THE NATURE OF WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY: WHERE IS THE ENVIRONMENT IN WPS AND WHERE IS WPS IN ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING?

Keina Yoshida   22/2019

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In 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2242, which recognised for the first time that climate change interconnects with the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework.[1] The Resolution also draws attention to the Sustainable Development Goals, in which gender equality is specifically included as a stand-alone goal, and is understood to be cross-cutting across the 17 goals, including Goal 13 to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Despite this resolution, climate change, the environment and nature remain at the periphery of WPS practice and scholarship.[2] As Annica Kronsell has noted, "climate change is not yet prominent on the WPS agenda nor a salient feature in the scholarly literature on WPS."[3] This paper challenges the absence of the environment and climate justice from the WPS framework and the parallel marginalisation of gender perspectives within the literature and practice of environmental peacebuilding.

> Women's experiences and contributions to an ecologically sound environment must therefore be central to the agenda for the twenty-first century.
>
> *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995*[4]

While the WPS framework importantly makes gender equality integral to international peace and security, the Security Council fails to provide a broader vision as to what constitutes "sustainable peace."[5] As Isobel Renzulli has remarked, this is underpinned by an approach to peace which is reactive rather than transformative, negative rather than positive.[6] The near absence of the natural environment and climate change from the Security Council's agenda is a serious and important lacuna within the WPS framework given the linkages between environmental degradation, natural disasters, extractive projects, conflict and gender-based violence against women.[7] It also demonstrates the obfuscation of women's experiences and feminisms from the framework, with the notable absence of indigenous, rural and ecofeminist perspectives.[8]

At the same time, this paper illustrates the absence of gender, and gender equality from the Security Council's work on environmental peacebuilding. While environmental factors, including resource scarcity and resource abundance are understood to be causes of conflict and brokers of peace, the practice and literature on environmental peace and security, has centred upon natural resource extraction and economic recovery post-conflict, rather than a broader understanding of environmental justice, indigenous rights to land, or the intersection of gender equality and the environment.[9] The WPS agenda

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1   The preamble to Resolution 2242 (2015), S/RES/2242, notes the "changing global context of peace and security" including "…the impacts of climate change …, and in this regard reiterating its intention to increase attention to women, peace and security as a cross-cutting subject in all relevant thematic areas of work on its agenda, including threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts."

2   This article uses "nature", "environment" and "natural environment" interchangeably, as although the distinctions in terminology are interesting, the ordinary usage of these terms in the mainstream is sufficient for the purposes of this article.

3   Annica Kronsell, "WPS and Climate Change", in *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*, ed. Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 726

4   United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action*, 27 October 1995, https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf, para 251.

5   See http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/building-and-sustaining-peace.

6   Isobel Renzulli, ""Women and Peace": A Human Rights Strategy for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda", *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* (October, 2017). This reactive and regressive trend has been identified more broadly in the literature in relation to peace agreements and negotiations. For example, Christine Chinkin has explained that "Concepts of reconstruction and rehabilitation may be misnomers in the case of women. Both concepts assume an element of going back, restoring to a position or capacity that previously existed. But this is not necessarily what women seek." See Christine Chinkin, "Gender, International Legal Framework and Peace-Building", in *Gender and Peace Building in Africa*, ed. Kari Karamé (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2004), 32. It also contrasts with the normative standards in CEDAW, which are transformative.

7   CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 35 on Gender-Based Violence Against Women, Updating General Recommendation No. 19, 14 July 2017, CEDAW/C/GC/35, para 14.

8   Yuderkys Espinosa Minoso et al, *Tejiendo de Otro Modo: Feminismo, Epistemologia y Apuestas Descoloniales en Abya Yala*, (Popayán: Editorial Universidad del Cauca, 2014). I am grateful to Mariana Prandini Assis for this recommendation.

therefore has an important role to play in providing an alternative and sustainable vision of peace and security in the face of the current extractivist and neo-liberal practice, which fails to consider the impact of these economies on women.[10]

The paper adopts a feminist lens to explore the international legal framework underpinning the WPS agenda. Feminist interventions allow for an analysis that challenges power structures and shifts the lens to considering a gendered re-imagination of the status quo. Any "new" ways of framing WPS in international law and at the level of the Security Council must necessarily include the voices of women who have continuously struggled against the exploitation and oppression of both women and the environment supported by the institutions and structures of international law.[11] As Dianne Otto remarks in her work on queering international law:

In the crisis-saturated international community of today, new ways of framing and applying international law are desperately needed. We need an international legal framework that can build solidarity rather than foster division, promote redistributive values rather than private enrichment, challenge the entrenched inequalities of the quotidian rather than normalising and exploiting them, advance positive peace rather than militarism, and ensure environmental sustainability rather than degradation.[12]

This paper presents the early workings of a broader project on this issue.[13] Its central argument is that the 20 year anniversary of Resolution 1325 and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action present a renewed opportunity to push an agenda which incorporates voices from women from around the world and to include a vision of greater sustainability in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the goals set out in the Beijing Platform for Action. As such, the WPS framework must address the gender-related dimensions of disasters in the context of climate change and the impact of extractive economies on women throughout the conflict cycle by including the standards which have been established on how climate change affects women and girls.

WHERE IS GENDER IN ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING?

This section provides a brief overview on environmental peacebuilding, a growing parallel field to the WPS agenda and human rights framework. Although there is as yet no framework to mirror the WPS agenda in relation to the environment as such, measures to address management of natural resources and environmental stress have been recognised as key components and ingredients of sustainable development and sustainable peace by the Security Council, in what has been termed "environmental peacebuilding" and "environmental peace-making".[14] Carl Bruch has defined environmental peacebuilding as "[T]he process of governing and managing natural resources and the environment to support durable peace" in a process that includes consideration of non-renewable natural resources, renewable natural resources and ecosystems.[15] His work, which has been highly influential in the field and mainstream literature, looks at the environmental impacts of conflict

(direct, secondary and governance-related), the environment as a source and resource of conflict (extractive, agricultural, illicit) and the place of the environment as a part of peace-making and in post-conflict transitions.[16] According to Bruch, since 2005 all major peace agreements incorporate natural resources. This is vital given the damage caused to the environment during conflict, meaning that environmental issues are often key to re-establishing sustainable livelihoods.

It is clear that natural resources can lead to conflicts; further, their management must form part of the resolution of conflicts, and the natural environment more broadly conceived is often a victim of conflict. The deliberate targeting of the environment as a part of conflict has become an increasing preoccupation, with calls for the recognition of a new crime of ecocide both in conflict and in peacetime.[17] According to the Special Rapporteur to the International Law Commission, which is currently in the process of drafting principles on the protection of the environment during armed conflict, in 2015 the Security Council had adopted 2,195 resolutions of which 242 or 11% addressed natural resources in some manner.[18] The Special Rapporteur concludes in her second report that "[T]his is a clear indication of the connection between the threat to international peace and security and the protection of the environment and natural resources."[19] The Security Council has through its various resolutions thus highlighted the role that illegal exploitation, illicit trade and trafficking of natural resources and high-value commodities play in conflict.[20] The debates at the Security Council have also drawn the link between natural resources, conflict, development and Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Agenda with respect to the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, particularly in resolutions on Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Libya.[21]

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More recently, and beyond illicit trade and the targeting of the environment, the Security Council has explored the nexus between climate change and global conflicts, with similar debates taking place in the European Union and the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC). In this debate a number of states and stakeholders urged the Council to recognise climate change as a security risk.[22] The climate-security nexus sits alongside the Security Council's recent work on water, peace and security.[23] Much like climate change, the relationship between water insecurity and peace has been gaining increasing attention at the Security Council level following concerted activism by NGOs, academics and people on the ground affected by water insecurity.[24] Increasingly, both states and non-state actors have sought to underline the risks that climate change and natural disasters present to international peace and security outside of the context of armed conflict. As El Salvador submitted to the Special Rapporteur of the International Law Commission:

...there is an indissoluble relationship between security and environmental protection which remains even in situations not defined as armed conflict in the strictest sense. The relationship also operates in reverse: threats to the environment, especially natural disasters, have potentially adverse effects on security, since they create tensions and exclude persons who might have no other option but to join armed groups or commit various crimes.[25]

9   David Boyd, The Rights of Nature: A Legal Revolution that Could Save the World, (Toronto: ECW Press, 2017).

10   See Radhika Balakrishnan and Krishanti Dharmaraj, "WPS and Sustainable Development Goals" in The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security, ed. Sara E. Davis and Jacqui True, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

11   Hilary Charlesworth and Christine Chinkin, The Boundaries of International Law: A Feminist Analysis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 47; Usha Natarajan, "TWAIL and the Environment: The State of Nature, the Nature of State, and the Arab Spring", Oregon Review of International Law, 14 (1) (2012): 177-201.

12   Dianne Otto, "Introduction" in Queering International Law: Possibilities, Alliances, Complicities, Risks, ed. Dianne Otto (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 2.

13   The project on Gender, Nature and Peace funded by the British Academy commenced in April 2019 with a first workshop taking place in June 2019 at the LSE.

14   For example, through the creation of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) a pillar of UN Environmental Programme.

15   This definition is taken from a paper presented by Carl Bruch at a conference on the Nature of Peace, Lund, Sweden in April 2018. For an example of this approach see: Carl Bruch et al, "International Law, Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: From Rio to Rio+20 and Beyond", RECIEL 21 (1) (2012), 44.

16   Carl Bruch et al, "Post-Conflict Peace Building and Natural Resources", Yearbook of International Environmental Law, 19 (1) (2008): 58-96.

17   See the campaign run by Polly Higgins: https://eradicatingecocide.com/.

18   International Law Commission, Second Report on the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts, A/CN.4/685, 28 May 2015, paragraph 79.

19   Ibid.

20   UN Security Council Resolution 1625 (2005), S/RES/1626.

21   Another way in which the Security Council has dealt with this issue has been through the issuing of sanctions.

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22 UN Women event, *Women on the Frontlines: Climate Change and Security Nexus*, 9 November 2018. Information about the event is available here: https://www.unenvironment.org/events/un-environment-event/women-frontlines-climate-change-and-security-nexus [last accessed 1 February, 2019].

23 UN Security Council, *Water, Peace and Security*, 7818th meeting, 22 November 2016, S/PV/7818. See for example the contribution of Australia: "Australia also believes that the effective implementation of SDG 6 requires explicit attention to gender equality and social inclusion. Women and vulnerable populations face an increased risk of violence where water and sanitation services are only available outside the home, often in unsafe locations. Furthermore, we need to deliberately and proactively engage women and marginalized people and encourage their participation in strengthening water governance."

24 Dan Smith, "Tackling the World Water Crisis: Reshaping the Future of Foreign Policy", International Alert, https://www.international-alert.org/news/water-peace-and-security [last accessed 1 February, 2019]; Mara Tignino, "Water, International Peace, and Security", *International Review of the Red Cross*, 92 (879) (2010), 647.

25 International Law Commission, *Preliminary Report on the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts*, A/CN.4/674, 30 May 2014, paragraph 20.

26 Cynthia Cockburn, "The Continuum of Violence" in *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, ed. Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2004): 24-44.

27 Ileana Porras, "Appropriating Nature: Commerce, Property and the Commodification of Nature in the Law of Nations", *Leiden Journal of International Law* 27 (3) (2014): 641-660.

28 David Boyd, *The Rights of Nature*, 137.

29 Nicole Detraz, "Environmental Security and Gender: Necessary Shifts in an Evolving Debate", *Security Studies* 18 (2) (2009): 345-369.

30 Alice Edwards, "Global and Local Justice. Reflections on Nesiah, Kouvo, Andersson and Thomas" in *Feminist Perspectives on Contemporary International Law: Between Resistance and Compliance?*, ed. Sari Kouvo and Zoe Pearson (London: Hart Publishing: 2014), 134.

In other words, a narrow temporal lens on environmental protection during conflict adopted currently by international humanitarian law fails to understand how environmental threats including climate change pose a danger to international peace and security. This observation thus aligns with feminist work on violence against women which underlines the need to emphasise the continuum of violence.[26] This continuum of violence against women and against the natural environment operates via gender power structures which result in violence against environmental, indigenous and women's rights defenders such as Berta Caceres who have attempted to struggle against corporate abuse of the environment in contexts which are not classified within international law as "armed conflicts". This political violence against those struggling to uphold the goals set out in the SDGs, and the targeting of women, indigenous and human rights defenders against extractive economies, is yet to be recognised as a threat to international peace and security.

While the literature and practice of peacebuilding has importantly developed to place the environment as a central consideration in peace negotiations and conflict management, there have been criticisms over the approach adopted, particularly with regards to the way in which natural resources are prioritised over environmental protection and regeneration.[27] In other words, the focus has been on natural resources, rather than on ecology, biodiversity and the emerging concept of the rights of nature. The rights of nature are increasingly recognised in many national constitutions and have been defined by David Boyd, the current UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, as legal recognition of non-human species and elements of the natural environment, inter alia.[28] This means that ecosystems, rivers, animals and trees are judicially recognised as rights holders in and of themselves, rather than through the human rights framework, which has traditionally marginalised environmental rights.

Further, there is a notable absence of gender perspectives in the field of environmental peacebuilding.[29] Women are often only mentioned as a guilty footnote, with brief acknowledgement of their important role in natural resource management, meaning that the contribution of women's traditional knowledge and scholarship on how climate change, environmental degradation and extraction affects both women and the environment remains marginalised in this field. This forms part of a larger critique of state-building where gender is included within post-conflict contexts as a "'ticking of the box" of the international community equality agenda"[30] with projects conceived in a limited way which "produce[s] asymmetrical power relations between men and women".[31] In other words, while peacebuilding can present a springboard for gender equality,[32] the failure to place gender equality at the heart of environmental peacebuilding risks entrenching gendered power structures and fails to take into account women's leadership role and knowledge on the environment.

From a practical perspective, the absence of gender within the environmental peacebuilding framework has meant that the intersection between gender justice, climate justice, extractive economies

and sustainable peace has largely been overlooked by international institutions and actors.[33] This is despite longstanding feminist work on the ground and in development studies which links women's rights to environmental rights and access to natural resources.[34]

Building on this work, a Joint Programme on Women, Natural Resources and Peace was established by UN Women and the UN Environmental Programme in 2016 to promote natural resource-based interventions as a tool for strengthening women's participation in three areas.[35] First, participation in dialogue, mediation and conflict resolution efforts; second, participation in governance and decision-making at all levels; and third, contributions to economic recovery and sustainable development. UN Women, UN Development Programme and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office have worked together to design a number of pilot projects to strengthen women's roles in natural resource governance and conflict prevention and resolution, for example in North Kordofan, Sudan and Choco, Antioquia, Colombia. These programmes aim to, inter alia, economically empower women and build women's capacity to participate in decision-making bodies that govern the access to and use of natural resources.

While initiatives such as the Joint Programme are important in that they increase women's participation in decision-making around natural resources, it is imperative that both environmental peacebuilding and the WPS framework adopt an intersectional and gendered perspective in their environmental peacebuilding work. In other words, women know only too well that an "add women and stir" approach in peacebuilding and an "add-environment-and-stir" approach to the existing WPS framework will not be sufficient in face of the complex ways in which the environment intersects with conflict and gender.[36] This is because such

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programmes maintain the human/nature dichotomy and often fail to sufficiently take into account the needs of women, the ecosystem and future generations for a clean, healthy and safe natural environment.[37] We might also add that it is often exclusionary of indigenous and other worldviews which promote human existence in relationships of harmony with nature.

Participation in natural resource management is thus only a starting point, a start of a journey towards listening to the needs of those who are most affected by the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation and who are often made vulnerable to escalating violence due to environmental conflict. It is a start to asking how women's economic empowerment can work in harmony with nature to realise the SDGs, including the goals to tackle climate change and obtain transformative gender equality. As we approach the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action it is also a reminder of the need to act against "the degradation of natural systems and the dangers of polluting substance", the worsening conditions destroying fragile ecosystems, and how this displaces women from productive economies.[38] The threat to a safe and healthy environment and the threat of climate change are thus recognised threats to women's fundamental rights and a threat to international peace and security, meaning that it is a vital issue for the WPS agenda.

31 Hilary Charlesworth, "Talking to Ourselves? Feminist Scholarship in International Law" in *Feminist Perspectives on Contemporary International Law: Between Resistance and Compliance?*, ed. Sari Kouvo and Zoe Pearson (London: Hart Publishing: 2014), 26.

32 Ibid, 26, citing Simona Sharoni, "The Empowering and Disempowering Effects of Conflict and Violence", paper presented to the World Bank, Washington DC, 10-11 June 1999

33 UN Environment et al, *Women, Natural Resources and Peace*, 2018, https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/Women_NR_Peace_2pager_2018.pdf.

34 Caroline Sweetman and Maria Ezpeleta, "Introduction: Natural Resource Justice", *Gender and Development* 25 (3) (2017): 353-36.

35 This builds on paragraphs 248 and 249 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which specifically addresses the absence of women from all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resource and environmental management, conservation, protection and rehabilitation.

36 This idea builds on feminist scholarship which has critiqued an "add-women-and-stir" approach to operational measures and equality which is formulaic rather than substantive. I have adapted this here to argue that the same can be said of the environment. See Gina Heathcote, "Participation, Gender and Security" in *Rethinking Peacekeeping, Gender Inequality and Collective Security*, ed. Gina Heathcote and Dianne Otto (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 64; on the urge to "try and slot women in" see Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Francesca Haynes Dina and Naomi Cahn, *On the Frontlines: Gender, War and the Post-conflict Process* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 232.

37 See the seminal work of Donna Haraway in this regard.

38 United Nations, *Beijing Platform for Action*, para 246.

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> Feminist scholars from differing standpoints have a long history of calling for frameworks which recognise the ecological causes and consequences of masculinist mentalities and the impact of the military-industrial complex on women and nature.

39   Elizabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York: UNIFEM, 2002), 3.

40   Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, "Reintroducing Women, Peace and Security", *International Affairs* 92 (2) (2016), 249.

41   The WPS framework includes the following core resolutions: 1325 (2000); 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015) and 2467 (2019).

42   UN Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013), S/RES/2122.

43   Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, "The "War on Terror" and Extremism: Assessing the Relevance of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda", *International Affairs* 92 (2) (2016): 275-291.

44   Kirby and Shepherd, "Reintroducing Women, Peace and Security", 250, notes that the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom dates its foundation to the 1915 meeting of women in the Hague; See also Lela B. Costin, "Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the 1915 International Congress of Women", *Women's Studies International Forum* 5 (3–4) (1982): 301-315. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka has stated, "Resolution 1325 was one of the crowning achievements of the global women's movement and one of the most inspired decisions of the United Nations Security Council". See UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, (New York, NY: UN Women), 5.

45   Isobel Renzulli, "Women and Peace".

46   Catherine O'Rourke, "Feminist Strategy in International Law: Understanding Its Legal, Normative and Political Dimensions", *European Journal of International Law* 28 (4) (2017), 1019.

47   Gina Heathcote and Dianne Otto, "Rethinking Peacekeeping, Gender Inequality and Collective Security: An Introduction" in *Rethinking Peacekeeping, Gender Inequality and Collective Security*, ed. Gina Heathcote and Dianne Otto (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 1–22. As the Global Study on WPS puts it, "Frequently, women are portrayed alongside children, either in pictures or in the pages of reports, and they are almost universally shown as defenceless and vulnerable victims. This has had an effect in policy and in practice." UN Women, *Preventing Conflict*, 86.

48   Similar criticisms have been made in the context of international law: see Ratna Kapur "The Tragedy of Victimization Rhetoric: Resurrecting the "Native" Subject in International/Post-Colonial Legal Politics", *Harvard Human Rights Law Journal* 15 (1) (2002): 1-38.

WHERE IS THE ENVIRONMENT IN WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

This section sets out the ways in which the WPS framework and literature has considered the environment within the agenda. It is also likely to be of interest to scholars of environmental peacebuilding who are unfamiliar with the WPS framework. It provides a short introduction to the framework but is in no way an overview of the rich literature in the field. The WPS framework has variously been described as a "watershed political framework"[39] and "a global policy architecture."[40] It draws attention to the prevalence and pervasiveness of sexual violence in conflict and recognises the important role that women play in contributing to peace through negotiations and mediations. The nine resolutions that now make up the agenda are sometimes conceptualised as falling under four pillars: conflict prevention, women's participation, protection and relief and recovery.[41] Key issues included within the framework include, inter alia, women in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, preventing and responding to sexual violence, women's contribution to peacekeeping missions, women's leadership in peacebuilding,[42] gender as a cross-cutting issue within the WPS, and Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism agendas.[43]

While the history of the adoption of 1325 is an important example of transnational solidarity between women's groups and feminist movements,[44] the framework has since been criticised for its reactive approach to peace,[45] and feminist scholars from various standpoints have expressed disillusionment with what the framework has achieved (or perhaps more accurately, not achieved).[46] For some, the WPS agenda focuses myopically on women as victims,[47] zooming in on the issue of accountability for sexual violence in conflict.[48] Feminist scholars from a variety of disciplines have reacted with scepticism and disappointment to the focus on the militarised security element of the framework, with much work to be done in relation to the peace component of the agenda.[49] This narrow interpretation of "security" has meant that water security, food security, natural disasters and the prevention of gender-based violence against women have all been obfuscated by states, who have instead sought to co-opt the language of gender equality to fight terrorism and use the discourse and co-option of women's rights as a juridical means of regulating war.[50]

Within the "extensive, detained and crowded" literature on WPS there has been slow uptake on research on how WPS relates to climate change, natural disasters and the environment.[51] This is surprising given the recognised disproportionate impact that environmental degradation, extraction and destruction has on women and girls.[52] It is further surprising given that women and human rights defenders from around the world have been visible and vocal in making the linkages between peace, security and the protection of the environment, especially through the theoretical framework of ecofeminism and the activism of indigenous women.[53] Feminist scholars from differing standpoints have a long history of calling for frameworks which recognise the ecological causes and consequences of masculinist mentalities and the impact of the military-industrial complex on women and nature.[54] For example, Joni

Seager has consistently argued that, "Anywhere in the world, a military presence is virtually the single most reliable predicator of environmental damage".[55] Seager expressly draws the intersections between destruction to the environment and violations of women's fundamental human rights, including access to clean water, health, sanitation and food.[56]

In Latin America, the concept of territorial feminismos as a theory and practice has also highlighted the linkages between violence that is exercised towards nature and territory through large scale extraction activities and conflict, and the violence against women's bodies. According to Astrid Ulloa, territorial feminisms are "centred on the circulation and defence of life, the body, territories, and the natural world, as well as the critique of the capitalist and extractivist process of capitalist development".[57] Ulloa's work looks at local initiatives of social movements led by women to control their territory and their own autonomy. Similarly, but in the context of the African continent, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) has drawn attention to the intersections of corporate power, violence against women, colonialism and indigeneity.[58] AWID and others have highlighted the lethal context in which environmental human rights defenders work and the specific challenges faced by women due to their gender and sexuality. These groups struggle against extractive industries, which take over land and natural resources, and deepen existing social and economic inequalities.

Significantly, feminist scholars of different disciplines have challenged the focus of WPS on the militarised security framework by questioning what positive peace and sustainable peace mean for women. Feminist peace scholars have turned to feminist methodologies in order to "make visible and uncover the potential for the flourishing of all living creatures" and to imagine alternatives to the current unsustainable economic system.[59] Thus

Radhika Balakrishnan and Krishanti Dharmaraj argue that there is a need to change the current economic system and base it instead on human rights fulfilment, which considers the policies necessary "to achieve sustainable peace beyond the absence of war and violence."[60] Their linkage of profit over peace and economies of inequality builds upon on a long heritage of work by feminist scholars such as Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, who have theorised the issue through the framework of ecofeminism, explaining:

We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors as feminist concerns. It is the same masculinist mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way.[61]

Alongside the mention of climate change as a cross-cutting issue in UNSCR 2242, the embryonic WPS scholarship has drawn attention to how the effects of global warming and rising sea levels are a form of "slow violence" which poses a risk to women alongside masculinised governance and militarism.[62] Through her work in the Pacific, Nicole George suggests that "there seems to be a vast distance between the regional framing of the WPS agenda and forms of activism that oppose the slow violence of militarism or gendered political marginalization" which also includes climate change.[63] This is because climate change and other factors "are currently not identified as priority concerns amongst WPS activists or within the current WPS policy documents".[64] The lack of prioritisation of climate change within the agenda demonstrates a narrow framing of peace and security by the Security Council which fails to tackle one of the greatest challenges of our time, and fails to understand how gender equality, climate change and environmental degradation intersect with one another.

49 Dianne Otto, "Women, Peace and Security: A Critical Analysis of the Security Council's Vision" *LSE Women, Peace and Security Working Paper Series* 1 (2016): 1-10, www.lse.ac.uk/WomenPeaceSecurity/pdf/2016/wps1Otto.pdf.

50 Fiona de Londras, "Gendering Counterterrorism: How to, and How Not to: Part 1 and 2", *Just Security*, 1 May 2018, https://www.justsecurity.org/55522/gendering-counterterrorism-to/; Vanja Hamzic, "International Law as Violence: Competing Absences of the Other" in *Queering International Law: Possibilities, Alliances, Complicities, Risks*, ed. Dianne Otto (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 77.

51 Kirby and Shepherd, "Reintroducing Women, Peace and Security", 252.

52 CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change, CEDAW/C/GC/37, 7 February 2018. See also UN Environment Programme et al, *Women and Natural Resources: Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential*, (New York, NY: United Nations, 2013), https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_UN-Women_PBSO_UNDP_gender_NRM_peacebuilding_report.pdf.

53 Although Sonja Klinsky has reflected in relation to a workshop on climate equity and justice that feminist theory and methods were largely absent.

54 Carroll W. Pursell, *The Military-Industrial Complex* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Barry Sanders, *The Green Zone: The Environmental Costs of Militarism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).

55 Joni Seager, "Patriarchal Vandalism: Militaries and the Environment" in *Dangerous Intersections: Feminist Perspectives on Population, Environment, and Development*, ed. Jael M. Silliman and Ynestra King (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1999), 164.

56 Ibid; see also Claire Duncanson, "Anti-Militarist Feminist Approaches to Researching Gender and the Military" in *The Palgrave International Handbook of Gender and the Military*, ed. Rachel Woodward and Claire Duncanson, (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2017), 43.

57 Astird Ulloa, "Feminismos Territoriales en America Latina: Defensas de la Vida Frente a los Extractivismos", *Nomadas* 46 (2016), 123.

58 I am grateful to Felogene Anumo for sending me this paper: AWID, *Women Human Rights Defenders Confronting Extractive Industries: An Overview of Critical Risks and Human Rights Obligations* (2017).

59 Annick Wibben et al, "Collective Discussion: Piecing-Up Feminist Peace Research", *International Political Sociology* 13 (1) (2019), 90.

60 Balakrishnan and Dharmaraj, "WPS and Sustainable Development Goals", 704.

61 Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, *Ecofeminism* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 14.

62 Nicole George, "Promoting Women, Peace, and Security in the Pacific Islands: Hot Conflict/Slow Violence", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 68 (3) (2014), 316.

63 Ibid.

INTEGRATING A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH ON WPS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In the international human rights sphere, the Human Rights Committee stated in 2018 that, "Environmental degradation, climate change and unsustainable development constitute some of the most pressing and serious threats to the ability of present and future generations to enjoy the right to life".[65] In the same year, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) made it clear that women, girls, men and boys are affected differently by climate change and disasters, "with many women and girls experiencing greater risks, burdens and impacts" since the situations exacerbate pre-existing gender inequalities and intersecting forms of discrimination.[66] Climate change is thus characterised as one of the defining human rights challenges of our time and a major gender equality and security issue.[67] The underlying causes of climate change and potential feminist solutions, however, have a grounding in the human rights framework before this through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Declaration notes that "women play an important role in promoting sustainable development through their concern for the quality and sustainability of life for present and future generations."[68]

While Deratz, George and Kronsell consider human security studies to be a fruitful framework for understanding WPS's relationship with climate change and environmental protection, it is important to recognise state obligations which currently exist in relation to women and girls in the context of the WPS and human rights framework. Annica Kronsell mentions the Beijing Declaration in her work, but dismisses its relevance and significance on the basis that it does not use the words "climate change".[69] Yet this undervalues the normative importance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which instead uses wording which aligns with the Harmony with Nature framework of the UN General Assembly. Further, most international human rights instruments do not use the term "climate change", which has only been adopted by the UN treaty bodies more recently. In fact, CEDAW General Recommendation no. 37 is the first general recommendation or comment to use this express term. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action remains a vitally important normative document which provides a sustainable vision of economic empowerment for women and which strongly aligns with the SDGs.

Within the WPS resolutions, the inclusion of CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other international legal frameworks mandate an approach which recognises the promotion of an ecologically sound environment and the entitlement to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature as part of the promotion of peace.[70] The Beijing Declaration recognises that the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production. Articles 8 and 9 of UNSCR 1325 are particularly important since they integrate a vision which is inclusive of indigenous processes and feminist approaches to the right to a healthy environment.

As Catherine O'Rourke and Aisling Swaine have explained, CEDAW forms a vital part of state accountability with respect to the WPS agenda due to the reporting obligations placed on states parties.[71] The CEDAW Committee has provided authoritative guidance in its recent recommendations on gender-based violence against women, climate change and natural disasters.[72] General Recommendation No. 35 in particular is important since it expressly links

64 Ibid.

65 Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36 on article 6 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 30 October 2018, CCPR/C/GC/36, article 62.

66 CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 37, para 2.

67 Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh, *State Responsibility, Climate Change and Human Rights under International Law* (London: Hart Publishing, 2019).

68 United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action*, para 248.

69 Kronsell, "WPS and Climate Change".

70 For example, United Nations, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, June 1992, http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/RIO_E.PDF, principle 1, see para 8, 9, 11.

71 Catherine O'Rourke and Aisling Swaine, "CEDAW and the Security Council: Enhancing Women's Rights in Conflict", *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 67 (1) (2018): 167-199.

72 CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 35.

extraction and environmental destruction to gender-based violence against women.[73] The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking has also recently made it clear in her report to the General Assembly:

Conflict-related violence is also used to strip natural resources, forcibly seize land and displace populations, often leading to the trafficking of women and girls who are recruited for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour in illegal mining areas and other extraction zones controlled by non-State actors, such as armed groups or private security services.[74]

The Special Rapporteur has called for an integration of a human rights-based approach to trafficking in persons into the WPS agenda, and has emphasised the importance of paying particular attention to the underlying political economy of violence, including competition for the control of natural resources and mining settlements by armed groups. She argues that women and girls are often seen as "commodities that can be 'used', including in the context of economic activities that involve a concentration of male workers" and has highlighted the linkages between these extractive economies, large and militarised presence of troops and the sexual exploitation of women and girls.[75]

Christine Chinkin and Gema Fernández have argued that integrating the human rights approach on trafficking allows for a breakdown of appropriate responses under the four pillars of prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery. They underline how "sexual violence is used strategically to grasp control of land and resources, destroying the physical and economic security of displaced women and making socioeconomic reintegration vital to relief and recovery".[76] While access to land and livelihoods are frequently understood as aspects of economic reconstruction, they argue that the lack of a human rights and gender approach ignores how the forcible seizing of land, mines and natural

> **Environmental peacebuilding cannot only be about women's participation in the allocation of or access to natural resources, but is vital to ending sexual violence in conflict and promoting gender equality.**

resources relate to conflict-related sexual violence. In other words, environmental peacebuilding cannot only be about women's participation in the allocation of or access to natural resources, but is vital to ending sexual violence in conflict and promoting gender equality.

Beyond conflict-related sexual violence, human rights norms continue to develop important state obligations on climate change which should be integrated into the WPS framework. The CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 37 on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change is a landmark instrument which draws attention to the differential and disproportionate impact of climate change and disasters on women and girls. The General Recommendation categorically rejects the positioning of women as passive and vulnerable in the context of climate change, explaining that this is in and of itself a negative gender stereotype.[77] The Recommendation is shaped by three key general principles: equality and non-discrimination, participation and empowerment, and accountability and access to justice – framed as fundamental to ensuring that all interventions related to disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change are implemented in accordance with the Convention.

General Recommendation 37 begins with an introduction which explains the gendered impact of disasters on women and girls, including the fact that women, girls and boys are affected differently by climate change and disasters, with

73 Ibid, para 14.

74 UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking, *Report Presented to the General Assembly on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, A/73/171, 17 July 2018, para 22.

75 Ibid.

76 Christine Chinkin and Gema Fernández Rodríguez de Lievana, "Special Rapporteur on Trafficking Urges Human Rights Approach and Integration with the WPS Agenda", *LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security blog*, 30 November 2018, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/wps/2018/11/30/special-rapporteur-on-trafficking-urges-human-rights-approach-and-integration-with-the-wps-agenda/, [last accessed 20 April 2019].

77 CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 37, para 7.

> An intersectional and human rights approach to eradicating poverty, disarmament, gender equality and a safe and healthy environment all form part of the important corpus of the WPS agenda's potential of striving for sustainable peace..

many women and girls experiencing greater risks, burdens and impacts due to underlying inequalities. As the Recommendation makes clear, this is due to the limited control many women have over decisions governing their lives, which means that they are more likely to be exposed to disaster-induced risks and losses related to their livelihoods. This in turn means that they are less able to able to adapt to changes in climatic conditions. The General Recommendation highlights that women and girls are impacted disproportionately since they have higher levels of mortality and morbidity in situations of disaster. Gender-based economic inequalities mean that women, and female-headed households in particular, are at higher risk of poverty and more likely to live in inadequate housing in urban and rural areas of low land value that are vulnerable to the impact of climate-related events such as floods, storms, avalanches, earthquakes, landslides and other hazards.

As authoritative guidance this is particularly important since, as Radhika Balakrishnan and Krishanti Dharmaraj argue, holistic human rights fulfilment is a vital part of states reaching their SDGs. General Recommendation 37 specifically states that women and girls in conflict situations are particularly exposed to risks associated with disasters and climate change, thus drawing links with the WPS agenda and General Recommendation no. 30. The detail of the guidance draws attention to the need to promote solutions to tackle climate change and foster gender equality by

taking into account the lived realities of women's lives and diverse experiences. The acknowledgement of traditional and indigenous knowledges in particular is important, since it underlines the need for any peacebuilding programme to be inclusive and intersectional.

It is hoped that this express tour of the normative background to the WPS agenda will familiarise readers with just some of the human rights standards which exist and which must be integrated into the WPS agenda at the UN level and locally through National Action Plans and state reports before the CEDAW Committee.[78] The integration of a human rights perspective (in addition to that of security studies) is important given that thus far the literature has yet to consider the synergies between WPS and the human rights framework on this issue. Significantly, as the CEDAW Committee makes clear "gender equality is a pre-condition for the realization of sustainable development goals."[79] In other words, gender equality is not only a component that is to be mainstreamed throughout the other SDGs but is in fact a pre-condition for the realisation of the 16 other goals, including on efforts to tackle climate change. An intersectional and human rights approach to eradicating poverty, disarmament, gender equality and a safe and healthy environment all form part of the important corpus of the WPS agenda's potential of striving for sustainable peace.

CONCLUSION

As the CEDAW Committee has recently affirmed, climate change is gendered and its impact is deeply unequal. General Recommendation 37 makes it clear that, "While climate change affects everyone, those countries and populations, including people living in poverty, young people and future generations, who have contributed least to climate change are most vulnerable to its impact."[80] Alongside this we might

78 These standards are set out in a forthcoming paper on CEDAW, the environment and militarisation. This working paper forms an early part of this work.

79 CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 37, para 7.

80 Ibid.

add the impacts of "slow violence" from extractive economies in conflict and post-conflict contexts affecting nature, women and indigenous communities. The inadequate and insufficient action within the WPS agenda regarding the connections between gender inequality, climate change, environmental destruction and extractivist economies means that women continue to suffer the consequences of these phenomena with little accountability on the part of those responsible.[81] In order to build a sustainable vision of peace through the WPS framework, the agenda must recognise that the vast challenges facing the planet means that concepts of peace and security must necessarily include environmental sustainability, regeneration and redistribution rather than extraction, and the environmental peacebuilding literature must look beyond natural resource management

and ensure that gender is included within its analysis and frameworks in a cross-cutting manner. At present, both the WPS agenda and the environmental peacebuilding literature remain in their silos, and this boundary must be crossed in order to address global environmental change, foster gender equality and build sustainable peace.

The inadequate and insufficient action within the WPS agenda regarding the connections between gender inequality, climate change, environmental destruction and extractivist economies means that women continue to suffer the consequences of these phenomena with little accountability on the part of those responsible.

81 The disadvantages of the unequal international economic system and their gendered impact were recognised in the *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, A/CONF.177/20, 17 October 1995, https://undocs.org/A/CONF.177/20.

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