rather than privilege one over the other” (Hansen 2006: 23) in order to “illustrate how ... textual and social processes are intrinsically connected and to describe, in specific contexts, the implications of this connection for the way we think and act in the contemporary world” (George 1994: 191).

With regard to methods used in the project, I also acted as a participant-observer as both a member of a UN-accredited NGO and as a researcher. For the former, I attended the Sixth Anniversary events of SCR 1325 in New York City from October 23 to 26, 2006. Through the Huairou Commission, a transnational network committed to supporting women’s grassroots movements, I was able to attend both public and closed meetings at UN headquarters and parallel NGO meetings also taking place in New York. Of particular interest, I observed an Arria formula meeting,<sup>33</sup> where women’s civil society groups were able to address and debate with Security Council Members as well as the Security Council open debate on SCR 1325. As an academic researcher, I also observed and participated in two virtual community discussions on gender and security sector reform in April and May of 2007. These online communities, facilitated by the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), brought together over thirty practitioners currently working in the field to share their experiences making security sector reform gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive. The participants were an equal mix of UN personnel and non-state actors from all over the world.<sup>34</sup> Both experiences as a participant-observer provided great insights and many first-hand accounts that informed this research.

Overall, the methodological approach operates from the premise that “the way to study securitization is to study discourse” (Buzan et al. 1998: 25). In other words, in order to understand how international security is constructed and conducted, one must not only talk to the people involved, but pour over official and unofficial documents as well to really deconstruct the significance of the language—that which is articulated and is left out. Establishing a standard of rhetoric, a commonly understood language, is not only a tool with which to hold governments accountable, it is also constitutive for what is brought into being. My methodology is distinct in its reflexivity, and derives its strength from the “juxtaposition and layering of many different windows” through which to look at the nature of security discourses in relation to women and gender (Cohn 2006: 93).<sup>35</sup>

While some of these windows were part of my original research design others were opportunistic and emerged as I collected the data. Chapters 4 and 5 are particularly reflective of the latter approach. Similar to the work of Carol Cohn, the persuasiveness of my case studies taken together relies upon the “multiplicity of spaces within which I trace metaphoric gendered themes and their variations” in the production of international peace and security (2006: 107).

### Genesis of 1325

Before moving on, it is important to briefly discuss some of the background on how SCR 1325 and the WPS network came to be. Although the emergence and development of this activism has been well documented, it has been done so in a fragmented way.<sup>36</sup> No one piece offers a comprehensive narrative, and thus, it is important to synthesize this information for a solid knowledge-base. In order to understand where we are going, we must understand where we have come from—the root values and objectives that motivated this particular initiative to engage and attempt to influence the UN Security Council, *the* global governance institution in matters of peace and security.

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action laid the conceptual foundation in its articulation of women and armed conflict as one of the twelve strategic objectives.<sup>37</sup> In 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took up this theme and discussed the obstacles to implementing the Beijing chapter on women and armed conflict. According to two UN officials who were part of the process, “the NGO network began to appear informally at the 1998 meeting” of the CSW. They go on to say, “With many women from a number of different conflict zones attending, it was here that the idea to advocate for a Security Council resolution was first raised” (Cohn et al. 2004: 131). As one NGO activist at the time points out, “Frankly, at the time, I had no idea what it really meant to get a Security Council resolution. But I knew it would create a mandate for our work” (interview, March 2007). After the CSW, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security officially formed and agreed to pursue two specific recommendations: to encourage women’s participation in peace agreements and to push for the convening of a special session of the Security Council on women, peace, and security (Hill et al. 2003: 1258).<sup>38</sup>

Although UNIFEM did informally support some of the Working Group’s members in 1998–1999, it did not get directly involved with the working group until 2000.<sup>39</sup> This more formal partnership really started to take shape with a conference organized by International Alert, one of the NGOs party to the WPS network. The conference was focused on a global campaign to bring women to the negotiation table, and International Alert brought UNIFEM on as an integral partner in supporting local women’s peacebuilding work.<sup>40</sup> Thus, through this partnership with International Alert, UNIFEM became initially involved in the WPS network (former UNIFEM official, interview 2007).

Although the NGO Working Group initiated this notion of working for a Security Council Resolution on women, UNIFEM played a major role in circulating

it among members of the Security Council and proved to be a critical access point for such non-state actors to influence state actors. One NGO official that was involved during that time recounted:

Noeleen Heyzer [the executive director of UNIFEM] hosted a cocktail party in March of 2000 and invited the Security Council President at the time, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury of Bangladesh. At the party she gave him copies of the draft [for a potential resolution] to give to the rest of the Council. Then, he came out with his speech on International Women's Day, and it was so important in drawing attention to the campaign.

(Interview, 2007)

Numerous studies on SCR 1325 find this speech given by the Council President at the time to be a major turning point.<sup>41</sup> Not only was it the first time that the President of the Security Council addressed the International Women's Day proceedings, but it was also significant in what he said. He recognized that:

peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men. They affirm that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

(SC/6816 2000)<sup>42</sup>

Thus, he squarely placed the women's rights (minimally understood) and gender equality in the security framework. As one UNIFEM official remembers:

I think the main turning point was when Bangladesh passed the presidential statement. I think that is when people at the SC recognized that WPS was not an issue for the GA only and that the SC could not just talk about civilian protection and children in armed conflict, but that there really was this debate that had to be had on WPS. So it really was Bangladesh that turned the corner and then Namibia during their presidency. You know the country has been very progressive. Women have been active in the liberation struggle and afterward in their post-conflict reconstruction. So Namibia also took this forward and really encouraged UNIFEM to formulate some solid thinking around this.

(Interview, August 2006)

Others have described Chowdhury's speech as a "crucial rhetorical act" (Cohn 2003-04: 4) that provided a "shot of enthusiasm and encouragement for the women gathered at the CSW by linking equality, development, and peace, and the need for women's urgent involvement in these matters" (Hill et al. 2003: 1257). Another former UNIFEM official described this security framework as a "lens for all three things, opening up women's situation vis-à-vis equality, development and

peace" (interview, December 2007).<sup>43</sup> These speech acts not only served to further mobilize the women's organizations into an effective and heterogeneous transnational advocacy network, but they also helped further by opening political space for this network to operate.

As previously noted, the government of Namibia was also critical in this process. In May 2000, the Government of Namibia and the Lessons Learned Unit of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) organized a seminar on mainstreaming gender in peace operations, which resulted in the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action.<sup>44</sup> Because Namibia hosted this meeting, the NGO Working Group saw Namibia as a logical entry point for discussing the possibility of holding an open session on women during Namibia's October presidency of the Security Council (Hill et al. 2003: 1259). Beginning with Namibia, NGO Working Group began forming alliances with sympathetic states on the Council at the time, which included Canada, Bangladesh, and Jamaica. But during this time NGOs intentionally downplayed their role in pushing this issue onto the security agenda, as they understood it was vital that Namibia did not appear to be NGO-led. Felicity Hill, a founding member of the Working Group, describes the process:

Through a series of meetings and papers, NGOs supplied this core group of states with arguments about the *utility and advantages* of a Council debate on this subject, with talking points and recommendations to use in their discussion with other delegates. Only after they knew that states had begun the discussion between them, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security undertook a number of initiatives such as meeting with each remaining member of the Security Council, utilizing different arguments with each to advocate for a thematic debate and resolution on Women, Peace and Security. (2004–2005: 29–30, emphasis added)

Throughout the process, the NGOs worked tirelessly to educate the Council, "finding as much high quality relevant literature as they could ... comb[ing] through every UN document from the institution's inception, finding every reference any way relevant to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda" (Cohn 2003–04: 4). In this way, NGOs supplied UN officials with a "a compendium of 'agreed language' which showed the basis for committing themselves" to the resolution (Cohn 2003–04: 4). All the while they worked to create a resolution that appeared state-driven, not NGO-driven. All the while they worked to create a resolution that appeared state-driven, not NGO-driven.

As soon as Namibia agreed to host an open session on Women, Peace, and Security, the Working Group drafted the resolution. UNIFEM and the NGO Working Group arranged for women from conflict zones from around the world to address the Council in an Arria formula meeting, "bringing to men who rarely left NY a concrete, personal awareness of both women's victimization in war and their agency" (Cohn 2003–04: 5). The resolution was passed the day after the Arria formula meeting, and although there were a number of issues left off the

final document, its preambular language was identical to the draft the NGO Working Group had submitted (Hill 2004–05: 30).<sup>45</sup>

Overall, the progressive leadership of Bangladesh and Namibia was very important. So too was the technical, financial, and institutional support of UNIFEM once they fully signed onto the Women, Peace, and Security campaign in early 2000. But in the end, it was the NGO Working Group that laid the “entire groundwork for this resolution, including the initial drafting, and the political work of preparing the Security Council members to accept that a resolution was relevant and had precedents in the Security Council’s work” (Cohn 2003–04: 4).

A UN official, who was not directly part of the process, described WPS as a group that took advantage of “interagency networking” and the “growing concern within the UN system to mainstream human rights” (interview, October 2006). This focus on human rights had already emerged in the Security Council with its thematic focus on civilians and children in armed conflict in 1998–99.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the WPS network utilized a sort of “bandwagoning mechanism to see gender from a security perspective” (interview, October 2006). Another interviewee who was with UNIFEM at the time and directly involved in the WPS network related this bandwagoning strategy to:

The human security agenda and the ways in which the Council started thinking thematically about security: first with the protection of civilians during armed conflict and then children. It created this opportunity to look at gender issues. It had to do with a much broader securitization of politics in general, a question of framing and expediency. All of those factors brought it together.

(Interview, December 2006)

But the concept of human security was consciously evoked for only a few actors in this process. One of the founding members of the NGO Working Group argues that although human security as a “fairly obvious concept was invoked, it was not the sustaining or enabling discourse that facilitated the NGO work on 1325” (Cohn et al. 2004: 135). Nonetheless, human security, and the Human Security Network more specifically, provided the legitimization that the Security Council needed to include issues, such as women, into its work in the late 1990s.<sup>47</sup> This network and the language it utilized created an entry point for issues that had long been seen as organizationally and substantively separate from the Council’s mandate to be included as part of their agenda. According to Carol Cohn, without the Human Security Network, “the thematic resolutions (children and armed conflict; civilians and armed conflict; and 1325) could not have happened” (Cohn et al. 2004: 135). It was all part of a political space that was opened with the discourse surrounding human security.<sup>48</sup> In further support of this claim, a recent study of South African women involved in various peace-building projects concludes that “... from a gender perspective, the most significant document in human security” is SCR 1325 (Hamber et al. 2006: 490).<sup>49</sup>

Within this context of human security and an organized and sophisticated women's network, SCR 1325 was unanimously adopted by the Security Council in October 2000. Scholars and practitioners, men and women have referred to SCR 1325 as a landmark document:

It is not only a landmark document, it is potentially a revolutionary one. Its broadening of the gaze from the traditional political and military aspects of peace and security can and should do several different things at once: It affirms women's rights to protection and participation; and should it be widely implemented, women's experience of conflict and their ability to prevent or end it could be substantially transformed. What could also be transformed by this 'broadening of the gaze' is the mainstream belief in the adequacy of restricting one's vision to the traditional political and military aspects of peace and security. Resolution 1325, as it moves from rhetoric to reality, could potentially transform our ideas about the prevention of war, the bases for sustainable peace, and the pathways to achieve them.

(Cohn 2004: 9)

This transformative potential is a result of the way gender and war are historically, inextricably linked.<sup>50</sup> As Joshua Goldstein (2001: 10–11) concludes, "Gender roles adapt individuals for war roles, and war roles provide the context within which individuals are socialized into gender roles." In this way, the transformation of gender relations may often demand significant changes in the war system first; at the same time, if the war system is to change or if war is to end altogether gendered identities and expectations may have to be reconstructed. The intricate interdependencies between gender and international security are significant, and any genuine shift in how gender roles are perceived by the Security Council has potentially profound consequences for the very nature of war itself.

To understand how the security framework and the WPS network have affected the war system in terms of socialized gender roles, I have developed four distinct, yet interrelated case studies. Each one provides a unique look into the ways in which the security discourse and SCR 1325 have been implemented and not implemented, used by other UN agencies outside the Council, and informed the development of emerging UN institutions and norms related to gender and security. These cases studies are not an exhaustive look at the security framework or at SCR 1325, but rather reflect multiple ways of examining international security discourses as they relate to women's rights and gender equality. These cases constitute Chapters 3 through 6 and are described briefly in the next section.<sup>51</sup>

## **Project roadmap**

Understanding the origins of the WPS network and SCR 1325, raises further questions about how this security framework has been operationalized and implemented throughout the UN system. First, how have women's rights been



securitized within by the Security Council in the last eight years? How has SCR 1325 been integrated into Council activity on the ground? Chapter 3, in addressing these questions, finds that despite the many institutional and attitudinal barriers, the adoption of SCR 1325 and the diffusion of norms from the WPS network is proof that ideas originating in women's movements and feminist theory are gradually becoming part of the practices and institutions of global governance, rhetorically, legally, and procedurally. Nonetheless, the chapter concludes that much of the progress associated with SCR 1325 reflects additive shifts rather than a transformative change to the way the UN does security, leaving much of the traditional security agenda very much intact. The tensions that emerge with this case study begin to point to some of the important differences between securitizing women's rights and humanizing security.

Given the many obstacles that the WPS network still faces, the second case study turns to a comparison of women's activism in conflict and post-conflict situations with those advocating for children in armed conflict. Chapter 4 contrasts these two vulnerable groups as a way of highlighting the unique (and not so unique) obstacles that women face in the Security Council. In analyzing the now six SC resolutions on children in armed conflict with SCR 1325 and the more recent SCR 1820,<sup>52</sup> I find that as much as women have gained in the UN system, they do face some unique structural, institutional, and attitudinal barriers that children do not particularly in the context of the security framework. This is partly explained by the transformative nature of the WPS agenda and the demand that the Security Council go beyond seeing women as victims. Simply stated, demanding women's inclusion into the decision-making process, poses a greater challenge to the existing power structure than demanding the protection of children during and after conflict. While children certainly have agency and fundamental human rights, they do not challenge existing power relations and embedded structures in the same way that women do.

Although Chapter 4 highlights the shortcomings and setbacks of the security discourse and SCR 1325 for the WPS network, it raises questions about what sorts of advantages or opportunities, if any, the movement has gained in utilizing this framework. Chapter 5 explores one way that the security discourse has benefited women beyond the scope of the Security Council through an organizational examination of UNIFEM, an institution created to deal with women's roles and concerns in economic development. As indicated in an earlier section of this chapter, UNIFEM has been an important actor in the WPS network, and therefore, it is important to understand how a *development* fund got in the business of international peace and security, a policy arena they had long been excluded from. Through an analysis of security sector reform in post-conflict situations, I find that the security discourse provides a new strategic entry point in terms of a basis for developing new partnerships and new resources that had not been available to UNIFEM before.

Lastly, Chapter 6 addresses questions about the future of the WPS network and SCR 1325 in guiding the work of the UN more broadly. The establishment of the

UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005 presents an opportunity for the UN to fulfill and implement the principles set forth by SCR 1325, and therefore it serves as an ideal case study for evaluating how a gendered approach to security is being articulated and operationalized in its design, mandate, and activities. Given that the PBC is part of the larger efforts to reform the UN, this case also provides insight into the major tensions that women still face in challenging how the UN defines and pursues international peace and security in relation to broader socio-economic development goals. In addition, analyzing the progress and the many setbacks of the PBC, I find SCR 1325 coming full circle in this case study: a campaign that was initiated by NGOs continues to be driven by NGOs in its implementation.

Taken together, these chapters weave an intricate and complex story about the way in which this network of activists, and the policy commitments they were able to push through, have and have not fostered discursive change at the level of foundational concepts and subsequent practices with the UN system. This means acknowledging that as many doors as this framework may have opened, the security language has also posed significant limitations in just how far the WPS network can go in criticizing the fundamental assumptions of peace and security practice in a state-based system. In other words, many of the opportunities created by this discursive positioning rely upon state institutions for the realization and implementation. The shortcomings of the security language, particularly the essentialist assumptions of women as peacemakers that framework relies upon, cannot be ignored.

In the end, however, my research works from the premise that feminist scholars and activists need to be engaged with formal institutions of global governance, like the UN, but always analyzing the complexity of the impacts of that engagement along many different dimensions. Reaffirming Jacqui True's argument, it is "not how feminist scholars and activists can avoid cooptation by powerful institutions, but whether we can afford not to engage with such institutions, when the application of gender analysis in their policy-making is clearly having political effects beyond academic and feminist communities" (2003: 368). When one interviewee was asked about where her motivation to use the security discourse came from, she responded:

Well, it came from my working at the UN for 27 years. It's something that you breathe working for the UN. I have to be strategic in my work. I have a very difficult and complex issue with a very small office. I had better be strategic in terms of how I create high profile. Of course, human rights create a high profile. But security takes it to a different level.

(Interview, UN official, September 2006)

It is to that level that we now turn.

## Notes

- 1 From this perspective, “‘security’ is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics” (Buzan et al. 1998: 23). Framing, therefore, is a strategy being employed by multiple actors at multiple levels.
- 2 It is important to note here that no organization, governmental or non-governmental, discussed in this research is necessarily uniform in its beliefs and strategies. Inter-agency tensions exist and not all are in support of the security framework for women’s rights. Many still prioritize a rights-based approach over a security-based approach. This tension and its impact on policy are addressed in later chapters.
- 3 For the full text of this resolution, see [http://www.un.org/events/res\\_1325e.pdf](http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf). For a summary, see Appendix A.
- 4 For more on women and security as “regimes” see Hill 2004–05.
- 5 Chapter 2 explores in more detail the positive and negative impacts of securitizing non-military or nonconventional security issues (and threats).
- 6 For a comprehensive and timely analysis of the importance of ensuring women’s rights and gender equality in post-conflict situations, see Anderlini 2007.
- 7 Even those most engaged in studying securitization, namely scholars at the Copenhagen School, refrain from judging a particular security framework as accurate or not. The approach of the Copenhagen School is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.
- 8 In this sense, the meaning of security is assumed and agreed upon. It is a given not to be questioned. It is simply an end goal to be achieved. For more on this distinction of security as a means versus an end, see edited volume by Lipschutz (1995).
- 9 Other marginalized groups, such as refugees and internally displaced persons, have also been located within the security framework by activists in and around the UN. Although this group is beyond the scope of this book, it is certainly an area that merits further research.
- 10 The European Union, for example, has been engaged in this discourse and adopted several initiatives to better implement SCR 1325. For example, see [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/gender\\_equality/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/index_en.html) or [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/speeches/2003/ad290503\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/speeches/2003/ad290503_en.pdf).
- 11 Margaret Snyder, the first Executive Director of UNIFEM, has been quoted as saying, “I think the global women’s movement would be lost or at least much weaker without the UN ... I think women captured the UN and made it their own vehicle for their movement to make sure that their movement was going to go ahead” (Weiss et al. 2005: 255).
- 12 For more information, see <http://www.unhistory.org/>.
- 13 See for example, Weiss et al. (2005).
- 14 Although the Brandt Reports focused on the global economy, they are significant here in that they link issues that historically have not been linked, such as the environment with trade with dependence with population and so forth. More broadly, they begin to construct the interdependencies between development with security.
- 15 Karns and Mingst (2004) confirm this normative role of the UN in terms of the human rights regime and the evolution of the idea of sustainable development. They also discuss the emerging norms surrounding human security and humanitarian intervention, particularly as they relate to the UN, although they are less certain that these norms have been confirmed by the international community.
- 16 As of December 2008, the Gender Development Index of the UN Human Development Reports illustrates that no country on earth accords women the same status and rights as men.
- 17 Enloe’s work, particularly *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminists Sense of International Politics* (1989), was pioneering in this area.

- 18 For more on this concept, see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/e65237.pdf>.
- 19 For an idea of the range of members and scope of issues of this network, see [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org).
- 20 The role the NGO Working Group in the Genesis of 1325 is explained in further detail below.
- 21 Interestingly, as Carol Cohn points out, these Working Group members while all concerned with what was happening to women in wars, the majority do not define themselves as “anti-war,” per se, nor as feminist. Only The Hague Appeal for Peace and WILPF are explicitly anti-war, anti-militaristic, and pro-disarmament, and of those two, only WILPF defines themselves as feminists. “What these differences meant concretely was that although all group members agreed that something had to be done to increase women’s protection and participation, their own conceptual framings for how to do that were quite divergent” (Cohn 2003–2004: 12).
- 22 See for example, UNIFEM’s web portal on “Women, Peace, and Security” at [www.womenwarpeace.org](http://www.womenwarpeace.org).
- 23 For more on this network and other initiatives by the Canadian government to support SCR 1325, see [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreign\\_policy/human-rights/women\\_peace-en.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreign_policy/human-rights/women_peace-en.asp).
- 24 It is also worth noting here that SCR 1325 and WPS as a movement, campaign, and network have been part of International Studies Association (ISA) panels for at least the last seven years that this author has been in attendance.
- 25 For more information, go to [www.genderandsecurity.org](http://www.genderandsecurity.org).
- 26 For more speeches using this framework, see the collection at [http://www.peacewomen.org/un/6thAnniversary/Open\\_Debate/index.html](http://www.peacewomen.org/un/6thAnniversary/Open_Debate/index.html).
- 27 In recent years there has been a substantial amount of anecdotal research asserting that women have a different understanding of peace, security, conflict resolution, and the use of force, given their socially constructed identities and experiences. Many make the case that the different identities, experiences and perspectives that women bring to peace missions allows them to be more constructive, inclusive, and sustainable. These assumptions are in part based on the male-dominated nature of the military system and warfare as explained by the intense socialization arguments set forth by Joshua S. Goldstein (2001) in his book, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Goldstein finds gender to be ontologically enmeshed in war, concluding that culturally constructed gender identities enable war.
- 28 Many have referred to this framework as the “practical ‘use value’ argument” (Isha Dyfan, as cited by Cohn et al. 2004: 137).
- 29 Such specific value-added, gendered arguments include notions that women are more likely to foster reconciliation (Hamilton 2000); women raise different issues than men, making the peace process more comprehensive and increasing national ownership (Anderlini 2000; Conaway & Martinez 2004); women control aggression better than men (DeGroot 2001); women are more collaborative and innovative negotiators (Olsson 2001; Florea et al. 2003); and women’s organizations in general persistently advocate for peace (UNIFEM 2005).
- 30 In compliance with the Institutional Review Board at Office of Research Compliance at the University of Connecticut (Approval Protocol H06-061), and at the Research Institute at the University of Dayton all interviewees gave written and/or oral consent signaling their willingness to participate in the research project. They were given copies of a consent form along with a summary of the project and his/her rights as participants in the study. Given that many interviewees are still part of this ongoing political process and employed by the UN, national governments or non-governmental organizations, most interview attributions in this book are kept anonymous.
- 31 The interviews took place between March 2006 and November 2008.
- 32 Several interviewees shared internal documents with me during the interview process.

- 33 Arria Formula meetings, named after their originator Ambassador Diego Arria (Venezuela), are informal gatherings that allow the Security Council greater flexibility to be briefed about international peace and security issues by actors with a given expertise that aren't necessarily government officials or UN delegations. This practice has been used frequently and has grown in importance since 1992 when it was first implemented. Most significantly, these meetings allow non-state actors, especially civil society organizations to address the Council directly. For more on this practice see <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/mtgsetc/arria.htm>.
- 34 For more information on these two virtual discussions, see <http://www.un-instraw.org/en/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=1048&Itemid=244>.
- 35 This methodological approach is largely informed by feminist research in international relations, most especially Ackerly et al. (2006).
- 36 One possible exception here is the 2003 article by Felicity Hill, Mikele Aboitiz, and Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya, although this article focuses specifically on the role of NGOs. See also True-Frost (2007).
- 37 For the specific references to women and armed conflict in this document, go to <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/women/unwomenpeacedocs.html#16>.
- 38 There were six original NGOs that formed the Working Group. Now there are twelve. For more information, see <http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/about/>.
- 39 Carol Cohn maintains that although UNIFEM becomes very important to SCR 1325, from 1998 to early 2000 "the Working Group initiated and carried out this project for months despite what they felt was a clear message from women's advocates within the UN that the 'time isn't right, it couldn't happen, it isn't worth the effort'" (2003-04: 5).
- 40 That conference led to the global campaign Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table. It was launched by International Alert in May 1999, with the support of 100 organizations worldwide, to respond to women's concerns about their exclusion from decision-making levels of peace, security, reconstruction and development processes. For more information, go to <http://www.international-alert.org/>.
- 41 Beyond issues of women and gender, international lawyers are beginning to study more closely the legal status of presidential statements. Dr. Jose Alvarez, Director of the Center on Legal Problems at Columbia Law School, recently spoke about presidential statements as intentionally weak, nonbinding documents that are beginning to develop into something that they were never intended to be, something closer to soft law. Speech given at the 2007 Academic Council on the United Nations System, New York, June 7, 2007.
- 42 For more, see <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/UN1325/1325index.html>. It is also worth noting that this language is very similar to that in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.
- 43 Equality, development, and peace was the theme of the Decade for Women (1975-1985). The Decade for Women is often seen as a vehicle that mobilized the world's women into the beginnings of the global women's movement. For more, see Antrobus 2004. The security language seems to shed new light on this old theme.
- 44 For the full text of this declaration, see <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/WindhoekDeclaration.html>.
- 45 Although SCR 1325 represents the broadest political interpretation of gender issues ever articulated by the UN peace and security agenda, it does not, by any means, reflect the entire agenda of issues related to women, peace, and security. It does not for example address overall disarmament and the militarized approach of the UN system to establishing peace and security.
- 46 These resolutions are examined in great detail in Chapter 4.
- 47 The Human Security Network was formed in 1999 by several UN Member States. The Network includes Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Slovenia, Thailand, and South Africa as an

observer. The Network has a unique interregional and multiple agenda perspective with strong links to civil society and academia. The Network emerged from the landmines campaign and was formally launched at a Ministerial meeting in Norway in 1999. For more, see <http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/network-e.php>.

- 48 Also related here was Canada's role on the Security Council at the time. During its two-year term (1999–2000), the Canadian government in particular was part of “humanizing the Security Council” prior to SCR 1325. See Pearson (2001).
- 49 At the same time, however, it is important to understand that human security has not always been interpreted in such comprehensive terms or through such progressive legislation as SCR 1325. As Mary Caprioli (2004) convincingly demonstrates, the universal nature of human security can obscure the fact that key ideas promoted by that discourse—democracy and human rights—tend to have differential impacts on men and women and can be subsumed into traditional statist frameworks.
- 50 “Potential” is a key qualification here, as SCR 1325 seriously lacks enforcement mechanisms. The sources and implications for this lack of mechanisms are discussed more fully in Chapter 3.
- 51 Case selection for this project follows the criteria outlined by Van Evera (1997), particularly in terms of maximizing the empirical scope, data richness, the resemblance of case background conditions to the conditions of current policy problems, appropriateness for controlled comparison with other cases (mainly using Mill's method of difference, and intrinsic importance.
- 52 The full text of SCR 1820 can be found in Appendix B.