Women, Peace and Security: Mapping the (Re)Production of a Policy Ecosystem

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After decades of scholarship dragging questions of gender from margin to centre, there is now widespread acceptance that war-making and peace-making are fundamentally shaped by how peoples and communities enact and transform gendered relations of power (compare, for example, Squires and Weldes 2007 and Reiter 2015).[1] Among practitioners, the recognition may be tracked in initiatives like 'gender mainstreaming' in security communities such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); in the appointment of gender advisors for peacekeeping missions and in key portfolios at the United Nations (UN); and in the advent of indices and frameworks explaining inter-state conflict by reference to the degree of patriarchy within societies (Hudson et al. 2009). If taken at face value, proclamations in favour of gender equality are now so ubiquitous as to suggest an almost universal ethical commitment by the society of states.

In this article, we examine the preeminent manifestation of the international security politics of gender, in the form of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The WPS agenda, now nearing the end of its second decade, is the most significant collective effort to reform international security practices in accordance with feminist principles, broadly understood. As we will show, 'WPS' has become an umbrella term for an array of campaigns, policies and blueprints which take 'a gender perspective' on the causes, character and resolution of war and associated forms of violence.[2] Whether in promoting women's inclusion in the armed

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[1] The phrase 'margin to centre' echoes hooks 1984.

[2] In its preambulary sections, the first of the WPS resolutions passed by the Security Council explained itself by reference to "the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations", which it

forces or urging their involvement in ceasefire negotiations, practically all peace and security initiatives undertaken in the name of gender equality since the turn of the century may be read as specimens of the agenda.

The WPS agenda is a paradigmatic case of the expanding terrain of global security. Arising in part from the 1995 Beijing Conference, the fourth and last of the UN-sponsored World Conferences on Women, and informed by feminist peace activism spanning a century, the WPS agenda was at least initially seen as a major concession by the great powers of the Security Council (Hill, Aboitiz and Poehlman-Doumbouya 2003; Tickner and True 2018; but see also Otto 2010). WPS is now one of the most established thematic issues on the Security Council docket, numbering ten dedicated resolutions at the time of writing, as compared to the ten on children and armed conflict, seven on protection of civilians, and five on non-proliferation.[3] The agenda is significant as a field in its own right, and as a key case study in the contestation of the terminology and practice of 'international peace and security'. In this article, we argue that the agenda represents a field of activity so complex, and with such contested vectors of development, that it requires new tools to think with in order to adequately capture its substance and impact on world politics. We propose the concept of *policy ecosystem* as a way of understanding the field of WPS activity, and of drawing

suggested at a minimum entailed attention to "(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction; (b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements; (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary" (United Nations Security Council 2000, 2, 3). The phrase 'gender perspective' is today common currency in the field.

[3] This count is based on the thematic items listed by the UN Security Council Resolution project at http://unscdatabase.com at the time of writing. See also https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/thematic-items. At the time of writing, the ten WPS resolutions are: UNSCR 1325 (2000); UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2103 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); UNSCR 2242 (2015); UNSCR 2467 (2019); and UNSCR 2493 (2019). We do not include clearly related, but technically distinct, resolutions on issues such as human trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions, such as UNSCR 2272 or UNSCR 2331 (both 2016)

analytical attention to dynamics of the field's (re)production that are frequently overlooked in contemporary conventional accounts.

Our argument proceeds in four sections. First, we describe the WPS agenda and the stakes of our analysis. We show that WPS is not adequately captured in prevailing conceptions of norm diffusion or regime formation, despite the many insights yielded by these approaches. The various norms embedded in the agenda do not currently significantly constrain state behaviour, are in some cases ambiguous or in tension, and are not obviously the motive for much of the activity that happens under the label of WPS. IR's present concern with norms establishes a horizon against which all practice is implicitly, and usually explicitly, judged, such that other questions and interpretations are crowded out.

In a second section we build on our critique by detailing the contribution that the concept of policy ecosystem can make to theorising peace and security governance, turning from the question of how the WPS agenda diffuses, is transferred, or operates in the world to the prior question of what the WPS agenda *is*. We define the policy ecosystem as a complex field of ongoing activity with defined but porous boundaries, within which multiple entities and processes interact. We argue that an ecological perspective is better able to accommodate the multiplicity of the agenda, both in terms of the actors that populate it and the differing claims made upon it, because it does not presume a set horizon but instead treats the field of practice as inherently open and plural.

In the third section, we reveal the complexity and dynamism of the agenda through an empirical mapping of the field of WPS activity, drawing on a dataset of 213 policy documents assembled from the UN system, national governments, and regional and international

organizations over the entirety of the agenda's lifetime, from 2000 to 2018. By drawing on such a range of WPS artefacts, we are able to undertake the first truly systematic study of the agenda's policy elements. Our view of the actors and geographies involved in the reproduction of WPS runs counter to some established narratives about the development and shape of the agenda. We explore the content of these documents to show the ways in which 'core' and 'new' WPS issues are represented, and tracing how attention to these issues emerges, consolidates, and diminishes over time. Our concluding remarks outline directions for future research on the WPS agenda and its (re)production, and comment on the significance of our study for understanding policy dynamics in global security politics more broadly.

Women, Peace and Security in Question

The Women, Peace and Security agenda derives from, though extends far beyond, United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the first of the ten resolutions to be adopted by the Council. Adopted in 2000, and so influential that advocates often treat '1325' as short-hand for the whole agenda, that first resolution founded a new thematic area of Council business, drawing attention to the need to transform peace and security governance in recognition of the ways in which prior practice had entrenched gendered inequalities and harms. In this first iteration, the Security Council sought increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making around conflict prevention, management and resolution; provided a mandate for new appointments of women as envoys and special representatives; listed measures to be taken to recognise gender iniquities when negotiating and implementing peace agreements; singled out peacekeeping operations as an area where women's role should be expanded; called for special protections in response to the violence suffered by women and

girls; identified impunity for sexual violence crimes as a special concern; and promised efforts to engage with women's civil society groups in future Council business (United Nations Security Council 2000). Histories of the agenda tend to stress the ambition of this first resolution and the unlikely conditions of its success: resolution 1325 was "almost entirely the work of civil society and non-governmental organisations" (Cockburn 2012a, 49; see also Confortini 2012, 132). The provisions of 1325 were developed and further specified in subsequent resolutions and, over the course of nearly two decades, an identifiable set of political practices constituting the agenda has emerged, as has a vibrant dialogue bridging academia, advocacy, and policy-making (see e.g. Olonisakin, Barnes and Ikpe 2011; Hendricks, 2015; Basu, Kirby and Shepherd, 2020).

The burgeoning sub-field of WPS research interrogates a range of these political practices from several perspectives. Many have examined the textual practices of WPS, with an eye to the political possibilities that are opened up, and foreclosed, in discourses of gender, peace, and security (e.g. Shepherd 2008, 2011; Puechguirbal 2010; Pratt 2013). There are large-scale studies documenting the participation of women both in peace negotiations (Bell and O'Rourke 2010; Ellerby 2013; Anderson 2016) and in peace and security institutions (Karim and Beardsley 2013; Olsson and Möller 2013; Huber and Karim 2017), as well as those assessing the prevalence and causes of conflict-related sexualised violence (Nordås and Rustad 2013; Cohen and Nordås 2014, 2015). Researchers have also explored the 'diffusion' of WPS ideas through various mechanisms (True 2016; Lorentzen 2017; Martín de Almagro 2018), with a particular focus on the development and implementation of 'National Action Plans' (NAPs), which function as the framework through which states pursue their commitments to the agenda. These latter studies, whether single-case or comparative, tend to document the process of NAP development and analyse the commitments of the NAPs in

question as an instance of implementing practice, evaluating the extent to which the NAPs embody or even extend the WPS principles which are supposed to have inspired them (Swaine 2009; Fritz, Doering and Gumru 2011; Miller, Pournik and Swaine 2014; Barrow 2016; Aroussi, ed. 2017).

Prevailing theorisations of the agenda are premised on specific ideas about what kind of an object the WPS agenda *is*, from which flow different ways of understanding how the WPS agenda can be better implemented. The most common conceptualisation of the agenda to date is as a norm or set of norms that influence security practices. Jacqui True, for example, describes the WPS agenda as "the most significant international normative framework addressing the gender-specific impacts of conflict on women and girls" (True 2016, 307), while Torunn Tryggestad argues that the WPS agenda has already become "an institutionalised set of norms with influence on UN peace and security matters" (Tryggestad 2009, 159). The 2015 Global Study – a high level review commissioned by the UN Secretary-General to examine the health of WPS – proclaimed movement towards a normative framework as the agenda's 'greatest success' (Coomaraswamy et al. 2015, 28). Certainly the agenda was intended to be transformative, and its demands on states are both proscriptive and prescriptive, seeking to constrain some behaviours while promoting others. The language of the framework suggests that norms are complementary, the foundations, floor-plan and facade of a single architectural project, or perhaps different outposts rendered in a common style. Yet the political history of the agenda also includes significant episodes of dispute, rivalry and dissent over both the method of construction and the final condition to be realised.[4] Though the agenda can be disaggregated and studied as a series of norms, accepted and enforced to

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[4] As Bucher 2014 has argued, the language of norm diffusion itself tends to eclipse agency, and lead to over-neat structural accounts where abstract norms do the causal acting.

varying degrees, and though parts of the agenda may one day constitute a regime, much of WPS practice does not currently conform to standard models.

Though it is sometimes treated as a single endpoint, WPS cannot reasonably be described as *a* norm, because its various normative components are diverse. The agenda is organised into a series of 'pillars', in most renditions covering four themes: participation, protection, prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction. Each can be said to imply a set of norms, usually defined as "standard[s] of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891). For example, a major prospective norm identifiable within the WPS agenda relates to the participation of women in peace and security governance, requiring member states to "ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict", per the first operative paragraph of Resolution 1325 (United Nations Security Council 2000, 2. More recently, this language has been strengthened by reference to 'full' and 'meaningful' participation; see Coomaraswamy et al. 2015, 47, 58). Clearly, there is not widespread adherence to this norm, and women are still excluded from peace dialogues more often than they are included (see Coomaraswamy et al. 2015, 47-48).[5]

Yet even this most foundational of WPS norms covers a domain so broad that the agenda can contain strikingly different manifestations of it. An increase in women's participation in militaries and an increase in women's participation in diplomatic missions may both qualify as evidence of the participation norm in action, even if the first is correlated with greater levels of conflict and the latter with greater success in negotiating peace. As this example

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[5] Assessments of the agenda often take the level of women's participation in peace processes and mediation as a key metric of progress, though there are of course many other sites of decision-making as set out by UNSCR 1325.

demonstrates, some WPS norms are procedural (as is the case for the democratic control of foreign policy) while others are substantive (akin to the taboo on chemical weapon use). Additional norms plausibly present in the agenda - such as the inclusion of a gender perspective in military decision-making - are more ambiguous still with regard to concrete policy pathways.

Though WPS scholars and practitioners are keenly aware of the differing ways in which the agenda may be mobilised, the implications of tensions in meaning and use have thus far not led to a reconsideration of norms as the ultimate horizon of WPS practice. As an ambitious peace and security agenda emerging from a wider trajectory of transnational feminist activism, WPS norms are frequently ambiguous with regard to both their domain and their effect. There are instances of norm acceptance that are not registered in WPS documents or practices (such as the number of female parliamentarians in a given country), as well as apparent evidence of norm acceptance in WPS documents that do not translate into practice (a phenomenon we term 'aspirational' WPS). Like True and Wiener – who describe WPS as a 'norm bundle' (2019, 553) – we identify antagonism and contestation alongside patterns of consolidation and elaboration in the agenda. Other scholars have increasingly recognised that norms do not proceed by simple diffusion and local adaptation (Bucher 2014; Chua 2017; Martin de Almagro 2018; Towns 2010; Manchanda 2020). Rather than constituting a clearly defined set of norms, the WPS agenda might instead be viewed one of the largest contributing element to the supernorm of gender equality, a 'cluster' of norms with family resemblances aspiring to "a unified and coherent framework" (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011, 18).[6] But as we argue in greater detail below, this 'coherence' is in important respects an unstable

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[6] A different understanding of 'clustering' – where distinct norms become associated with each other – has recently been proposed but operates at a higher level of abstraction than we are concerned with here (see Staunton and Ralph 2019).

construct, produced through claims and counter-claims, rather than existing as a logical and necessary inter-relation of parts.[7]

In addition to the ambiguity of the agenda's content, the preference for norm language in assessing the agenda is notable for its disconnect from the characteristic of norms that usually captures the interest of IR scholars: their effect in meaningfully constraining the behaviour of international actors.[8] Nearly two decades after the inauguration of the agenda, there is at best patchy evidence that new standards of appropriate behaviour have taken hold, and then only in relatively isolated areas of policy (for a review see Kirby and Shepherd 2016). Applying Deitelhoff and Zimmerman's norm contestation framework to WPS, there is a prima facie case that norms within the agenda have significant *validity* – in that they are widely accepted and circulated by states and other actors – but are lacking in *facticity*, more rarely guiding the actions of agents to any meaningful extent (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2019, 3). A possible exception may be the anti-sexual violence norm, widely regarded as the area of 'protection' where states have expended most energy, and where norm violations by at least some parties can be met with sanctions (see Huvé 2018; Chinkin and Rees 2019, 7; though also Aroussi 2011). We do not purport to provide a comprehensive accounting of which actors accept which norms, which is beyond the scope of our study, but rather stress the extent to which the partiality and failure of norms is a regular refrain for practitioners and observers alike (see Coomaraswamy et al. 2015).

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[7] In discussing the antipoverty supernorm, Fukuda-Parr and Hulme note that the strength in unifying more discrete policies under an abstract general aim can also prove a weakness, as major political disagreements go unresolved (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011, 29). This characteristic of supernorms is also evident in the case of WPS.

[8] Norms are widely seen as limits on actions that would otherwise be possible, and for many thus offer alternative explanations than may be derived from purely 'rationalist' or 'materialist' premises. A selection of pieces that shaped discussion of norms in IR include: Finnemore 1993; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Goertze and Diehl 1992; Katzenstein ed., 1996; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Legro 1997; Risse and Sikkink 1999; Towns 2010.

The content of NAPs, regional action plans, and the other institutional guidelines that structure the implementation of WPS might alternatively be taken to suggest that WPS is a governance regime, per Stephen Krasner's classic formulation of regimes "as principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area" (1982, 185). It is notable that the scholarly literature on WPS has not engaged substantively with regime theory, nor has regime theory been applied to WPS.[9] Though norms can be identified even where there is not significant adherence to their prohibitions in practice, regime theory has been more closely concerned with *effective* and *binding* rules institutionalised at the supra-national level (e.g. Moravcsik 2000; Garcia 2015), which are arguably incomplete even in treaties like CEDAW (Kardam 2004, 97-98). In more interactive regime models actors are viewed as engaging in strategic action within a web of overlapping legal agreements, for example on trade (Alter and Meunier 2009). But where regime theory recognises the interaction of diverse actors, it remains wedded to *rule* complexity, and the co-existence of multiple regimes in a nested 'complex' (Alter and Meunier 2009). Though regimes need not revolve around a single point of legal authority, and like the WPS agenda can include a diverse set of issue areas, treaties and technical regulations nevertheless remain crucial regime elements (for the example of climate change, see Keohane and Victor 2011; Abbot, Green and Keohane 2016).

Despite the inclusion of 'norms' and 'principles' in the accepted definition, it is rules and procedures that make a regime (see Kardam 2004, 89).[10] The recommendations of the UN Security Council, whilst arguably announcing a set of expectations for states, do not in

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[9] We are grateful for the suggestion of an anonymous reviewer that we address this point.
[10] John Ruggie's earlier definition of a regime as "a set of mutual expectations, rules and regulations, plans, organizational energies and financial commitments, which have been accepted by a group of states" (1975, 570) is arguably more applicable to WPS, given the inclusion of plans and energies, though the agenda is still some way from an inter-state agreement based on mutually-binding rules. Ruggie's examples - such as the non-proliferation regime or the European space programme - are highly technical.

themselves generate a gender equality regime. Where WPS resolutions echo treaties like CEDAW or reiterate fundamental principles they plausibly contribute to customary international law (Chinkin and Rees 2019), though dissatisfaction with implementation to date underscores the inconsistency of state practice. Prohibitions on sexual violence are again relevant as a partial exception, with WPS policy commitments working to embed the recognition of sexual violence as a war crime, crime against humanity and act of genocide, while related developments – like the increased use of sanctions against credibly-accused perpetrators and development of common standards on documentation – suggest the emergence of a regime.[11] Nevertheless, the WPS field at large is currently too open for regime theory to provide ready explanations of its dynamics, and there is little for purchase for fundamental regime theory puzzles such as why states surrender sovereign powers to international institutions (e.g. Moravcsik 2000).

The concrete relevance of our observations regarding the limitations of viewing WPS through the lens of either norms or regimes may be seen from the case of NATO, which is perhaps the most prominent and widely discussed example of internal WPS contradictions (e.g. Egnell 2016; Wright 2016). According to our mapping of WPS entities detailed below, and by common consensus, NATO is today a key exponent of WPS policy.[12] At the same time, as a collective security organisation it was a major target for the feminist peace movement during and after the Cold War. It therefore finds itself at odds with other equally important actors in the field, such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), a feminist anti-militarist civil society group sometimes credited as the historical originator of the agenda (Gibbings 2011; Tickner and True 2018).

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[11] As Kranser's definition indicates, norms are an element of regimes, and the difficulty in assessing the facticity of WPS norms would therefore be carried forward into any postulated WPS regime.

[12] For example, in their recent study of the contestation of WPS norms, True and Wiener describe NATO as one of the "early adopters and implementers of WPS" (True and Wiener 2019, 564).

As recently as 2009, WILPF actively participated in coalitions calling for the dismantling of NATO, arguing that it was an obstacle to peace and an agent of expansionist militarism (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 2008). Opposing the notion that war could be reformed, prominent WILPF figures posed the challenge, on the 60th anniversary of its founding, of "whether NATO should exist at all" (Cockburn 2012b, 136).[13] WILPF's opposition to NATO has become much less evident in the last decade, over the same span that NATO has more actively embraced the WPS agenda, starting with the 2007 and 2011 *Policies for Implementing UNSCR 1325* and the 2012 appointment of Mari Skåre as the first of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representatives for Women, Peace and Security. In this, WILPF's work on WPS has diverged from its advocacy over nuclear weapons and the arms trade, which continues to name NATO as an opponent in respect of the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty (e.g. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 2018, 13).

In embracing the agenda, NATO officials have worked to position the organization as a leader in some aspects of WPS (namely protection from sexual violence and gender balancing of armed forces) whilst occluding others (anti-militarism and conflict prevention). As WPS champions within the organisation make clear, NATO's integration of the gender perspective is driven at the institutional level not by feminist political objectives, but by an orientation towards success in a concrete 'mission' or 'mandate' (see also Wright 2019). It is in relation to such a mandate that WPS is operationalised: "a planning machinery with gender baked into the practical tools that the military structure uses in daily life", in the words of the NATO Special Representative for WPS (Schuurman 2017, 104). Both NATO and WILPF stress the

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[13] The joint 'No to war - No to NATO' statement - to which WILPF was party - was stronger still: "Our goal is to dissolve and dismantle NATO". See 'The Strasbourg Declaration', https://www.no-to-nato.org/2013/03/strasbourg-declaration/

value of 'participation', but connote starkly contrasting gendered roles, institutional practices, political commitments and desired endpoints in the process.

Arguments that NATO should not be treated as a 'proper' WPS actor simply sidestep the analytical challenge posed by a variegated field of practice.[14] Nor can the tension between NATO and WILPF be read straightforwardly as a case of 'norm decay' or as either party violating the fundamental norm.[15] WPS is such a vast field of activity, including such an array of artefacts and actors working in concert and opposition across political space, that a focus on norms alone, with its implication that all WPS actors seek the same change in values and rules, risks occluding profound differences by casting them as variations on a single theme. NATO is far from the only example. As critics of the agenda have argued, 'WPS' has been produced by security institutions in the global north in forms compatible with militarism, racialised hierarchies and the security state (Pratt 2013; Parashar 2019; Haastrup and Hagen 2020; Stavrianakis 2020). The degree of contestation and dynamism visible across so many different planes and axes suggests a need for a different starting point: one that can recognise norms where relevant but also address strategies, texts and practices as other than greater or lesser cases of contestation.[16] It is to this parallel form of inquiry that we now turn.

A Policy Ecology Perspective on WPS

As our empirical mapping below demonstrates, the WPS agenda is spreading and deepening, in uneven and sometimes surprising ways. To offer a new concept to aid thinking about the

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[14] See Basu 2016a on the related issue of how states on the Security Council take up gender as part of their national interest calculations.
[15] For background on norm decay see Price 2019.
[16] We recognise that others may prefer to adopt this perspective by revising established scholarly terms, as in the case of opening 'regime' to emphasise the role of shared meanings over technical rule books (Gale 1998).

WPS agenda, and complex governance more generally, we draw from ecology to theorise policy. Others have made a similar move in the study of international organisations. One such effort integrates insights from the sociology of organisations to explore "aggregate changes in the types and numbers of organizations" (Abbott, Green and Keohane 2016, 249), where ecology is the study of interactions among a population of entities in a given environment and the relevant entities are organisations. Our approach differs somewhat, as we are interested in the full range of actors and entities in the WPS field, understand interactions to include practices, habits, speech acts and activities beyond the entry and growth conditions for organisations, and ask constitutive questions about how WPS actors are themselves produced, rather than treating organisations as sharply distinct actors. We take inspiration from conceptual work from educational studies and define the WPS *policy ecosystem* as the field of activities, actors, and artefacts interacting in the name of the WPS agenda. Given the porosity and fluidity implied by the ecosystem metaphor, these activities, actors and artefacts include, but are not necessarily limited to, protocols, policies, guidelines, advocacy campaigns, manifestos, offices, bureaucrats, networks, movements, institutions, training manuals, government ministries, communities and individual citizens and subjects (this categorisation is influenced by Weaver-Hightower 2008, 155).[17] The agenda operates through conventional state action, such as sanctions against armed groups, but also efforts to reconfigure domestic politics through changes to political decision-making, reform of the military, adjustments to border regimes, and integration of traditional security into a far-reaching human rights framework (on WPS and human rights see O'Rourke and Swaine 2018).

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[17] We draw on Weaver-Hightower's conceptualization of *policy ecology* as a perspective on education policy (a similarly variegated field of practice), which he puts forward as part of "a call to complexity for policy research, an appeal to researchers to theorize and account for the many interconnections that create, sustain, hold off, or destroy policy formation and implementation" (Weaver-Hightower 2008, 152).

We propose four advantages in developing an understanding of the concept of policy ecosystem through the perspective of policy ecology (where again ecology is the study of interactions among the actors, activities, and artefacts that produce policy). First, there is the recognition of a potentially confounding diversity: an ecosystem is by definition complex, consisting of multiple organisms and features of various types co-existing in different and relational connection to one another. Second, interpreting policy ecologically encourages us to think holistically. Scholars might focus on any one ecological component at a given moment, but conceptualising policy as ecosystem encourages us to keep the whole in mind even as we engage closely with its parts. Third, conceptualizing policy through ecology also keeps us attentive to the borderlines and boundaries between different policy ecosystems and non-policy domains. By delimiting the ecosystem in terms of those actors that explicitly name their work as WPS (or are invoked by others as doing WPS), we do not look at activity on resonant themes framed otherwise, though we are conscious that ecosystems overlap. The fourth and final benefit of the policy-as-ecosystem concept is its utility in theorizing implementation, and the various guidelines, plans and protocols developed to govern implementation practices, as moments of reproduction. There are aspects of the ecosystem that are stable, and others that are highly mutable, unstable, or contested. New terms may enter the WPS lexicon through interactions, but interaction is also a means for elaborating and consolidating long-standing commitments.

The plurality of policy as ecosystem is inherent within the complexity of the environment. There are multiple agents within the system, all of which have different and even competing needs and interests and which make different and sometimes conflicting contributions. The relationship between the agents and the environment (or 'structure', for the more traditionally-minded) is one of mutual constitution, re-affirmed and re-visioned through the

dynamism of the ecosystem. More specifically, these processes (re)produce not only the system as a whole but also the elements or components within it, in and through iterative repetitions that mutate, shift slightly, revise deliberately, subvert, or faithfully render the assumed 'original' that was always multiple.

We recognise that there are potential pitfalls in using a naturalist metaphor to develop a conceptualisation that is then in turn built into a theory.[18] Our understanding of ecology is not evolutionary or teleological. While we seize on (re)production as a lens through which to study the politics of difference and the labour that is expended in perpetuating WPS, we do not argue that WPS is improved over time, nor that it automatically becomes more complex or sophisticated. The parameters of the ecosystem are not set in advance by inherent features, but arise out of the relational interaction of the actors within it, who are included by virtue of their own claims for themselves as advocates, implementers and critics of WPS, or by the status in the WPS ecosystem that they are ascribed by others.

We contend that conceptualising the WPS agenda as a policy ecosystem offers insight into the way that complex policy objects/practices work: how they are propagated, renewed, adapted, and mythologized with varying effects that can be empirically tracked. This concept allows us to interrogate the WPS agenda and associated agenda-setting and implementation practices to explore those effects and explain how the agenda is being (re)produced. An ecological perspective on policy – the study of policy fields as interconnected, bounded, and multiple entities pushing and pulling the policy issue in different, oftentimes radically incommensurable, directions – unsettles the taken-for-granted assumptions about, or common

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[18] Indeed, Weaver-Hightower warns against 'extrapolating from an ecological view that policy is somehow "natural" or that it should be seen as an organic, inevitable outgrowth of human needs for regulation' (Weaver-Hightower 2008, 157).

knowledge of, a policy object, and encourages creative and careful tracing of the reproductive dynamics specific to that particular ecosystem. In the section that follows, we provide a new systematic account of the WPS agenda to illustrate the utility of the concept of policy ecosystem, paying particular attention to the complexity and dynamism that is often obscured in other accounts of the agenda as an object of study.

Mapping the WPS Ecosystem

Norms research conventionally posits a standard sequence by which norms take hold among a distinctive class of international actors. In Finnemore and Sikkink's original life cycle model, norm entrepreneurs focused their efforts on states, and it was states as discrete units who were socialised and who formed the population in which norms were eventually internalised (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 895). Understandably, given the importance afforded to states in IR scholarship, subsequent research has largely followed suit, with the extent of WPS diffusion established by reference to the adoption of NAPs (e.g. True 2016; Barrow 2016; Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015). Studies of advocacy strategies similarly foreground states as the target of campaigns (e.g. Joachim 2003; see Carpenter 2011 for a different approach). At the same time, the agenda is frequently identified with the United Nations as an entity not reducible to its member states, by reference to the decisions of the Security Council as determining what states then implement, and also in detailing the disproportionate involvement of UN agencies and offices in taking up aspects of the agenda, from responses to sexual violence to brokering peace agreements to implementing peacekeeping mandates.

Given the complexity of the agenda's structure and dynamics, an inductive approach – where the agents of WPS policy are not settled in advance within a presumed hierarchy of global

governance – provides insights that unsettle conventional accounts. In this section, we present a systematic analysis of the WPS agenda since 2000, as it is captured in documentary artefacts. We have curated a new dataset of policy documents that represent the WPS agenda, and we interrogate these data to pose two over-arching questions: what *actors* convene the field of WPS policy?; and which *issues* define the content of the agenda over time? The two questions inform each other: the identity of actors drives research design into norm and policy change; and the emergence and decline of certain issues implicates different groups and entities as WPS actors.

Who is WPS?

The Women, Peace and Security agenda contains a multitude. Even before considering the range of actors now engaged in some way with the agenda, there are numerous documentary artefacts that lend themselves to interrogation as part of an investigation into WPS (re)production. Clearly, no single article could possibly engage with the totality of the WPS system. Our effort here is the opening move in a broader project on the shifting terrain of the agenda. In this first step we choose to focus on the totality of *policy texts* as key to establishing the parameters of the agenda. In doing so we acknowledge that there are swathes of WPS practice that are not captured in policy documents; that there are many important texts about WPS that are not codifiable as distinct policy; that every WPS policy document is the outcome of bargaining, collaboration and exclusion; and that the agenda is situated in a dense and contested web of global gender politics that find expression in innumerable other forms, even as they touch on themes familiar from the agenda (see e.g. Manchanda 2020). We are nevertheless able to sketch a new map, even at this most obvious and explicit level of the WPS ecosystem.

We focus on the core body of policy texts representing the major attempts to implement the agenda between 2000 and 2018 and organise these documents into three categories. The first category includes those produced through the United Nations system, comprising the Security Council's WPS resolutions and the Secretary-General's mandated reports to the Council, Statements by the Presidents of the Council, and key initiatives from outside the Council, such as General Recommendation 30 issued by Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (the 'UN system' subset).[19] Second, we include every National Action Plan (NAP) released between 2000 and 2018 (noting that the first NAP was released in 2005, pursuant to the 2004 recommendation of the UN Secretary-General and endorsed by the Security Council), representing the fullest survey yet assembled, and including some plans translated into English from their language of origin for our analysis (the 'National Action Plan' subset).[20] Third, we take what we believe to be the most comprehensive collection of international and regional organisation policy on WPS, as well as those few cases where national policy has been made outside of the context of a National Action Plan, such as the US Congress' Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 and Canada's 'Feminist International Assistance Policy' (the 'Other WPS' subset).[21] There are 33 such documents in this first iteration of our dataset for a combined total of 213 WPS policy documents across the three categories.

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[19] On this last, see O'Rourke and Swaine 2018. We count 55 WPS policy documents generated by the UN system. We do not include high level reviews (e.g. Coomaraswamy et al. 2015) or downstream implementation guidelines. Fuller details are available in our code book.

[20] 78 states produced at least one iteration of a NAP (including Bougainville and Tajikistan; these states are often counted in assessments of extant NAP states as they have produced NAP-like documents) in the research period. 30 states have formulated multiple iterations of their Plan, producing a dataset of 125 individual documents produced over the period 2000-2018. There are in addition some domestic approaches to WPS which do not rise to the level of policy and which we are therefore not able to include, as in the case of India; see Basu 2016b.

[21] We have chosen to include these other national documents in this third category rather than along with the NAPs in order to preserve comparability between NAPs, which are to some extent written in a common policy 'style', a point we expand on below.

Apprehending the WPS field in this way immediately reveals a number of interesting features. First, the sheer volume of WPS policy underlines its success, and bolsters the case for an analysis of the agenda as a significant security governance project. This point is well known to WPS scholars but is under-appreciated in the wider literature. In documenting the volume of WPS policy, we also stress that the WPS agenda resides in and is governed by no single document, even a document with the authority provided by the imprimatur of the UN Secretary-General or Security Council. Importantly, our collection of documents indicates that states are complemented by a diverse collection of other institutions – some domestic, some supranational – which implement the agenda in ways that may involve symmetry or divergence, and where the identity and motives of parties are not always evident (for example, because the same state may feed into WPS policy in multiple fora as well as in national plans which are the product of domestic bureaucratic bargaining).

Second, we are able to track *when* WPS gained traction across various levels and domains. In the language of norm diffusion, we can make out a 'tipping point' in 2010 (see Figure 1); the number of policy artefacts produced between 2000 and 2010 steadily rose, and subsequently there has been relative stability in the number of WPS events (notwithstanding a small spike in 2017; again see Figure 1). Of course, much more granularity would be required to understand 'norm diffusion', a question we bracket given our position on the norm literature outlined above. Nevertheless, our different categories of documents broadly confirm the existing view of when the agenda consolidated (Figure 2; see also True 2016), while demonstrating more clearly how regional and non-NAP national initiatives became more common in several regions.
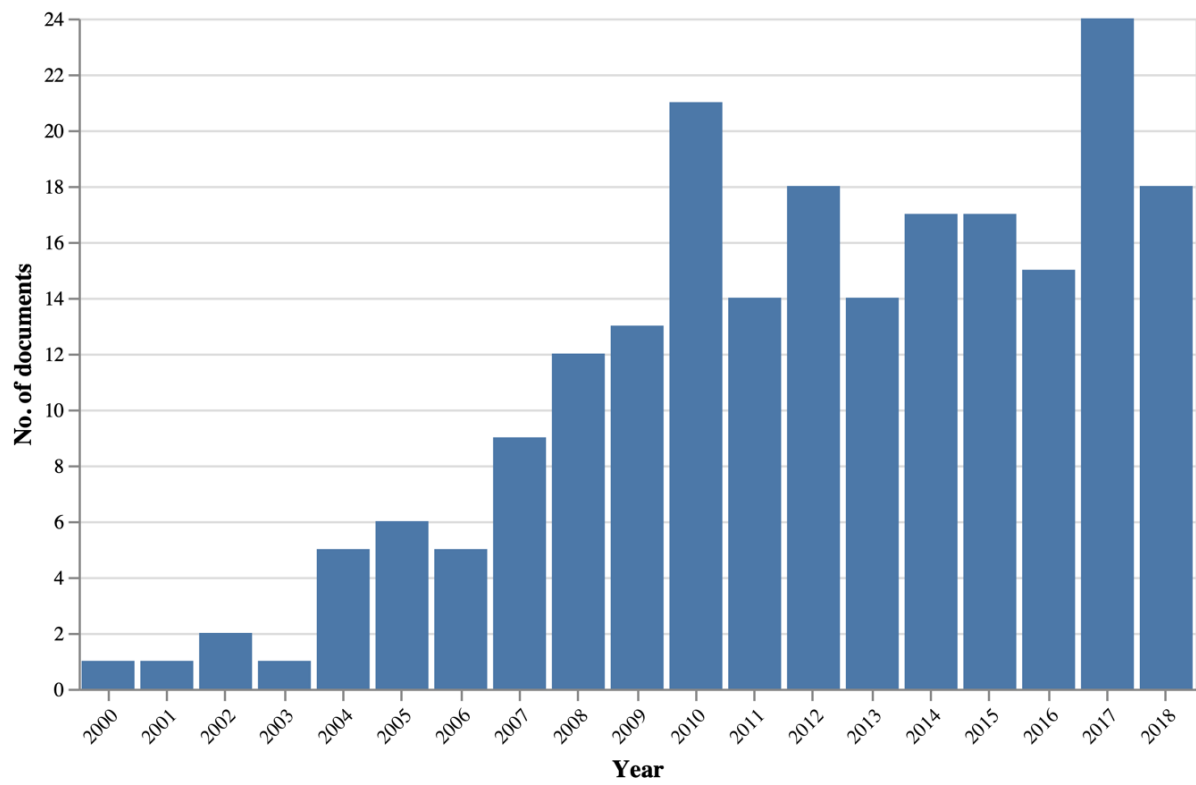
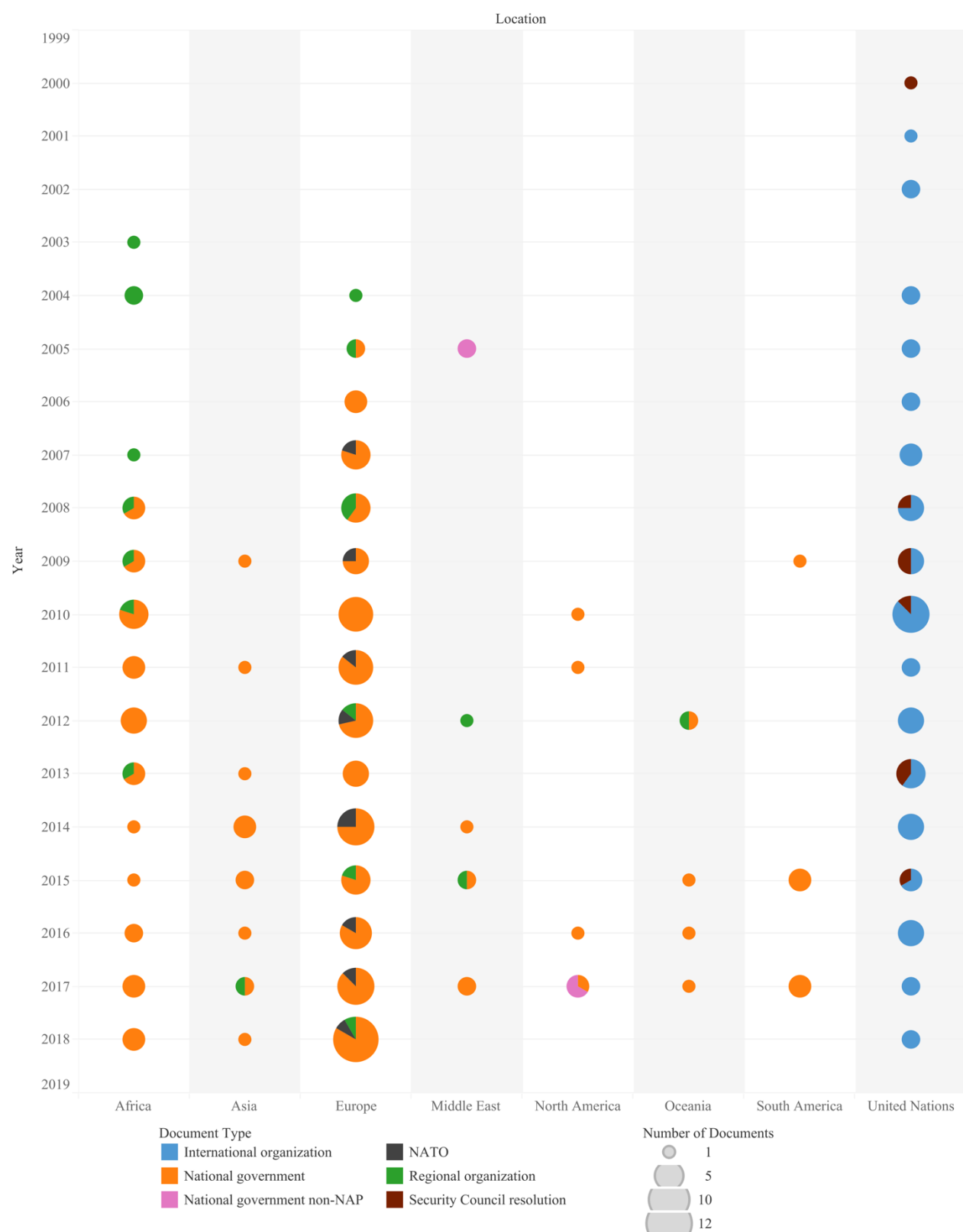Figure 1: Number of WPS policy documents produced by year (n=213)

Figure 2: WPS Documents, by Issuing Entity and Location (2000-2018)

Third, by subdividing the documents produced each year by the type of entity that produced them we confirm that it was states in particular that proliferated WPS policy artefacts after 2010; the activity of member states (including 'national government' and 'national government non-NAP' in Figure 2) accounts for the greatest increase in WPS policy documents. More recently, states have implemented WPS outside the context of national action plans, through bespoke government initiatives and occasionally legislative action which create parallel mandates for the agenda (see below). The 'domestication' of WPS is thus confirmed as a key feature of the ecosystem in need of further analysis and confounds the persistent description of WPS as 'the United Nations' Women, Peace and Security agenda'.[22]

Fourth, we note that the geography of WPS is more complex than often appreciated. While the first NAPs were issued by European governments (and specifically 'good citizen' states like Denmark, Norway and Sweden: see Dunne 2008; Tryggestad 2014, Lyytikäinen and Jauhola 2020), the earliest policy document to take up the mission of UNSCR 1325 outside the UN was the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, agreed by the African Union in 2003, followed by the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the Dar Es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes, both in 2004. Although in all three cases references to WPS are fleeting in comparison to what followed, they point to a larger pattern of early adoption. Between 2000 and 2009 (the first half of our period of analysis), African regional organisations account for six of the eight policy documents issued outside of

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[22] Of course, scholars of WPS are keenly aware of the existence of national action plans, and numerous studies take NAPs as their central focus (e.g. Swaine 2009; Lee-Koo 2014; Kaya 2016; Haastrup and Hagen 2020). However, it is still remarkably common to see the agenda analysed as occurring within the UN Security Council alone. For a related use of the term 'domestication' see Beoku-Betts 2016.

the UN and member state NAPs.[23] The first NAP outside of Europe was also located in Africa (Cote d'Ivoire in 2008).

From this mapping, we are able to make visible areas of contestation that would otherwise remain obscured. For example, one under-appreciated early 'diffusion' of the WPS agenda occurred in 2005, when an amendment to Israeli national law implemented aspects of the WPS agenda (specifically around women's participation) was matched by a Palestinian Presidential decree endorsing 1325 (for an analysis see Farr 2011; also Aharoni 2014). Neither document is captured by the conventional NAP or UN-centric approach to the agenda. The then-novel WPS frame was expected to yield new forms of peace-building through women's participation, such as when Jerusalem Link (an organisation of Israeli and Palestinian women) participating in Arria formula meeting in 2002, subsequently cited as a promising example in the key early UN study of WPS (United Nations 2002, 58). As might be expected from arguments for the participation norm, at this moment women's involvement on both sides appeared to create new space for a dialogue about peace.

However, the 'harmony of interests' conception of women's role in peace-making is less useful as an explanation for the subsequent divergence of approaches to the agenda. In the build-up to the issuing of the Palestinian NAP, the overwhelming emphasis of civil society groups was on Palestinian women as "direct victims of occupation", stressing displacement, fragmentation of families, land confiscation, settlements and arrests as key vectors, with a secondary emphasis on gender-based discrimination within a "conservative and traditional" Palestinian society (Nazzal 2009, 12, 12-13, 14). UNSCR 1325 was viewed as "a new tool for

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[23] The set of 'regional organization' documents for this period includes the first NATO directive on 1325. Note that in figure 2 NATO is listed as a separate class to other regional organizations to more clearly indicate its outsized influence.

engaging against and exposing the policies of the aggressive occupying state that violates international resolutions and legitimacy" (Nazzal 2009, 22. See also MIFTAH 2017). These emphases are strongly reflected in the most recent Palestinian NAP, where strategic objectives relate overwhelmingly to gender-based discrimination linked to the occupation, such as imprisonment, house demolitions, and harassment at checkpoints; resilience against the occupation, through sponsorship of women's initiatives; and seeking to hold occupation forces accountable through legal redress, especially through UN and international bodies (Palestinian NAP 2017, 12-43). As Sarai Aharoni has argued, WPS-related norms have been helpful in allowing activists to challenge domestic patriarchy within Israel, but their utility for peace-building has been minimal (Aharoni 2014). In short, WPS discourse now includes a limited codification of WPS in Israeli national law with regard to women's political participation, and at the same time articulates active opposition to Israeli occupation in the form of the Palestinian NAP. The point is less to endorse or denounce these strategic framings than to note how our analysis reveals WPS to be a field of contention in which antagonistic parties may find resources for their own positions under a nominally common umbrella. These points of fracture become visible only when the agenda is understood as something other than a single normative project hampered primarily by problems of implementation and translation.

What is WPS?

To yield quantitative data about the constitutive issues of the WPS agenda, we used content analysis software (NVivo 12) to run frequency searches of key words. The searches were run across the full policy set (213 documents) and our three sub-sets. The search terms are shown in Table 1, divided into 'pillar' and 'non-pillar' issues. The latter were derived as search terms

from a combined strategy of 'coding whilst browsing' – documenting which words were

appearing with relative frequency – and reviewing the scholarly literature on WPS that

indicates which issues are perceived as animating the agenda at any given point.[24] Search

results were transcribed into Excel and tabulated by frequency over time in order to show how

the agenda is (re)produced. We document the relative influence of differing conceptions and

elements of the WPS ecology below, using the occurrence of key terms, weighted by the

number of WPS documents published in that year as our indicator.

	CONCEPT	ACTUAL SEARCH TERM
Pillar issues	prevention	prevention
	participation	participation
	protection	protection
	humanitarian (relief & recovery)	humanitarian
Non-pillar new issues	refugee/IDP	asylum OR refugee OR displaced
	disasters	disasters
	LGBTQI+	LBQ OR LGBT OR LGBTQ OR LGBTQI OR LGBTQIA OR gay OR lesbian OR queer OR homosexual
	sexual and reproductive health	reproductive
	human trafficking	traffick
	climate change	environment OR climate OR environmental
	transitional justice mechanisms	"transitional justice" OR reconciliation OR reparations
	men and boys	"men and boys"
	human rights defenders	"human rights defenders"
	small arms and light weapons	"arms trade" OR "small arms" OR "light weapons"
	terrorism/extremism	terrorism OR terror OR terrorist OR extremism OR extremist OR radical OR radicalized OR radicalised OR radicalisation OR radicalization

Table 1: Search terms queried in NVivo

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[24] We do not include a comprehensive list of scholarship on the growing complexity of WPS but see recently Thomson and Pierson 2018; Holvikivi and Reeves 2017; Kirby and Shepherd 2016.

In selecting these terms, we have attended to existing WPS terms of art. It is convention within the WPS literature to discuss the agenda's substantive issue areas of focus in terms of 'pillars' of action: the prevention of violence; the protection of women's rights and bodies; the participation of women in peace and security governance; and the adoption of a gendered perspective on post-conflict humanitarian relief and recovery.[25] The 'four pillars' are a prevalent shorthand, and thus enable a mapping of WPS politics in terms of their distribution. This is especially so for the UN Security Council as a source of political discourse. Council resolutions are argued over in detail, carefully choreographed, and understood to have far-reaching ramifications based on the precise placement of terms, the sequencing of operative paragraphs, and the composition of the Council at the time of issuing (Johnstone 2005; Shepherd 2008). We are thus able to bracket long-running theoretical and meta-theoretical debates about discourse and signification (see Holzscheiter 2014 for a discussion). In the case of WPS, there is a clear and meaningful relationship between key terms and the policy approach that they signal. A National Action Plan that includes no language on women's participation is positioned relative to the wider field by a quite specific and non-trivial difference. It is not surprising then that only two NAPs out of the 125 we studied made no mention of participation: the 2007 Netherlands and 2009 Guinea NAPs.[26] The non-pillar issues we track do not command the same consensus, but here too the significance of language is well-demarcated by larger patterns of institutionalisation.

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[25] These pillars are generally deemed to derive from UNSCR 1325, but they were first laid out in the September 2007 Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security. Originally a fifth 'normative' thematic area was listed, but after 2010 became incorporated throughout as a 'cross-cutting' element and has largely fallen away in subsequent policy practice.

[26] Each expressed the same point in different language – the Dutch NAP through references to 'involvement' and 'improved position' of women; the Guinean in references to 'involvement' and 'integration'.
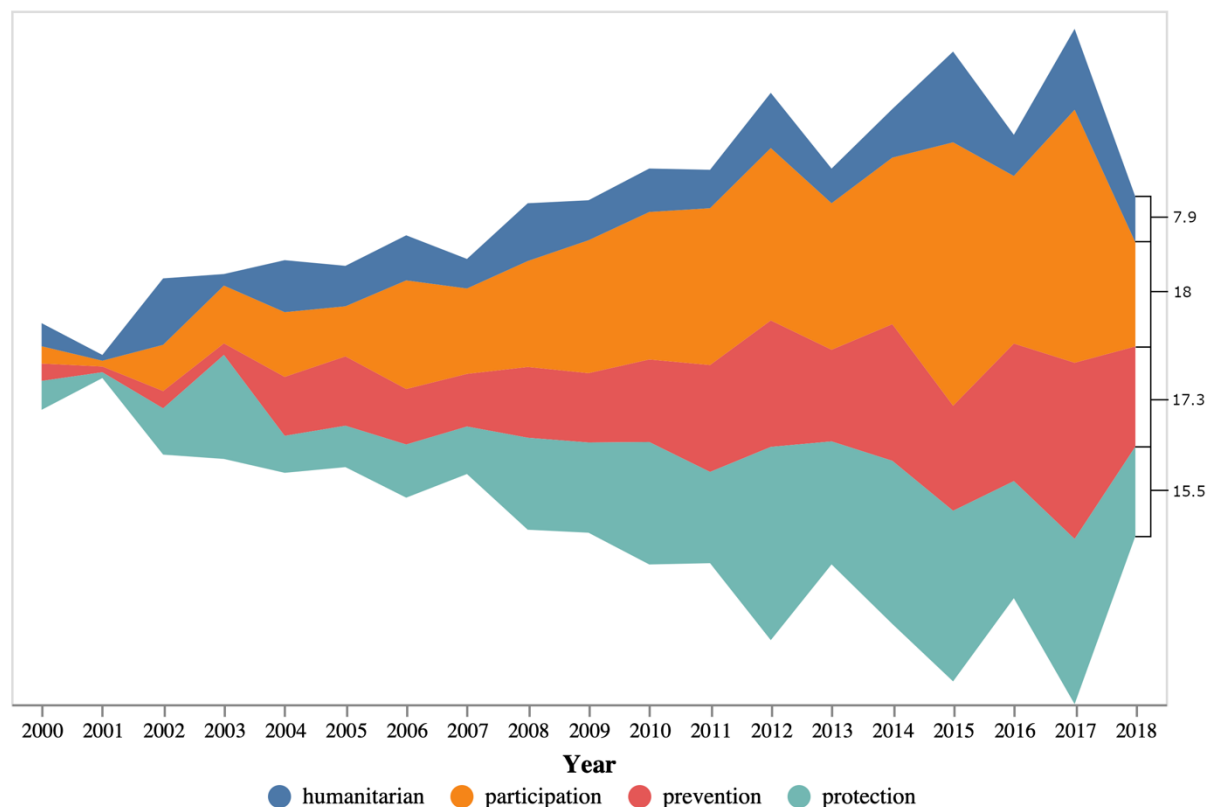
Figure 3: Mention of the four pillars in all documents over time

(2000-2018, n=213, weighted by number of documents published each year)

Figure 3 provides an overview of the attention given to the four pillars from the start of the

agenda until the end of 2018, covering all the documents in our dataset (n=213). Each

'ribbon' of colour represents the weighted number of mentions of the relevant search term.[27]

(in this and subsequent figures we indicate the weighted number of mentions). The growth in

mentions of the pillars, even correcting for the increase in the overall number of WPS

documents, is indicative of a consolidation of the agenda around these terms. This accords

with the approach taken in the scholarly literature on WPS, where the pillars are increasingly

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[27] In this and subsequent figures we indicate the weighted mentions for search terms in the final year of analysis to give an impression of frequency in each document category. In this figure we have provided values for each of the four pillar search terms. In the remaining figures we indicate the highest and lowest value search terms for 2018 and also include a third value for a search term in the middle range for that document category. Full details on the breakdown of mentions per document and the exact values for each year of analysis are available in our accompanying dataset.

invoked as the constitutive elements of the agenda, raising questions about the balance to be struck between them, and the differing meanings that may be invested in the same terms (see e.g. Basu and Shepherd 2017 on 'prevention'). We do not dwell overly on these findings here, as an impressive literature on the role of the pillars in WPS discourse already exists (see Puechguirbal 2010; Otto 2010; Aroussi 2011; Hagen 2016; Ni Aolain 2016; Confortini and Basu 2017). Research into the language of Security Council resolutions has tracked a trend from the broader base of the agenda - in which participation in all its senses was primary - to an increasing fixation on sexual violence as exemplary atrocity, activating the 'protection' side of the agenda to the detriment of the deep social, political and economic transformations implied by alternative articulations of WPS (Aroussi 2011; Shepherd 2011). This trend is by no means uncontested. Indeed, practitioners and activists have been keenly aware of it, and different resolutions issued by the Security Council may be read as signs of an ongoing struggle over the parameters of canonical WPS (see the discussion in Kirby and Shepherd 2016, 379-383).

Our findings broadly confirm these patterns for the WPS system at large, with 'participation' and 'protection' the most widely invoked terms, and post-conflict relief, reconstruction and recovery consistently the least mentioned after 2003. In the UN system documents, the fortunes of participation, prevention and protection are closely intertwined since 2006, with no pillar predominating throughout. By contrast, the hierarchy of pillars is less ambiguous in the set of NAPs, with participation the most invoked for every year since 2005, and protection in second place in nearly every year until 2016, when mentions of prevention overtake it, reflecting the grammar of anti-terrorism measures rather than the prevention of conflict at large.

As the agenda has grown, so too have new issues been added to its remit, sometimes through the canonical texts of the Security Council, other times through innovations by other WPS actors. In themselves, these moves constitute an important archive for studies of agenda setting and the salience of advocacy frames. Mapping the frequency of non-pillar issues across our three categories of documents advances two further aims. First, by looking to the emergence of more discrete terms we are able to sharpen our analysis of the pillars themselves. 'New' issue areas do not arise in splendid isolation from previous debates, but instead often represent a particular interpretation of the WPS mandate. This is the case for references to terrorism and extremism as a variety of 'protection' and 'prevention', for transitional justice as a tool of 'participation', and for references to sexual and gender identity and men and boys as signals of the agenda shifting away from general categorisations of 'women'.[28] Second, we are able to more concretely establish whether and how the agenda is being recalibrated. Is the agenda pluralising, as many observers suspect? If so, what does the take-up of new terms tell us about the actors that constitute the ecosystem of WPS? What tensions and conflictual relations enter the ecosystem through its growth?

As argued above, it is possible to identify 2010 as the point of consolidation, and it is evident from the dataset we have curated that issue areas proliferate after that point. We frame this as 'pluralisation': the (re)production of new issues within the remit of the WPS agenda (which, in turn, constitutes what 'the WPS agenda' *is* – and what it is not). The increased diversity of WPS issues is shown most clearly in Figure 4, which shows marked increases, across the totality of WPS documents in the ecosystem, in references to: asylum seekers, refugees, or displaced persons (after an outlier peak in 2002); terrorism or extremism; trafficking;

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[28] On the gender binary see Hagen 2016.

transitional justice; and 'men and boys'.[29] Engagement with issues like climate change and arms control fluctuates. We are also able to discern a recent uptick in attention to LGBTQ issues, although the incorporation of sexual orientation and gender identity remains extremely limited (see also Hagen 2016).
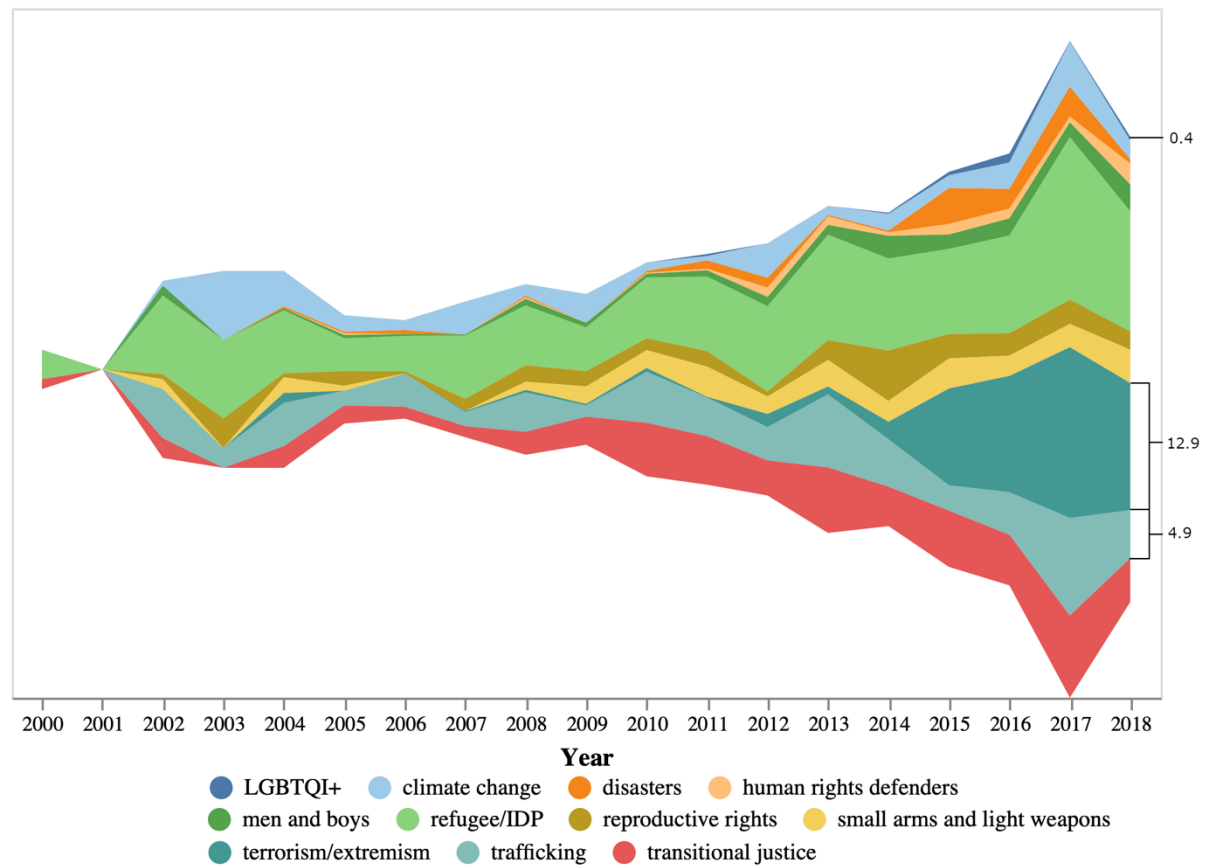

Figure 4: Mentions of new issues in WPS agenda over time

(2000-2018, n=213, weighted by number of documents published each year)

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[29] A note on our coding decisions is in order here. WPS documents are replete with references to men as the critical comparator category for gender equality, as in statements of the form 'the importance of equal participation of men and women in preventing and resolving conflict' (Serbia NAP 2017, 7). In such formulations men are not mentioned in connection to activities (such as programs to promote positive masculinity), but a standard against which the increased participation of women is to be assessed. The combined phrase 'men and boys' better captures attempts to recognise, in the words of one recent NAP, that "men and boys… may be opponents of or advocates for gender equality, as well as survivors of gender-based violence" (United Kingdom NAP 2018, 6).

Examining the constituent parts of the agenda reveals different emphases on these 'new issues', which reinforces the extent to which (re)production varies and is varied by/in different entities. Figure 5, for example, shows that references to extremism/terrorism are almost entirely absent from regional organisation and related WPS documents, appearing only in 2004 and then disappearing until 2012. The same issue was included at a lower level in NAPs, starting in 2007 with the Austrian NAP, with attention spiking after 2016 (see Figure 6). This despite the absence of references to extremism or terrorism in the WPS resolutions – arguably the closest thing to the origin policy of the agenda – until 2015. Terrorism and violent extremism have now become a major WPS issue across all three document categories, underlining the highly contentious grafting of contemporary security practices to feminist attempts to stymie militarism through the agenda (see Ní Aoláin 2016 for a wider discussion). Importantly, the arrival of terrorism and violent extremism as terms across the three documentary sets predates their appearance in the WPS resolutions themselves, again upending the conventional logic of policy transfer and norm diffusion.
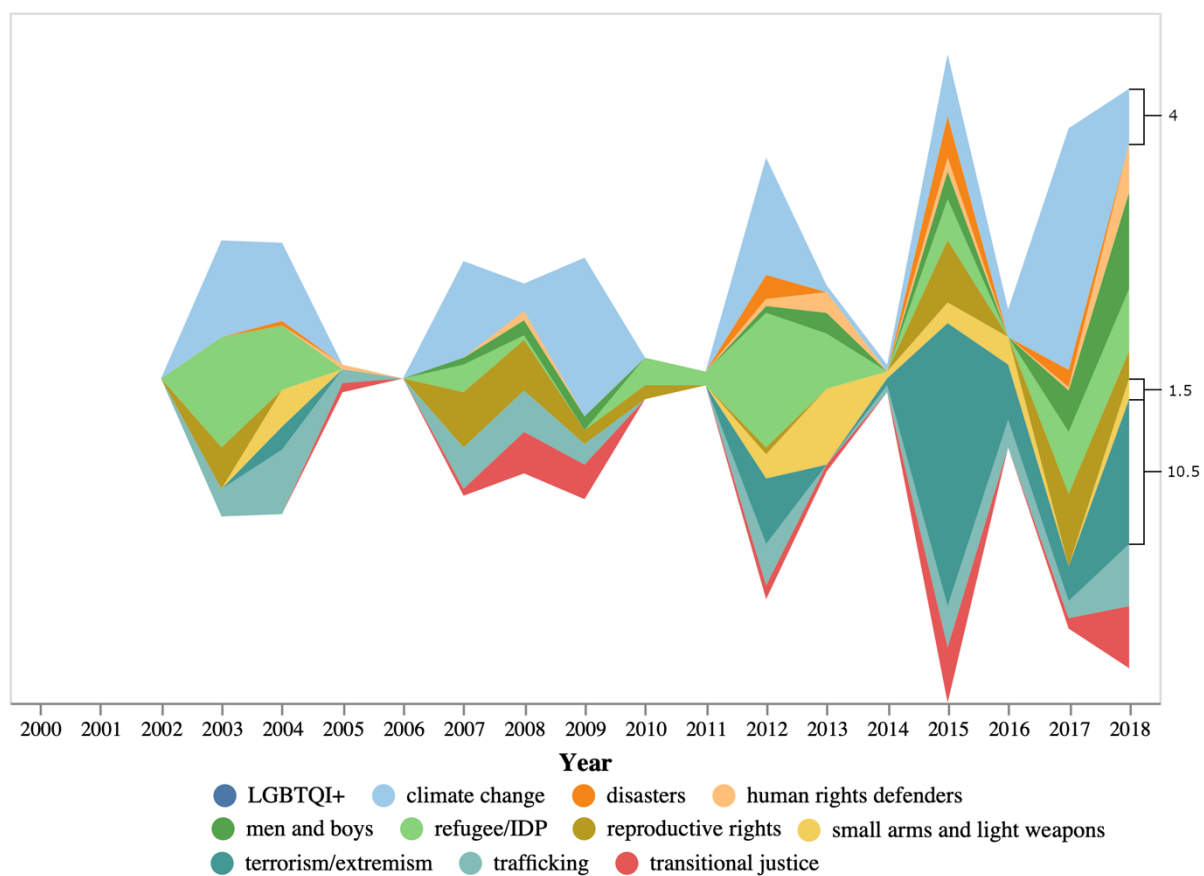
Figure 5: Mentions of new issues in 'Other WPS' documents over time (2003-2018, n=33, weighted by number of documents published each year)
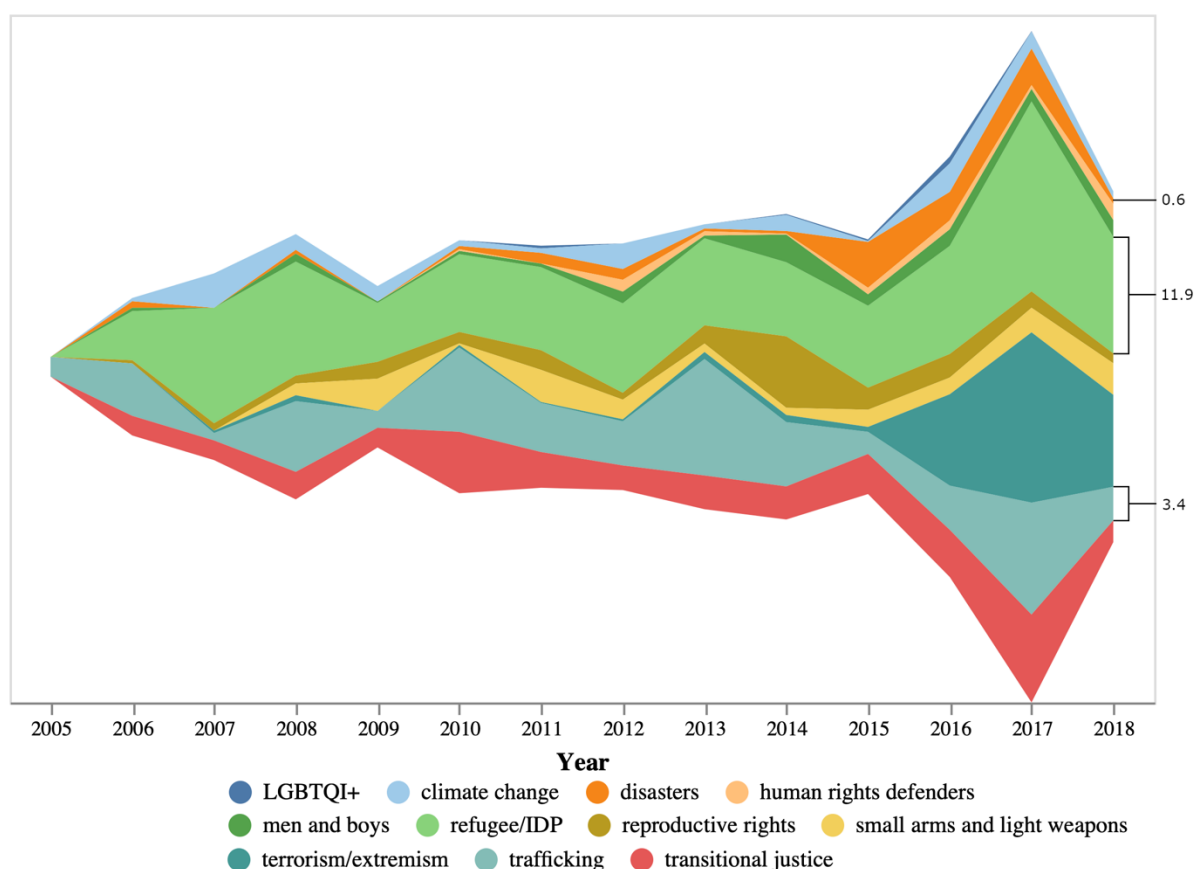
Figure 6: Mentions of new issues in NAPs over time

(2005-2018, n=125, weighted by number of documents published each year)

Table 2 summarises the top three non-pillar issues in our three categories of WPS document over time, as measured by number of mentions weighted by number of documents in five-year periods (and a four-year period for 2015-2018). As might be expected from its sometime humanitarian role, the focus in UN documents is consistently on asylum, refugee and displacement issues, and it is notable that this emphasis is mirrored in national initiatives and less consistently in regional and other WPS policies. Transitional justice concerns have also been to the fore. National Action Plans are more likely to include references to human and sex trafficking, indicating the role of the state's police function on the more coercive end of WPS practice.

Time Period	UN System	NAPs	Other WPS
2000-2004	refugee/IDP trafficking transitional justice	n/a	climate change refugee/IDP trafficking
2005-2009	refugee/IDP transitional justice climate change + reproductive rights	refugee/IDP trafficking transitional justice	climate change trafficking + reproductive rights transitional justice
2010-2014	refugee/IDP transitional justice small arms and light weapons	refugee/IDP trafficking transitional justice	refugee/IDP climate change terrorism and extremism
2015-2018	terrorism and extremism refugee/IDP transitional justice	refugee/IDP terrorism and extremism trafficking	climate change terrorism and extremism reproductive rights

Table 2: Top Three Non-Pillar Issues in each Document Category by Five-Year Period

Among regional and other national bodies, we note the surprising appearance of reproductive rights in the 2005-2009 period, driven by several documents which made links between WPS and development priorities, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Policy, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, and to a lesser extent the European Union's Comprehensive Approach to the Implementation of 1325 and 1820. Perhaps most surprisingly, climate change and environment issues have been a major focus in regional and other WPS approaches since the advent of the agenda. This finding underscores the importance of examining the intersection of WPS with other policy domains, as it was *gender equality* policies issued by the African Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the South African Development Community which most often emphasised the gendered impact of climate change in the first decade of the agenda. These

documents integrated WPS commitments alongside other priorities, rather than being
singularly focused on the narrower security dimension more characteristic of canonical
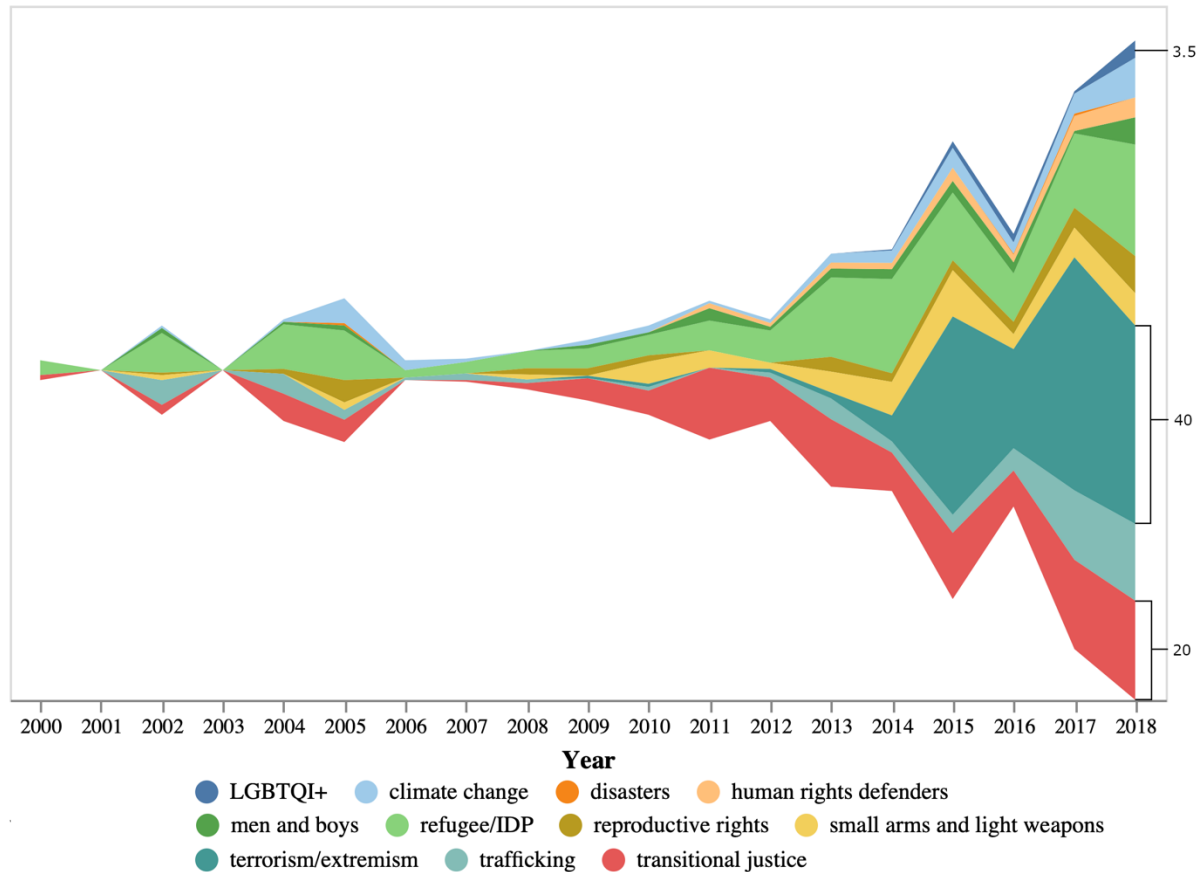agenda artefacts.

Figure 7: Mentions of new issues in UN WPS docs over time

(2000-2018, n=55, weighted by number of documents published each year)

The limited but growing energy in the WPS ecosystem around LGBTQI issues and concerns
has been generated not by Council resolutions, but by other UN entities and occasional
national government policy. By our count, there are no mentions of the applicability of the
agenda to LGTBQI people before 2011, where they are first mentioned in the United States'
National Action Plan, and thereafter most mentions come via reports of the UN Secretary-

General.[30] These issues are almost completely absent in policy generated by other WPS actors, and from the WPS resolutions themselves. These examples demonstrate that the issues under the remit of the agenda are pluralising, and, importantly, that the pluralising impetus is not driven by any one source or actor. Different entities represent and therefore (re)produce the agenda in different ways over time. Many more issues are considered WPS issues than the four pillars of prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery; the pluralisation of WPS issues extends the field of concern of WPS and fundamentally changes how it can be understood as the object of research and practice.

The final dimension of plurality to which we draw attention is that of the actors shaping WPS policy. We have already shown how WPS is taken up by different organisations at multiple levels of governance: here we note which parts of the machinery of government are involved in WPS implementation, as shown in Figure 8. Aisling Swaine (2009) has convincingly argued that the location of National Action Plans within the machinery of government is politically salient, demonstrating through her analysis that the focus of the NAP (whether it is domestic or foreign-policy focused) and its level of influence will be shaped by the lead responsible agency. It is therefore instructive to map the NAPs as a component of the WPS ecosystem to explore the range of lead agencies involved in co-ordinating WPS activity.

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[30] The multiple iterations of WPS policy by the U.S. government make for an instructive case study in the contestation of the agenda's content. While there were several references to LGBTQI issues in the 2011 and 2016 US National Action Plans, there were none in the most recent US Strategy on Women, Peace and Security, issued by the Trump administration in 2019.
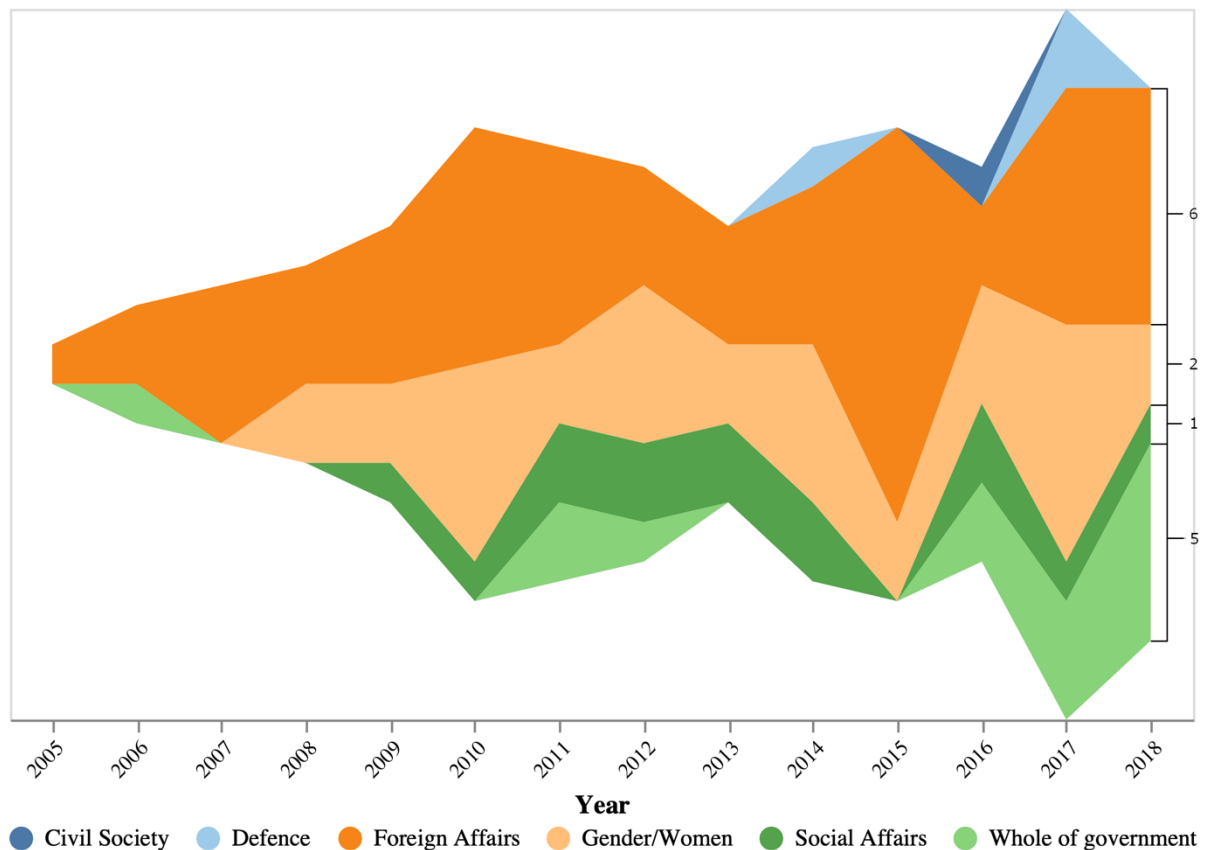
Figure 8: Category of NAP lead agency over time (2005-2018, n=125)

We find, as shown in Figure 8, both that there are evident consistencies – in the placement of the NAPs within ministries for foreign affairs, or similar, and in ministries charged with oversight of gender equality programming or the advancement of women – but also emerging patterns. In Romania (2014), Serbia (2017), and Montenegro (2017), NAPs were launched that were situated within or co-ordinated by ministries of defence. Relatedly, the third iteration of the Dutch NAP sits with civil society as an implementing actor; this move reflects the fact that many civil society actors and activists express a strong sense of ownership over the resolution and the agenda more broadly.[31] Figure 9, below, shows how the pluralisation

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[31] Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, co-founder and international coordinator of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), affirms this perception of ownership of the WPS agenda: "I still recall one GNWP

across the different lead agencies plays out geographically: in Africa and the Middle East, the vast majority of NAPs sit with ministries for gender or women, while in Europe and the Americas it is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (or equivalent) that is most likely to take the lead. The latter regions, however, and as shown in Figure 8, are also the areas where NAP responsibility is pluralising. Several dynamics are evident. The move to Defence, and the Dutch allocation of responsibility to civil society, along with the increasing numbers of NAPs managed or overseen by whole-of-government task forces or inter-agency working groups, all challenge a monolithic reading that aligns responsible agency with region (of the kind that suggests that Global South NAPs tend to be inward-looking while those produced in the Global North tend to look outwards; see Shepherd 2016), at least inviting a closer look at the way responsibility is pluralising in those locations. These data also reveal likely imminent fracture, as locating the NAP within Defence brings with it a certain set of protocols and expectations that would be absent, for example, when the NAP is located with civil society or a ministry for social affairs. Future research is needed to explore these pluralising and fracturing dynamics within the WPS ecosystem.

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member from the conflict-affected Mount Elgon district in Kenya who said to me: 'The first time I read Resolution 1325, I held it close to my chest. This is ours; this belongs to us'" (Cabrera-Balleza 2011, no page; on the 'narratives of production' of the foundational resolution, see Shepherd 2008).
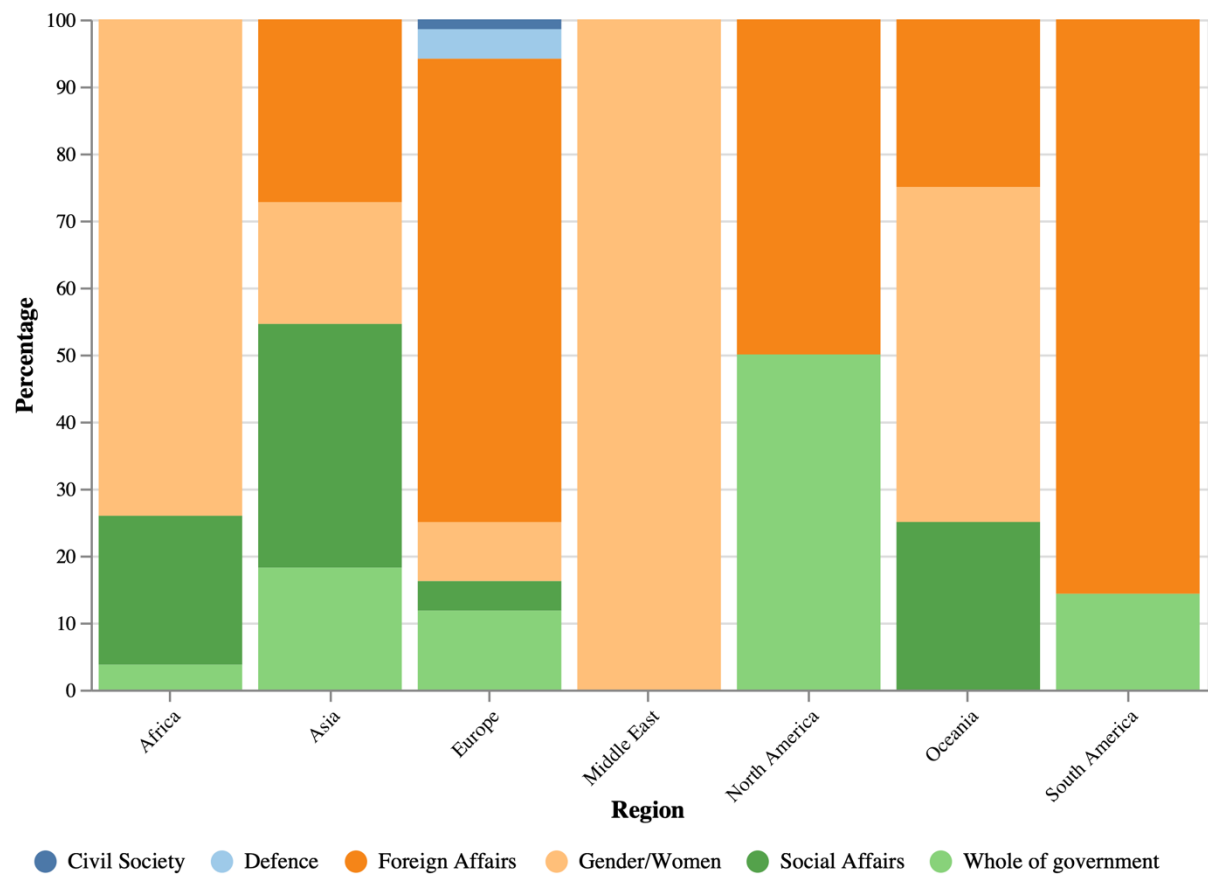
Figure 9: Percentage of NAPs within each lead agency, by region (2005-2018, n=125)

The analysis presented here reveals some striking and unexpected dynamics organising the field of WPS activity. It is not just the case that the various elements of the agenda are 'contested', a formulation that assumes that the agenda is a somewhat stable or settled policy entity that actors diverge from. The above analysis shows that the meanings given to WPS in various locations, by various actors, and across various time periods, are highly mutable, challenging the treatment of 'the WPS agenda' as a single object of analysis. At a minimum, our analysis demonstrates the utility of a different perspective on WPS, and we have proposed that 'policy ecosystem' is a useful way of thinking about the field of activity, actors, and artefacts that is described by the shorthand of 'the WPS agenda'. We have demonstrated how the plurality of WPS actors reproduces the agenda in complex and divergent ways; our analysis identifies states working alongside a diverse collection of other formal institutions,

domestic, regional, and supranational, all of which implement the agenda in ways that may involve symmetry or divergence. We have also shown that, within and across categories, there is surprising variation in the issues deemed to fall under the auspices of the agenda. Yet our dataset captures only the surface of the ecosystem, as these are the entities empowered to make 'official' policy, and so do not include the array of civil society organisations and social movements that agitate for gender inclusivity and feminist peace. Our map is not comprehensive, but our perspective underscores the importance of looking beyond the canonical features of the agenda.

Conclusion

We have shown that the field of WPS activity is highly variegated and have identified dynamics of pluralisation and fracture in the reproduction of the WPS agenda through its various policy artefacts. Existing conceptualisations of WPS as a norm, or normative framework, do not adequately capture either the tensions or the complexity of the agenda's development over time, nor do they resonate with the non-linearity and multiplicity of its reproduction (which involves many different and variously dis/connected actors, institutions, and ideas). At the time of writing, the adoption of the most recent WPS resolutions is still fresh in the minds of many who work in the field (UNSCR 2467 and UNSCR 2493, adopted in April and October 2019, respectively); the process of negotiation, and the eventual content, of resolution 2467 specifically has been described as a 'decisive setback' for the agenda (Ní Aoláin 2019) because of its weakened language on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) rights for survivors of sexual violence. The US government had threatened to veto the resolution – championed by Germany, which held the presidency of the Council at the time – if the wording about sexual and reproductive health was not removed. The negotiations went

right through to the Security Council Open Debate, during which the draft text was amended further, removing reference to UNSCR 2106 (which previously articulated the agenda's commitment to upholding the SRH rights of survivors) to the Preamble of the resolution. Having presented a collaborative draft resolution of their own on the topic of sexual violence in conflict (largely seen as an effort to maximise the gains possible from having the agenda in chaos, its previously unified supporters bitterly divided), China and Russia abstained from the vote on UNSCR 2467, making it the only WPS resolution not be to adopted by unanimous vote.

As this brief vignette demonstrates, the decoherence and fracture we identify through our broader analysis above can be evident for practitioners and observers at crucial moments but is lost in broader narratives of normative development. The testing of a norm such as the protection of SRH rights (thought previously to be settled or at least broadly agreed upon within the agenda and enshrined within the operative paragraphs of WPS resolutions; e.g. UNSCR 1889, para. 10; UNSCR 2106, para. 19), in the further development of the agenda's policy framework shows the extent to which the reproduction of the agenda is an iterative process of stabilisation and destabilisation, of pluralisation and fracture. Most critically, our analysis shows that the agenda is comprised not of a discrete set of identifiable norms but rather of a plural, overlapping, and ambiguous set of norms, ideas, principles, deeply-held personal beliefs, and policy actions. Our hope is that the analysis we present above begins to use the complexity of the field of study as a way of gaining analytical clarity.

In presenting the most systematic analysis of WPS policy to date, we have emphasised the diversity of the agenda and its multiple locations of enunciation. Our approach has yielded a range of insights into agenda's development, its current parameters and actors, and the

changing constellation of issue areas that constitute it. We have further proposed that a shift from conceptualising WPS as a norm or normative framework to the concept of *policy ecosystem* permits the theorization of policy development as a process of (re)production and differentiation. The agenda is constantly being written and re-written. Both the issues that are conceived of as WPS issues, and the infrastructure within which WPS actors interact, are changing in ways that fundamentally challenge the interpretation of implementation as a story of singular, unitary, and unidirectional policy development or norm diffusion.

Our argument has two major implications. First, with regard to the WPS agenda itself, we provide substantial reasons to permanently reorient the research agenda away from a notion of policy change cascading out from the texts of the UN Security Council, and towards the relational and interactive dynamics of multiple actors within a variegated field. While it will remain profitable to assess WPS case studies and measure the success or otherwise of diverse initiatives, this should be set in the wider context of the agenda's porous boundaries and internal differences. The concept of policy ecosystem aids such efforts at contextualisation. Second, for the wider analysis of norms and policy, we join others in suggesting that greater sensitivity to the politics of (re)production will better capture the ways in which policies becomes arenas for contestation, adaptation and transformation. It may be objected that the WPS agenda is a *sui generis* agenda, or at least strikingly different from the norms and policies usually of interest to IR scholars. We are not able here to undertake a comparative analysis, but point to initial evidence of similar policy forms such as the recent UN Secretary-General's *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, which encourages UN member states to develop 'national plans of action' with a distinctively WPS flavour (United Nations General Assembly 2015, para. 44). Given the resources that are invested, both intellectual and material, in investigating and documenting implementation gaps and failures, how may we

explore the dynamics of policy in a way that attends not only to the technical detail of texts or the normative horizon towards which they aim, but also to the expanse of relations and struggles that animate, remake and frustrate agendas, plural?

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