REFERENCES
Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/26558023?seq=1&cid=pdf-
reference#references_tab_contents
You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

Civil Society Participation in Women, Peace and Security Governance: Insights from Australia

Anuradha Mundkur and Laura J. Shepherd

Research on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda frequently focuses on the participation of civil society organisations in the governance and implementation of the agenda. In this paper, we examine the current engagement between civil society and government around the WPS agenda in Australia, and explore the ways in which this engagement could be enhanced and supported into the future. Taking seriously—and facilitating properly, through funding and opportunities for direct ongoing engagement—civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia and across the world is essential for the agenda's continued resonance, legitimacy, and efficacy in world politics.

The policy architecture of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is formed of eight United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) adopted under the title of 'Women and Peace and Security'.[1] These resolutions represent the consolidation of decades of women's activism, leadership and advocacy regarding the importance of women's participation in peace and security governance and the protection of women's rights in conflict settings. The agenda is usually described as comprising three or four 'pillars', of which participation and protection are two. The agenda also engages questions of violence prevention, including but not limited to the prevention of sexualised violence in conflict. The relief and recovery dimension is identified as a fourth pillar in some scholarship and practice. Research on the WPS agenda frequently focuses on the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs), especially women's organisations, in WPS governance and implementation, perhaps as a result of the genealogy of the agenda and the perception that it is founded in civil society activity.[2] Our

---

[1] At the time of writing, the eight UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) that form the policy architecture of the WPS agenda, with their years of adoption, are as follows: UNSCR 1325 (2000); UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); and UNSCR 2242 (2015).

[2] See, for example Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007); Judy El-Bushra, 'Feminism, Gender, and Women's Peace Activism', *Development & Change*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2007), pp. 131-47; Elisabeth Porter, *Peacebuilding: Women in International Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 11-42; Elisabeth Porter, 'Women, Political Decision-Making, and Peace-Building', *Global Change, Peace and Security*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2010), pp. 245-62; Julia Arostegui, 'Gender, Conflict, and Peace-Building: How Conflict Can Catalyse Positive Change for Women', *Gender & Development*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2013), pp. 533-49; Jill Irvine, 'Leveraging Change: Women's Organizations and the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Balkans', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2013), pp. 20-38.

---

paper seeks to contribute to this body of literature, examining the case of civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia. We draw out specific dimensions of the interactions between civil society and government in support of an argument about the role of civil society organisations in the continued resonance, legitimacy and efficacy of the WPS agenda in world politics.

We have chosen Australia as our case study in part due to the unparalleled access to data that we enjoy as a result of our ongoing involvement with WPS governance and civil society activity in this space. More significantly, though, is the fact that Australia is one of the countries named in the 2015 global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as evidencing best practice in the sphere of civil society participation. The study states that "[t]he role of civil society in collecting up-to-date information on the situation of women affected by conflict, as well as in maintaining the momentum for NAP [National Action Plan] implementation, is well recognized".[3] The 2015 global study lists Australia, among other countries, as having specific provisions for enabling civil society participation in WPS governance. Our intention, therefore, is to present a broader argument about the significance of civil society participation in WPS governance by examining the current engagement between civil society and government around WPS in Australia, and through exploring the ways in which this engagement could be enhanced and supported into the future.

There are three dimensions of civil society participation, namely *expertise*, *ownership* and *accountability*, to which we pay particular attention in this paper. Together, these dimensions form the mode(s) of civil society engagement we identify as critical to the continued development of the WPS agenda. In discussing *expertise*, we investigate the ways in which, both globally and in Australia, the participation of women and women's CSOs in WPS governance brings to the fore civil society's capacity to speak with, for, and about, the subjects of WPS governance in ways that government perhaps is unable or at times unwilling to do. We interrogate the question of *ownership*. The WPS agenda is somewhat unique in this regard. While the architecture has an institutional home at the UN Security Council, the agenda lives in civil society, because it is nurtured and kept alive by the various civil society entities—both individual and collective—that are committed to the realisation of the hard-fought commitments that are represented in WPS principles and practices across the world. Finally, we explore *accountability* as a core contribution that civil society makes to WPS governance in Australia. This relates directly to John Keane's formulation of civil society as "a permanent thorn in the side of political power",[4] in this case

---

[3] UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York: UN Women, 2015), p. 248. Online, at: <wps.unwomen.org> [Accessed 25 September 2017].
[4] John Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 15.

keeping the Australian Government accountable for the commitments made under the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2012-2018 (hereafter 'the Australian NAP').

The paper proceeds in five substantive parts. First, we outline the conceptualisation of civil society that informs our analysis here. In the second part, we provide an overview of the role played by civil society in the development and implementation of the Australian NAP, in order to provide some context for the tripartite discussion that follows regarding the elements of civil society participation outlined above. We devote parts three, four and five to the discussion of expertise, ownership and accountability respectively. We draw together our various strands of argument in the concluding section of the paper, emphasising the significance of civil society participation in WPS governance and summarising an argument about the importance of taking seriously—and facilitating properly, including through funding and opportunities for ongoing direct engagement—women's CSOs participation in WPS governance in Australia and across the world.

The Concept of Civil Society and Its Role in Democratic Governance

Civil society as a concept has historically been defined in opposition to its others. In some early formulations, as outlined for example by Krishan Kumar, it is held to be an intermediate realm between government and the family.[5] Prior to that, even, in modern political theory, the concept of civil society was juxtaposed with the 'state of nature', in which people enjoy neither the freedom afforded by, nor the protections of, formal government. *Societas civilis*, in this view, is broadly synonymous with subjection to the rule of law and the civilisation of society under democracy.[6] Civil society is also conceptualised as a 'third sphere', a space apart from politics, on the one hand, and economics, on the other. This account conceives of civil society as a facilitative, integrative domain, in which free associations of individuals can collectively counterbalance the power of the state: "Here, social associations bringing people together in networks of solidarity cultivate the art of empathy, perform functions of pedagogy and socialisation and, in general, help citizens to connect".[7]

---

[5] Krishan Kumar, 'Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of an Historical Term', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 44, no. 3 (1993), p. 378.

[6] See, for example Anthony Black, 'Concepts of Civil Society in pre-Modern Europe', in Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge Unviersity Press, 2001), pp. 33-38; John Keane, 'Civil Society, Definitions and Approaches', in Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler (eds), *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2010), pp. 461-64; Kumar, 'Civil Society'.

[7] Neera Chandhoke, 'The "Civil" and the "Political" in Civil Society', *Democratization*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2001), p. 4.

Alternative ways to theorise civil society are represented in Hegelian, neo-Marxist, and Foucauldian writings on the limits of power and resources. All three offer, in various ways, explanations of civil society as a social structure that functions towards more or less democratic or authoritarian ends.[8] The educative function of civil society is held to be integral to the functionality of the state and the relations of production that support and reinforce state power, on this view. Where Gramsci, in particular, breaks from these other theories of power and social control is in the articulation of possibilities afforded by civil society for resistance to hegemony in progressive and positive ways, through a reversal of the logic that sees power flow from civil society or citizenry to the state and the creation of hegemony located in and deriving from a vibrant and effective civil society.[9] In brief, social progress happens when CSOs agree upon and create governance structures in society that are supported and facilitated by the state, which in turn exists to serve civil society, not the other way around. While perhaps not widely or consciously attributed to Gramsci himself, this strategy of social progress underpins much of contemporary civil society's engagement with government.

This is the vision of civil society that underpins our analysis of civil society participation in WPS governance in this paper. Not only do we focus on the democratic aspects of civil society in our articulation of why civil society participation matters in WPS governance, but also our account aligns with that outlined briefly above in its articulation of a vision of social change. Ultimately, our view of civil society is one that engages with the "*articulation* and *negotiation* of political interests within society"[10] with the outcome of effecting positive change, while remaining in balance with government because CSOs lack the regulatory and geostrategic power of states. In a typically eloquent turn of phrase, John Keane has proposed that "civil society should become a permanent thorn in the side of political power",[11] but in such a way as the state and civil society are mutually reinforcing progressive initiatives and alternative visions of social organisation. Writing about the role of civil society in democratisation, Keane suggests that "[c]ivil society and the state … must become the condition of each other's democratization";[12] we endorse this view and in turn argue that civil society and the state need to enable each other's support of and commitment to ongoing democratic governance. Manuel Castells summarises this view

---

[8] Hegel and Foucault tending to see outcomes more conservatively, Gramsci—among others—viewing the possibilities of civil society activity slightly more positively. See Michael Hardt, 'The Withering of Civil Society', *Social Text*, no. 45 (1995), pp. 27-44, pp. 28-33 in particular.
[9] Ibid., p. 30.
[10] Christoph Spurk, 'Understanding Civil Society', in Thania Paffenholz (ed.), *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010), p. 8 (emphasis in original).
[11] Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society*, p. 15.
[12] Ibid.

when he proposes that "the relationship between the state and civil society is the cornerstone of democracy".[13]

This conceptualisation of civil society and its function vis-à-vis social progress leaves unanswered questions about *why* civil society is such a valuable sphere of activity. A well thought through account of the benefits of a vibrant and engaged civil society requires that we sketch out the positive qualities or characteristics of civil society participation in governance, lest we present an analysis that romanticises or obscures rather than clarifies the contributions made by civil society organisations in relation to Women, Peace and Security governance. Debates about the inclusion of civil society in WPS governance in particular owe an intellectual debt to debate about civil society as a development actor, which is not unrelated to Keane's discussion of democratisation. In the context of societal transformation, particularly transformation led by global development organisations in the 1980s and 1990s, "a vibrant civil society was considered an important pillar for establishing democracy, and support for it became an obvious aim of democratization".[14] The values assumed to inhere within civil society are plural and wide-ranging. However, the significance and worth of fostering an engaged civil society in the development context carry over to and inform assessments of the significance and worth of civil society engagement with WPS principles and practices. In the section that follows, we outline the role that civil society played in the context of Australian WPS governance, particularly in relation to the adoption and implementation of the the Australian NAP.

The Role of Civil Society in WPS Governance in Australia

As outlined above, the 2015 global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, published under the title *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace* (hereafter 'the *Global Study*'), highlights the pivotal role that civil society has played, nationally and internationally. Civil society actors have been leaders in both advocacy and lobbying for greater recognition of the WPS agenda and in drafting resolutions, polices and action plans to implement the agenda.[15] As Cynthia Cockburn notes,

> It may well be the only Security Council resolution for which the groundwork, the diplomacy and lobbying, the drafting and redrafting, was almost entirely the work of civil society, of non-governmental organisations. Certainly it was the first in which the actors were almost all women.[16]

---

[13] Manual Castells, 'The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks and Global Governance', *Annals AAPSS*, no. 616 (2008), p. 78.

[14] Schmidt, cited in Spurk, 'Understanding Civil Society', p. 16.

[15] UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace.*

[16] Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis* (London: Zed Books, 2007), p. 141.

In Australia, CSOs and individuals are deeply engaged in advocacy, lobbying, and activism in the sphere of WPS governance. This section provides a brief overview of that activity in the context of the Australian government's engagement with WPS more broadly.

Australia's aid program has a history of supporting aspects of the WPS agenda even before the adoption of UNSCR 1325. Australian aid played an instrumental role in supporting the Gender Unit of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) to develop gender mainstreaming guidelines for the ministries of education and health. Similarly, well before the Australian NAP was published, Australia supported projects in the Asia-Pacific region that align with the key pillars of UNSCR 1325. In Bougainville, the aid programme funded the Community Trauma Programme developed by the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation. In the Philippines in 2004, the aid program assisted the Mindanao Commission on Women's work to influence public policy and public opinion about peace and development from a women's perspective. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue's project *Women at the Asian Peace Table: Enhancing Women's Participation in Peace Processes* in 2009 sought to increase women's involvement in formal conflict resolution and mediation processes. Ongoing assistance to UNDP's network of peace advocates, N-Peace, is yet another example of Australia's support to the WPS agenda.[17] Australian CSOs sought to leverage this work when lobbying for an Australian NAP.[18] The government's decision to bid for a temporary seat on the UN Security Council (2013-2014) was seen as the window of opportunity to lobby for its adoption.[19] The campaign for the Australian NAP was led by the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF Australian Section) and supported by UNIFEM Australia (now UN Women National Committee Australia), in partnership with other locally based CSOs.[20]

The advocacy work that laid the foundation for the Australian NAP dates back to 2004 when WILPF (Australian Section) received funding from the Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW) to develop an Australian website promoting UNSCR 1325. In the same year, the Australian Government invited WILPF (Australian Section) to suggest ideas on the best way forward to implementing a NAP, as part of preparatory work for the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In 2008, in partnership with UN Women National

---

[17] Sherrill Whittington, 'Women, Peace and Security: A Gendered Approach to Aid Effectiveness in Post-Conflict Development', Think Piece, Office of Development Effectiveness, AusAID, November 2011, <dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/Documents/women-peace-security-aid-effectiveness-sherrill-whittington.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017].
[18] Katrina Lee-Koo, 'Implementing Australia's National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 3 (2014), pp. 300-\13.
[19] Ibid.; see also 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*, vol. 68, no. 3 (2014), pp. 257-84.
[20] Lee-Koo, 'Implementing Australia's National Action Plan'.

Committee Australia, WILPF (Australian Section) proposed to the former Minister for the Status of Women that not only should Australia develop a NAP but that the Women, Peace and Security agenda should be one of the top ten women's priorities for action. As a result, in 2009 WILPF (Australian Section) was funded to run national consultations to inform the Australian Government on the next steps towards the development of a NAP.

The recommendations derived from national consultation were captured in a discussion paper released in 2009 titled *Final Report: Developing a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (hereafter *Final Report*).[21] The *Final Report* provided a comprehensive framework outlining the scope of the NAP (domestic and international focus), recommendations regarding governance structures, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Following the release of the *Final Report*, OFW convened a Women, Peace and Security Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG), comprising representatives from the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Defence (ADF), Attorney General's (AGD), AusAID (now Australia Aid and part of DFAT), Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). The IDWG was tasked with determining "how Australia could better implement UNSCR 1325" and overseeing the "development of a consultation draft National Action Plan, which was informed by key suggestions from WILPF Australia's work".[22] As discussed below, many of the recommendations made by CSOs in the *Final Report* were ignored by the IDWG.

Australia's six-year NAP details four key strategies with specific actions under each strategy that correspond to the four pillars (which the Australian NAP terms as thematic areas) of UNSCR 1325—prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery.[23] Some actions align with more than one thematic area and some align with the normative thematic area, described as a commitment to "raising awareness about and developing policy frameworks to progress the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and integrating a gender perspective across government policies on peace and security".[24] For each of the actions, the Australian NAP details government agency responsibility. The four strategies that frame the NAP are: integrating a gender perspective into Australia's policies on peace and security; embedding the WPS agenda in the Australian Government's

---

[21] WILPF Australia Section, *Final Report: Developing a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2009), <www.1325australia.org.au/textdocuments/FinalReportJuly2009.pdf> [Accessed 25 September 2017].
[22] Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs [FaHCSIA], 'Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018', 2012, <www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/aus_nap_on_women_2012_2018.pdf> [Accessed 25 September 2017], p. 16.
[23] The Australian NAP primarily takes UNSCR 1325 as the framework for implementation.
[24] Ibid., p. 17.

approach to human resource management of defence, AFP and deployed personnel; supporting CSOs to promote equality and increase women's participation in conflict prevention, peace-building, conflict resolution and relief and recovery; and promoting WPS implementation internationally. The government departments with NAP responsibility include the ADF, AFP, DFAT, ACMC, AGD and OFW, the entity tasked with coordinating this whole of government effort.

CSOs, despite their vital role in pushing for the national adoption of the WPS agenda, have no clear role in the Australian NAP. Laura Shepherd and Jacqui True draw attention to the lost opportunity to provide for meaningful CSO participation in both the governance and implementation of the Australian NAP: "whereas in some NAPs, civil society is a cosignatory (such as in the Netherlands) or an implementing agency (such as in the Pacific Regional Action Plan), the Australian NAP does not explicitly mention civil society as responsible for any implementing actions".[25] The role of CSOs in relation to the Australian NAP is articulated as a vague encouragement to develop shadow reports on progress.[26] This restricted 'watchdog' function, however, comes without the power and resources required to effectively play this role, as we discuss below in the section on accountability. It was therefore left up to CSOs to create a space to engage with the Australian NAP. This has taken two forms. First, Annual Civil Society Dialogues on Women, Peace and Security and Annual Civil Society Report Cards serve as a means to engage in a policy dialogue on WPS and present an assessment of progress made in implementing the Australian NAP. Since 2013 five Annual Civil Society Dialogues have been held. The first three (2013-2015) received funding from OFW and ACMC, and the remaining two (2016-2017) were funded entirely by ACMC. Second, civil society was successful in lobbying for representation on the Australian NAP governance mechanisms: the IDWG and the IDWG's Sub-committee.[27] As we outline in more detail below, however, this representation does not necessarily translate into "meaningful opportunities for influence".[28]

The Australian experience largely reflects that of others from across the globe. The *Global Study* points to the conspicuous absence of ongoing engagement with CSOs to ensure effective implementation of the WPS agenda. Indeed, "[w]here progress and broader transformation had taken place, the main factor of success was often credited to collaboration and joint action with other civil society organizations, using civil society's role as

---

[25] Shepherd and True, 'The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Australian leadership in the World', p. 270.
[26] FaHCSIA, 'Australian National Action Plan', p. 27.
[27] The IDWG and the IDWG Sub-committee were renamed in 2017 the Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) and IDC Sub-committee.
[28] Laura J. Shepherd, 'Constructing Civil Society: Gender, Power and Legitimacy in United Nations Peacebuilding Discourse', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 21, no. 4 (2015), p. 900.

a watchdog and independent monitor".[29] In the sections that follow, we draw out some insights from Australia regarding the participation of civil society in WPS governance, according to the three dimensions of civil society participation derived from our review of the literature in the previous section: expertise, ownership and accountability. We examine how these three dimensions manifest in Australian CSO participation in WPS governance, in order to better understand how each dimension contributes to and is in turn influenced by CSO engagement.

The Dimension of Expertise

The norm of women's participation in peace and security governance has been a core pillar of Women, Peace and Security activity since the formal inception of the agenda in 2000. The foundational UN Security Council Resolution emphasises participation in the Preamble, referencing "the importance" of women's "equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security".[30] Participation is described as 'important' because of the 'role' women play "in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building".[31] Participation is also given textual priority in the operative paragraphs (which have more political purchase than the preambular statement); the first two operative paragraphs relate explicitly to representation and the "participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes".[32] We suggest that the norm of women's participation in peace and security governance, extended and consolidated in later WPS resolutions, relies on the same principle we interrogate here in the context of examining civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia: the dimension of expertise.

Recognising women's expertise in the field of peace and security is an important component of the WPS project. Sheri Lynn Gibbings identifies the root of the participation norm in a 'contributor rights' discourse that articulates the value of women's participation in terms of its contribution to achieving peace and security.[33] Put simply, women and women's CSOs have a right to participate in WPS governance, according to this view, because they have expertise that will enable or facilitate the achievements of the goals and objectives under discussion. In a broader sense, this is in

---

[29] UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 303.
[30] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1325 (2000), S/RES/1325, Preamble,
<www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/2000.shtml> [Accessed 3 March 2017].
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., para. 2. For a comprehensive examination of the construction of participation in the WPS architecture, see Laura J. Shepherd, 'The Development of the "Women, Peace and Security Agenda" and Adopted Security Council Resolutions', in Sara Davies and Jacqui True (eds), *Oxford Handbook on Women, Peace and Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, *forthcoming*).
[33] Sheri Lynn Gibbings, 'No Angry Women at the United Nations: Political Dreams and the Cultural Politics of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2011), pp. 528-30.

keeping with analysis of civil society participation that identifies an epistemic rationale for the inclusion of CSOs in decision-making and policy formulation. If we accept that, "[i]n order to have good rules, we should bring the experiences, reasons, and perspectives that policy makers and government-appointed experts would not otherwise consider into the decision-making process",[34] then the participation of civil society in such deliberations is legitimised through the ascription of the subject-position of 'expert' to the civil society participant simultaneously as the participation of civil society is justified on the basis of the participant's expertise: the two concepts go hand-in-hand and are mutually reinforcing.

In the Australian context, we can identify an increasingly strong discourse on expertise being used to legitimise and secure the participation of civil society in peace and security governance. WPS engagement in Australia is primarily driven by the group of CSOs that formed the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security ('the Coalition'). As explained on the Coalition's website,

> The Coalition brings together activists, feminists, practitioners, humanitarian actors and those with *first-hand experience* working in the frontline on issues relating to women, peace and security. Coalition members have *wide ranging expertise* in gender and peace.[35]

The 'first-hand experience' and 'wide-ranging expertise' are important legitimating descriptors; moreover, the articulation of 'experience' with 'expertise' is in line with much feminist theorising around the recognition of 'experts by experience' and the praxis dimension of feminist activism.[36]

The Coalition produces annual 'Civil Society Report Cards', in part an important accountability mechanism, which we discuss in more detail below.[37] In these Report Cards, the Coalition relies on the dimension of expertise and the depiction of civil society organisations as experts in WPS to explain the importance of civil society participation. In the first Report Card (2013), for example, the expertise of civil society is referenced to encourage the Australian Government to draw on capacity in civil society to

---

[34] Jens Steffek and Maria Paola Ferretti, 'Accountability or "Good Decisions"? The Competing Goals of Civil Society Participation in International Governance', *Global Society*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2009), p. 42.

[35] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'About Us', no date, (emphasis added), <https://wpscoalition.org> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

[36] See, for example: Brooke A. Ackerly, 'Women's Human Rights Activists as Cross-Cultural Theorists', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2001), pp. 313-14; Felicity Hill, Mikele Aboitiz, and Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya, 'Nongovernmental Organizations' Role in the Buildup and Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2003), pp. 1255-69; Sam Cook, 'The 'Woman-in-Conflict' at the UN Security Council: A Subject of Practice', *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2 (2016), pp. 353-72.

[37] All of the Report Cards are publicly available and can be downloaded from the Coalition's website, at <wpscoalition.org>.

provide training on WPS and to become a 'participant and partner' rather than simply a beneficiary of WPS activity.[38] The most recent Report Card (2016), mentions 'expert' and 'expertise' no fewer than twenty times, with the expertise found in civil society explicitly articulated in the methodology underpinning the report and its recommendations related to the next iteration of the Australian NAP, for which planning has already begun given the expiry of the current NAP in 2018.[39] The dimension of expertise, then, clearly informs civil society participation in peace and security governance within Australia. The specific point we wish to emphasise here relates to the ways in which the Coalition *performs* its expertise as part of shoring up the legitimacy of its participation. Internationally, the inception of the WPS agenda more broadly was in no small part due to the recognition of expertise about peace and security embodied in civil society[40] and, true to the spirit of the agenda, both civil society organisations and government actors have a responsibility to ensure that this expertise continues to inform WPS policy and practice.

The Dimension of Ownership

The second dimension we discuss here is ownership. It is civil society's ownership claims relating to the Women, Peace and Security agenda that render its participation in its governance legitimate, even required. As Karen Barnes comments, "UNSCR 1325 would not have been adopted without the initial momentum from civil society, and NGOs, working at both the international and national levels, have continued to drive the agenda forward".[41] The WPS agenda is somewhat unique in this regard, as it is forged through unprecedented interaction between civil society activists, advocates and practitioners, national governments, and the body charged with "the maintenance of international peace and security"[42] on behalf of all 193 member states of the United Nations: the UN Security Council. This heritage locates the agenda in an awkward and potentially compromised space, manifesting both in completing claims about ownership and tensions between "demands of the 'business-as-usual' politics at the Security Council

---

[38] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', 2013, p. 11. <pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/civil-society-report-card-2013-final-lores.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017].
[39] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Fourth Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', (2016), p. 8. <pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/fourth-annual-civil-society-report-card-on-the-national-action-plan-for-women-peace-and-security.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017].
[40] Hill et al., 'Nongovernmental Organizations' Role in the Buildup and Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325'.
[41] Karen Barnes, 'Evolution and Implementation of UNSCR 1325', in 'Funmi Olonisakin, Karen Barnes and Eka Ikpe (eds), *Women, Peace and Security: Translating Policy Into Practice*, (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 25.
[42] United Nations, 'Charter of the United Nations: Chapter V: The Security Council', no date, <ww.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-v/index.html> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

and the feminist aspirations that it may be seen to espouse".[43]   But this awkward location, sustained and reproduced through the claims to ownership propounded by civil society organisations both nationally and internationally, is a productive space indeed.

Two aspects of ownership are significant. The first dimension of ownership is identifiable as *ownership-as-authority*. This is a claim to ownership that envisages the WPS agenda as a product of feminist activism and advocacy; the agenda therefore belongs to the women and women's organisations that lobbied and fought for the first and subsequent resolutions. Laura Shepherd describes this ownership as a form of authority, which she identifies as "author-ity" to denote both ownership and control.[44] Shepherd notes that, in the international sphere,

> [t]he NGO WG [Working Group] has a strong claim to author-ity over the Resolution, and, through its continued political presence, the Working Group has been able to transform decades of theorizing and activism into concrete achievements in the issue area of women, peace, and security.[45]

In the Australian context, there were significant efforts throughout 2017 to demonstrate civil society ownership of the WPS agenda in ways that could inform the next iteration of the Australian NAP.   In 2017, the Coalition restructured the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security into two complementary parts. Civil Society Roundtables were held in all capital cities, with some holding more than one roundtable.   These roundtables provided a space for over 200 women from diverse backgrounds to express their views on what peace and security means in practice.[46] The intention to anchor the next phase of Australian WPS policymaking in the voices, experiences and expertise of civil society is perhaps clearest in the title of the outcome document from these roundtables: 'Women Shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda'.[47] The document seeks to reframe peace and security, moving away from state security to human and people-centred approaches: reclaiming ownership of the WPS narrative, as it were. The perspectives on peace and security captured in 'Women Shape the

---

[43] Soumita Basu, 'The United Nations' Women, Peace and Security Agenda', in Simona Sharoni, Julia Welland, Linda Steiner and Jennifer Pedersen (eds), *Handbook on Gender and War* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2016), p. 577.

[44] Shepherd explains: 'I hyphenate "author-ity" … to draw attention to the connotations of both ownership (author) and control (author-ity) that the word signifies'. See Laura J. Shepherd, 'Power and Authority in the Production of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2008), p. 384.

[45] Ibid., p. 391.

[46] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Women, Peace and Security Roundtable Discussions', no date, <wpscoalition.org/annual-civil-society-dialogue-on-women-peace-and-security-2/2017-3/women-peace-and-security-round-tables/> [Accessed 26 September 2017].

[47] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Women Shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Roundtable Discussion Summary', 23 November 2017, <wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/women-shape-the-wps-agenda-roundtable-discussion-summary-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed 14 March 2018].

Women, Peace and Security Agenda' formed the basis for the Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogue. Led by the Coalition, the policy dialogue was attended by government departments with portfolio responsibilities relating to the Australian NAP and representatives of civil society organisations. Three questions framed the discussions at the policy dialogue: What are the key understandings of peace and security in Australia in the current global context and how do the issues raised at the Civil Society Roundtables confirm, challenge and/or develop these understandings? How can these understandings of peace and security contribute to building an informed and effective approach to women, peace and security in Australia? And, how does the approach to women, peace and security link to broader Australian discussions on conflict and peace processes; domestic and foreign policy; and Australia's response to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 5 and 16?[48] On our interpretation, the reports from this policy dialogue[49] and the Civil Society Roundtables[50] are a clear manifestation of ownership-as-authority as grounds for participation.

The second aspect of ownership relates to recognition and representation. The intensity of effort that goes into the maintenance of the WPS agenda, including ensuring that all 'pillars' receive adequate attention and holding both national governments and the UN itself to account (which we discuss further below), is grounded in the sense of ownership felt by transnational and national CSOs because the resolutions reflect or represent both their concerns and their previous efforts. As Sanam Anderlini reports, "[u]pon the first anniversary [of the passage of UNSCR 1325], in 2001, the council members expressed surprise. 'Other resolutions don't have anniversaries', they said, to which the NGOs replied, 'Other resolutions don't have a global constituency'".[51] Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, co-founder and international coordinator of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, similarly affirms the ownership of the WPS agenda, in particular the founding resolution, when she comments: "I still recall one GNWP 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'".[52]

The efforts made in the Australian context by various civil society actors to push forward the development of the WPS agenda locally through

---

[48] The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security, *Listening to Women's Voices and Making the Connections to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Fifth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security* (2018), <pscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety_2018_report_ART_web.pdf> [Accessed 14 March 2018], p. 17.
[49] Ibid.
[50] The Coalition, 'Women Shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda'.
[51] Anderlini, *Women Building Peace*, p. 7.
[52] Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, 'It Is Time to Walk the Talk and Fulfill the Promise of UNSCR 1325', *Palestine–Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture*, vol. 17, no. 3/4 (2011), p. 23.

engagement with the implementation of the current Australian NAP are chronicled in the acknowledgements section of each Civil Society Report Card. There are various names that appear consistently, and each year the "vast amount"[53] of "dedicated work"[54] and "commitment"[55] by these individuals and others is celebrated and affirmed, functioning to link the Report Card as a product to these visible efforts, thus forging an association between the 'care labour' that goes into maintaining the resolution and civil society as a locus of this labour. This association has the performative effect of constituting civil society organisations as (at least part-) 'owners' of the agenda and its architecture.[56] These aspects of ownership combine both the principle of expertise and the principle of accountability to create a mandate for civil society participation in peace and security governance. In the section that follows, we move on to explore the third and final dimension of civil society participation: the principle of accountability.

The Dimension of Accountability

Accountability describes a relationship between actors, a relationship that specifies "who can call who into account, and who owes a duty of explanation".[57] Power is meant to rest with the actor that calls the other into account: "the notion of authority as the right to call people to account needs to be complemented by the notion of power as the ability to call people to account".[58]   The direction of accountability is meant to illustrate the distribution of power among actors. The exercise of this power requires more than just sharing of information; the ability to call people and/or institutions to account implies what Keohane calls "the ability to impose a cost"[59] or the ability to affect change in the people/institutions being called

---

[53] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, '[First] Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', p. 1.
[54] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Third Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', 2015, <pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/report-card.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017], p. 1.
[55] The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, 'Second Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security', 2014, n.p., <pscoalition.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/second-annual-civil-society-report-card-australias-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security.pdf> [Accessed 26 September 2017].
[56] This is, of course, a 'shared ownership', given the agenda's relevance to a range of stakeholders (most of whom, incidentally, are resourced to carry out their WPS work), but our focus here is on the ways in which civil society ownership of the agenda functions within the broader context of civil society participation in WPS governance. We are grateful to the comments from an anonymous reviewer, which encouraged us to clarify this point.
[57] Patrick Kilby, 'Accountability for Empowerment: Dilemmas Facing Non-Governmental Organisations', *Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government Policy and Governance Discussion Paper*, no. 04-01 (2004), <openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/10440/1174> [Accessed 25 September 2017], p. 4.
[58] Patricia Day and Rudolf Klein, *Accountabilities: Five Public Services* (London: Tavistock, 1987), p. 9.
[59] Robert Keohane, 'Commentary on the Democratic Accountability of Non-Governmental Organisations', *Chicago Journal of International Law*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2002), p. 479.

into account. By controlling the extent to which change can be affected, actors regulate the exercise of accountability.

At the global level, accountability to the Women, Peace and Security agenda is largely vertical-upward (the UN Secretary General is accountable to the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council). This accountability is activated through mechanisms such as regular reporting (e.g. the Reports of the UN Secretary General on Women, Peace and Security to the UN Security Council) and reviews (e.g. the *Global Study* and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations). This is mirrored at the national level in Australia. The Australian NAP requires all government stakeholders to table three progress reports (one every two years) before Parliament. The Australian NAP is also independently reviewed twice during its life period. The interim review is meant to provide guidance on NAP progress and emerging issues, while the final review assesses the overall success and providing guidance on the next NAP. There is no mechanism, however, to ensure that the recommendations made by the reviews are implemented. Thus, little action was taken to implement the sixteen recommendations made in the 2015 *Independent Interim Review of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.*[60] Poorly articulated mechanisms regulate the extent to which government stakeholders can be held accountable to NAP commitments. In the case of the Australian NAP, this poor accountability is compounded by an anaemic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework that leans on descriptions of actions taken by government stakeholders rather than focusing on the outcomes of actions.[61]

The responsibility to ensure vertical-downward accountability to women and their communities rests with CSOs. At the global level, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security monitors and analyses the entire cycle of UN Security Council decision-making—from the adoption of peacekeeping mission mandates in resolutions, to their implementation reports, to presidential statements adopted in response to an emerging crisis. Another example of monitoring is WILPF's *Security Council WPS Scorecard* which focuses on the five permanent members, analysing statements and commitments made at the Security Council, international gender and human rights commitments, and gender and peacekeeping actions. It also analyses national actions on financing of military versus gender equality, women's participation in parliament and judiciary, levels of sexual violence, and gendered post-conflict stabilisation programs. The UN Security Council's Arria Formula meetings on WPS provide opportunities for women and women's organisations to address members of the UN Security

---

[60] Humanitarian Advisory Group, *Independent Interim Review of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018* (Melbourne: Humanitarian Advisory Group, 2015), <www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/nap-interim-review-report.pdf> [Accessed 14 March 2018].

[61] Katrina Lee-Koo, 'Engaging UNSCR 1325 through Australia's National Action Plan', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 336-349 (2016), pp. 342-46.

Council. These serve as a reminder to Member States of commitments made to the agenda.

Vertical-downward accountability is, however, limited. This is because while CSOs play a role in monitoring commitments to the WPS agenda, the inability to participate and thereby influence decision-making restricts their function to one of information sharing. Adil Najam calls this type of information sharing role "the sham of accountability [because] unlike Governments, they [CSOs/communities] cannot impose conditionalities" or effect real change.[62] Thus, the exercise of voice remains largely symbolic. Alnoor Ebrahim argues that information sharing (including public meetings, surveys, call for submissions, consultations and so forth) is the lowest level of accountability, as the power to make decisions (including accepting/rejecting/ignoring the views of civil society) rests with the government;[63] this is clearly evident in the development of the Australian NAP. As discussed above, CSO consultations (articulated in the *Final Report*) provided the impetus for the development of the Australian NAP. Many of the key recommendations made in the *Final Report* regarding scope, focus, M&E, and process of NAP development were, however, ignored during the actual drafting of the NAP. For example, the Australian NAP has an international focus, even though there was a strong consensus in the *Final Report* that the NAP should have both a national and international focus: "the establishment of positive national parameters to further peace and security was a prerequisite before adopting a regional or international focus".[64] Neither the draft, nor the final NAP, included "an action plan matrix with measurable targets … budgets, timelines".[65] Again absent from the draft and final NAP was the mandate to establish an "all-party Parliamentary group [to] ensure progress/continuity under all governments/opposition"; this group was intended to "consult frequently with women's NGOs".[66]

Higher levels of accountability may be realised by enabling participatory evaluation of the NAP and creating a space in NAP governance structures for CSO participation. In the Australian NAP, as mentioned, CSOs are "encouraged to develop shadow progress reports".[67] Where this process fits within the overall framework of the Australian NAP's monitoring evaluation and reporting framework is, however, not articulated—neither is any direction provided on what this shadow reporting process should involve, nor how the government will respond to the report, nor how it will be funded.

---

[62] Adil Najam, 'NGO Accountability: A Conceptual Framework', *Development Policy Review*, vol. 14, no. 4 (1996), pp. 346-47.
[63] Alnoor Ebrahim, 'Accountability in Practice: Mechanisms for NGOs', *World Development*, vol. 34, no. 6 (2003), pp. 951-63.
[64] WILPF Australia Section, *Final Report*, p. 11.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., p. 9.
[67] FaHCSIA, 'Australian National Action Plan', p. 27.

The current CSO mechanism for ensuring accountability was developed after the release of the Australian NAP and was designed by the group of CSOs that later formed the Coalition. As discussed earlier, the civil society-led Annual Dialogue brings together CSOs, women and women's organisations, government and policymakers to discuss WPS issues and to contribute to effective implementation through a deliberative process of assessing the Australian NAP's implementation. To facilitate deliberations at the Dialogue, a scorecard was developed that tracks progress against the actions listed in the NAP. Deliberations at the Dialogue are captured in the Annual Civil Society Report Card.[68] The lack of a robust M&E framework has resulted in a rudimentary scorecard that is only able to track progress using the following evaluations:

- Insufficient information (insufficient information has been communicated with civil society to ascertain if this action is being implemented);

- No action (insufficient action is being undertaken to implement this action by 2018);

- Some action (some, not necessarily all agencies, demonstrated and communicated activities that support the implementation of this action by 2018); and

- Extensive action (all responsible agencies demonstrated and communicated activities that support the implementation of this by 2018).

While this process has been vital in allowing civil society to contribute to M&E, the implementation of recommendations made each year are non-binding, raising significant questions about the effectiveness of such a process in holding the Australian Government and government departments with NAP responsibilities accountable.

The reduction in funding (as a result of OFW's inability to financially support the Dialogue since 2015) has also affected the extent to which CSOs have been able to consult on the progress made on the Australian NAP. Recognising their role in ensuring accountability to the WPS agenda and the Australian NAP in particular, CSOs have used the four Annual Civil Society Report Cards to provide recommendations on strengthening accountability processes in four distinct but interrelated ways. First, it has been suggested that reports by CSOs should form part of the overall NAP reporting mechanisms; second, CSOs have proposed the allocation of dedicated resources to support CSO reporting; third, the idea of tabling the CSO reports before Parliament has been mooted; and, fourth, CSOs have

---

[68] Lee-Koo, 'Engaging UNSCR 1325', p. 346.

suggested including a provision that necessitates a formal response from the Australian Government to the recommendations made in CSO reports. The fifth report[69] calls for the new NAP to have embedded a commitment to ongoing engagement with civil society (especially women's organisations) in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation. The *Global Study* reports that many plans for implementation are "focused on process, with neither mechanisms for accountability nor budgets for real implementation"; in this regard, the Coalition's advocacy is in line with international understandings of barriers to achieving change in the sphere of WPS practice.[70]

To further strengthen the weak accountability of the Australian NAP, relevant government agencies have attempted to create spaces in NAP governance structure for civil society participation. Although the NAP recognised the role played by CSOs during the development phase, there was no civil society representation on the IDWG that was established to develop the NAP. The Australian NAP includes a vague provision to invite the NGO sector "to nominate a selection of representatives to meet with the Women, Peace and Security Inter-Departmental Working Group each year".[71] It is evident in the Australian NAP that CSOs were not seen as a stakeholder and so no specific role was allocated to them, even though CSOs receive financial resources from government agencies to implement the WPS agenda.

Soon after the release of the NAP, the Coalition successfully advocated for representation on the IDWG and the IDWG's Sub-committee that was created to take care of the ongoing implementation of the NAP. The role of the IDWG was modified to provide the strategic leadership and oversight in the implementation and sustainability of the NAP. Representation on the IDWG has been important in allowing CSO voices to be heard on NAP leadership and implementation, while also serving as an accountability mechanism. Replicating this move at a departmental level, the ADF, as part of its internal NAP implementation working group, has also included a space for CSO representation in an observer capacity. However, the ADF is the only department to do so. While the creation of these spaces has provided CSOs with the means to amplify their voices, it is a significant concern that this participation remains unfunded and is not guaranteed. As a result, CSO capacity is stretched: not only are various CSOs enabling the government to meet their NAP commitments through implementing funded projects, they are also being called upon to provide technical capacity and expertise *pro bono*. This significantly limits the extent to which CSOs are able to participate in time-consuming bureaucratic processes associated with NAP governance and thus further limits the extent to which CSOs can hold the government to account.

---

[69] The Coalition, *Listening to Women's Voices*.
[70] UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 14.
[71] FaHCSIA, 'Australian National Action Plan', p. 26.

The need to adequately resource civil society's role in enabling accountability and the need for formalised mechanisms for ongoing engagement with civil society are recurring themes in research comparing NAPs from different countries.[72] Two notable exceptions are Ireland and the United Kingdom. Ireland's NAP has established an independent monitoring group, comprising 50 per cent representation from CSOs, which meets regularly and reports on progress and also has the power to modify the Irish NAP based on lessons learned from the evaluation. The United Kingdom has a dedicated budget allocation for external evaluations of its NAP. In Australia, the Fourth Annual Civil Society Report Card (2016) has recommended formalising and clearly articulating civil society's role with regards to participation in governance and shadow reporting in the next NAP. The report card also calls upon government to fund civil society's engagement and participation in NAP governance. This recommendation echoes views canvassed by Women, Peace and Security Network in Canada during the drafting of Canada's next NAP iteration.[73]

Overall, civil society organisations working on the WPS agenda need to also adopt a more strategic approach to accountability. The *Global Study* advises CSOs to utilise mechanisms established under the Universal Periodic Review and submissions to the treaty bodies, particularly CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) to enhance accountability to the WPS agenda.[74] Vertical-downward accountability can be empowering for women and their organisations when there are well-established mechanisms that enable diverse CSOs to participate in all aspects of NAP development and implementation, particularly in monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion

Civil society is at the heart of politics, broadly conceived. This is a view of politics that sees it not as a brute struggle for power, but rather as a process: "[p]olitics is about how ordinary men and women think about, conceptualise, debate and contest how people belonging to different persuasions, classes and interests live together in society in conditions of justice and civility".[75] The participation of civil society, then, is necessary to ensure that "ordinary

---

[72] See, for example Aisling Swaine, 'Assessing the Potential of National Action Plans to Advance Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law*, vol. 12 (2009), pp. 403-33; Belgin Gumru and Jan Fritz, 'Women, Peace and Security: An Analysis of the National Action Plans Developed in Response to UN Security Council Resolution 132', *Societies Without Borders*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2011), pp. 209-25.

[73] Women, Peace and Security Network Canada, 'What's in a NAP? A Short Analysis of Selected Women, Peace & Security National Action Plans', 2017, <wpsncanada.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/short-analysis-paper-wpsn-c-final-2017.pdf> [Accessed 25 September 2017].

[74] UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 306.

[75] Chandhoke, 'The "Civil" and the "Political" in Civil Society', p. 21.

men and women" have access to processes of policy formulation and implementation, to the practices of contestation and debate that keep politics alive.

In this paper, we have outlined three principles that underpin civil society participation in peace and security governance, specifically focused on activity related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Australia: the principle of expertise, which draws attention to the different and complementary insights and ways of knowing that civil society brings to WPS governance in Australia; the principle of ownership, which recognises that, in the case of the WPS agenda in particular, the agenda lives in civil society, because it is nurtured and kept alive by sustained engagement from civil society; and, finally, the principle of accountability, which recognises the valuable contribution of civil society in holding government and international governmental organisations like the United Nations to account in regard to the commitments made by these actors to advancing the WPS agenda. These three dimensions of civil society engagement together comprise the foundation of civil society participation in WPS governance, which we identify as necessary—vital, in fact—to the continued development and relevance of the WPS agenda.

We propose that the Australian case discussed here could usefully inform future practice in other contexts, as well as enabling or facilitating improvements in the participation of civil society in the governance and implementation of Women, Peace and Security initiatives within Australia. As Paul Kirby and Laura Shepherd argue,

> The consequences of excluding civil society organizations from the NAP development process include a separation of WPS principles from the lived experiences of individuals within the state in question, a lack of grounded understanding of community needs related to WPS provisions, and a lack of recognition of forms of community knowledge in the development of the plans.[76]

Beyond National Action Plans, taking seriously—and facilitating properly, including through funding and opportunities for direct consultation—women's civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia and across the world is essential for the agenda's continued resonance, legitimacy, and efficacy in world politics.

Anuradha Mundkur is an Adjunct Lecturer, College of Humanities at Flinders University. She is currently working for the Australian Council for International Development (seconded to the Australian Civil-Military Centre) focusing on women peace and security issues. The views expressed in this article are those of the author alone. amundkur@acfid.asn.au.

---

[76] Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, 'The Futures Past of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda', *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 2 (2016), p. 384.

Laura J. Shepherd[*] is ARC Future Fellow and Professor of International Relations at the University of Sydney and Visiting Senior Fellow at the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security. Much of her research, including her current ARC Discovery Project, focuses on the United Nations Security Council's 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda. laura.shepherd@sydney.edu.au*.*

---

[*] Corresponding author.