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Feminism in International Security Discourses

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Abstract

In light of the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (WPS), this thesis contributes to understanding the current discursive role of feminism in international security discourses. In a qualitative content analysis of the 8649th meeting of the UNSC on WPS, I analyse how women's/equal participation in peace and security is discursively presented and reproduced. This happens through three main rationales which lay the ground for diverse sub-arguments, namely: rights-based, instrumentalist, and transformative arguments. Concerned by a strong dominance of instrumentalist arguments in the WPS discourse, I pledge for a discursive shift towards a rights-based and transformative thinking of women's/equal participation in peace and security.

Keywords: Feminist Theory, Peace and Security, WPS, Participation, Discourse Analysis

Introduction

The year 2020 is not only marked by a worldwide health crisis and its implications, but it also marks the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325. Together with its nine following resolutions and additional documents, this resolution forms the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. Twenty years after resolution 1325, this thesis shall contribute to assessing the current role of feminism in international security discourses. The WPS agenda, being the UNSC's "institutional response to radical claims" (Charlesworth 2008: 359), appears to be the best site for this. Having brought women as agents in the institutional security discourse for the first time (Cohn 2008: 198), the WPS agenda is considered "the most significant international normative framework (...) promoting women's participation in peace and security processes" (True 2016: 307). In stepping back from technical details in the WPS agenda, my objective is to reflect upon the current role of these "radical claims" (Charlesworth 2008: 359), upon the direction of the agenda as a political project. Rather than assessing the implementation[1] of women's/equal participation[2], I am interested in its conceptual foundations, that is: the discourse around why women's/equal participation in security is being promoted. Consequently, this thesis shall contribute to understanding different feminist approaches to the WPS agenda by analysing the UNSC's most recent debate on WPS, its 8649th meeting. This was held "in preparation for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325" (UNSC 2019a: 1). Therefore, it is a suitable sample to assess the overall direction of the agenda with regard to women's/equal participation.

This paper does not focus on crises in specific countries of conflict, but it rather draws attention to the ongoing "crisis" in current international conflict-solving structures. In using a poststructuralist lens, I suggest that discourses are sites of power which have a direct effect on political happenings (Foucault 1988: 74). This means that I, like Cohn (2008: 197), assume that the WPS discourse has a direct effect on political practices of international security. Consequently, an analysis of the way of arguing for women's/equal participation contributes to understanding two important things. First, arguments for women's/equal participation cannot be pronounced without implying how, by whom and in what this participation is being imagined. And understandings of participation determine what this participation looks like in practice (Whitworth 2004: 126f.; O'Reilly 2013: 7; True 2016: 317). As Gibbings puts it: "(A) particular way of speaking at the UN shapes the possibility of action and limits a supposed freedom of political participation" (2011: 526). Secondly, analysing the arguments for women's/equal participation reveals why the speakers support this participation, and thus is an important step to understand their ambitions in the WPS agenda as a political project. Thus, an analysis of the discourse around women's/equal participation contributes to deconstructing the current discourse around the aim and direction of the WPS agenda as a whole. These two aspects are entwined. If, for example, someone pledges for women's participation because "women bring peace", then this argument implies both how this participation is being imagined (women should participate in a way that women can contribute to peace), and why this participation is considered important (gaining peace is considered the objective of the WPS agenda, and women should participate as long as they contribute to this). Therefore, from a poststructuralist lens, arguments for women's/equal participation are not only arguments; by (re)producing different visions of this concept, they implicitly lay a foundation for firstly forms of participation in practice, and secondly the direction of the WPS agenda. Following this theoretical perspective, this thesis is guided by the research question: How is women's/equal participation discursively presented and reproduced in the 8649th UNSC meeting? The short answer is: Most of the statements made instrumentalise women's/equal participation for other ends. This is problematic, since it lays the foundation for limited spaces of participation and adds a conditionality to participation claims.

But in order to answer the research question properly, one first needs to clarify: what is women's/equal participation, and what kinds of feminist participation claims exist? In 2.1, I therefore conceptualise women's/equal participation in the context of this paper. Since I am interested in the overall ambitions of the WPS agenda, I follow a broad understanding of participation. In 2.2, I develop the theoretical framework for the following analysis, answering the first out of three sub-questions: How do feminist scholars argue for women's/equal participation in international security? I discuss the rationales in feminist scholarship representatively for feminist rationales in international security discourses since, in most cases, feminist scholarship works closely with feminist activism (Gayer and Engels 2011: 13).

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Chapter 3 offers a qualitative content analysis of the 8649th UNSC meeting under the second sub-question: How frequently and in which forms are the different rationales discussed in 2.2 presented in the 8649th UNSC meeting? Since the UNSC builds its decisions on negotiations and compromise (Heathcote 2018: 382f.), the debates of the UNSC are the central space where the UNSC's positions are developed. The 8649th meeting in particular is the most recent debate of the UNSC on WPS and thus the closest one can get to the current state of the discourse. The method qualitative content analysis enables a structured analysis of the discourse, by systematically identifying speakers' patterns of argumentation and measuring the frequency of these patterns. For this, I segregate the different arguments for women's/equal participation discussed in the analytical framework (2.2) into categories of analysis. After having clarified the analytical procedure in 3.1, I discuss the overall findings of the analysis (3.2), and the findings within each analytical category (3.2.1 - 3.2.3).

In the conclusion I debate the function of the discussed arguments as a reproduction of how we think participation, putting the findings from the 8649th meeting in the overall context of the WPS agenda. I also briefly refer to contributions from Nina Bernarding, Director at the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, whom I had a chance to interview for this thesis (see 6.1).

2. Women's/Equal Participation in Peace and Security

2.1 Disentangling Women's/Equal Participation

In order to enable a more precise discussion of women's/equal participation, it appears necessary to first clarify: whose participation, what kind of participation, and the participation in what is meant? Generally speaking, the concept women's/equal participation does not refer to different participation practices (since this would not serve the objective of this thesis), but it is rather a collective term for the diverse forms of feminist involvement with international security. This broad conceptualisation enables us to think of arguments for concrete forms of participation and arguments for the importance of the WPS agenda together.

While most of the arguments discussed in 2.2 work with a clear distinction between men and women, some – including myself – see this distinction itself as a contradiction to feminist ideas. I therefore add the term equal – meaning the equal participation of all social groups – to the term women. This does not only raise awareness to my involuntary reproduction of the social category women in this thesis[3], but it also enables a broader conceptualisation of participation which is not limited to women's participation, but includes men, children, activists, civil society – shortly: everyone. Still, since the WPS agenda is centred around women, this paper (involuntarily) mainly deals with

arguments for women's participation. Participation here goes much further than the participation pillar of UNSC resolution 1325: it means taking part in international peace and security processes, by actively influencing and shaping them. This can be either on an international level, meaning the participation in different UN bodies, or on a local level, referring to a (not necessarily institutionalised) participation of the people in situations of conflict. Feminist arguments for women's/equal participation include both descriptive and substantive participation. In Pitkin's (1967) words, descriptive representation describes women's physical presence, whereas substantive representation refers to the presence of women's demands[4]. This means that the concept of women's/equal participation is not limited to the physical presence of all social groups; it also entails the influence of feminist ideas. As Simic (2014: 186, 195), Ellerby (2016), Goetz and Jenkins (2016: 220) and Pfaffenholz (2019) demonstrate, we have to be aware that the descriptive participation of a group does not necessarily lead to their substantive participation.

This thesis discusses arguments for women's/equal participation in the specific context of international security discourses. In acknowledging that concepts of peace and security deserve a deeper discussion, I understand security as a "historically shifting set of social and political practices" (Gheciu et al. 2018: 11) to overcome the diverse forms of direct and structural violence. The arguments discussed in 2.2 reproduce various understandings of security, which however will not be further examined in this thesis.

To sum up, women's/equal participation in this thesis refers to the equal participation of all social groups, often explicitly women, as well as the presence and influence of feminist ideas, in diverse social contexts related to security. Chapter 2.2 discusses with which presumptions and in which ways feminist scholars argue for this participation.

2.2 Feminist Arguments for Women's/Equal Participation

After having clarified the meaning of women's/equal participation in this thesis, this chapter answers the first sub-question: How do feminist scholars argue for women's/equal participation in international security? Feminist scholarship follows three different main lines of reasoning; rights-based arguments, instrumentalist arguments and transformative arguments. Rights-based arguments demand women's/equal participation based on a human-rights logic. Instrumentalist arguments aim at improving the UNSC's work by using feminist ideas, thinking within the existing UNSC structures. Transformative arguments pledge for participation in order to deconstruct and transform the existing UNSC structures. These three main rationales enable diverse arguments, some of which again lay the ground for more specific sub-arguments.

Some feminist scholars[5] frame women's/equal

participation as a human right. All people, including women, have the right to participate in everything that concerns them, including security issues. As a consequence, there is no need to justify this participation. No matter what the outcome is, everybody has a right to participate. An interesting rationale linked to this are religious arguments for women's participation: Horst (2017: 398ff.) talked to women who argue for their participation based on Islamic women's roles: It is their right and religious duty to participate in building peace.

Rights-based arguments are maybe the most powerful, but at the same time the most imprecise way of arguing for women's/equal participation; on the one hand, rights-based participation is not bound to any condition and can be used as a "one fits all" argument for everyone's descriptive and substantive participation on all levels. On the other hand, however, a rights-based approach leaves the question open of what this participation implies for the ones participating as well as for the structures in which they participate. It is not directly linked to any aspirations which could come true together with this participation. In addition, O'Reilly (2013: 7) warns that rights-based arguments for women's participation can be easily instrumentalised by the UNSC as a way to deal with its lack of legitimacy.

Instrumentalist arguments denote all arguments which aim at improving the UNSC with feminist ideas, thinking within the existing structures. The term instrumentalist refers to the fact that feminist theory is being used as an instrument – not as an end in itself – to improve the work of the UNSC. Also, instrumentalist arguments have in common that they are based on difference feminism, working with a clear distinction of men and women, and aiming at revaluing female traits.

The most common instrumentalist argument for women's/equal participation is the women bring peace argument. It links gender equality to successful peacekeeping, claiming that women are more peaceful than men and that consequently, women's participation leads to more sustainable peace (Ellerby 2013: 455; O'Reilly 2013: 1, 6; True 2016: 308; Pfaffenholz 2019: 4ff.). Within this narrative, Fukuyama (1998) argues from an essentialist mindset that women are more peaceful than men by nature, and Ruddik (1998; 2009) develops the concept of maternal thinking as an alternative to militarist peacebuilding. Some constructivists, however, trace this claimed peacefulness back to women's upbringing and to gender norms (De La Rey and McKay 2006; Anderlini 2007; Pfaffenholz 2019: 11). Additionally, women are said to bring peace due to better mediating styles (O'Reilly 2013: 5), and by deploying different peacekeeping techniques than men (Whitworth 2004: 126). According to Anderlini (2008: 55f.), women identify more easily with women from the enemy side, because women from both sides share the experience of being oppressed.

While women bring peace arguments address women's character, different perspective arguments target the content of their participation. They claim that women's participation brings in a different per-

spective and agenda, and thus enables the UNSC to do more effective work. As Whitworth (2004: 124) shows, this way of arguing is closely connected to the concept of gender mainstreaming. Different perspective arguments lay the ground for two sub-arguments. Firstly, Anderlini (2008: chapter 3, 5), Gibbings (2011: 528) and Pfaffenholz (2019: 3) argue that women have different needs than men, and that the UNSC can meet these needs only through women's participation. The different needs argument becomes then an instrumentalist argument when these often essentialised[6] women's needs are framed as a reason for why women should participate. Secondly, different perspective arguments appear in a capitalist market logic, selling women's perspectives as an "untapped resource"[7] of valuable knowledge (Cohn 2008: 201; Gibbings 2011: 529). O'Reilly, for example, writes: "(O)ne source of fresh perspectives and alternative approaches remains largely untapped: women" (2013: 1), and Anderlini gives examples of "what women saw that men could not" (2008: 166). Whitworth (2004: 136f) portrays women's participation as a chance for the UN to improve their work by gaining access to "gender information". This "gender information", or "gender expertise" (O'Rourke 2014: 16), does not necessarily imply the descriptive participation of women.

International women for locals arguments claim that women's descriptive participation on the international level influences the local level positively. This lays the ground for two sub-arguments. The role model sub-argument constructs international women as role models for local women (O'Rourke 2014: 10f). Whitworth (2004: 127), for example, argues that the more women are in the international personnel, the more local women will join peace committees. Secondly, what Heathcote (2018) calls protective participation frames women's participation as a means to reduce sexual violence. According to Odanovic (2010: 73) and Stiehm (1999: 56), international women peacekeepers have better access to local women and can therefore better help local women who experience sexual violence. Simic (2010: 190; 2014: 188) sees in this rationale the UNSC's attempt to save its own reputation rather than "saving" women. And, most importantly, the protective participation sub-argument leaves the structural dimension of sexual violence untouched (Whitworth 2004; Simic 2010; Pratt 2013).

However, there are also rationales in feminist scholarship which tackle women's/equal participation from a structural perspective. I classify all arguments that aim at deconstructing and transforming the existing international security structures[8] as transformative arguments. Feminist scholarship increasingly investigates the role of men and masculinities in peace and security (Gayer and Engels 2011:14,16; Ellerby 2013: 442; Zürn 2020). Charlesworth (2008: 351, 359) and others criticise that there is no clear distinction in the WPS discourse between gender, being a social category of power dynamics, and the social group of women. This imprecision leaves the role of men in international

security mostly unquestioned. According to O'Reilly (2013: 9) and Horst (2017: 396), an important reason for the lack of women's participation is that some powerful men do not want to share their power with women. Therefore, we should stop speaking about women, peace and security, and start speaking about men, peace and security. This includes explicitly acknowledging men's overrepresentation (Heathcote 2014: 52,58; 2018: 382), as well as asking about hegemonic masculinities and the UNSC's complicity in gendered violence (Heathcote 2018: 391). Tickner (1995) makes the important point that unlearning masculinity is possible, and that this is the only way to enable a comprehensive thinking of security.

Closely linked to the critique of masculine structures, Whitworth (2004: 137), Cohn (2008: 197f), Gibbings (2011: 532), Demetriou and Hadjipavlou (2018) and others reject an understanding of participation as women's inclusion into a militarist system (Cohn 2008: 198f). Instead, the WPS agenda should present anti-militarist alternatives to the UNSC's current policies. Anderlini (2008: 54ff.) and Ellerby (2016: 138f.) show what these alternatives could look like, giving examples of women's resistance to militarism in areas of conflict. Anti-militarist arguments are built on the normative standpoint that "the use of violence should be of deep concern to feminist actors" (Heathcote 2018: 387). The difference between instrumentalist women bring peace arguments and transformative anti-militarism arguments is that the former understands women's participation as a means to solidify existing militarist security structures, whereas the latter aims at transforming these structures into non-militarist ways of building peace.

According to Orford (2010: 282), arguing for women's participation only within the boundaries of already set projects undermines the transformative potential of the WPS agenda. In the logic of Hunt's (2006) concept of embedded feminism, Brunner (2011), Heathcote (2018: 386ff.) and others warn from a co-option of feminist ideas into the existing UNSC structures. Counter-terrorism, for example, is brightly mentioned in WPS resolutions, while the WPS agenda does merely play a role in the UNSC's counter-terrorism resolutions (Ní Aoláin 2016). One important feminist objective within the WPS agenda is therefore to fight the co-option of feminism in the UNSC.

Horst (2017: 402) criticises that local realities are mostly absent in the international WPS discourse. Accordingly, Kapur (2005) and Heathcote (2014; 2018) argue that the discourse on WPS is driven by culture essentialism, meaning that the UNSC imposes gender assumptions about women in areas of conflict instead of acknowledging the diversity of local gender norms. They criticise international narratives which understand participation as an elitist project while victimising women in the Global South (Heathcote 2018: 392). Pratt applies Spivak's (1988: 92) postcolonial critique of "white men saving brown women from brown men" to the WPS discourse and writes: "The international

community positions itself as the savior of the 'brown women' from the 'brown men,' evoking the language of colonialism" (Pratt 2013: 775f). One more transformative argument for women's/equal participation is therefore the objective to decolonize the UNSC.

The last transformative argument for women's/equal participation is to deconstruct gender binaries. As long as we think in a male – female binary and link this to a war – peace binary, we can neither reach peace nor gender equality (Charlesworth 2008: 357; Ellerby 2016: 138ff; Horst 2017: 397). Some feminist scholars therefore pledge for abandoning the men – women dichotomy in the security discourse. This would enable us to address the inequities among women and across genders (Cohn 2008: 202; Pratt 2013: 774; Heathcote 2014: 53; Horst 2017: 398 Pfaffenholz 2019: 10f), and to include non-binary people in the participation discourse, who still do not have a voice in the WPS agenda (Hagen 2016). Zürn (2020) suggests abolishing the category women and to replace it with a more complex model of power relations. This would also abrogate existing implicitly gendered hierarchies between institutions, namely the hierarchies between the male military and UNSC on the one hand, and the female civil society and NGOs on the other hand (Hagen 2016: 319). The following chart summarises all arguments discussed in this chapter, which at the same time form the categories of analysis for the following chapter.
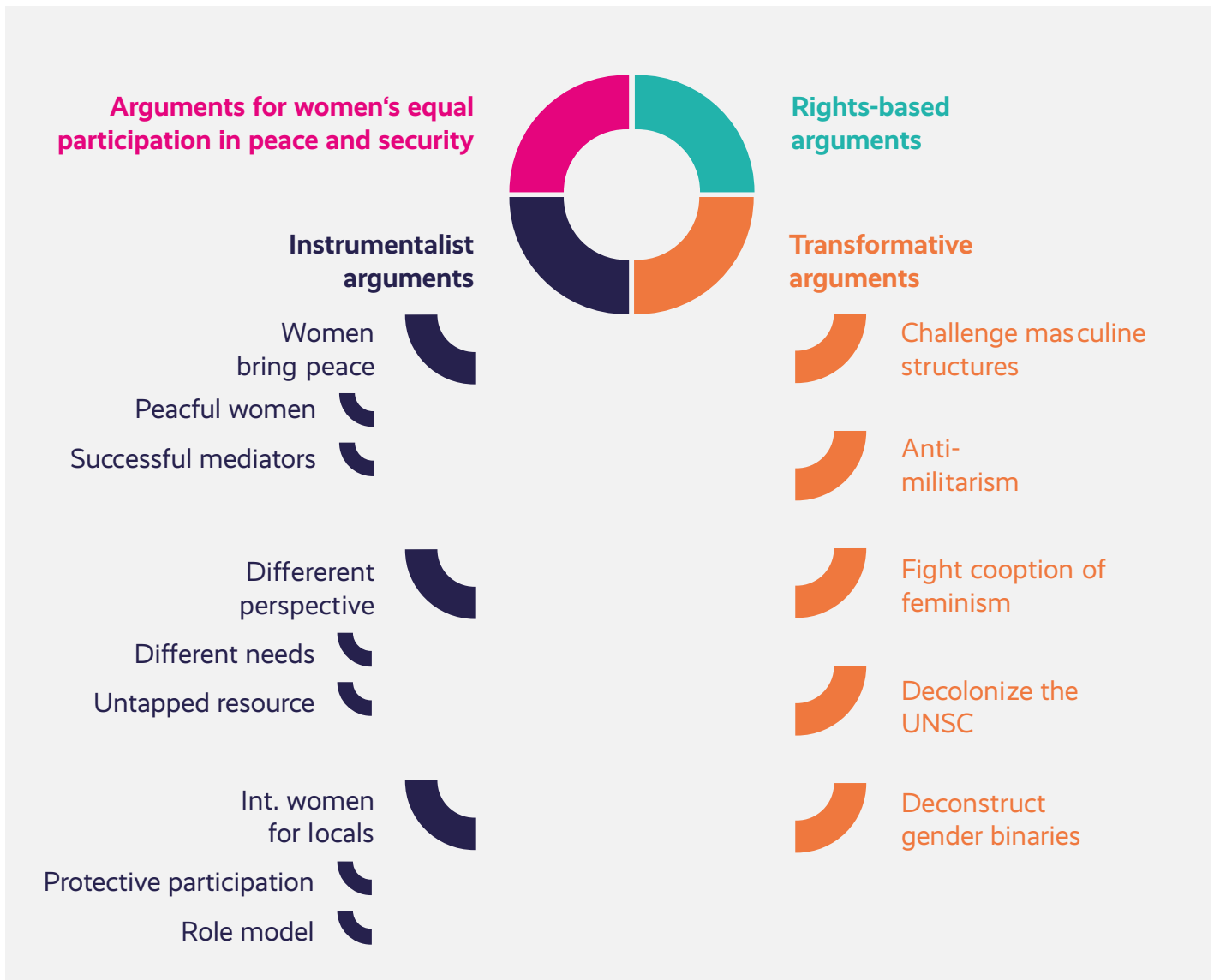
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Figure 1: Arguments for Women's/Equal Participation in Peace and Security

3. Qualitative Content Analysis of the 8649th UNSC Meeting principles

3.1 Analytical Procedure

Inspired by Mayring (2015), I conduct a qualitative content analysis of the UNSC's 8649th meeting on WPS. Before discussing the results of this analysis, I want to briefly clarify which analytical steps I took. Initially, I created a codebook (see 6.2) where I deductively formulated indicators for each of the arguments discussed in 2.2. I gave each indicator a letter (e.g. "argues that women have better mediating styles than men" = indicator G). In order to enable a differentiated discussion of the presence of specific arguments, I created indicators not only for the three main rationales, but also for all arguments and sub-arguments. As a next step, I scanned the two documents of the 8649th UNSC

meeting for arguments for women's/equal participation, and collected the arguments found in tables. In these tables, each argument listed has an indicator behind the quote so that one can retrace why a specific argument has been classified for example as an instrumentalist argument (e.g. a quote is an instrumentalist argument, because it "argues that women have better mediating styles than men" (= indicator G), and (G) indicates the "women bring peace" argument, which is an instrumentalist argument). I collected the arguments of state representatives and these of the briefers (including Ms Salah) in separate tables, so that one can compare their ways of arguing for women's/equal participation. Since Ms Salah is the only briefer who is not affiliated with any international organisation, I paid specific attention to the frequency distribution of her arguments for women's/equal participation.

Coded statements from	Rights-based arguments	Instrumentalist arguments	Transformative arguments
State representatives	17 %	59 %	24 %
Briefers	11 %	47 %	42 %
Ms Salah (activist)	14 %	29 %	57 %
Total (all statements)	16.5 %	57.5 %	26 %

Table 1

The most obvious and most relevant finding of the conducted qualitative content analysis is that instrumentalist arguments for women's/equal participation strongly dominate the discourse in the 8649th meeting. The table shows the overall results of the analysis. With 57.5% of the total sum of 212 coded statements, there are more instrumentalist arguments stated than rights-based (16.5%) and transformative (26%) arguments together.

Both state representatives and briefers use mainly instrumentalist arguments for women's/equal participation, and even though Ms. Salah argues differently, this has almost no effect on the overall discourse. In stepping into a more detailed analysis, the following subchapters examine which sub-arguments within these three rationales are hegemonic and which ones barely play any role in the 8649th debate.

3.2.1 Rights-Based Arguments

Out of the three main rationales, rights-based arguments are the least frequent in the debate. This does not necessarily mean that the power of rights-based approaches is as little as the results suggest. Rights-based arguments are not as easy to identify as instrumentalist or transformative arguments: If one regards the need for women's/equal participation as an obvious matter of course, then one might either not see the need to argue for this, or consider an argument for women's/equal participation as a threat of putting a natural right up for discussion. Thus, it is in the nature of rights-based arguments that they are often not pronounced. There are speakers in the debate who do not mention any arguments for women's/equal participation or for the importance of the WPS agenda at all. For example, Mrs. Chatardová (Czech Republic) only reports on their national achievements and initiatives with regard to the WPS agenda (UNSC 2019b: 6), leaving unclear why she supports it. She might not bring any arguments for women's/equal participation because she follows a rights-based approach, but it is just as likely that Mrs. Chatardová does so for other reasons (such as a lack of time). We simply cannot not tell.

Fortunately, there are also clearly rights-based arguments in the debate: Fourteen statements frame women's/equal participation as a normative objective or responsibility, and 16 statements refer to it as a human right. Five out of 35 as rights-based coded statements explicitly refuse to put women's/equal participation up for discussion, such as Ms. Quiel Murcia (Panama):

"(…) it is unacceptable to continue debating and questioning neither the leadership of women and their right to hold high-level positions nor the equal participation of 100 per cent of the population in any sphere of political, social and economic life (…)." (UNSC 2019b: 10)

To sum up, only 16.5% of all statements have been coded as rights-based arguments. These frame women's/equal participation as a right, and the WPS agenda as a normative responsibility. Since it is difficult to measure rights-based approaches, there might be more rights-based thinkers in the debate than a qualitative content analysis can show. Having this uncertainty in mind, we can say that rights-based arguments are present, but do not play a key role in the debate.

3.2.2 Instrumentalist Arguments

With 122 statements, instrumentalist arguments make up 57.5% of all coded statements. Thirty-four of these are generally instrumentalist arguments that frame women's/equal participation as a means or precondition for achieving peace and security. Women bring peace arguments are the most prominent sub-argument not only within the instrumentalist rationale, but among all sub-arguments across the categories: they make up 26% of all coded statements. Thereby, women's/equal participation is understood as the inclusion of women into the existing masculine and militarist system:

"We are not speaking empty rhetoric when we refer to the participation of women — we have women here from our various armed forces in South Africa and our police service who have served in peacekeeping missions." (UNSC 2019a: 15)

I identified 24 different perspective arguments, the majority (17) of them focussing on women as an "untapped resource". Monsignor Charters (Holy See), for example, speaks of women's expertise which needs to be "harnessed" (UNSC 2019a: 5). With four statements, women's needs arguments are much less prominent

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than untapped resource arguments. With 9 coded statements, the hierarchisation between international and local participation plays, at least explicitly, a rather less prominent role. However, one observation discloses that the narrative of international women helping local women might implicitly be much more powerful than explicitly stated: During the entire debate, speakers refer to "women" in the third person. In assuming that a vast majority, but at least some of the speakers identify as "women", I ask: Why don't they include themselves when speaking about "women"? To give an example, the president, Mrs. Pandor, states: "Women are tired of us talking" (UNSC 2019a: 15). This sounds convincing, but whom does she mean by "women" and whom does she mean by "us"? The discursive use of "women" might be a rhetorical means or simply the UN's diplomatic language. But at the same time, it appears to me as an implicit othering; the construction of "women", who are not present in the debate, for whose participation the speakers argue, but which the speakers themselves do not identify with.

Throughout the debate, women's/equal participation is mainly explicitly framed as a women's issue, and "women" are talked about as if they were somewhere far away from the UNSC. Arguments that women were needed to build peace, and that the UNSC could benefit from women's or gender knowledge, are the leading narratives in the discourse.

3.2.3 Transformative Arguments

Only 55 of all coded statements can be considered transformative arguments. In eight passages, state representatives generally pledge for critical thinking and transformation in international security. Although this number is obviously very low, we can here see some imprecise, but at least existent movement towards a transformative understanding of women's/equal participation in peace and security. The need to challenge masculine structures is with 27 coded statements by far the most prominent transformative argument. Unfortunately, structural inequalities, misogyny, and violent masculinities are often framed as cultural problems which are far away from the UNSC. Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia) is one of the only two speakers who explicitly raise awareness to the existing masculine structures within international institutions by saying:

The root causes of women's chronic under-representation in peace talks, and, broadly, in the security sector, include discriminatory laws and practices, institutional obstacles, gender stereotyping and the existence of predominantly masculine structures within the system. (UNSC 2019b: 2)

Interestingly, with regard to anti-militarist arguments in the debate, we can observe a clear difference between state representatives and briefers: While anti-militarist arguments make up only 3% of state representatives' statements, the equivalent percentage is 21%

for briefers' statements. While state representatives are mostly silent about the need for anti-militarist approaches to security, one of the briefers, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, criticises the existing militarism:

"Feminist organizations' repeated calls for disarmament, arms control and shifting military spending to social investment still go unanswered. It seems easier to use arms than to deliver clean water (…)." (UNSC 2019a: 6)

I could find only one statement, by Mrs. Tripathi (India), which tackles the co-option of feminist ideas in the agenda, demanding to "ensure that this agenda is not used as a ploy for furthering interterritorial ambitions" (UNSC 2019b: 13). And even though this statement matches with indicator Q, it only accuses one (unnamed) delegation of co-opting the WPS agenda and does not aim at commenting on the discourse around women's/equal participation in general. We can therefore say that the risk that the UNSC co-opts feminist ideas is not at all discussed in the 8649th meeting. Similarly, with three coded statements, the postcolonial objective to decolonise the UNSC plays almost no role. The need to "also attend to the issue at home" (UNSC 2019a: 22) and to "ensure equality among states" (UNSC 2019a: 30) are not more than tentative hints to colonial structures. The only statement (by Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser) where "measures of colonization" (UNSC 2019b: 32) are explicitly mentioned, refers to the conflict in Palestine.

Six statements have been coded as arguments to deconstruct gender binaries. These mainly follow intersectional approaches, stressing the diversity of the group "women", and demand that the "women and peace and security agenda must be a whole-of-society enterprise and not just left to women" (UNSC 2019b: 4). I see this as a spark of hope in the discourse, especially within an agenda that carries the word "women" in its name. However, the feminist objective to deconstruct a male – female binary in thinking peace and security seems to not (yet) have reached the UNSC discourse. Interestingly, the participation of civil society plays a prominent role during the debate, being mentioned 34 times (e.g. UNSC 2019a: 33). Civil society is explicitly framed together with "women", and so implicitly thought to be feminine. This confirms Hagen's (2016: 319) observation that institutions are gendered, and that civil society's role is understood as a women's issue.

The analysis has shown that the meeting entails a diverse spectrum of arguments for women's/equal participation. However, rights-based and transformative arguments only play a subordinate role. Women's/equal participation is focussed on "women", and dominantly understood as women's inclusion into the existing masculine and militarist structures. Instrumentalist arguments, and especially the narrative that women's/equal participation is a precondition to reach security, dominate the debate.

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Conclusion

We have seen in the case of the 8649th meeting that women's/equal participation is mainly presented as a means for the UNSC to reach security. Even among the briefers – with the exception of Ms. Salah – we could see mainly instrumentalist narratives of thinking women's/equal participation.

If we look at the overall WPS discourse since resolution 1325, we could interpret this dominance of instrumentalist narratives in the 8649th meeting as an evidence that feminism in the UN discourse has over the time evolved "from a critical to a problem-solving tool" (Whitworth 2004: 139). However, this conception might be misleading. Cohn (2008: 196f.) asserts that the WPS agenda never was framed as an anti-militarist or feminist project: Almost all NGOs which lobbied for resolution 1325 distanced themselves from feminism and anti-militarism, and they were concerned to appear as apolitical as possible[9]. Since the very beginning of this political agenda, the denial of transformative aspirations might have been a conscious lobbying tactic, and instrumentalist arguments for women's/equal participation might have been the only peaceful way for feminists to be heard by the UNSC at all (Cohn et al. 2004: 138; Simic 2010: 190; Pratt 2013: 775).

Nevertheless, acknowledging the use of instrumentalist arguments in that specific context does not mean to me that the ways of arguing for women's/equal participation do not matter as long as they make participation possible (Cohn 2008: 201). As discussed in the introduction, the way of arguing for women's/equal participation always implies a vision of what this participation looks like and of the roles that the participants will play; I see the coded and analysed statements not only as a presentation of arguments, but as a reproduction of the concept of participation within this particular context and herewith as a way to determine the purpose of the WPS agenda. This reproduction might be conscious or subconscious, explicit or implicit, but in the end, it creates political practices and realities. I pledge for a transformation of the existing international security structures, and I am convinced that this can only happen in a transformative discourse.

An instrumentalist thinking ensures women's/equal participation only as long as it is beneficial for the UNSC (O'Rourke 2014: 21f.). It reduces a gender dimension to an "add-on", and forecloses pivotal questions such as: Which issues do we consider to be relevant for international security? And are we using the right means and processes to tackle these issues? A rights-based approach, however, enables participation which is not bound to any conditions. And a transformative approach bears the potential for the ones participating to question existing structures and to transform understandings of and practices in international security. To sum up, if the WPS agenda is to transform the UNSC's work, the first step for a transformative discourse must be abandoning instrumentalist narratives.

I disagree with Whitworth (2004) who claims that an instrumentalist argumentation in the past has foreclosed any transformative intervention. Would the UNSC have been more open for transformation before resolution 1325? I do not think so. Compared to what the UNSC's gender awareness looked like before 2000, I consider the WPS agenda as a great success, and some even celebrate it as an important tool for local women (Demetriou/Hadjipavlou 2018). Nonetheless, now that feminist ideas have a foot in the door of a masculine institution, it is our[1] task to distance ourselves from an instrumentalisation of these ideas and to actively promote a transformative agenda – not only when speaking about the UNSC, but within the discursive spaces of power that feminists now have access to.

There are many important questions left to discuss, such as: What about excluded people who do not support the objective of their participation? or: What could a transformation of international security structures look like in practice? But I want to close with one last thought which accompanied me through my whole working process: I have chosen security discourses as one sight of investigation in analysing the discourse around feminist demands. However, I sometimes question how helpful my approach can be to changing things for the better. I have never lived as a – fill-in any marginalised person here – in a situation of armed conflict. My knowledge is solely theoretical and acquired from an extremely privileged position. Am I (and most of the people whose contributions I have read and discussed here) in the right position to comment on this discourse? My last demand from the WPS agenda is simple, yet still unrealised: Let us stop speaking about excluded groups and about conflicts as if they were somewhere far away. Let us listen to those who have been excluded for too long, and to those who are directly affected by the decisions made.

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Footnotes:

[1] This has already been examined elsewhere (True 2016; Horst 2017).

[2] A conceptualisation of this will follow in chapter 2.1.

[3] Dittmer (2011) reflects upon the difficulties of doing research as a feminist scholar in male institutions, arguing that by working within male hegemonies, feminist scholars inevitably reproduce gender dichotomies and hierarchies.

[4] For a more differentiated conceptualisation of women's participation, including formal and symbolic representation, see also Phillips (1998, 2001), Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler (2005) and Nazneen (2016).

[5] namely: Reilly 2007; Charlesworth 2008; O'Reilly 2013: 5; O'Rourke 2014: 11-12; True 2016: 308; Heathcote 2018: 384; Pfaffenholz 2019: 2.

[6] O'Rourke (2014: 6), Heathcote (2014: 52; 2018: 381, 385) and others warn from essentializing women's needs and pledge for giving space to their diversity.

[7] Here, the citation marks do not mark a quote, but my personal critical distance to this concept.

[8] I write "closely linked" here, because Tickner (1995) and others, including myself, explicitly think militarism and masculinities together.

[9] Among the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG), only the Hague Appeal for Peace and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) committed to anti-militarism, and the WILPF was the only explicitly feminist NGO.

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Appendix

Codebook

	Argument from theoretical framework	Indicator	Example from the 8649th UNSC meeting
A	Rights-based arguments	Frames women's/equal participation as natural / human right	Women and men have exactly the same right to take part in decisions concerning their future. (UNSC 2019a, p. 31, right column)
B	Rights-based arguments	Frames women's/equal participation as normative objective / responsibility	It is imperative to secure women's full right to participation and decision-making at all stages of the peace process (1st, 19, r.)
C	Rights-based arguments	Refuses to justify the need for women's/equal partici-pation	(…) it is unacceptable to continue debating and questioning neither the leadership of women and their right to hold high-level positions nor the equal participation of 100 per cent of the popula-tion in any sphere of political, social and econo-mic life (2nd, 10, r.)

Table 2: Indicators for rights-based arguments

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Appendix

	Argument from theoretical framework	Indicator	Example from the 8649th UNSC meeting
D	Instrumentalist arguments (general)	Frames women's/equal participation as an instrument / a condition for peace and security	(…) there is no more effective instrument for the promotion of peace and international security than the empowerment of women (1st, 29, l.)
E	Women bring peace (general)	Links women's/equal participation to successful peace	(…) women improve the effectiveness of peace-keeping missions (1st, 3, l.)
F	Women bring peace: Peaceful women	Refers to women's peacefulness	women (…) are more likely to advocate for accountability and services for the survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. (1st, 23, r.)
G	Women bring peace: Successful mediators	Argues that women have better mediating styles than men	Including women at the peace table can also increase the likelihood of reaching an agreement, as women are often viewed by negotiating parties as honest brokers. (1st, 23, r.)
H	Different perspective (general)	Argues that women's participation brings in a different perspective	Women are in fact not only part of the solution, but have also been influential in serving as a source of inspiration (1st, 26, r.)
I	Different perspective: Different needs	Argues that women's needs can only be met through women's participation	The specific needs of girls and women must be included in the strategies of those missions. Missions must incorporate women (…) (2nd, 18, l./r.)
J	Different perspective: Untapped resource	Emphasizes women's knowledge / skills / expertise / resources	(…) advocate for the full deployment and use of women with tremendous skill that are committed to the agenda (1st, 7, l.)
K	International women for local women (general)	Distinguishes between two types of women: women as saviours and women as victims	The women leaders (…) must work in their civil society role as partners for the implementation of urgently needed assistance programmes for women in remote areas. (1st, 12, l.)
L	International women for local women: Protective participation	Argues that international women protect / rehabilitate local victims of violence	(…) support for victims and prevention initiatives need to be bolstered in the provinces. To this end, it is necessary to increase the number of women Blue Helmets deployed on the ground in the communities. (1st, 11, r.)
M	International women for local women: Role model	Argues that international women's/equal participation can be a role model for local women's/equal participation	As an international role model, it is imperative that the United Nations conduct itself in accordance with the SDG 5 and the women and peace and security agenda. (2nd, 17, r.)

Table 3: Indicators for instrumentalist arguments

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Appendix

	Argument from theoretical framework	Indicator	Example from the 8649th UNSC meeting
N	Transformative arguments (general)	Pledges for critical thinking /transformation in peace and security institutions	We are facing a challenge that requires a transformative and sustained effort over time. (2nd, 20, l.)
O	Challenge masculine structures	Addresses structural / cultural inequalities	The root causes of women's chronic under-representation in peace talks, and, broadly, in the security sector, include discriminatory laws and practices, institutional obstacles, gender stereotyping and the existence of predominantly masculine structures within the system. (2nd, 2, r.)
P	Anti-militarism	Pledges for disarmament / overcoming violence	Feminist organizations' repeated calls for disarmament, arms control and shifting military spending to social investment still go unanswered. It seems easier to use arms than to deliver clean water (1st, 6, r.)
Q	Fight cooption of feminism	Warns from instrumentalising the WPS agenda for other interests	(…) ensure that this agenda is not used as a ploy for furthering interterritorial ambitions. (2nd, 13, l.)
R	Decolonise the UNSC	Addresses power inequalities between states / Criticises the victimisation of women from the Global South	(…) the equality required to tackle the root causes of conflicts and their increasing complexity goes well beyond gender equality. It also encompasses and reflects the need to ensure equality among States and the right of all States to sustainable development. (1st, 30, l.)
S	Deconstruct gender binaries	Pledges for the rights / equal participation of all social groups, not only "women"	The women and peace and security agenda must be a whole-of-society enterprise and not just left to women. (2nd, 4, r.)

Table 4: Indicators for transformative arguments

Appendix

	Total number of statements coded with this indicator	Statements by state representatives	Statements by briefers	Statements by Ms Salah (included in briefers' statements)
A	*16*	14	2	1
B	*14*	14	-	-
C	*5*	5	-	-
D	*34*	32	2	-
E	*47*	44	3	2
F	*4*	4	-	-
G	*4*	4	-	-
H	*3*	3	-	-
I	*4*	4	-	-
J	*17*	15	2	-
K	*3*	2	1	-
L	*5*	4	1	-
M	*1*	1	-	-
N	*8*	8	-	-
O	27	23	4	1
P	*10*	6	4	2
Q	*1*	1	-	-
R	*3*	3	-	-
S	6	6	-	-

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Table 5: Frequency of Indicators