

Narratives of Support and Resistance
A political psychological analysis of the implementation of UNSCR 1325
in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract¹

This article presents an analysis of norm change, and, more specifically, how gender equality norms are negotiated in Bosnia. The immediate reason for asking these questions is the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 in 2000 on women, peace and security and the massive global effort to change gender equality norms in order to improve peacebuilding efforts. We argue that implementation of the United Nations' Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda rests on localization of gender equality norms. Our contention is that this process takes place on different levels. Based on a series of focus group interviews in Bosnia we offer depth to what a localization process can look like. We discuss what this means for the WPS agenda in Bosnia, for norm change and for political psychological scholarship.

Key words: Norm change, UNSCR 1325, gender equality norms, narrative, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Introduction

How can we understand norm change, and, more specifically, how gender equality norms are negotiated in post-conflict settings? The immediate reason this questions is the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 in 2000 (hereafter: UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security (UN, 2000), and the massive global effort to change gender equality norms in order to improve peacebuilding efforts. International, regional, governmental and non-governmental actors have, in various ways and across the globe, aimed to influence changes that make men and women more equal in social, economic and political affairs. Greater gender equality, the argument goes, is a means of recognizing and ensuring that women's voices and perspectives are integrated in peacebuilding efforts. These are political experiments in the making and therefore warrants great scrutiny to assess the dynamics of norm entrepreneurship and its implications.

This article presents an analysis of a country which was a game changer for international engagement in armed conflict, women's war experiences, and peacebuilding efforts, namely Bosnia Herzegovina (hereafter: Bosnia). The Bosnian stories about the systematic use of sexual violence during the war from 1992 to 1995 brought world attention to women's plight in war and contributed to the adoption on UNSCR 1325 in 2000. As Chinkin & Kaldor (2017, p. 376) note; "Bosnia [...] was the archetypical example of a "new war" [...] and it became the laboratory of the peacebuilding agenda". It is therefore particularly valuable to analyse the changes in gender equality norms one generation after the war and assess the interlinkages with UNSCR 1325.

The study has both empirical and theoretical aims. The empirical aim is to generate policy relevant knowledge about UNSCR 1325 implementation modes in Bosnia, while the theoretical aim is to show how political psychological scholarship can be conceptualized by combining norm theories from the field of international relations (hereafter: IR), and narrative

psychology. We do this by asking how UNSCR 1325 implementation efforts shape discussions about gender equality norms on macro, meso and micro levels in Bosnia today and what this means for peacebuilding and for political psychological scholarship.

The political psychology of norm change

Norm change is a delicate endeavour spanning from political, to social and individual change. A *norm* is, according to basic social psychology, “a statement made by members of a group, not necessarily all of them that its members ought to behave in a certain way in certain circumstances” (Homans, 1961, p. 40). Norms intrinsically define what is considered normal, or appropriate, behaviour by individuals, groups, and events as judged by the various political, cultural and social groups to which they are ascribed, or subscribe membership. IR theories define a norm as “a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 891) and, further, that norms are seen as ways to formulate the rules and goals of governing (Keohane & Nye, 1997). Norms have prescriptions, i.e. what to do or not to do, and parameters, i.e. indications under which situations the norm’s prescription applies (Shannon, 2000, p. 295).

A central question within IR theory is how norms emerge, spread and are internalized (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998), or as Björkdal et. al. (2015) argue, how norms are adopted, adapted, resisted or rejected. Further, the study of norms within IR has both a horizontal and vertical focus; i.e. between states and institutions as well as within states and institutions. The aim is to better understand how international norms regulating the behavior between states take root in local contexts and impacts internal dynamics within a state (Checkel 1999, p. 84). Our contention is that in order to improve the analytical aim of understanding localization aspects of norm change, narrative psychology can be helpful. Norm changes are not just rules and regulations, but ideas and ideals for behavior linked to identities and group membership on

interpersonal and intrapersonal levels. The localization of norm change is therefore not only dependent on domestic policies within a state, but also on the citizens' behavior, perceptions and identification with new norms. This makes norm change a psychological matter. Howarth et.al. (2013, p. 370) argue that "change, as any psychological process, does not happen in isolation – but is supported by contextual factors, social relations and political ideologies." Further, the authors argue that societal change is far too often conceptualized as linear processes, and that it is the "common sense knowledge and practices of everyday setting that are most revealing when it comes to understanding societal change and its political implications" (Howarth, et al., 2013, p. 373). Doise & Staerklé (2002, p. 153) state that the aim of research ought to be focused on "meaning and content in political positioning" and on how global norms, such as human rights and democracy, provide common reference systems and modes of interactions on multiple levels (Doise & Staerklé, 2002). They refer to global norms as social representations which "assumes that various members of a population [...] share common views about a given social issue" (Doise & Staerklé, 2002, p. 159) and that these representations "are organizing principles of individual differences within the representational field" (Doise & Staerklé, 2002, p. 160). Chinkin & Kaldor (2017, p. 33) argue that gender equality norms; articulated as women's rights to protection from, as well as prevention of gender based violence, participation in political decision making related to peace and security matters and relief and recovery from armed conflict as articulated in UNSCR1325; are examples of new global norms on the same level as human rights and democracy.

Gender equality is a highly contested area of politics, and it is deeply personal. But, as history has shown, gender norms can be challenged and changed. Nevertheless, there are areas policy areas that appear very resistant to gender equality norms; such as in peace and security matters. There were for instance only 9% women negotiators at peace tables and fewer than 4%

women signatories to peace agreements between 1992 and 2011³. UNSCR 1325 contests this norm and asks for concerted global efforts to change the male privilege in this policy area and to do that the normative changes the UNSCR 1325 calls for⁴ must be localized and adapted to different cultural practices, cultures and modes of domestic governing.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda

The adoption of UNSCR1325 in October 2000 is the cornerstone of what has since been called the Women, Peace and Security agenda (hereafter; WPS) agenda within the United Nations (UN). Seven resolutions⁵ have followed which specify the two main normative ambitions in the initial resolution. The first ambition was that a gender perspective should be adopted in all matters related to peace and security, which entails increased participation of women as well as gendered analyses of the impact of armed conflict and peacebuilding; and second, that gendered protection needs should be better secured. With these resolutions in place a new way of thinking and operating was placed on the agenda of the UN, its member states, and of multilateral organizations such as the EU, NATO and OSCE (Tryggestad, 2009). As of August 2017, 67 countries had developed an NAP for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The progress in realizing the agenda has been slow, primarily in what has been referred to as the ‘participation pillar’ (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016, Tryggestad, 2009). Research suggests, however, that women’s participation in peace processes can increase the probability of peace agreements lasting at least two years by 20%. It can also increase the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years by 35% (O’Reilly, Súilleabháin, & Paffenholz, 2015, p. 12). It therefore makes political, financial and historical sense to include more women and to have a

³ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures> (Accessed 5 August 2016)

⁴ www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B.../WPS%20SRES1325%20.pdf

⁵ The WPS agenda includes the following Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000); 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

gender sensitive approach to peace and security issues, as it appears to hinder relapse into new conflicts by a substantial margin.

One concrete way in which the WPS agenda has been implemented has been through the development of National Action Plans, so called NAPs (Gumru & Fritz, 2009). NAPs were seen as a way of bringing an international agenda to national levels for member states, but NAPs have also been developed in regional organizations such as the OSCE, NATO and AU. In a study on the OSCE area it was found that NAPs increased awareness and enabled a sense of national ownership and accountability for making changes to improve gender inequalities (Ormhaug, 2014). But the study also noted a lack of capacity and commitment, as well as scarce amount of resources allocated to this work, which ultimately hindered implementation. The main conclusion was that that the agenda must be experienced as relevant at the local level for implementation to work (Ormhaug, 2014, pp.74 - 80).

The WPS agenda has resulted in a large body of studies which have focused on its origins, development and implementation (e.g. Anderlini, 2007; Barnes, 2011; Cockburn, 2007; Cohn, 2008; Hudson, 2010; Olonisakin, Barnes, & Ikpe, 2011; Olsson & Tryggestad, 2001; Porter, 2007; Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011; Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2012). Much of this literature has a technical focus on implementation modes and suggests that the slow progress of implementation is the result of the top-down, state centric efforts and analyses (Hirschhauer, 2014; Shepherd, 2008). The failure of implementation is not seen on this horizontal level, but rather on the vertical level how norms translate (Zimmermann, 2016; Zwingel, 2012), localize (Acharaya, 2004; Tholens & Groß, 2015), and are appropriated (Großklaus, 2015) in local contexts, i.e. how local contexts influence the meanings of norms (Wiener, 2004). Some scholars have looked more specifically at the negotiation of norms in the post conflict-space (Björkdahl, 2012; Björkdahl & Gusic, 2015; Groß, 2015; Tholens & Groß, 2015; Zimmermann, 2016) and these studies show that these spaces open up for substantial

negotiation over the prescriptions and parameters of international global norms; it is a time where norms of the past are negotiated against envisioned norms for the future.

Situating Bosnia

Why is Bosnia a relevant case for the study of norm change and UNSCR 1325 implementation? There are several answers to this question. First, Bosnia is a country which is still in many ways in transition from war to peace⁶. While the country is independent and self-governed, the international presence since the ending of the war in 1995 is still strong. In particular, the role and mandate of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which was put in place to oversee the civilian elements of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), contributes in creating a feeling of being ruled by outsiders, a sentiment which is by no means alien to the peoples of Bosnia, but which keep Bosnians in constant state of adaptation to outside forces. Second, the country is deeply divided. The DPA left Bosnia with one of the most complicated government structures in the world; a state divided into two entities (Republika Srpska and The Bosnian Federation), which has resulted in triple (state and entity levels) sets of presidencies, ministers and legislature. Needless to say the system is highly fragmented, resulting in corruption being widespread. Manoeuvring this landscape is difficult, and securing women's political participation is tangled into these complications which are overridden with ethnic divisions. Finally, and most importantly, the war itself from 1992 to 1995 brought women's war experiences and security needs to the international arena⁷. Never before had sexual or gender-based violence received so much international attention as was the case for Bosnia. The politicisation of women's bodies and a victimisation of women placed gender issues at the centre of ethnic politics in Bosnia (Helms, 2013; Meznaric, 1994; Nikolic-

⁶ Bosnia is still strongly influenced by the devastating war that lasted from April 1992 until the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in December 1995.

⁷ Estimates of the number of sexual violence crimes during the war range between about 20,000 victims and 60,000 victims (Meznaric, 1994, Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2000).

Ristanovic, 2000; Skjelsbæk, 2006); a dangerous combination of patriarchy and nationalism (Hansen, 2001, p. 65). Indeed, the massive attention and response to the systematic use of sexual violence in Bosnia was part of the backdrop for the adoption of UNSCR 1325 (Hudson & Leidl, 2015, p. 24).

The Bosnian Gender Equality Agency developed a National Action Plan (NAP) in 2010⁸ and a follow up in 2013⁹. For Bosnian civil society the adoption of UNSCR 1325 meant the provision of a tool for their work for women's rights and gender equality (Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2015). Sarajevo Open Centre for instance, argue that progress has been made in women's political participation, women in police and military forces and in terms of efforts to combat gender-based violence and to support victims of conflict related sexual violence (Sarajevo Open Centre, 2014, 2015). Others have pointed to the fact that NAPs do not function as an instrument for a more substantial change in gender dynamics in domestic structures (Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2015).

Methodological approach

Narrative psychology enables us to analyse the lifeworlds of the subjects that we study (Gergen, 2001; Hammack, 2008; Hammack & Pilecki, 2012; McAdams & McLean, 2013; Singer, 2004). A narrative can be understood as “the sensible organization of thought through language, internalized or externalized, which serves to create a sense of personal coherence and collective solidarity and to legitimize collective beliefs, emotions, and actions” (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012, p. 78). Individuals have a need for a sense of coherence, or unity, in their own identity development; a narrative order to connect different events, actions, thoughts and feelings over the life course, individuals create narratives of their own lives (Singer, 2004).

⁸http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/bosniaherzegovina_nationalactionplan_2010.pdf

⁹<https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/BiH-NAP-ENG.pdf>

These individual narratives, or life stories, are closely connected to shared stories at the societal and political level. Moreover, narratives function as mediating factors for how individuals and groups act in the social world. The types of narratives at the personal level thus influence the behaviour of groups as well as other individuals. We base our approach in part on the work of Hammack and Pilecki (2012), which allows for a link between the individual and the socio-political, between mind and society. They introduce the concept of narrative engagement (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012), which serves to explain how individuals engage with collective stories, such as what it means to be a woman or a man in a given context, and to be part of different groups and communities.

Our study of change in gender norms takes place at different levels, at the political, or macro level, referring to the Bosnian state and its institutions, at the community, or meso, level, referring to different cultural and social groups within the Bosnian state, and at the proximal, or micro level, referring to how individuals operate within the other levels, mobilizing for change or reproducing the status quo. Gender equality norms operate on all these levels and our aim is to see how the UNSCR 1325 implementation efforts are narrated on these different levels and what this means for the conceptualization of the localization of the normative framework. To achieve this we look at stories about changing gender norms in Bosnia, related to the past, the present and the future, both within and outside the peace and security sector. Data for this study was collected in Bosnia in November 2015. In total, 22 interviewees took part in semi-structured focus group interviews. The interviewees in the present study were primarily selected on the basis of having central roles in civil society in Bosnia which enabled them to be engaged in, or touched by, the implementation process in different ways. Some worked directly with the WPS agenda whereas others worked in areas not directly related to the agenda but potentially influencing the norm adoption process in Bosnian society in different capacities.

In the interviews, we asked questions related to the following topics: 1) gender roles in the past and at present; 2) influence of gender in work settings; 3) gender and politics in Bosnia today; 4) the dynamic of international and local actors promoting gender equality norms, and; 5) possible changes in gender roles in Bosnia in the future. In order to gain insight into individual and interpersonal dimensions, we also asked about interviewees' own experiences related to the different topics. Getting from data gathering, transcription and over to analysis we used a thematic approach, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, themes, that is narratives about (changes in) gender norms and reactions to the WPS agenda, were identified on the basis of their content and on the basis of having been referred to by several interviewees. Second, rather than aiming to describe the whole data set, the thematic organisation of the data focused on information about reactions and interpretations of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda and descriptions of different identities. Third, underlying assumptions, ideologies, and ideas rather than the explicit meaning of text fragments were conceptualized. The data were analysed following six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11 Pro.

Narratives of support and resistance

On an overarching level, two main narratives about the WPS agenda and changes in gender equality norms in Bosnia emerged. We have chosen to call these “narratives of support” and “narratives of resistance”. By using the term support, we refer to narrative accounts which present argument in favour of gender equality and situate trajectories of this norm. By using the term resistance, we refer to the opposite. The analyses are multi-layered and demonstrate how the implementation of UNSCR 1325 brings out different levels of reflection on gender equality norms in the everyday lives of the interviewees.

Narratives of support

There were various accounts of support for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 which took different forms in the interviews and three distinct sub-narratives emerged; of compatibility, modernization and manoeuvrability. These will be presented below.

Compatibility

The notion of gender equality is by no means new in Bosnia, rather the contrary. The socialist legacy from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), where Bosnia was one of six republics, had made the Bosnian public well acquainted with gender equality, both as rhetoric as well as in social and political organizing. Bosnians had, for instance, been used to welfare arrangements such as maternity leave, day care facilities, and access to contraceptives as well as abortions, all of which enabled women's participation in the workforce and public life. When we asked the interviewees about their experience with gender equality in their childhood we got answers which suggested that this was a familiar theme, such as this one;

During socialism we did have, gender equality ideology let's call it. That goes in hand with such a regime, in terms of socialist belief related to working class and equality of the proletariat and stuff like that. So we did have, in theory, good laws. And also in practice, we did see that happening, women gaining the right to vote, women gaining mass education. Getting all sorts of professional positions and stuff.

Interviewees told stories about how previous generation family members had lived lives where it was considered normal that women had many of the same roles as men in the public sphere. Ramet (1999) explains that gender equality during the socialist years was solved by ensuring

women's political participation in the Communist Party as well putting in place legislation such as Article 24 in Yugoslavia first post-war constitution (1946) which ensured that "women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of state economic and social life" (Ramet, 1999, p. 94). Yet, the picture was by no means perfect and the job market was vastly gender segregated, women might have gained economic equality, but not political equality. Ramet (1999, p. 104) also notes that school textbooks, informative for the younger generations, portrayed gender stereotypical roles for boys and girls, which suggests that gender equality did not trickle down to the domestic sphere. Despite this, the introduction of UNSCR 1325 and the notion that gender equality norms are presented as a post-war phenomenon is resisted as this interviewee explains:

First of all the idea that gender equality is being introduced to us post Dayton [the peace agreement in 1995], you know that is not true because socialist Yugoslavia had a stronger, at least idea, although it didn't play it out fully institutionally, but the idea of gender equality was actually much stronger and much more radical than we have now.[...] We were not a blank, you know like a white paper.

And another interviewee note that she experienced the gender equality of the past as a close to perfect system;

I mean, Bosnia was part of Yugoslavia, which was a very strong communist or socialist system. So I mean women's rights were not really ever a big issue here. Because I mean in socialism you had this equality kind of, it was very, I mean, it was advanced, you know.

Swanee Hunt, who was the USA ambassador to Vienna during the Bosnian war and who was instrumental in bringing women's voices from Bosnia to the peace negotiations leading up to the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, was surprised to find that men involved in the peace process seemed unable to identify qualified women to take part since she had found that "Yugoslavia had the highest percentage of women PhDs of any country in Europe"¹⁰. Why was this so? One would think that amongst the highest educated women in Europe there would be someone who could be seen fit to take part in peace talks. So, despite the high level of gender equality in pre-conflict Bosnia, women's involvement in peace and security matters was still in the margins. One explanation of why might be so can be found in Husanović (2015, p. 116) who noted that the post socialist era, which came about very abruptly and violently with the onset of the war in 1992, is one where it has been "important to hide how much the women have lost in terms of equality". Violence, ethnic divisions and nationalism preceding a new liberal capitalist economy placed women in a new symbolic role where "their losses are made visible only insofar as they serve the patriarchal system of the nation, family and market" (Husanović, 2015, p.116). The roles of women and the plight of gender equality were vested in different political ideologies but on a personal and private level, gender equality was perhaps never achieved. As Ramet (1999, p. 105) concludes, "The achievement of gender equality requires a frontal assault on the cultural, psychological, religious, social, economic and political bastions of patriarchy", which dominated pre-war Bosnia. One interviewee supports Ramet's claim by saying that not all benefitted from the socialist gender equality system, and that gender equality was reserved for some, but not all;

¹⁰ Quoted in Hudson & Leidl (2015, p. 24)

That [gender equality] is a residual of the socialist system that we had before, which had a very strong welfare state. So I mean, yeah, in that term it was good. Also, I mean, women who work for the public sector they really enjoyed full one-year maternity, paid leave. But then, you know, not all of them are lucky to have that sort of contract.

What we see demonstrated above is an example of a normative fit where the global norm is compatible or resembles pre-existing norms (Checkel, 1999). Furthermore, this fit is not only on an ideological level, but experienced in public rhetoric and in societal organization. The normative intentions behind UNSCR 1325 are familiar and recognizable and do not represent a stark shift with practice and thinking of the past. Yet, the past was ridden with double standards and gender equality was described as primarily something which related to the public sphere of work and education. It is described as ridden with (communist) ideology and imperfect. But as the data show there are alternative ways of framing gender equality norms and UNSCR 1325.

Modernization

The outline above suggests a support narrative which is looked at as a legacy from the past, as something familiar to which Bosnians have a degree of ownership. Yet, the gender equality changes, in line with the intentions of UNSCR 1325, are also embedded in a forward looking narrative; as a way of making changes that point to a more modernized liberal Bosnia, in line with other European and Western countries. Consider the following answer from a local politician when asked about UNSCR1325 implementation in Bosnia;

We had the first country in the region that had 27 percent of women in the parliament, and we did it, we were at several levels always the first. Even Germany and France didn't have that many women.

Delivering on gender equality through progressive policies is seen as a way of putting Bosnia on the European map; ahead of the two most powerful countries in the EU; France and Germany (*'even Germany and France didn't have that many women'*). By promoting women's political participation, the interviewee quoted above challenges the norm of male domination in the political field and expresses pride in how far Bosnia allegedly has come; she presents Bosnia as a modern westernized state. In the focus group interview where this sentiment was expressed, an interesting situation emerged where the politician's account was strongly contested by the other interviewees. The others, who were all part of different local civil society groups, protested against the notion that Bosnia had come very far, amongst the best in Europe, when it comes to gender equality. The arguments against her claim were that *"our youth are leaving"*, *"we have not reconciled after the war"*, and *"the politicians are all corrupt"*. It appeared important for the politician to present Bosnia in a positive light when talking to western European researchers such as ourselves. Being a progressive well-functioning European state entailed gender progressive policies. The essence from the protesting voices was that this was mere rhetoric and did not reflect a reality where Bosnia was seen as a functional and attractive state. Rather the contrary, according to other interviewees, the state did not address the implementation of the WPS agenda nor women's advancement in public life seriously:

So they put women on the list [for political parties], they are finding representatives that they know will not make it into the assembly. Even when some

women are elected into the assembly there is a large question: Are they allowed to discuss their opinion? Or do they need to represent the party, the opinion of the president? They elect women to be part of a party, giving them false power. But they do not have real power.

The political system and culture were described as disfavouring women, and as dysfunctional altogether. What these stereotypes mean for young women in Bosnia is reflected in the following quote by a woman who worked for an international NGO in Bosnia tasked with the implementation of the WPS agenda;

But I mean, working for the UN is different, you don't feel like you're working in Bosnia because we have this very clear UN core values that we all identify with.

She makes juxtaposition between a functional UN system united by core values as opposed to a Bosnian state with other values and a dysfunctional system. This quote suggests, in a different way than the quote from the local politician, that there is something to gain for Bosnia by uniting around core values, such as gender equality. The gain is international recognition and appearing as a modern functional state, but this is not without complications;

I mean, you always have different expectations for men and women. I think everywhere. Before the war I was really young then, but I think definitely women now are more independent, women get married much later now than before. I think that is a trend everywhere. Before women usually lived with their parents until they got married but now there is this trend that if a woman is like 30 years

old, she has a career. It's normal to see them buying apartments on their own and stuff like that if they can afford it.

Returning to Husanović's (2015) assertion stated above, that one of the hallmarks of the post socialist and post-conflict era is to hide how much women have lost in terms of gender equality, then casting adherence to the WPS agenda as a brighter future can serve strategic political gains, as expressed by the local politicians in the focus group interview. Here the point is that the push for these changes comes from outside Bosnia, not from the socialist past. One of the interviewees even felt that her position in an international NGO saved her from a disempowered life, as reflected in her answer to our question of how she experienced working with implementing the international WPS agenda in her home country: *'I have no problems with that, that actually saved me to be honest, I'm good, I'm good'*. She brings the impact of the gender equality norm down to an intrapersonal level; it gives her a feeling of being good, and that is contrasted with how the Bosnian setting makes her perceive herself even if there are changes towards more independence for women as the previous quote suggests.

Manoeuvrability

The final narrative which articulates support for gender equality norms, and changes to that effect, does not situate these norms as something for a modernized future, or legacy of the communist past, but as something in between, something that is rooted within a different set of parameters. We have chosen to call this a manoeuvrability narrative which attempts to articulate a middle position between the past and the future.

This narrative was the most pronounced in the focus group interviews with representatives from the four major religious groups in Bosnia; Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish. This was an important group to include in our data because religious leaders and

communities are often heralded as spoilers of the WPS agenda (Rayman, et.al. 2016). Yet, it was religious leaders, particularly within the Islamic communities in Bosnia who offered a reinterpretation of the Koran during the Bosnia war issuing a fatwa stating that war raped women should not be seen as damaged goods, but as heroines; a statement that had a profound impact on the ways in which raped women were seen in their local communities, families and identities (Skjelsbæk, 2012). Religious leaders have moral authority to influence gender norms, as this interviewee notes;

But it is a bigger concept [gender equality] I would say than just religious interpretation. But of course, strong determined theologians could have a great role here to reinterpret what actually the religion or religious texts have to say about gender issues.

The core of the interviewees' argument is that religious texts and interpretations open up for manoeuvrability for women's influence in religious, social and political matters, in both positive and negative ways. Our interviewees were mid-level religious leaders with an understanding of how the top leaders in their religious communities reason as well as how their congregations react. They were united in the conviction that narrow views and understandings of religious theology were considered mistaken interpretations of religion and should not stand in the way for development and change for leading to women's increased political and religious participation as formulated by the interviewee below:

As a religious people, as women of faith, we would like to be active and recognized by the society as some kind of strength of the society that can, that we can do something together for the benefit of civil society.

The scriptures, they argue, are not hindrances for women's leadership in religious life in Bosnia. One interviewee, from the Islamic community, told that the Imam, personally, had never been against more female participation in religious and public life and that this was known throughout the Islamic community.

The Orthodox representatives argued that having women as heads of the church was difficult to envision, but this did not rule out that a woman could be an important leader under the patriarch within the religious community. They also recognized that this construct could be challenged, but felt that such a change would be hard fought due non-religious traditions between men and women in the domestic sphere as this interviewee states here:

Because women are different from men and I am talking from my own experience because I am from that kind of family and I am experienced in that. It is not just about my right but the experience is that it [being a priest] is very hard.

The role of religion in post war Bosnia has increased and gender roles and norms have changed accordingly. Religious groups follow, to a large extent, ethnic lines and so the roles of women within Croat, Bosniak, Serbian and Jewish communities have gained particular religious expressions (Skjelsbæk, 2009). A representative from the focus group with local NGOs framed it like this;

Now each ethnic elite is doing their best to create this identity that we supposedly all have very different, you know. Language and religion and that is why religion also gets such a prominent role because that is the only possible mark that diversifies. Because it is not our looks, it is not the way we speak, it is not what we

eat, it is not the kind of culture we like or what we engage in. So religion becomes an entry [point for difference].

Religion and discussions about religious views on gendered norms have become part of public life, rather than as a part of a hidden private life as was the case under communism. This gives rise for new discussions and changes, as this interviewee articulates;

I think we are living in an age of very aggressive religious institutions on all sides. Like Catholic and Protest and, Orthodox and Muslim. I think before the war we had a situation where, my perception of course, where religion was part of the private sphere. So if you wanted to pray to God, you could do it. You probably could not get top positions but you could still, you know, it wasn't forbidden. Now it is the reverse, I think the part, you know, the more you go to these religious institutions the higher you climb on the career ladder, you are more part of society, it is part of the schools more and more. It is part of everyday lives more and more, the way we celebrate religious holidays etc. So I think now religion is really part of the public sphere and what has become privatized are really issues which should not be part of the private sphere such as domestic violence etc.

The main point which was conveyed by these interviewees was that religious groups and interpretations of religious scriptures would be more open to gender equal treatment in terms of positions and participation in religious and political life, but secular gendered traditions were the main obstacle to achieving this, as will be discussed below.

Narratives of resistance

There were various forms of resistance to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and gender equality norms which took different forms in the interviews; as stories about traditions and nationalism. These will be presented below.

Traditions

While there are strong and deep-rooted divisions in Bosnian society there was consensus amongst the majority of the interviewees that Bosnia is a society in which patriarchal values dominate. It was seen as something that had existed in the past and which has strong influence on the present. The patriarchal roots, and its inherent traditional gender roles, were not seen as religious, nor ethnic, but rather as an all-encompassing feature of Bosnian life; something that united Bosnians, rather than served as an entry point for nationalist divisions. One interviewee explained it like this:

I agree, I just would like to add that tradition, especially in Bosnia, is mentality. You know, I think it's not just connected with religion. It is mentality and I think that it could be seen during the socialism era, communism. We didn't have practising [of religion] but we had very traditional attitudes you know, connected with this country. So it's mentality actually.

Another interviewee articulated the same reflection like this;

So I think the biggest problem there is tradition and interest [...] the women who are interested in, who want to be something bigger in society, in every segment of life, they are a minority. [...] And those who aren't just stick to tradition. And the bad part of tradition.

In discussions on political participation interviewees told how female politicians were seen as less credible than male politicians. As a female politician expressed: *'According to our mind set people would say; what is she doing here, like giving less credibility to the women than to the men'*. What several interviewees emphasized was a lack of awareness among the population, including women, about what gender equality entails. Ordinary people had little knowledge of, or interest in, the feminist agenda and women's advancement.

And believe me, here, for women to be a successful politician in BiH, it is possible only if (when) her kids grow up, if you are married. If you are single woman and then, then you can be successful earlier. But if you have a family. If you care about marriage. The first of all you have to have support from kids and husband. And you should be virtuous, to handle all this.

While many of these accounts are about times in the past there were also those who referred to processes of re-traditionalisation taking place, where young Bosnians embraced gender norms based on tradition rather than on developments towards more gender equality. Skjelsbæk (2012) has noted that the transition towards more traditional gender is a general feature of post conflict settings, including Bosnia. Returning to what is seen as core (and often imagined) gender values and norms is a way of reconstructing order after chaos and upheaval as the following two quotes show;

In terms of the private sphere it is even more traditional and I think Bosnia is re-traditionalizing and I think it is not particular of Bosnia. I think that when you look at other conflict societies, for example, in Syria it is also happening. We talked to Syrian women and they were like: "I don't know what is happening but

this is, you know, completely against the, how we were". So I think that on top of we already having very traditional gender roles in the private sphere it is even worse now.

And another interviewee stated the following;

We have this, you know, re-traditioning and the youth are much more traditional than like, older generations. And even my generation. If you talk to someone who is 18 or 20 now they sound much more traditional, culturally and religiously in their view of family and, than even my parents' generation. It is scary.

The need for security and stability becomes associated with these traditional norms, which might make changes toward increased gender equality less desirable. Further, the stories above also indicated that the narratives about traditional gender roles are about mind sets, private lives and the domestic sphere.

Nationalism

Finally, the legacy of the Bosnian war was a central part of the interviews; stories about past and current unresolved ethnic divisions and nationalist threats. The war remains an open wound and gender equality issues were seen, by many, as subsidiary to criminal prosecution of war criminals as well as admittance and distribution of guilt and responsibilities.¹¹ This view was often expressed as an afterthought after the interviews were over. The comments came in the form of small talk, and in the form of explanations about what are the real concerns in

¹¹ Many of these war criminals have been indicted and/or convicted for sexual violence crimes. More than a third of those convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) have been found guilty of crimes involving sexual violence. <http://www.icty.org/en/in-focus/crimes-sexual-violence> (Accessed, 16. August, 2017)

Bosnia today; nationalism, corruption, unemployment, and more. The fact that it was the Bosnian experiences with conflict related sexual violence which was one of the pretexts of the work leading up to the adoption of UNSCR 1325 was not part of the collective consciousness, nor did it seem to create a particular engagement with the WPS agenda. Gender equality issues were seen as co-opted by nationalist politics:

[T]here was recently a report that came out on women Serb victims and a war-time parade and we understand that from a political point of view that, this was actually the attempt of the Republika Srpska Gender Centre to lobby for protection of women. But, it was, in the title it referred only to Serb women victims [...]. Suddenly you see a group of women, human rights you know, fighters, activists and so on dragged into a political conversation about who raped whom.

Efforts to address women's issues; thereby working for gender equality in relation to reparations, recognition and documentation becomes entangled in nationalist and ethnic divides and there is little socio-political space to address gender equality norms outside the nationalist rhetoric. The vast majority of the victims of sexual violence have never received any compensation from the state. The War Crimes Chamber of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed 111 cases involving wartime sexual violence between 2005 and 2013 OSCE (2014). The first financial compensation to a war victim of sexual violence by the same court was granted in June 2015 (Amnesty International, 2016). The perpetrators were sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The ways in which victimization of gender based crimes have made women politically significant in post conflict societies have been denoted as the "protection-representation dilemma" by several scholars (Hudson, 2012; Kirby & Shepherd, 2016). The essence is that

women are seen as politically relevant in the post-conflict space when they embody ethno-nationalist harm. In other words, it is their wounded bodies which give them particular forms of political power and this might overshadow or hamper other forms of gendered political engagement. This phenomenon was also reflected in our data and one male political explained it like this:

We have to empower women and strengthen their capacities. The situation again with women is not related to war. In this area women were never included in public life. It takes time, like in other countries, where it took time to go from a male system to an equal system. Women in rural areas are not aware of their power, of what they can do. It needs time. Strengthen their capacities; show them that they have power to do things and that they need to have self-esteem and self-confidence.

Collective stories and memories of events linked to the war, and the social realities this produced, limited space for promoting gender equality norms in general and the WPS agenda in particular. Husanović (2015, p. 116) notes that “in a post atrocity society which needed victims, terror and war in order to come to existence, the awakening of the dead, for the purpose of the politics of revisionist levelling, legitimizes new battles, through parody/farce of old battles and values, through horror/porno of everyday life”. One of the interviewees expresses this concern the following way:

I mean, there must have been something wrong with our societies if we had such massive phenomenon of sexual violence and rape during the war [...] I mean, we have to ask ourselves why it has happened. Why did men strategically target

women? Was it to destroy them? Or was it because they thought that by destroying them they would destroy the men, they would destroy the families and the communities finally.

An international representative echoes this sentiment and suggests that there is a deep rooted patriarchal culture which is at fault:

Really we must not kid ourselves. There must have been something that was present before that led, that escalated to, you know, mass rape and sexual violence. But what I think is also important in terms of, changing the situation, when it comes to violence against women and gender based violence in general, is to really have people or professionals working in this sphere applying international standards.

The domestic politics of a dysfunctional nationally divided state, further embedded in a deep rooted traditional gender dynamic, makes the implementation of international standards, or global norms, hard. She goes on to say “*they don't get it, because they don't get to, they are struggling with each other*” and explains that many NGOs working to promote women’s issues are divided by ethnic lines and that collaborations across these divides are increasingly difficult.

Discussion

Implementation of the WPS agenda rests on localization of gender equality norms; on different levels. While our interviewees all engaged with gender issues and the discussions in the focus groups were broader than on mere WPS implementation and focused on how narratives on gender equality intersected with other narratives on macro, meso and micro levels, and as such

offer depth to what a localization process can look like, and what it means in the Bosnian context. We found that there were two main narrative responses to the implementations efforts of the WPS agenda; one of support and one of resistance.

The narrative of support is comprised of three main themes which point in different directions. First, there is a line of argument stating that gender equality norms are a fit with a socialist past and are thereby recognizable and known to Bosnians, albeit in a communist form. Gender equality then represents a form of continuity. Second, there is another line of argument which states that increasing gender equality norms in different public domains is a new development. It is an externally defined agenda to which Bosnia through its adaption demonstrates modernization and alignment with Western states. It represents a form of change. Finally, there is a line of argument which states that gender equality norms can be handled in flexible ways; as a socio-political space for manoeuvrability where gender equality norms become part of new ethnicized differences in Bosnia; religious interpretations of gender norms become an entry point for difference in a divided society. Religious leaders can be a driving force in these efforts. What unites all of these narratives, however, is that the narrative engagement, i.e. the level on which they talk about adaption, is on the public, social and community level; the macro level.

The narrative of resistance is comprised of two main themes; patriarchy and nationalism. What unites these narratives is that the narrative engagement is on the inter-personal and intra-personal levels; meso and micro. It is when describing interactions in the private and domestic sphere that opposition is formulated; traditional gender roles will override intentions of gender equality formulated on social, political and community levels. The ways in which they describe interactions at home and the collective mentality cutting across ethnic, religious and nationalist divides is one of strong patriarchal structures. Further, ethnic divisions and nationalist sentiments linked to the war still influence daily and political life and

interactions which make gender equality aims hard to pursue. It is the individual victimized female body which overrides other kinds of gendered political significance.

By further analysing the different levels of narrative engagement we see that support is articulated a macro level reasoning; support for gender equality norms is seen as something that elites and leaders articulate in a public space for different political and ideological reasons. These narratives, however, are ridden with scepticism, which brings us to a different level of analysis; narratives of resistance which is articulated as meso- and micro level reasoning. It is the overarching patriarchal traditional norms and nationalism which impacts in the domestic/private sphere of home, family and body. While the public rhetoric of support for gender equality norms might be strong, the resistance to these norms are found in intra and interpersonal relations; the patriarchal family structure, war victimized bodies, and mentalities. What is more, these narratives are presented as the primary reason why women do not engage in political participation; they cannot participate until the children are out of the house, until they have self-confidence enough to do so and until their bodies are de-politicized from nationalist rhetoric.

On an empirical and policy level, we have seen that effective implementation of the WPS agenda in Bosnia rests on tackling the different modes of resistance. This again, entails policy initiatives aimed at meso and micro (or intra and interpersonal) engagement. Realizing the WPS agenda is therefore not merely a political question in which states and different actors can agree upon the normative framework and then implement it, but also an important social and personal issue. Full implementation involves changes in what groups and individuals consider as *normal* political behaviour for men and women in the peace and security sector, i.e. that the norm about peace and security matters are “male issues” needs to change. Such norm change involves the whole Bosnian society, from different organisations to political parties, the

military, and police entities, but also ordinary men and women and their social interactions in everyday matters.

On a theoretical level, our findings show that norm theories are enriched by analyses which go deeper than national levels when attempting to conceptualize how global norms are localized. Much of the critique in scholarship on the normative literature on the WPS agenda has been its state-centrism (Cohn, Kinsella, & Gibbings, 2004), resulting in the lack of understanding of how the framework is being shaped and transformed by local actors (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016). We have shown that a focus also on politics of everyday life and how intra and interpersonal dimensions are conceptualized expands the understanding of support and resistance to global norms and enables different consideration for policy engagement beyond the state central level.

Political psychological scholarship is focused on the relationship between politics and psychology where psychology is used as a lens for understanding politics and politics being used as a lens for understanding psychology. We believe that the combination of narrative psychology; i.e. how people situate their life worlds and impact of micro, meso and macro relations, combined with IR theories which focus on the relationships between states and organizations, is a productive way to create a deeper understanding of norm transformation and social and political change.

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