

# Everyone wants (a) peace: the dynamics of rhetoric and practice on 'Women, Peace and Security'

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This article makes a contribution to the special section of this issue of *International Affairs* which offers a novel take on norms research based on 'dynamics of dissent'. Following earlier work that addressed 'dynamics of norm change' and 'norm robustness',<sup>1</sup> this special section stands out in the field of norms research in International Relations (IR) theory in so far as it shifts the ontological focus from 'norms' to 'practices'. By studying distinct practices of norm contestation, Stimmer and Wisken seek to offer a balanced trial of 'public debates over the meaning of norms'<sup>2</sup> and what they call 'non-discursive forms of contestation'.<sup>3</sup> To that end, they 'differentiate between contestation *by means of discourse*' (i.e. 'discursive contestation') and 'contestation *by means of actions* that affect implementation' (i.e. 'behavioural contestation').<sup>4</sup> Based on this distinction, the special section highlights two questions: first, 'under what conditions should we expect to see behavioural and discursive contestation, respectively?' And, second, 'What effects can behavioural contestation have?'<sup>5</sup> Bringing this distinction to bear, our contribution to the special section addresses the second question in particular. It argues that contestations about the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda represent a particularly notable case for studies of norm contestation. WPS is not just any normative agenda but a 'norm bundle' consisting of fundamental norms such as the prohibition against the use of sexual violence in conflict on the one hand, and numerous adjacent norms that are 'hidden' or 'emerging'—such as women's right to inclusion in peace processes—on the other.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the WPS agenda is marked out by the presence of multiple stakeholders including numerous

<sup>1</sup> See, respectively, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change', *International Organization* 52: 4, 1998, pp. 887–917; Nicole Deitelhoff and Lisbeth Zimmermann, 'Norms under challenge: unpacking the dynamics of norm robustness', *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4: 1, 2019, pp. 2–17.

<sup>2</sup> See Amitav Acharya, 'How ideas spread: whose norms matter?', *International Organization* 58: 2, 2004, pp. 239–75; Antje Wiener, 'Contested compliance: interventions on the normative structure of world politics', *European Journal of International Relations* 10: 2, 2004, pp. 189–234.

<sup>3</sup> Anette Stimmer and Lea Wisken, 'The dynamics of dissent: when actions are louder than words', *International Affairs* 95: 3, May 2019, DOI: 10.1093/ia/iiz019.

<sup>4</sup> Stimmer and Wisken, 'The dynamics of dissent', emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> Stimmer and Wisken, 'The dynamics of dissent'.

<sup>6</sup> See Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 'Women, Peace and Security—a transformative agenda?', in Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, eds, *The Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 98–110; Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, 'The futures past of the Women, Peace and Security agenda', *International Affairs* 92: 2, March 2016, pp. 373–92.

non-state actors such as a powerful transnational NGO network convened during the advocacy for UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, adopted in 2000. The WPS case reveals how practices of contestation both shape and are shaped by extant hidden norms as well as emergent and changing norms.

To demonstrate how this co-constitutive effect came about and to examine its effect on norm emergence, norm change and transformative change, this article recalls the long and complex process of establishing and implementing the WPS agenda defined by UNSCR 1325. We analyse constellations of contestations, and their impact on norm change and transformative change. The article shows the significance of the interplay between discursive and behavioural contestation, and explores this interplay to pursue two research objectives. The first is empirical and consists of identifying norm change (in extant norms) and norm emergence (of hidden norms) through contestation; the second is normative and involves evaluating transformative change with regard to affected stakeholders' access to participation in contestation (reactive and proactive).

Taking account of the burgeoning literature on WPS, this article goes on to show in more detail how *discursive* contestation matters especially for norm change, while *behavioural* contestation is key for establishing the normative taken-for-grantedness of WPS. To present the case of this contested norm and identify the co-constitution of norm emergence and transformative change generated over decades before and after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, we build on and add to the contestation literature.<sup>7</sup> We apply the primary distinction between discursive and behavioural contestation to map the emergence and change of the WPS norm bundle. In a related attempt to evaluate the transformative change generated through these contestations, we differentiate between types of access to contestation as either a *reactive* practice of objection or a *proactive* practice of critical engagement. By addressing the question of the political agency of those affected by the norm according to the *quod omnes tangit* principle (what touches all must be approved by all), this distinction adds an all-important political dimension to the contestation literature.<sup>8</sup>

We argue, contrary to earlier accounts of norms research which centred their analytical focus on processes of 'internalization'<sup>9</sup> or 'diffusion'<sup>10</sup> of taken-for-granted core liberal norms such as human rights or democracy, that the WPS norm bundle represents a different case. The political and socio-cultural environment in which the norm stands to be implemented is both more recent and more complex than that of core liberal norms. Compare, for example, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the constitution of WPS, the high point of which

<sup>7</sup> See Antje Wiener, *A theory of contestation* (Berlin: Springer, 2014); Holger Niemann and Henrik Schillinger, 'Contestation "all the way down"?', *Review of International Studies* 43: 1, 2016, pp. 29–49.

<sup>8</sup> David Owen and James Tully, 'Redistribution and recognition: two approaches', in Anthony Simon Laden and David Owen, eds, *Multiculturalism and political theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 265–91; Antje Wiener, *Contestation and constitution of norms in global international relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 31–3.

<sup>9</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics'.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink, *The power of human rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

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was marked by UNSCR 1325.<sup>11</sup> In the light of this distinctive embeddedness, WPS has typically been studied by mapping and evaluating the effect of sequences of contestation where the *idea* of the norm mattered more to norm generation and change than the *principle*.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the agents involved in the process have been and continue to be a diverse and plural constellation. As we argue, therefore, the WPS agenda that was established by UNSCR 1325 was a norm bundle, of which everybody 'wants (a) peace'.

The article consists of four main parts. The first part frames the argument about the interplay between discursive and behavioural contestation and situates the parameters of the qualitative methodology that is developed in relation to the special section's main research questions and the literature on norm contestation. The second part maps the norm contestations at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) among distinct stakeholders. The third part evaluates practices of contestation with regard to affected WPS stakeholders' access to political agency. The concluding fourth part assesses the effect of these practices of contestation on norm change and transformative change in the WPS agenda.

Our empirical research builds on the rich research 'repertoires' that have been generated by the WPS literature.<sup>13</sup> Norm change is identified with reference to extant, emerging and hidden norms, while transformative change is highlighted with reference to the global normative 'structure of meaning-in-use'.<sup>14</sup> The sources for our empirical analysis include the 129-page transcript of statements at the two-day open debate on WPS at the UN Security Council held on 13–14 October 2015; the concept note for the debate; UNSCR 2242, which was unanimously adopted at the debate; and the UN Secretary-General's commissioned global study on the 15-year implementation of Resolution 1325, which involved substantial consultation with civil society groups across regions of the globe.<sup>15</sup>

## **The changing balance between low discursive and high behavioural contestation**

The focus on discursive and behavioural contestation, respectively, in analysing distinctive practices of dissent offers a helpful methodological prism through which to identify the impact of contestation on norm emergence and change as

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>. For the full text of UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000), adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting on 31 Oct. 2000, see [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325\(2000\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325(2000)). (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 31 Jan. 2019.)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Mona-Lena Krook and Jacqui True, 'Rethinking the life cycles of international norms: the United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality', *European Journal of International Relations* 18: 1, 2012, pp. 103–104; Antje Wiener, 'Enacting meaning-in-use: qualitative research on norms and international relations', *Review of International Studies* 35: 1, 2014, p. 183.

<sup>13</sup> For an account of the exploratory approach to norms by contrast with explanatory approaches, see Jonathan Havercroft, 'Social constructivism and international ethics', in Fiona Robinson, Brent Steele and Eric Heinze, eds, *Routledge handbook on ethics in international relations* (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Jennifer Milliken, 'The study of discourse in international relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 5: 2, 1999, p. 231; Wiener, 'Enacting meaning-in-use'.

<sup>15</sup> See UNSC open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533.

well as on transformative change. We work with this distinction to frame the efforts of norm scholarship to connect empirical and normative dimensions. Accordingly, discursive contestation is identified as two-pronged and dependent on the political conditions at different sites of contestation, which we call the ‘normative opportunity structure’.<sup>16</sup> That is, objection to norm violations and engagement to counter them are distinguished as two specific types of discursive contestation: *proactive* or merely *reactive* in respect of the global structure of meaning-in-use. Proactive contestation denotes an agent’s capability to engage with norms on a macro scale; reactive contestation, by contrast, indicates an agent’s capability to merely object to a norm on the micro scale. Whether engaging the normative structures of meaning-in-use is *reactive* or allows for strategic normative change through purposeful and normative *proactive* behaviour, this form of contestation ‘assumes an agent to be capable of critically engaging with a norm’.<sup>17</sup> That is, reactive contestation represents an agent’s objection to norms which may be expressed passively or actively; by contrast, proactive contestation represents critical engagement with norms as a political act.

We use this distinction to evaluate the potential of agency for affected stakeholders as our research analyses contestations at the UNSC. The following section applies it to illustrate how the dynamics of dissent work with regard to transformative change in global society, as instantiated by contestations about WPS norms and UNSCR 1325 specifically, regarded as a watershed resolution with regard to norm conflict.

The WPS agenda is characterized by unprecedented recognition by states at the UNSC—the interstate institution with the greatest power of command.<sup>18</sup> At the annual UNSC open debate in October 2015, reviewing 15 years of WPS implementation, more governments (176 states) presented statements than in any previous debate in the Council’s history.<sup>19</sup> However, when it comes to actual commitments to supporting and financing the agenda, progress has been judged to be quite limited.<sup>20</sup> Beyond wide state and non-state recognition developed over two decades of debate, we argue that the high degree of civil society engagement in the distinct practices of contestation was vital for framing the process of norm emergence and change for WPS from the outset. We show that this process was marked by differential access to contestation framed by the normative opportunity structure that reflected the extant norms constituted by the UNSC and other interstate institutions, as set out in table 1. In this respect, WPS is relatively unique

<sup>16</sup> This follows the distinction between ‘rules of engagement’ and ‘normative structures’ established in Wiener, *Contestation and constitution of norms*.

<sup>17</sup> Wiener, *Contestation and constitution of norms*, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> The WPS agenda refers to eight resolutions to date that comprise the cross-cutting thematic agenda on the UNSC. They are: UNSC Resolutions 1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); and 2242 (2015). See Christine Chinkin, ‘The adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325’, in Davies and True, eds, *Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, pp. 26–37.

<sup>19</sup> António Guterres, ‘Remarks to the Security Council open debate on Women, Peace and Security’, 25 Oct. 2018, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2018-10-25/remarks-security-council-women-peace-and-security>.

<sup>20</sup> UN Women, *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: global study of the implementation of 1325 (2000)* (New York, 2015).

among global normative agendas. It is therefore a good case by which to illustrate the distinct effects of behavioural and discursive contestation, and the specific effects of reactive and proactive discursive contestation on norm emergence, norm change and transformative change in global society.

For example, within the WPS norm bundle, the norm prohibiting sexual violence stands out as being widely accepted, while being frequently violated in practice (high *behavioural* contestation). This tension has generated multiple *discursive* contestations of both types. The reactive contestations of feminist and peace movements prior to the adoption of UNSCR 1325 demonstrated protest against the norm violations—with little access to proactive contestation. In turn, following the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the proactive contestations of the multiple stakeholders involved in WPS implementation have contributed to norm emergence and change. The next section of the article seeks to identify the course of this shift following UNSCR 1325.

Drawing on Stimmer and Wisken's leading assumption, that 'norm change can imply a change in the meaning actors attribute to a norm, but it can also imply a shift in the (relative) importance of a norm compared to other, competing norms',<sup>21</sup> we examine change with regard to norm emergence and transformative change. We assert the key importance of two aspects. First, the meanings of norms are always 'contested' and therefore provisional, evolving and subject to 'trial and error' practice.<sup>22</sup> This is where discursive contestation, which can be expressed either reactively or proactively, weighs in. And second, norm emergence and change depend on access to norm validation 'on site'. Following the *quod omnes tangit* principle, the perceived legitimacy of normative change depends on affected stakeholders' access to norm validation, which in turn reflects the power structure at each site of contestation (i.e. the UNSC). For example, access to formal validation is typically restricted to government officials, while access to social validation is expressed habitually through social recognition by selected stakeholders who have shared iterated interaction over time, thereby forming a social group. By contrast, cultural validation is practised every day when individual agents bring their own 'normative baggage' to bear *vis-à-vis* non-familiar others.<sup>23</sup>

In sum, our analysis considers contestation as a political practice that reflects power relations at distinct sites where norms are contested, and asks: who among those affected by a norm—or, conversely, a norm's violation—has access to proactive contestation? Consistent with the political project of Global IR, we argue that, in order to sustain normative change, proactive contestation depends on the access of a plurality of affected stakeholders to the 'global multilogue'.<sup>24</sup> Distinguishing proactive and reactive types of discursive contestation—both of which

<sup>21</sup> Stimmer and Wisken, 'The dynamics of dissent'.

<sup>22</sup> Krook and True, 'Rethinking the life cycles of international norms'.

<sup>23</sup> IR and international law tend to consider only formal validation and social recognition. By contrast, Wiener (*Constitution and contestation of norms*, pp. 44–5) adds 'cultural validation' as a third practice in everyday life that affects international society.

<sup>24</sup> Owen and Tully, 'Redistribution and recognition', p. 283. For the political Global IR project, see Amitav Acharya, 'Global International Relations (IR) and regional worlds', *International Studies Quarterly* 58: 4, 2014, pp. 647–59.

**Table 1: Mapping WPS contestation and actors**

<i>WPS norm bundle: norm types</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Stakeholders and sites</i>	<i>Degree and type of contestation</i>
<i>Type 1</i> Fundamental norm	Prohibition against sexual violence in conflict	UN General Assembly; UN member states, NATO, UNSC, UK, G7, ICC	Low Proactive
<i>Type 2</i> Organizing principles	UNSCRs 1888, 188, 1960 UNSCR 2016 Protection pillar and accountability for perpetrators	Government representatives UNSC	Balanced Proactive, reactive
<i>Type 3</i> Standards and procedures	Documentation protocol PSVI declaration; Foreign Minister PSVI champions UNSG SR SVAC Women protection advisers Monitoring, analysis, reporting system AU Special Envoy WPS PSVI and UN/UK team of experts OAS resolution on SVAC	UN General Assembly UNSC, G7, UK, AU, UN Peace Ops, GBV Interagency Standing Group  UN member states  Local and international NGOs supporting survivors	High Reactive (objecting to breaches of norm) Behavioural
<i>Type 1</i> Fundamental norm	Women's right to inclusion in peace processes	Friends of WPS 48 states 1325 NGO working group	Medium moral reach —balanced reactive and proactive
<i>Type 1</i> Hidden (taken for granted)	Culture of impunity	UNSC, Courts	Behavioural
<i>Type 2</i> Hidden (taken for granted)	'Silencing detail'	UNSC, Courts	Behavioural
<i>Type 2</i> Organizing principle Emergent	UNSCRs 1325, 2122, 2242	Government representatives	High Proactive
<i>Type 2</i> Concrete processes Emergent	UN Women's 2015 global study on implementation of 1325 (research on women's participation) Informal experts group advising UNSC AU Special Envoy WPS; EU principal adviser on gender and 1325 across all external policies	Informal experts group; UNSC; Academia Gender specialists in governments and international organizations Government representatives Policy-making interventions to establish broader access to contestation	Balanced Proactive, reactive

<i>Type 2</i> Emergent	Mobilizing and diffusion events 'Documenting detail matters'	Global PSVI summit, June 2014 Civil society groups Government officials IOs and NGOs, London summit, UK & other government websites (social) media outlets academic publications	Balanced Proactive discursive  Behavioural
<i>Type 3</i> Emergent	'Women's meaningful participation'	Women and Mediation conference, Wilton Park, UK 2017 Nordic Women mediators annual conference Gertrude Shopes women and mediation conference, South Africa, 2018 UN Expert Meeting on Women in Peace Processes, 2018 Women mediators NGOs and grassroots women peacebuilders Government mediation support units UN DPA Regional mediation networks (Nordic, African, UK/Commonwealth, Mediterranean, ASEAN, and UN/global)	Low Behavioural

AU = African Union; ICC = International Criminal Court; IOs = international organizations; OAS = Organization of American States; PSVI: Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative; UN DPA = UN Department of Political Affairs; UNGA = UN General Assembly; UNSG SR SVAC = UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict.

are distinct from practices of behavioural contestation, which may be strategically employed by interest-driven actors operating at any scale of global society in order to avoid norm implementation—allows us to address political power differentials in global politics indicated by conditions of access. It therefore casts light on a central question: 'whose practices count' for the constitution and change of norms?

### Mapping contestations

In this section, to identify contestations, we engage in a mapping exercise that compiles a 'contestation repertoire' in relation to the WPS norm bundle. We refer to affected stakeholders (as the involved agents), distinct types of contestation, and the sites where these contestations have come to the fore (see table 1). We identify those stakeholders who are affected by the breach of a norm and who engage in reactive contestation, and evaluate norm change generated by proactive contestation. Although there are now multiple venues for contestation on WPS, the UNSC still represents the central site of contestation involving the greatest

number of actors, albeit biased towards state actors. The involved agents include the key state and non-state stakeholders: the five permanent member states of the UNSC, non-permanent UNSC members, other UN member states, intergovernmental organizations and civil society actors such as the 1325 NGO network. They are identified through the lens of the 2015 UNSC open debate on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, which conducted a 'stocktake' of progress in order to set the future agenda for women, peace and security. This moment in the normative evolution of WPS, which involved the participation of many states and some non-state actor stakeholders, provides an opportunity to observe the dynamics of dissent in this normative agenda.

The open debate is a particular, located moment with clear boundaries around it from a methodological perspective in which 'contestation' may be captured cross-sectionally. The limitation to this approach is that the UNSC is just one institution and scale of contestation from which many non-state actors are excluded. However, key civil society actors, such as victims' groups, NGOs and WPS practitioners, were represented at the open debate by the NGO working group and several civil society leaders. Moreover, the debate itself mentioned and connected with other scales and WPS institutions through the statements of actors about what they *were doing* or *would not do* to advance the norm, that is, their behavioural contestations.

Despite the semblance of permanence given by UNSC resolutions, the WPS bundle is a typical 'work in progress' norm in that its content is not fixed. As Krook and True argue, 'norms are dynamic and contested, even as they become embedded in institutional practices in myriad settings across the international system'.<sup>25</sup> Here, we consider a key hypothesis of the 'dynamics of dissent' framework: that behavioural contestation of a norm, which is expected during the implementation stage of a norm rather than its constitution (adopting) or negotiation, is more likely if the norm is either relatively vague, contains multiple or ambiguous meanings, or leaves no room for manoeuvre by affected stakeholders. By contrast, those aspects of WPS that are most directive, setting out concrete procedures and standards to be followed and observed, are those most likely to be reactively, discursively contested. This hypothesis sustains the leading research assumptions generated against the background of a norm typology which distinguishes three types of norms: fundamental (type 1 norms) on the macro-scale, which are relatively vague and generate little reactive contestation; organizing principles (type 2 norms) at the meso-scale, which are more specific yet leave room for contestation; and standards and procedures (type 3 norms) at the micro-scale of the norm implementing process, which are most specific and generate mostly reactive contestation. According to this typology, norms that are defined as 'standards' or 'procedures' (type 3 norms), given their 'narrow moral reach', are expected to generate little proactive contestation but much reactive contestation.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Krook and True, 'Rethinking the life cycles of international norms', p. 106.

<sup>26</sup> Compare the three research assumptions that follow the norm typology with table 3.1 in Wiener, *Contestation and constitution of norms*, p. 62.



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For example, the prohibition against the use of sexual violence in conflict, as stated in UNSC and General Assembly resolutions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), as well as the documentation protocol and ICC protocols to enable investigation, and the annual reports of the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sexual Violence in Conflict to the Security Council (including recommendations for the Sanctions Committee),<sup>27</sup> all generate a high level of reactive contestation.<sup>28</sup> By contrast, those aspects of the WPS agenda that are vaguer but widely accepted, because operating principles have not been devised to define and measure compliance, are contested only through behaviour such as the lack of action and prioritization. The norm of women's right to participate in peace processes and conflict prevention illustrates this dynamic and, as we will see, is characterized by a complete absence of reactive contestation. No one argues any more that women should *not* participate in peace and security or that peace processes should not be *inclusive*. That they should do so is a fundamental (type 1) norm. While state and non-state actors do not specify where actual breaches of the norm take place, they do, however, critically engage with the norm in respect of where and how change needs to happen. Against this backdrop, and following the leading assumptions of contestation theory, therefore, the emergence of organizing principles (type 2 norms), for example on women's participation in peace processes, which are established through iterated interaction in politics and policy-making and generate a high degree of social recognition shared by affected stakeholders, for instance within global and regional networks of women peace mediators (see table 1), will—and in this example are beginning to—indicate significant normative change.

### *Identifying change in sites of contestation*

To examine how far and in what ways such change emerges with regard to WPS norms, we analyse the 15th anniversary Security Council open debate on WPS as a microcosm of these different types of contestation. Although the UNSC setting is usually exclusively for states, in recent years—in part owing to the advocacy of WPS civil society groups—non-state actors and representatives of civil society have been allowed to brief the Council through 'Arria formula' meetings on particular issues and mandates and at the annual debate on WPS in October, including on situations of sexual violence in conflict.<sup>29</sup> Meetings under the 'Arria formula', named after Venezuelan Ambassador Diego Arria, who first convened such a meeting in 1993, 'are designed to allow UNSC members to hear statements and advice from actors not usually included in debate or dialogue on

<sup>27</sup> UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence*, S/2017/249, 15 April (New York: UN, 2017).

<sup>28</sup> Sophie Huve, *The use of UN sanctions to address conflict-related sexual violence*, policy brief (Washington DC: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2018).

<sup>29</sup> See Sam Cook, 'The "woman-in-conflict" at the UN Security Council: a subject of practice', *International Affairs* 92: 2, March 2016, pp. 353–72; Annika Björkdahl and Johanna Mannergren Selimovic, 'WPS and civil society', in Davies and True, eds, *The Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, pp. 428–38.

UNSC matters'.<sup>30</sup> Intergovernmental and regional organizations are also invited to speak at open debates, reflecting the fact that these bodies are referred to in successive UNSC resolutions as WPS implementing actors with key accountabilities. Against that background, we summarize the overall positions of stakeholders on the normative agenda as seen in the 2015 open debate, based on our analysis of types of contestation.

First of all, *civil society* actors are significant stakeholders in the normative agenda.<sup>31</sup> They present the testimonies of women's and girls' experiences of conflict and highlight some of the systematic, damaging impacts of conflict on them that have suffered from a lack of visibility, both historically and in many contemporary conflicts. They engage in both reactive and proactive contestation, objecting to the breaches of WPS norms, such as the absence of women representatives from peace negotiations and the impunity for sexual and gender-based violence in conflict perpetrated by all parties to conflict, while calling for specific actions from states, international organizations and other accountable actors. In this open debate setting, departing from past protocol restricting participation to state representatives only, three women leaders from three different conflict-affected countries—Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Libya—were able to present statements, two on behalf of the NGO working group on Resolution 1325, which consists of several international women's NGOs.

Second, *states* have a major stake in the WPS agenda, as demonstrated in the open debate, but their interests are not universal or unified. On the contrary, they reflect the plurality of political agency in global society. Four groups of states are distinguished in this case. One group of states, including China, Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan and Russia, have in common an interest in delimiting the scope of the WPS normative agenda to issues pertaining to 'international peace and security' (around which they also draw strict boundaries) and thereby merit being brought to the UNSC. They engage here in proactive contestation to critically reframe women's human rights, for instance, as domestic issues pertaining to sovereign states rather than international issues to be considered in jurisdictions like the UN. They emphasize their significant contributions to international peace and security through peacekeeping troop contributions, development assistance and regional support.<sup>32</sup> This group of states, however, have not adopted WPS national action plans (NAPs), nor do they see the need to, and in this way also engage in behavioural contestation.<sup>33</sup> A second group of states and regional organizations support

<sup>30</sup> Laura J. Shepherd and Jacqui True, 'The Women, Peace and Security agenda and Australian leadership in the world: from rhetoric to commitment?', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 67: 3, 2014, p. 62.

<sup>31</sup> Felicity Hill, Mikele Aboitiz and Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya, 'Nongovernmental organisations' role in the build-up and implementation of 1325', *Signs* 28: 4, 2003, p. 1255.

<sup>32</sup> See Soumita Basu, 'Global South writes WPS (too)', *International Political Science Review* 37: 3, 2016, pp. 362–74; Liu Tiewa, 'WPS as diplomatic vocation: the case of China', in Davies and True, eds, *The Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, pp. 528–39.

<sup>33</sup> For example, proactive contestation from China and Russia led to the removal of cases not currently in conflict or post-conflict from the annual reports of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict to the UNSC on 'situations of sexual violence in conflict'. See Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 'Connecting the dots: pre-existing patterns of gender inequality and the likelihood of mass sexual violence', *Global Responsibility to Protect* 9: 1, 2017, p. 79.

the WPS agenda broadly and do not proactively contest its expanding scope to encompass the rise of security threats such as violent extremism that have particular impacts on women's security. However, these states seek to uphold their autonomy and continually refer to the political independence of states and the importance of UN cooperation with national jurisdictions and regional organizations. These states and regional organizations, such as ASEAN and the League of Arab States, have generally adopted or are planning to adopt WPS NAPs—but their plans are frequently nationally or regionally unique and distinct in their framing and content from UNSCR 1325, indicating behavioural contestation of the global norm.<sup>34</sup>

A third group of states are strong leaders and endorsers of WPS, and also tend to be wealthy donor states situated in the global 'North'.<sup>35</sup> They note their achievements, often after successive NAPs institutionalizing WPS principles and procedures. In certain instances, these states object to breaches of the norm, such as in the often-mentioned case of the sexual slavery and violence conducted by Islamic State against Yazidi women in Iraq and Syria. It is easier to object to breaches of the norm by non-state actors not present in the open debate, however, than to name and shame breaches made by states present. To address these lingering challenges in achieving WPS, these actors list their foreign policy and development assistance responses, often stating concrete political justifications and making explicit financial commitments quantified in either dollar sums or percentage targets. This can be seen as a form of positive behavioural contestation designed to expand the moral and practical reach of the norm through implementation.<sup>36</sup>

A fourth group of states are also strong endorsers of WPS. These states are typically in a post-conflict phase or affected by conflict, so normatively committed, but constrained in their capacity to implement the agenda without external assistance. They cite their achievements but also the major challenges they face in realizing gender-equal peace and women's security given the situations they face of armed conflict, violent extremism, climate-induced disaster and the resulting humanitarian crises. They stress their domestic and regional efforts to address women's rights, security and participation, and seek international recognition and assistance for these efforts. The orientation of these states is captured in Bangladesh's statement during the open debate that they have made their 'best efforts to ensure women's participation and empowerment in all areas of life'.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For example, ASEAN in its WPS statement avoids references to political conflict by using the general term 'violence against women', adopted from domestic jurisdictions, the UN CEDAW and the 1993 UN General Assembly Declaration on violence against women, rather than the term 'conflict-related sexual violence', as used in UN Security Council resolutions on WPS. See ASEAN, *Joint statement on promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN*, 16 Nov. 2017, <http://asean.org/joint-statement-on-promoting-women-peace-and-security-in-asean/>; Sara E. Davies, Kimberly Nackers and Sarah Teitt, 'Women, Peace and Security as an ASEAN priority', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 68: 3, 2014, pp. 333–55.

<sup>35</sup> See Soumita Basu, 'Gender as national interest at the UN Security Council', *International Affairs* 92: 2, March 2016, pp. 255–73.

<sup>36</sup> See Roberta Guerrina and Katharine A. M. Wright, 'Gendering normative power Europe: lessons of the Women, Peace and Security agenda', *International Affairs* 92: 2, March 2016, pp. 293–312.

<sup>37</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 14/33; Heidi Hudson, 'A double-edged sword of peace? Reflections on the tension between representation and protection in gendering liberal peacebuilding', *International Peacekeeping* 19: 4, 2012, pp. 443–60; Toni Hastrup, 'Where global meets local: the politics of Africa's emergent gender equality regime', in Tim Murithi, ed., *Handbook of Africa's international*

Third, there are *intergovernmental organizations* such as the African Union, NATO, the Organization of American States, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which have been early adopters and implementers of WPS. By normatively supporting and implementing the sexual violence prohibition and women's inclusion in peace and security, they are able to enhance their legitimacy and international reputation generally, as well as to improve their operational effectiveness in their fields of influence and action.<sup>38</sup>

## Evaluating contestations

This section of the article builds on the mapping exercise in the preceding section, which identified norm change and emergence with reference to norm types and stakeholders (summarized in table 1), in order to identify transformative change in the normative opportunity structure that sets the conditions for implementing WPS. We analyse the contestation repertoires of these groups of stakeholders and evaluate the conditions of access to contestation in the WPS field. While there are other meanings and implementations of WPS, for the purpose of our analysis of contestation repertoires, we focus on the two dominant meanings-in-use of the WPS norm. They are sometimes referred to as the 'protection' and 'participation' pillars of WPS respectively (see, in table 1, respectively, under 'normative opportunity structure: type 2 organising principles and type 2 concrete processes emergent').<sup>39</sup> With respect to these meanings-in-use of WPS, we identify six constellations that reflect distinct interplays of the three practices of contestation which are discernible from the statements presented at the two-day 2015 open debate.

The first constellation involves proactive contestation about the hierarchy of norms within the WPS agenda, notably which pillar of the agenda is more important and requires the more urgent focus: protection of women's human rights, or equal participation in peace and security decision-making. At this constitutive stage of norm implementation, it is mostly state representatives and UN officials, with some civil society representatives, who are involved. Most stakeholders enjoy access to all three practices of norm validation, most importantly formal validation at the stage of treaty-making. This is visible in statements by actors endorsing the WPS agenda and UNSCR 2242, with specific attention and relative weight given either to protection against sexual violence or to women's inclusion in peace processes. For example, the civil society representative from DRC, representing the Resolution 1325 NGO working group, primarily stressed the imperative of including women in all decision-making and peace processes. She highlighted the Addis Ababa Accord and the role of former Irish President Mary Robinson as UN

*relations* (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 103–12.

<sup>38</sup> See Stéfanie von Hlatky, 'WPS and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation', in Davies and True, eds, *The Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, pp. 364–74.

<sup>39</sup> Maria Jansson and Maud Eduards, 'The politics of gender in the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18: 4, 2016, pp. 590–604; Anne-Kathrin Kreft, 'The gender mainstreaming gap: Security Council Resolution 1325 and UN peacekeeping mandates', *International Peacekeeping* 24: 1, 2017, pp. 132–58.

Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region in involving women in peace processes. The DRC civil society actor's emphasis on women's participation is striking given that she came from a conflict situation known for the widespread and systematic use of sexual violence, where highlighting protection gaps and their impact on women and girls might be expected to be the priority. The Resolution 1325 NGO working group has consistently focused on the agency of women in peace and security. It views the priority of the women's inclusion in peace processes norm (a fundamental norm in table 1) over the sexual violence prohibition norm as the organizing principle of WPS. For advocates who founded the WPS agenda, contemporary social validation of that agenda based on the sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls runs the risk of reinforcing women's and girls' status as victims in respect of peace and security.

This unintended consequence of the WPS agenda is discussed in the UN's 'global study' on the implementation of Resolution 1325: 'Frequently, women are portrayed alongside children, either in pictures or in the pages of reports, and they are almost universally shown as defenceless and vulnerable victims. This has had an effect in policy and in practice. Our most urgent interventions to assist women and girls in crisis situations are focused on their protection rather than their empowerment.'<sup>40</sup>

The second constellation includes the discursive practice of reactive contestation by a diverse range of affected stakeholders. Here key state and non-state actors objected to breaches of the meanings-in-use of WPS that were constitutive for the normative opportunity structure against which the norm stands to be implemented. These instances of reactive contestation were identified with respect to both flagrant use of sexual violence in conflict and exclusion or minimal inclusion of women in peace and security processes, both fundamental norms. For instance, with respect to the inclusion norm, the UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-NGcuka objected to the breach of the intention of UNSCR 1325 inherent in the fact that just 11 per cent of peace agreements concluded between 1990 and 2010 mentioned women or gender relations, only 10 per cent of aid to fragile and conflict-affected states targeted gender equality, and 97 per cent of peacekeepers and over 70 per cent of civilians in peace operations were men.<sup>41</sup> The civil society representative from the Voice of Libyan Women concurred: 'Women's inclusion and action on the ground needs to reflect our commitments on paper.' Even Russia agreed in its statement that there were 'insufficient women in conflict-resolution and post-conflict reconstruction processes despite the normative framework'.<sup>42</sup>

Interventions in the open debate also demonstrated many examples of reactive contestation relating to the prohibition norm against sexual violence in conflict, including with respect to violation of type 3 norm standards and procedures. Many states, including Venezuela, for example, noted that 'women are objects

<sup>40</sup> UN Women, *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace*, p. 86.

<sup>41</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 5/96. See also Natasha Rupasinghe and John Karlsrud, 'WPS and peacekeeping', in Davies and True, eds, *The Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, pp. 206–21.

<sup>42</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 10/96 and 23/96.

of recurrent and systematic violence and sexual abuse' perpetrated by ISIS and Boko Haram, in contravention of 1325 and subsequent resolutions.<sup>43</sup> The civil society representative from Iraq, however, pointed to the breach of WPS by state actors, drawing attention to the new Iraq constitution which prevents NGOs from providing vital services to survivors of gender-based violence.<sup>44</sup> A further breach of UNSCR 1325 was noted in Gabon's objection to the lack of medical care and psycho-social support for victims of sexual violence and of health infrastructure for internally displaced women.<sup>45</sup> The implication here is that all UN member states, not only those affected by conflict, are responsible for addressing the impacts of sexual violence in conflict as part of the normative consensus on its prohibition. The Chad government representative cited the 'persistence of negative cultural aspects and misguided religious principles' in perpetuating the use of sexual violence as a weapon, which implies that states have a role in mitigating these adverse norms.<sup>46</sup> As well as specific objections to breaches of WPS principles, several state parties mentioned acts of violence against women and girls perpetrated by other states, foregrounding the significant ongoing intra- and interstate conflicts involving Israel and the Palestinians, Russia and Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Ukraine and Russia.

The third constellation includes both reactive and proactive practices of discursive contestation. It involves critically engaging in normative conflicts which come to the fore through objection to norms, in order to constrain broader stakeholder access to WPS contestation. Here, states and regional organizations challenge the potential incursion into national sovereignty represented by the Secretary-General's call to adopt WPS NAPs and other WPS institutional mechanisms, thereby engaging in high proactive contestation of type 2 organizing principles reflected in UNSC 1325 and related resolutions on women's participation in peace and security. For example, Vietnam, speaking also on behalf of ASEAN, stated that WPS should entail 'respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of states and refraining from the use of force.'<sup>47</sup> Such statements stress the role of regional organizations in supporting member states, the implication being that such organizations—including the UN—should not attempt to replace the authority of or exercise rule over member states. Similarly, Russia argues that NAPs should be adopted only voluntarily by conflict-affected states, and that they are not an end in themselves or an instrument to assess national policies aimed at enhancing the status of women.<sup>48</sup> The government delegate from Egypt expressed concern that there is 'insufficient attention to priorities of national sovereignty and respect for national legislation along with a reliance on unofficial standards that may not be as precise in evaluating WPS progress'.<sup>49</sup> In making these arguments, these states are normatively contesting the rules and criteria by which their progress on WPS

<sup>43</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 29/96.

<sup>44</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 8–9/96.

<sup>45</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 37/96.

<sup>46</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 26/96.

<sup>47</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 7/33.

<sup>48</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 23/96.

<sup>49</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 35/96

is judged. They seek to limit the access to contestation by non-state actors who they perceive as subordinate to states and in supporting roles only. Vietnam, for instance, encourages the UN 'to take a cooperative approach' and argues that states should not encourage 'exploitation of this issue [violence against women and girls] as a tool for one's own political agenda'.<sup>50</sup>

States also contest the scope of WPS and its relevance to international peace and security, and therefore to the UNSC agenda. For instance, China notes that 'UN agencies give full play to existing mechanisms' conducive to the 'greater development of the global cause of women', such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Sustainable Development Goals, among other international instruments and processes.<sup>51</sup> This view is shared by Russia, which argues that the UNSC should focus more strictly on issues relating to international peace and security. Violations of human rights, including those of women, are in their view matters to be addressed by specialized international bodies. Iran concurs, stating that 'organisational debate like this should not undermine the work of UN bodies most relevant to the consideration of women-related issues' such as 'the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly'.<sup>52</sup> This is a point on which, notwithstanding their political conflict, India and Pakistan agree. Both states endorse a limited agenda for WPS and oppose its inclusion of human rights concerns, violent extremism or counterterrorism, which in their view may 'endanger and dilute the work being done separately in the General Assembly and the Council and ... put under strain already stretched resources of the UN' (India) or 'weaken the wide consensus around the role of the Council in the WPS agenda' (Pakistan).<sup>53</sup> In this open debate, Russia specifically opposed the creation of the Informal Experts Group (IEG) provided for in UNSCR 2242, which briefs the UNSC on issues relating to WPS in particular conflicts and situations of concern as they arise. In the Russian delegate's words: 'Informal channels should not be referred within the structure of the Security Council.' The IEG precisely aims to expand civil society access to normative contestation on WPS within the setting of the UNSC.

The fourth constellation consists of both the proactive practice of discursive contestation and behavioural contestation in order to expand stakeholder access to norm validation from cultural towards social and formal validation of the WPS norm bundle. Here states and non-state actors advocate new institutional and funding mechanisms to promote civil society voice and participation in WPS. Notably, proactive contestation is often facilitated by academic intervention, which maps affected stakeholders in global norm conflicts and evaluates their respective access to practices of norm validation.<sup>54</sup> For instance, the IEG is viewed

<sup>50</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 7/33.

<sup>51</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 21/96.

<sup>52</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 30/33.

<sup>53</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 65/96.

<sup>54</sup> Kirby and Shepherd, 'The futures past of the Women, Peace and Security agenda'; J. Ann Tickner and Jacqui True, 'A century of International Relations feminism: from World War One women's peace pragmatism to the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda', *International Studies Quarterly* 62: 2, 2018, pp. 221–33.

by the Voice of Libyan Women civil society representative as a mechanism to 'guarantee greater coordination throughout the multilateral system and provide greater relief to defenders of women's human rights at risk on the ground'.<sup>55</sup> UN Women and several states speak positively about their commitment to the new Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) for women building peace and responding to humanitarian emergencies.<sup>56</sup> This multilateral funding instrument is intended to enable women to participate at the grass roots in key conflict prevention, peacebuilding and recovery initiatives from which lessons can be drawn for the overall WPS agenda. In the open debate, several states contributed their experiences of expanding the access to WPS contestation and implementation, while some developing states that frame WPS as a development issue called for support for civil society organizations in their countries (Tanzania)<sup>57</sup> and for the appointment of women from the global South in peace and security decision-making positions (Bangladesh).<sup>58</sup> Chile, to cite another example, noted its commitment to establish a national observatory consisting of representatives of civil society to monitor and report on progress on WPS implementation.<sup>59</sup> Colombia contributed its experience of involving women's civil society in the peace process—in which women made up 60 per cent of the delegates who briefed the negotiating teams—claiming that this was a key ingredient in a successful peace settlement.<sup>60</sup> Several states, while not advocating expanded access for non-state actors, contested the governance of peace and security, highlighting the exclusion of major peacekeeping troop-contributing nations from international peace and security decisions, including those about peace operations and mandates on the Council. They argued that 'troop contributing countries need to be fairly represented' (India).<sup>61</sup>

So far, most of the constellations discussed have involved distinct combinations of proactive and reactive practices of discursive contestation through debate. By contrast, the fifth and sixth constellations involve behavioural contestation through implementation or lack thereof, either to advance the norm (fifth) or to undermine it (sixth). Behavioural contestation is less visible in a UNSC open debate. However, given the focus of the 15th anniversary debate on taking stock of progress and examining implementation gaps and challenges for the future, behavioural contestation was more visible here than usual. Almost all state and non-state actors mentioned successful practices and commitments, and from this it can also be gleaned what had *not* been done or implemented. We argue that behavioural contestation is more likely when there is normative consensus on a broad and relatively vague norm, and strong pressure to endorse it, but as yet no specific agreements or directives to contest discursively.

<sup>55</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 11/96.

<sup>56</sup> The WPHF was previously called the Global Acceleration Instrument; see <http://wphfund.org>. See also UN Women, *Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund annual report, Jan.–Dec. 2017* (New York, 2017).

<sup>57</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 51/96.

<sup>58</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 14/33.

<sup>59</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 18/96.

<sup>60</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 10/96.

<sup>61</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 65/96.



The fifth constellation includes behavioural contestation through implementation. It can be seen especially with respect to the women's inclusion in peace processes norm. For instance, the informal adoption of a quota approach—often one-third—to women's participation in the armed forces, as for example in the Argentinian and Australian NAPs (mentioned in the open debate as commitments), is seen as a concrete way of advancing the inclusion norm, though such an approach is not mandated in the WPS agenda and is not widespread. To take another example, the UN Secretary-General's target that 15 per cent of all peacebuilding funding should be directed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected states is a form of proactive contestation through implementation, setting the benchmark for others. Only one state (Sweden) in the open debate mentioned commitment to this funding target as part of its own WPS implementation, and no state contested the benchmark.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, development aid to assist other countries to create and implement NAPs is an example of behavioural contestation through implementation. The United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands all mentioned their provision of such assistance; however, none of these states actually made the discursive argument that a NAP is a necessary or mandatory instrument for compliance with the WPS agenda. Even without such a statement or agreement, their material support for NAPs has paid off in terms of the progressive international diffusion of this mechanism to more than 70 states since it was first called for by the UN Secretary-General in 2004.<sup>63</sup> This diffusion has occurred despite some states' overt contestation of the relevance of NAPs and their affront to state sovereignty.

Finally, the sixth constellation involves behavioural contestation through non-implementation. Here, some states are very forthcoming about their opposition to NAPs—and consider their resistance to implementing one of these plans a normative act. This was discussed above with regard to India's and Russia's contestation of the scope of the WPS agenda and their assertion of the importance of respecting sovereignty as a condition of WPS progress. Behavioural contestation can also be observed with regard to the strategic non-implementation of concrete processes associated with the prohibition of sexual violence norm. For instance, consider the case of Myanmar, which at the open debate stated its 'universal condemnation of all forms of violence against women',<sup>64</sup> has signed the United Kingdom's declaration on its Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative at the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly and purports to have conducted training for all its military personnel though it has not used the documentation protocol to investigate sexual violence crimes in accordance with international law. In 2018, as in previous years,<sup>65</sup> there have been numerous reports of the use of

<sup>62</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 3/96; also Julie Marie Hansen and Jenny Lorentzen, 'Gender financing at the UN Peacebuilding Fund', *PRIO* [Peace Research Institute Oslo] *Gender, Peace and Security update*, 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Jacqui True, 'Explaining the global diffusion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda', *International Political Science Review* 37: 3, 2016, pp. 307–23.

<sup>64</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 14/33.

<sup>65</sup> Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 'The politics of counting and reporting conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence in Myanmar', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19: 1, 2017, pp. 4–21.

sexual violence by the Tatmadaw state army against Rohingya Muslim people in Rakhine state, where there is an ongoing civil conflict, and of impunity for these acts of violence.<sup>66</sup> A recent UN investigation panel also stated that rape and sexual violence have been deliberately used as tactics of war against civilians, citing some of the worst incidences globally in its report.<sup>67</sup> At the open debate, Myanmar argued that states should not encourage ‘exploitation of this issue [sexual violence] as a tool for one’s own political agenda’.<sup>68</sup> The impact of behavioural contestation through non-implementation here is to weaken the universality of the norm.

Civil society actors and some member states exposed this culture of impunity for sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations in the WPS open debate. Identifying the culture of impunity reveals a hidden gendered norm (see table 1, ‘Emergent’ and ‘Hidden’ norms), namely the norm that the stigma of sexual violence attaches to and silences the usually female or feminized victim, and not the perpetrator. This proactive, discursive contestation thereby contributes to normative change.<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusion: transformative change and outlook

This fourth and final part of the article considers the added value of studying the transformative effect of discursive and behavioural contestation as practices of dissent, based on the distinct practices and constellations identified above. Our conclusion is developed against the backdrop of the contestation repertoire, that is, the identification of affected stakeholders and constellations reflecting the distinct interplay of practices of contestation, illustrated above through the case of WPS. Taking into account the *quod omnes tangit* principle, we argued that conditions of access to practices of norm validation and contestation in the WPS field are crucial for the legitimacy of the transformative change generated by the process. These conditions are represented by norm emergence and change, which are reflected in the changing normative opportunity structure over time (see table 1).

We began by identifying objection to breaches of WPS norms (reactive contestation) as an indicator of global norm conflicts. We then considered how affected stakeholders may critically engage with these conflicts (proactive contestation). Specifically, we explored how the two main practices of dissent highlighted in this special section—*discursive* contestation (documented by distinct reactive and proactive practices) and *behavioural* contestation (documented by distinct practices of non-/implementation)—enable or constrain affected stakeholders *vis-à-vis* norms. We argued that not all fundamental norms can be taken for granted, and that in the case of WPS affected stakeholders’ access to norm validation is crucial in order to generate legitimacy.

<sup>66</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018* (New York, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018>.

<sup>67</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Report of Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar* (New York, 27 Aug. 2018), <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/MyanmarFFM/Pages/ReportoftheMyanmarFFM.aspx>.

<sup>68</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 14/33.

<sup>69</sup> See Wiener, *Constitution and contestation of norms*, p. 222, Table 8.1.

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To examine how far and in what ways access to norm validation has been generated, we mapped norm contestations with reference to the UNSC open debate on WPS (see table 1). On the basis of this empirical background, we asked whose practices count for the meaning of the sexual violence prohibition norm, women's inclusion in peace processes and adjacent WPS norms. It is evident from the open debate that there is an outstanding degree of normative consensus on the importance of the WPS agenda. Numerous 'motherhood and apple pie' statements were put forward by states in support of the agenda. Various states proudly proclaimed that they had always been at the forefront of the promotion and protection of women's rights, that 'the role of women in peace and security is indispensable' (Slovakia),<sup>70</sup> and that 'we have witnessed the birth of a transformational agenda' (Honduras).<sup>71</sup> As the Czech government representative at the debate said: 'For there to be more than 110 names on the list speaks for itself.'<sup>72</sup> The unanimous vote among member states at the debate in favour of the adoption of UNSCR 2242, which established the IEG, *inter alia*, is further illustrative of the international normative consensus. This broad approval of the WPS agenda notwithstanding, contestations in the process of implementation are abundant. They include both proactive and reactive contestation. By distinguishing the types of contestation at the UNSC, we have shown how contestations with regard to specific norms offer crucial information about transformative change, with reference both to extant, emerging and hidden norms at local sites and to wider normative change in global society.

We have argued that two dominant meanings-in-use of WPS norms are visible in the norm contestations at the 2015 open debate, and that a third, more highly contested meaning is gradually emerging. As the mapping, identification and evaluation of norm emergence and change have demonstrated, each meaning-in-use is distinguished with reference to norm type and site of contestation, as shown in table 1.

The first meaning-in-use refers to a fundamental norm of the WPS bundle, namely, the prohibition of sexual violence in conflict. This norm is frequently invoked.<sup>73</sup> Given that this prohibition is a fundamental norm (type 1) at the macro-scale of global society, the degree of expected objection to it (i.e. reactive contestation) is low. In turn, dissent is expected when the norm stands to be implemented according to specific standards and procedures at specific local sites on the micro-scale of global society. As the case of the 2015 WPS open debate has demonstrated, this dissent is expressed by both discursive and behavioural contestation

<sup>70</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 77/96.

<sup>71</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 8/33.

<sup>72</sup> See UN Security Council open debate, 13–14 Oct. 2015, S/PV.7533, 82/99.

<sup>73</sup> Conflict-related sexual violence was the substance of five UNSC resolutions adopted—Resolutions 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015)—and 14 presidential statements made between 2008 and 2016 that required specific actions by the UNSC and UN member states (Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 'Norm entrepreneurship in foreign policy: William Hague and the prevention of sexual violence in conflict', *Foreign Policy Analysis* 13: 3, 2017, p. 703, fig. 1). A sixth resolution, Resolution 2272 (2016), was introduced on addressing and reporting sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. By contrast, there were no resolutions following on from Resolution 1325 between 2000 and 2008.

in their various specific forms (i.e. reactive and proactive contestation as well as behavioural contestation through implementation or its avoidance). As we have shown, six constellations of these practices prevail. Among them, for example, the second constellation entails reactive contestation by states expressed directly in statements of denial and assertions of state sovereignty and indirectly through non-implementation. Or, to take another example, in the third constellation state parties are united against the use of sexual violence in conflict, especially when the violence is perpetrated by a non-state party such as ISIS or Boko Haram, and some states assume that non-state parties are the only perpetrators. Those states which have been listed by the UNSC as perpetrators—Myanmar, for instance—proclaim their support for the norm while providing detail about their country situation that contradicts this status, though not the relevance or reach of the norm.

The second meaning-in-use refers to the organizing principle (type 2 norm) of the need to include women in peace processes, both at the meso-scale and in high-level decision-making, which has received near-universal support at the macro-scale of global society. Paying due attention to women's inclusion is a norm which has emerged through balanced reactive and proactive discursive contestation at the meso-scale on the basis of politics and policy-making, not only at the UNSC but also within regional settings involving both state and civil society actors.<sup>74</sup> Given the iterated interaction of affected stakeholders in this process, it is expected to generate a high degree of acceptance.

Finally, the third meaning-in-use refers to concrete processes, specific practical measures or specific standards and procedures of implementation (type 3 norms) associated with norm implementation on the micro-scale of global society. At this scale, the involvement of affected stakeholders is measured (e.g. in terms of increased numbers of women as peace negotiators, mediators and decision-makers, including, in the security sector, female peacekeepers and police). The highly specified norms involved leave little room for proactive practices of discursive contestation. Instead, they are expected to encounter objection at local sites of implementation expressed as reactive or behavioural contestation.

## Outlook

The origins of the WPS agenda in the UNSC have meant that it has had to follow that forum's institutional conventions. However, this does not preclude multiple and intersecting WPS practices in other institutional sites. To date, the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Bretton Woods institutions have largely left discussions on how to implement the WPS agenda to the UNSC, the UN Secretariat and, to a lesser extent, UN Women and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.<sup>75</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation 30, however, makes it clear that the WPS agenda is not

<sup>74</sup> See Catherine Turner, 'Absent or invisible? Women mediators and the United Nations', *Global Policy* 9: 2, 2018, pp. 244–53.

<sup>75</sup> For an analysis of WPS in other sites, see 'Part V: Cross-cutting agenda? Connections and mainstreaming', in Davies and True, eds, *The Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security*.

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exclusively the province of the UNSC.<sup>76</sup> Future research will need to examine the enabling and constraining conditions for affected stakeholder access to WPS normative contestation in order to identify more pathways to further women's security and gender-equal peace, in addition to NAPs and consultation processes. For example, in some conflict-affected countries there is evidence that norms such as UNSCR 1325 have depoliticized gender equality goals and demobilized grassroots women's movements,<sup>77</sup> as is the case in Iraq, where women activists have become targets of a violent backlash where WPS is associated with a lack of local adaptation and excessive international intervention or donor pressure.<sup>78</sup> There may also be resistance from particular groups of women. The focus of political economy analysis on women's social and cultural reproductive roles expects women to be concerned first and foremost with the practical needs and survival of their families and communities, rather than with formal institutions and processes unless the latter reflect the concerns of everyday life. Critical analysis also reveals that while women defend religious and ethnic identities in solidarity with men, women have a particular capacity to negotiate these identities and overcome differences owing to their intersectional position.<sup>79</sup>

With reference to the case-study of the WPS norm bundle, we have sought to demonstrate that more detailed attention to the distinct practices of contestation is helpful in order to understand how practices of dissent work on norm emergence, norm change and transformative change in global society. We have shown that research on the distinct practices of contestation is vital to establish distinct WPS normative meanings, and to identify normative change and pathways to participation for affected stakeholders. Towards that end, it is vital to enhance the access of affected stakeholders to practices of norm validation at all stages of norm implementation. Given that access to validation constitutes the fundamental condition for generating and enhancing legitimacy for peace and security institutions, all affected stakeholders' representation must be (gender-)balanced. This is achieved when access to contestation is continually expanded to include new individuals and affected groups (according to the *quod omnes tangit* principle).

Thus, a central conclusion from this article's systematic assessment of WPS contestation in one global site is that further promoting the agenda requires ongoing opportunities to engage in significant, proactive contestation. For it is the shared norms that emerge through iterated interaction in groups of stakeholders operating across different sites in global society that set the yardstick for the full implementation of WPS and its potential to transform the structures and processes of the international system. It is important to pay attention, therefore, to how distinct types of contestation contribute to the transformation of WPS.

<sup>76</sup> Catherine O'Rourke with Aisling Swaine, 'WPS and CEDAW, optional protocol and general recommendations', in Davies and True, eds, *The Oxford handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, pp. 669–79.

<sup>77</sup> See International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and MIT Centre for International Studies, *What the women say. Participation and UNSCR 1325: a case study assessment* (Washington DC, Oct. 2010); Nicole George, 'Pacific women building peace', *Contemporary Pacific* 23: 1, 2011, pp. 37–71.

<sup>78</sup> Nadje Al-Ali and Nicola Pratt, *What kind of liberation? Women and the occupation of Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>79</sup> Cynthia Cockburn, *The space between us: negotiating gender and national identities in conflict* (London: Zed, 1998).

These types of contestation include both visible and invisible practices, by both those who are present in public discourse and therefore have a voice and those who appear to be absent from WPS contestation. To bring to bear the legitimate interests of the latter, as affected stakeholders, it is crucial to make the views of all those affected count through academic research.

In future research on WPS, we suggest that scholars work with the proposed methodological framework that maps and evaluates diverse practices of contestation to identify expanding spaces and choices for a variety of local, national and regional perceptions of what constitutes gender-equal peace and security. This research will benefit from taking into account a plurality of non-state actors and organizations interacting within and across different sites. Here distinct normative perceptions of WPS and access to contestation may be differentiated by divisions on many dimensions as well as gender, including ethnicity, class, religion, indigeneity, nationality status, sexuality and various other social divisions. Where state and civil society institutions recognize diversity among women and men, and promote access to deliberation about WPS, these institutions are expected to develop greater consensus based on shared organizing principles, in turn resulting in more effective, gender-responsive and lasting local practices of peace and security.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> On this point, see Denise Walsh, *Women's rights in democratizing states* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).