



Women's Representation in Peace Processes: A Discursive Analysis of the UNSCR 1325

Sally Maforchi Mboumien

Department of Linguistics and African Languages,
Faculty of Arts, The University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Seino Evangeline Agwa Fomukong

Department of English Modern Letters,
Higher Teacher Training College,
The University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Djimeli Alexandre Tafopi

Department Linguistics of African Languages,
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dschang, Cameroon

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to address the critical issue of the representation of women in peace processes, particularly in conflict-affected areas of Cameroon, from the perspective of language use and the translation of the provisions of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda in daily actions. The study employs a discursive analysis of the WPS agenda, guided by the Discourse Historical Approach by Wodak and Rieseigl and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Data was a document review of the UNSCR1325 of October 2000. The investigation revealed that language use in the policy document shapes the representation of women of peace processes. The finding of the study contributes to the understanding of the representation of women in peace processes and reveals that language use in texts and talks around women, peace, and security policy practice is contributing to the low representation of women in peace processes. The study highlights the importance of identifying discourses in texts and provides a framework for future studies to examine language use in different contexts and expand the discourse analysis techniques employed.

Keywords: language, feminism, WPS, CDA.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between language and power in policy documents is a complex and significant one. The way policies are written and communicated can have a significant impact on their effectiveness and accessibility, and policymakers must consider language choices and the power dynamics at play. The power of the words (language) in a policy document considering the voices and agency they represent, is captured from the earliest stages of conception, planning and drafting since policy texts constantly come into contact with such communities as various public consultations are conducted, which implies a high level of inclusivity (Scollon,

2008). In policy-making discourse, it entails competition for influence and the ability to exert policy agendas including alternatives by one individual or institution over another (Andrea & Hemant, 2013). In such an instance it is easy for discriminatory or exclusionary language to be introduced. Exclusionary or discriminatory language can further marginalize underrepresented groups, and policymakers need to take steps to ensure that their language is inclusive and reflects the diverse perspectives of their constituents. Policies must be written and communicated in ways that do not reinforce harmful gender stereotypes and perpetuate power imbalances (Shephard 2016).

The women, peace and security (WPS) agenda, a policy document on women's inclusion, representation and participation in peace processes, was first endorsed in October 2000 under resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council. Considering the fact that language used in policy documents like this WPS agenda gets interpreted and/or translated by different groups of people bearing different levels of power, there is bound to be irregularities following the varied context of action (Shephard 2011). In this line, language used in the documents is the power it bears on the people for whom it is meant. Discussing the question of power in language use is clearly the very next thing to look into as researchers like (Manchanda 2020) have recommended after analyzing other aspects of the agenda to understand the challenge to get more women in processes. It is important to identify the discourses in the WPS agenda to ensure they enhance gender equality, women's empowerment and respect of human rights.

From a discursive viewpoint, every policy or law codifies a particular construction of social reality, and the transformative goal as well as the projected means required to achieve that goal are part and parcel of this construction, (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead 2009). This implies that the discursive construction for instance of the WPS agenda embeds so many social realities of the power relations in our context which makes the agenda's actualization largely dependent on interest of stakeholders within this construction. The fact that language is everything in policy matters (Greener 2002) is imperative for written texts to enable flexible application of the policy document. Unfortunately, such texts are typically written in a highly generic manner, creating a constant tension between the two extremes of unambiguity and flexibility.

The trends on the representation of women in peace processes as enshrined in the WPS agenda are indicative of the fact that existing approaches to the actualization of the agenda are yet to yield the resultant effects expected by the proponents of the agenda. To this end, this study finds the conversation on women's representation in peace processes still needing some insights, especially from the angle of language use and the translation of the provisions of the WPS agenda in the daily actions of stakeholders especially women as individuals as well as groups or movements. Making this discussion more contextualised this investigation acknowledges that the Cameroonian society still has gender division of spaces and gender division of roles. (Atanga, 2012) which has a great influence on the discursive construction of the WPS agenda within this context.

The low representation of women in peace processes globally and in Cameroon specially despite the United Nations' commitment to this cause since the year 2000 is a trending discourse within the WPS agenda in world peace and security. Though meant for inclusion, the number of women who have been part of peace processes continue to be significantly low. The provisions of the WPS agenda policy documents are interpreted and translated by different

individuals and institutions within varied contexts and levels of understanding which gives room for misconceptions and unequal power relations between implementers and beneficiaries. Consequently, the representation of women within peace processes remains consistently low even with the rising number of security issues plaguing the world though studies and policy provisions root for women's inclusion and participation

This paper is aimed at identifying discourses pushed within the women peace and security agenda (discourse) on the representation of women in peace processes. The investigation that follows is guided by the question How does language within the women peace and security discourse (agenda) contribute to shaping the representation of women in peace processes?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The power of language is argued as one of the components of representation of women in processes, alongside the environment and history of a people. In Cameroon, women have historically valued their motherhood and fertility, knowledge of agriculture production, membership in secret societies, and their role in transitioning deceased women and men through dance and ritual. Women exercised varying levels of power and experienced a spectrum of belonging as wives, mothers, concubines, slaves, queen mothers, and political intermediaries (Fonjong 2005, Atanga 2010).

However, near the turn of the 19th century, political centralization and the expansion of long-distance trade produced new forms of inequality for women as wealth became more concentrated in the hands of elite men who sought to control women's labor and sexuality. Unfortunately, over the century, Cameroonian women have been increasingly integrated into a capitalist political economy that supports local patriarchal authority, changes women's relationships with land, and engenders new socioeconomic inequalities. Poverty is now the new reality for most women, and political leadership is highly financially determined, making it difficult for women to thrive in this space (Taku 2022). To address these challenges, it is important to promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, which, unfortunately, are embedded in the day-to-day functioning of our communities (Atanga 2010). Women's participation and leadership in peace processes should be recognized and supported, and their voices and experiences should be taken into account in decision-making processes (Forkum 2020). Governments and other actors should prioritize the inclusion of women in peace processes and commit to gender equality. The representation of women in peace processes remains a challenge, but it is important to continue to promote women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding efforts (GNWP 2018).

This conflicting discussion on the representation of women in peace processes continues to be of high point in conversations on gender equality as well as women's empowerment. The researcher found this issue an area of interest to shed more light on possible barriers and/or untapped opportunities that can be exploited to ensure an increase in the representation of women in peace processes. Owing to the fact that the entire endeavour is investigating exclusion of women in peace processes, a new dimension to gender studies within the Cameroonian setting, the researcher makes use of the feminist lens in the research to ensure an unbiased research process. It is worth noting that gender studies and especially women's studies in Cameroon have mostly focused on discrimination against women, the contribution of Cameroonian women to the economy and development of the country and women's political

participation (Atanga 2012) as well as leadership (Norman 2022). In addition, gender and language, in Cameroon, especially within political structures in the country, are traditional and conservative and construct women in very traditional ways claiming it is a model Cameroonian woman.

Many researchers like Kirby & Shephard (2016), Otto (2010 & 2014), Scully (2010), and Jayakumar (2022) on women's representation within peace processes uphold that peacebuilding processes are gendered processes that often reinforce existing power structures and elites by upholding the influence of recognized (male) stakeholders. In line with the assertion that peace processes are gendered, and gender dynamics in policies are embedded in the language used (Ellerby 2013), it is important to note that language is at the center in sustaining these power structures (Foucault 2019) and language has a very powerful effect over people, their actions and thoughts (Fomukong 2016). Ultimately, language lies at "the heart of what the WPS agenda is, and what it might become" (Kirby and Shepherd 2016b). Hence, "Power is maintained through language" (Atawneh 2009).

Within the context of women peace and security agenda, Agbalajobi (2009) says women play important roles in peacebuilding. They act as activists and advocates for peace, pursuing democracy and human rights. They also work as peacekeepers, relief aid workers, mediators, trauma healing counselors and policymakers to reduce direct violence and transform relationships. Lastly, women participate in the development process as educators to build the capacity of their communities to prevent violent conflict. These roles are possible due to socialization processes and the historical experience of unequal relations and values that women bring to the process of peacebuilding.

According to Funtah and Gormo (2009), women played an active role in conflict resolution in Cameroon. The region of Grassfields, which has a history of conflict over control of resources, land, and people, saw women actively involved in fighting and/or settling conflicts. They used female secret societies as instruments to effect their intentions and employed preventive diplomacy as a conflict pre-emptive measure when playing the role of architects of peace. Their role in the quest for long-lasting solutions to African crises can also be valuable today if given the opportunity to participate fully in the process.

Tanga (2011) discusses the use of indigenous strategies by the Takumbeng, a female secret society in Cameroon that promotes traditional structures for building peace and supports democratic governance to liberate Cameroon democratically. The protests led by these women have economic, social, and political implications, establishing a new order for women. Despite the Takumbeng's support, the current democratic governance lacks gender sensitivity and social responsibility. Nonetheless, the Takumbeng's activities offer a way for women to participate and represent themselves in politics.

Mougoué (2018) explores the part played by African women in secessionist movements. She highlights the failure to acknowledge their agency, which is embedded in a patriarchal order. The essay argues that women's sociopolitical activities are often co-opted by governments and male-led organizations, limiting their visibility in political discourse. The essay highlights the need for more research on gender and secessionist movements in contemporary Africa. It

emphasizes the importance of examining how gender interacts with other factors to shape these movements and urges scholars to pay greater attention to women's participation in them. Annan et al. (2021) focus on the significant contributions of female-led CSOs to conflict resolution in Cameroon. These organizations have engaged in campaigns for peace, drawing national and international attention to ongoing atrocities, and have worked towards a ceasefire and peaceful resolution of the conflict. The researchers highlight mobilization, networking, and coalition-building as important strategies for creating effective agency in the face of constraints and delegitimization attempts by the state. The study also highlights women's resilience in the face of challenges and their role as key stakeholders in peace processes.

Cheldelin and Eliatamby (2011) challenge the view that women are only victims in war. They argue that women have achieved greater equality with men and are granted heroine status with female militants. However, women are often required to return to prewar social norms.

Women's experiences give them a sense of agency and gender consciousness. Women's movements have maintained a strong grassroots base and created a broad-based network of support by addressing both practical and strategic gendered needs. By framing their narrative as human rights issues, they were able to mobilize supporters and recruit sympathizers, locally and globally. These women-led social movements are impressive examples of navigating the labyrinth by embracing and expanding on gendered identity.

Arostegui (2013) emphasizes the vital role of women in promoting peace and security during and after conflicts. The experiences of women in Rwanda, Uganda, and South Sudan underscore the importance of women's education, advocacy, and organizational skills in conflict resolution. Women have formed networks and peace groups, and now participate in decision-making and politics. They are also involved in justice systems and advocating for accountability for crimes. Arostegui's text emphasizes the need for recognizing women's agency in political discourse to promote peace and security.

In addition to the aforementioned angles to women's representation in peace processes, existing literature on women's issues in Cameroon highlights the historical and present-day political participation of women. Women were leaders of traditional female societies in Cameroon, and indigenous institutions in pre-colonial and post-independence eras. However, the situation of women in Cameroon has changed for the worse over time due to barriers in both physical (leadership positions) and ideological spaces (guide decision-making). Institutional and structural barriers exclude women from physical spaces, while cultural, intellectual, political, and financial limitations hinder women's full and substantive participation within those spaces (Atanga 2020). This background on women's political life presents a history of frontline political participation of women in the past and a present-day decline in this participation, which leaves the researcher curious to understand what happened to change the situation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study, in order to understand language used in the policy document (UNSCR1325), the foundation of the WPS agenda, blends the proponents of the DHA, critique, ideology, naming, agency and elements of gender equality and human rights from Feminist critical discourse analysis.

Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) aims to “analyze, understand, and explain the complexity of the objects under investigation” (Wodak, 2016). DHA considers discourse to be socially constructed and socially constitutive, which means that it both constructs social practices and is, in return, constructed by social practices. To unpack the barriers and opportunities around the representation of women in peace processes the researcher employs two different DHA concepts: interdiscursivity and intertextuality. Intertextuality points to the connection between texts, the reason why we analysed the different texts produced by women movements as well as individual women leaders in answering research questions. The references to other texts often involve a process of ‘recontextualization’, where the information from other texts is framed again (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). This study finds this multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature of this approach a good ground for a more in-depth analysis of the politics, policy, identity and history underpinning the women, peace and security agenda.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

Feminist critical discourse analysis is framework for analysing text while being specifically attuned to the ways language can sustain or challenge gendered power dynamics and social orders, to dive into the lines produced by the UNSC for a better understanding of the influence of the WPS agenda on women’s representation in peace processes as a whole. By reading the policy text the UNSCR 1325 through a critical feminist lens, this research highlights how the WPS agenda positions women in the issue of women’s participation in peace processes by identifying which gendered social norms are upheld, and which are challenged, in language use.

This blend of Discourse Historical Approach and Feminist Discourse Analysis has provided for the use of interdiscursivity to analyse the UNSCR1325 document. Interdiscursivity refers to how a text is created through a combination of language conventions, such as genres, discourses, and styles. It encompasses the entire language system used in a text and is more complex than intertextuality, which only looks at explicit relationships between texts. Interdiscursivity takes into account implicit relationships between discursive formations, making it a more nuanced concept. Knowing about interdiscursivity is vital for analyzing how language is used in various contexts and how it influences our perception of the world.

Women, peace and security agenda has a long-standing history in the conversation of women’s participation in peace processes to ensure sustainable peace and security. However, the landmark UNSCR1325 serves as a starting point to view this as a global agenda that influences, constitutes or enhances women’s representation in peace processes. In this line, the desk review of the provisions led the researcher to investigate the language in the policy. The following extract helped in setting a frame for naming existing discourses within the agenda:

When gender acts as a proxy for women, the real needs of actual women are negated. The foregrounding of gender in policymaking institutions may appear progressive but could also be a way to shift attention away from women and the radical interventions needed to overcome their position of disadvantage. It means that the policy focus has shifted from “women, to women and men and, finally, back to men” (Shepherd 2017).

This leads to the second implication – namely, that the discursive association of gender with women effectively confirms women's lack of agency and subservient position in relation to

men. Shepherd warns that such discursive constructions may impact the amount of resources allocated to women's programs.

Shepherd echoing the risk of a disadvantage in foregrounding gender in policymaking provides reasons for this study to take a look at how naming of targets within discourses in this UNSCR1325 document have been discursively materialised and contributed to the low representation of women in peace processes. This is done in this section by identifying the discourses being articulated in the different texts and talk under review. However, naming discourses involves using language to identify and categorize different discursive formations. This can be done by using descriptive language to clearly define and label the discourse, or by using more evocative language to convey a specific interpretation or perspective on the discourse. The discursive framework for naming discourses involves understanding the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which the discourse is situated. This includes identifying the power relations and ideologies that shape the discourse, as well as the discursive practices and conventions that define it. This implies the following examination of the UNSCR1325 document involves analyzing the ways in which language is used to construct and reinforce particular representations of the women, peace and security discourse. This includes examining the language used to describe the discourse, as well as the ways in which different actors and stakeholders use language to negotiate and contest the representation of the discourse.

DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES

In this section the study analyses the different discourses and ideologies that underlie the discourses identified comprise the women peace and security agenda. The ideologies include the challenges and opportunities that are discursively constructed by the voices of women leaders to reflect their contributions, community influence, and structural and institutional influence in the representation of women in peace processes within the women peace and security discourse.

Increase Representation Discourse

Representation of women in peace processes continues to be an issue within women peace and security discourse which has made many critics believe that the WPS agenda is not being fulfilled in the world. A critical-feminist position maintains that the WPS architecture has left gendered power relations largely unchallenged (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011). Corresponding to this claim, this study revisits the provisions of the UNSCR1325 document on women's representation within the peace and security framework to understand the discourse on women's representation. The resolution makes a clear and loud call on women's representation in peace processes:

Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict; (UNSCR 1325 article 01)

This first call introduced with the verb to ensure is an order which requires intentional and purposeful actions to consolidate demands made on the representation of women and the strategic contribution they can make in the resolution of conflicts. This phrase at all decision-making levels also sets the tone on what kind of women's representation is expected within

international peace and security efforts by the UN security and governments. Using the problem-oriented approach in DHA proposed by (Reisigl and Wodak 2001), the study critiques this provision by focusing on the interdiscursivity of the text. The expression “ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels” by all member states presupposes that women within the peace and security ecosystem are underrepresented or not represented at all necessitating an increase. The demand for increased representation is made in a way that specifies the spaces and actions being targeted for the increased representation. The adjectives “national, regional and international describing the targeted nouns institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict provide grounds for concrete actions that balances the exclusion currently being faced by women in peace processes. This consequently brings to light the focus of women’s representation in formal processes as voices or agency within the peace process. In this article the focus is on increase representation discourse although it is juxtaposed with other discourses like inclusion, participation and expertise constitute strategy of enhancing respect for gender equality and also respect of human rights for all.

Gibbings 2011; Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011 argue that the language of the WPS resolutions and NAPs may appear feminist but in fact entrenches militarist and Western/imperialist positions (Basu 2016). The researcher corroborates this assertion as the call for increased representation of women is juxtaposed with the concept of peace and security of the UN Charter on what it means to ensure and promote world peace and security - militarization. This highlights the ambiguity in the representation of women in language, making the discourse on increasing the representation of women still controversial, with underrepresentation being the norm. The call for the inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions or their appointment as special representatives further reinforces this assertion. The ambiguity in emphasizing the increase of representation discourse justifies the perception of war as a masculine activity, which means exclusion or underrepresentation for women in peace processes consequent on war.

Strategic Participation Discourse

Within the WPS agenda, participation is one of the four pillars and has generated interesting conversations around the level and quality of women's participation in peace processes and security arrangements. However, in the UNSCR1325 the base of this participation discourse it is stated that:

Urges the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard calls on Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster

The focus of women's involvement in the Women, Peace and Security agenda is often centered around demands for care and protection due to their vulnerability. It also involves pleading for consideration of women and children as they are often the most affected by conflict. However, the provision for the Secretary General to appoint and provide for women... challenges the discourse of women as victims and enforces strategic participation for women. This element of perspectivisation recognizes women as social actors who are an integral part of the process, acknowledging their voice and agency.

Considering the fact that the verbs “to appoint” and “to provide” used in the provision is an action required from a superior actor for the benefit of women, this study notes a possible backlash on this women's strategic participation in peace processes. In a bid to unpack the ambiguous presentation of women's strategic participation in the WPS agenda the study looked at this extract:

For all the doors it did open, Resolution 1325 was carefully drafted with the aim of getting a foot in the door in an otherwise ‘boys club’ situation, and to do so, prioritized strategic essentialism. ... Instead of arguing for gender equality or women's rights, it asked for the recognition of women as valuable actors in peace and security (Jayakumar 2022)

In line with the assertion above, this investigation finds the perspective of the article on women's participation limiting since it describes where and when without considering why and how the women should participate. It is an over-ambitious article since it is intended to make women's participation strategic and at all levels without considering specific context barriers to such. Feminist scholars uphold that If for instance the provision stays with women participating within the structures before the passing of the resolution and instances that used to necessitate action before, it means the ground is not leveled to accommodate diversity. This presents women's presence in the strategic spaces as based on tokenism due to the ambiguity embedded in the provision for their appointment to high post of responsibility. It is for this reason that critics also regard as problematic the connection that is made in UNSCR 1325 between women's so-called “participation” (presence) and positive change. They believe states include women in peacekeeping operations for instance because they assume it will socialise actors to behave “better.” They tend to make a normative and policy link between the inclusion of women and more democratic, accountable governance and the goal of more peace and security (True 2011).

The above notwithstanding, the benefits of broad participation are too many to ignore. When we talk of broad participation, we are looking at women's participation not as check boxing but substantial expertise participation in all subject matter at all levels of decision-making. The importance of such participation without barriers is advanced in the following article:

Further urges the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel; (UNSCR 1325 Article 2)

The use of the verb **to expand** signifies a required action to change the existing situation in the United Nations field-based operations. This implies that women are not included within strategic fields in UN issues of peace and security.

Based on the review of the provisions of the UNSCR 1325 on participation, this study finds that the specification of areas for women's participation is an argumentation strategy emphasizing the need to allow women to bring in their expertise within core sectors of security.

The discourse of women's strategic participation here rules out the mere physical presence of women, which promotes lip service by many institutions to the WPS agenda, specifically on respect for human rights and gender equality. Instead, women's strategic participation is looking at broad participation, which reinforces the right to equality and non-discrimination. This makes the resulting plans and strategies more responsive to the needs and expectations on the ground, and increases the level of ownership and commitment to implementation (Hudson 2015).

Inclusion in Decision-Making Discourse

Decision-making spaces have a significant impact on communities, affecting everyone's well-being. Respecting diversity in constituting decision-making bodies is paramount if we want to ensure proper representation and participation. As Hudson (2017) notes, inclusion can raise awareness, contribute to advocacy initiatives, and ensure a variety of perspectives on issues of security that affect diverse stakeholders.

However, this has proven problematic within the women peace and security discourse, as observed in most peace processes. Some scholars argue that "wartime delegations to peace talks are a reflection of the male-dominated societal and conflict dynamics." This claim highlights the constant exclusion of women in formal processes, although their inclusion would undoubtedly add value. Resolution 1325 highlights women's inclusion as a top priority for the WPS agenda as it repeatedly makes the call within the different provisions.

Requests the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures, invites Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment

This provision succinctly brings out the discourse on inclusion in decision-making. It urges the main institution of power, the Secretary-General of the UN, to include women in its actions on the one hand, and on the other hand, asks for the inclusion of women's issues in training packages for all interventions.

Reiterating the importance of "involving" women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as including issues that affect women in processes while engaging member states to replicate such practices, is materializing the agency of women as decision-makers and influencers who must be utilized within the WPS agenda.

Gendered Peace Processes Discourse

War has been given a masculine face, and peace has been given a feminine face, resulting in peacebuilding processes aligning with this framing. This tendency greatly influences outcomes since peace processes are the place where crucial political, economic, and social issues that impact women's everyday lives and their political participation are discussed or, alternatively, disregarded (Comair, 2022). In this regard, many claims are being made on the peace process being gendered. The extract below speaks to the perception of war of the Security Council while adopting the WPS agenda

8. Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia: (a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction; (b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements; (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

These extracts from the policy document embodies the evidence that peace processes are gendered processes. Provision 8 of the policy document just looking at it at a glance is the lengthiest of all the provisions in terms of the number of sentences it contains. In addition, it is the only provision that has sub-sections A-C detailing actions to take to materialise the call for all "to adopt a gender perspective" in peace processes. The underlined lines (the researcher underlined them) within the extract further prove that peace processes are gendered in nature. Line (a) emphasizes the special needs of women and girls, (b) local women's initiatives, and (c) the human rights of women and girls.

This is not a coincidence for this provision to consistently limit the call for action that upholds the well-being of humans as cited above and tag it specifically to women and girls. In conflict, everyone is affected because they have special needs which therefore presupposes that the construction of this text was done within a context that views women as victims, peaceful and needy of protection.

Furthermore, the putting together of the idea of protecting women, supporting their (local) initiatives and respecting their human rights in this particular order, amplifies the second-class status of women in peace processes. The actions required in this three-step call are fundamental to acknowledging any group as part of the process but tying the responsibility more to states and UN institutions (positions that before and during the adoption of this policy are handled by mostly male figures) is the sealing of woman and girls' fate as well as gender in this milieu to be passive as they constitute the object to receive these actions. The precedence set in the required actions within provision 8 are further enforced in provision 17

Requests the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

The Secretary General by extension the security council UNSC in this provision 17 have been liberated from any form of accountability to gender and/or women's issues. The relative clause "where appropriate" makes accountability on the subject optional since it is a matter of choice for them, if they deem fit can do a report on the progress on gender mainstreaming. The report of the Secretary General to the security council is a tool for advocacy since it brings to light concerns to be addressed after the progress made so far has been discussed. In the context of discourse, the researcher sees "his reporting" as power to be part of the actions of the security council deliberations. This possessive noun phrase presupposes the ownership of the security council's process of any issue or group included in the reporting since the report sets the agenda for deliberations. On this premise, this study claims that provision 17 waters down all the

gender provisions included in the document which justifies why in most processes' women and/or gender issues are an afterthought or a check boxing affair. In sum, peace processes as illustrated are gendered in nature and embedded with an unequal power relation that permanently excludes some (intersectional gender identities) irrespective of the context.

Gender Needs Discourse: Women as Weak and/or Lacking

The WPS agenda being a policy alternative to peace and security meaning militarization has expressions that present the other side of violence traditionally being masculine. The WPS agenda addressed patriarchy in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding for the first time on a global stage, (Anderlini 2007) and acknowledges the role that women play at the grassroots in supporting or actually rebuilding their communities in the aftermath of conflict (Jayakumar 2022).

This assertion is intriguing because in the actual resolution 1325 the needs of women are highlighted and a call to address the situation made as seen in the following extract.

Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict. UNSCR1325(10)

An overview of the consistent placing of women, girls, and children in the document endorses the existing claims that women are weak and need help. The nomination "women and children" as a social construction suggests that they are in need of protection and support during and after conflict, serving in this agenda as the justification for the focus of the resolution to be geared towards demilitarization and eradication of armed conflict with all ills associated with it.

The adjectival phrase "special" in line one of this extract qualifies the kind of measures to be taken, portraying the urgency and intentionality of the required action. The study attributes the vibrant and timely humanitarian response from most United Nations agencies in conflict-affected areas to this provision, as it echoes the discourse that women are weak and need protection.

The generalization of this category throughout the resolution carries powers that have gone beyond the document, maintaining women as incapable and in need of protection as well as inclusion into the peace process. This trend in the document has opened up a lot of debates, with many criticizing the construction of women as leaving them as passive and needy receivers of actions.

However, many scholars and activists have questioned the validity of this presentation of women, advancing a contrary view that "humanitarian discourses continue to configure women as victims and end up devaluing the multiple (empowering) roles women take on during conflict of managing community survival and peacebuilding" (Manchanda, 2005). The construction of women in this regard takes away their potential as social actors capable of making meaningful contributions to processes, seen in their representation as a group without voice and consequently no agency.

Women Peacebuilders Discourse: Women as Guarantors of Peace

Peace and security conversations lean on the patriarchal structures influencing daily governance (Dharmapuri 2011). These structures largely project women as soft-spoken and peaceful although critics like Butler say it is wrong to do such presuppositions. However, the WPS recognized the undervalued and underutilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding and highlighted the importance of women's equal and full participation, as active agents in peace and security. This claim within its provisions, projects women as the peace-loving and peacebuilders who are indispensable in the quest to guarantee activists sustainable peace and security within communities. This discourse of women's inclusion in decision-making is a strong pillar on which several gender equality activists and human rights defenders have based their advocacy using the WPS agenda. It has served as a yardstick to measure various processes, talks or dialogue. Most governments pride themselves on being committed to including women in the process.

Women as a Homogeneous Group Discourse

Nonetheless critics have identified this discussion as a source of hypocrisy and lip service from most institutions because the positions or level of decision-making to which women are included remains questionable (Shephard 2016). Many researchers uphold that the underrepresentation of women in peace processes is because women are not yet being included in spaces where hardcore issues like security, peacekeeping missions or foreign affairs make the WPS space masculine in a way.

The criticisms on the over-assumption of the identity of women further portrays the disfavor that the discourse of women as guarantors of peace in doing to the human rights cause. The security council falls short in this stand because the document ignores the fact that multiple identities intersect to create a whole that is different from the component identities. These identities that can intersect include gender, race, social class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, age, mental disability, physical disability, mental illness, and physical illness as well as other forms of identity. (Jayakumar 2022)

Considering women as a singular identity within the document falls short of the principles of intersectionality highlighted in the excerpt above. The resulting effect is low representation of women in processes, as the presence of women in processes is void of considerations of other identities that have been bunched under the "women identity" constructed within the agenda. While the notion of women as guarantors of peace is edifying for women, it should be noted that a disservice is being done to women if the document does not include every woman following their diverse identity, such as language, ethnicity, social status, and more.

The WPS agenda following the discourses analysed so far in this paper has been criticized for its limited focus on the representation of women in peace processes. While the agenda has made progress in recognizing the impact of conflict on women, it has been criticized for focusing on women as victims of conflict rather than as active participants in peacebuilding.

Additionally, the WPS agenda has been criticized for its limited focus on the intersectional nature of conflict, which can disproportionately affect women from marginalized communities.

These criticisms suggest that the language and approach of the WPS agenda may perpetuate double standards in relation to the representation of women in peace processes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the language and approach of the WPS agenda may perpetuate double standards regarding the representation of women in peace processes. While the agenda has made significant progress in recognizing the impact of conflict on women, it has been criticized for its narrow focus on women as victims of conflict rather than as active participants in peacebuilding.

The agenda's limited focus on the intersectional nature of conflict and its failure to recognize the role of women in non-traditional peacebuilding activities have also been criticized. Addressing these criticisms is essential to ensure that women are meaningfully included in peacebuilding processes and that their perspectives and experiences are taken into account when developing policies and programs to address the root causes of conflict.

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