NATO’s contested legitimacy and the surprising advantage of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: ‘To what extent (NATO) member states use the WPS agenda to enhance NATO’s legitimacy thus justify NATO’s military interventions?’

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Abstract

The legitimacy of NATO is a continuing source of debate since the end of the Cold War. Nowadays with a changing security environment due to new threats like terrorism, NATO's legitimacy depends on alternatives to traditional warfare. To meet parts of those challenges NATO adopted the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda which came as a surprise to most feminists and was soon depicted as co-opted for NATO's interest. While the existing literature does not link the WPS agenda to legitimacy, this thesis assesses to what extent the WPS agenda is used to enhance NATO's legitimacy thus justify NATO's military interventions. For this purpose, a discourse analysis in official statements of NATO member states disclosed an overview of legitimation dynamics in relation to the WPS agenda. The findings indicate that the member states use the WPS agenda to legitimize NATO and its military interventions, but depending on the discursive target either to the international or domestic public.

1. The narratives of Gender in NATO's legitimacy

The UNSC (UN Security Council) resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) is one of the big accomplishments of women's rights groups in the last twenty years. When the resolution was first passed by the UN in 2000, it represented the first resolution connecting gender equality to security and the military (see Cohn, 2008; UN, 2000a, 2000b). After 9/11, the US filled the war narrative with gender narratives, by using female attributes such as the 'burqa' to legitimate its interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq (Shepherd, 2006, 28; Otto, 2010). This narrative change partly shifted the justification for war and further 'depoliticized' military interventions in general (Wright, 2019, 89). When NATO adopted UNSCR1325 in 2007 it came as a surprise to feminist scholars and advocacy groups. Those groups were the first to criticize NATO for co-opting the WPS agenda by ascribing the failing enforcement of UNSCR1325 provisions to prevailing military practices, for example depicting women as 'calmer' (see Bastick & Duncanson, 2018; Reeves, 2012, 353). Other scholars conclude that

NATO hinders the implementation of UNSCR1325 on WPS by assigning too limited resources (see Egnell, 2016; Wright, 2016). Generally, the critique targets the diverging understandings of the WPS agenda between actors implementing the WPS agenda, such as states or international organizations (IO), and feminist activists and scholars (see Puechguirbal, 2010).

This argumentation illustrates that NATO's legitimacy not solely originates in military power, but equally in its political power (see Flockhart, 2011, 266; Prescott, 2013); which originates in adding concerns about human rights and democratic standards to NATO's original function of peace support and limiting wars (Egnell & Alam, 2019, 7f.).

In this thesis, legitimacy is understood as in a constructivist-sociological approach, evolving around general beliefs about the appropriateness of rule within an environment of ideas, norms, and values (Suchman, 1995, 574). Resulting in a concept of legitimacy that includes dynamics about the degree of contestation or supports over time and context (see Finnemore, 2009; Hurd, 1999, 2019; Stephen, 2018). Following this perspective, the audience of an institution is the source of legitimacy who assesses the degree of legitimacy by the communicative output (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 583 & 588).

Even though legitimacy is central for IOs and NATO, feminists and security scholars fall short in acknowledging the importance of the WPS agenda in the articulation of NATO's legitimacy and its future activities. Consequently, this thesis asks *to what extent (NATO) member states use the WPS agenda to enhance NATO's legitimacy thus justify NATO's military interventions?*

The dynamics of legitimation have long been a subject of scholarly debate in relation to IOs. With respect to NATO, the question was whether there could be alternative sources of legitimacy beyond its original mandate, particularly after the end of the Cold War. Accordingly, the thesis tries identify if the WPS agenda is used for NATO'S legitimacy and justification for military interventions.

The following sections, will first, reflect on the relevant literature, second, will discuss the conceptualization of legitimacy, and define the core concepts of gender within the military. The

third section presents the method and data selection, which is followed by the analysis and concluding remarks.

2. Literature on Legitimacy & Academic Relevance

Generally, approaches to IO's legitimacy are either studied normatively or empirically. The normative perspective has largely focused on the legitimacy of governance in light of an emerging democratic transnational community (see Held, 1999). In this respect, some argue that an approach to legitimacy is not possible without considering the normative dimension (see Mulligan, 2006). Whereas others claim an empirical approach to legitimacy is possible in light of contestation within a discursive setting or by considering the social norms (see Steffek, 2004; Tallberg & Zürn, 2019)

Literature approaching the concept of legitimacy from an empirical angle is especially evident in IR literature. This debate originated in the growing interdependence due to globalization. Scholars are no longer solely concerned with the nation-state but went beyond onto the international level (see Tallberg & Zürn, 2019).

Based on realism, IO's legitimacy is left aside and subsumed under power, because they are only seen as tools for states. Powerful states create IOs, making them reflections of the power distribution within the system (Mearsheimer, 1994, 7 & 13). Following, IOs have no constraining impact on state behavior or interests, not to mention independent agency.

This understanding is still upheld by liberal institutionalists who highlight IOs functional usefulness in decreasing transaction costs and uncertainty. IOs achieve this effect by facilitating joint agreements and by providing credible information (Keohane, 1982, 2006, 57). In contrast to realism, LI overtime acknowledged the importance of IO's legitimacy. Since IOs are understood as powerful structuring features, the international community is legitimizing them (Keohane, 2006; Ikenberry, 2018, 18f.).

The third strand, constructivists put the focus on legitimacy, stating that it is a social attribute changing state behavior and fostering compliance, equally so as coercion and self-interest (see Hurd, 1999; Risse & Sikkink, 1999). In this line of thinking, IOs become important as a unit of analysis within global governance, because IOs are broadening their scope and relevance (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 582 & 585). As a result, the legitimacy of IOs has become increasingly significant, as they are autonomous actors without coercive power and therefore dependent on voluntary compliance (Hurd, 1999, 388f.). Based on the foregone assumptions, the recent sociological literature on legitimacy states that the support or contestation within public opinion is the basis for IO's legitimacy (see Hurd, 2019). As some proscribe a crisis of IO's legitimacy, these scholars focus their analysis on dynamics of legitimation and delegitimation (Hooghe et al., 2019; Hurd, 2019).

Steffek identifies different sources for legitimacy, for example, democratic participation and control, a common cultural and historical community, or expertise, and good governance (2003, 255ff.). The general literature on sources of legitimacy follows Scharpf's (1999) dichotomy of output- and input-legitimacy who found the EU's expanding authority puzzling.

Here the normative and the sociological approaches divert on how to approach the performance of an IO. The former focuses on moral principles, like justice or fairness (Dellmuth et al., 2019, 629). The latter highlights the importance of actors' perceptions about the legitimacy of an IO, for example, the belief in NATO's success in combating terrorism (Dellmuth et al., 2019, 631; Hooghe et al., 2019).

Others find the institutional design or the unrecognized dynamics behind and within the input and output category are the decisive drivers for variation in legitimacy (see Stephen, 2018; Tallberg & Zürn, 2019). Lenz and Viola (2017) distance from this approach and concentrate on the extent to which functional attributes of IOs converge or distance to the standard of appropriateness.

These legitimation dynamics are widely recognized in IO literature pertinent to NATO, as well as puzzling examples of challenges and changes in environment and mandate.

During the Cold War, the apparent threat of the Soviet Union established a strategy of containment based on the perception of a joint destiny. During this time, the Russian threat, together with military efficiency and operational success, was sufficient to legitimize NATO's existence (Flockhart, 2011, 267).

After the Cold War, with the elimination of the Soviet threat, the purpose of NATO was increasingly questioned. NATO gradually shifted its focus on yet another ideological fight against terrorism in combination with new paradigms for military interventions (see Prescott, 2013; Schreer, 2019).

Overall, NATO's legitimacy is no longer only seen in relation to its role as a military alliance, but also in connection to its political power (Newby & Sebag, 2021, 312; Wright, 2016, 250). This is because the legitimation of military interventions is nowadays about the protection of civilians, adhering to human rights, and democratic standards of governance, rather than about traditional war (see Nevers, 2007; Prescott, 2013; Thakur & Weiss, 2009; Wright, 2016). Schreer goes as far as arguing that NATO not only exists because of the values it portrays but also because it promotes the values to a broader international audience (2019, 300).

With regards to NATO's adoption of a WPS agenda, the scholarly debate focuses on criticism about NATO's actions following the UNSCR1325 provisions.

The first line of literature engages in an empirical discussion about the reasons for NATO to adopt the UNSCR1325 on WPS. One group of scholars draw it back to NATO's decreasing ability "[…] to achieve operational effectiveness." (Hardt & von Hlatky, 2020, 146). Operational effectiveness understood as a military term means for example strengthening military capacity or improving information exchange (Hardt & von Hlatky, 2020, 137).

To achieve operational effectiveness, feminist scholars argue that NATO co-opted the WPS agenda to dictate its meaning and use it to 'fill competence gaps' (Egnell, 2016, 86; see Bastick

& Duncanson, 2018, 558; Enloe, 2014; Isaksson, 2019). Either, through NATO prescribing women gender-specific abilities, for example, women are 'calmer' and more 'communicative' than men (Reeves, 2012, 355). Or, through NATO seeing women as a resource increasing troop numbers (King, 2015, 129).

The second scholarly debate, considering the reasons for NATO to adopt the WPS agenda, point out that NATO only reacted to international pressure from transnational networks, especially within the UN (see Wright, 2016). NATO's focus on the WPS agenda is generally regarded as contradicting the organizational structure of 'hegemonic masculinity' (King, 2016, 122 & 126; Sjoberg, 2015, 437, 2016, 52).

Another critique targets the implementation of the WPS agenda within NATO. Some argue that the shift in the professional language was slow and not sufficient, even though the top-down military structure is more efficient (see Hardt & von Hlatky, 2020). In addition, resources were not properly allocated, Wright and Hurley (2017) even conclude that NATO hindered far-reaching implementation by under-resourcing (see Aronsson, 2021).

Further, scholars discover the implementation problem in NATO's limited expertise, due to its understanding of the WPS agenda (see Isaksson, 2019). More specific NATO only considers the WPS agenda relevant for the target country of military intervention (Bastick & Duncanson, 2018, 558 & 568). The different interpretations of the WPS agenda by NATO member states is another factor identified for the slow and incomplete implementation (Isaksson, 2019, 226; von Hlatky, 2019, 364).

Normatively, feminists accuse NATO of co-opting the WPS agenda, leaving traditional military practices in place, and consequently, securing the traditional military image of 'hypermasculinity' (see Cohn, 2008; von der Lippe, 2012). More specifically feminist scholars argue NATO treats the practice of gender mainstreaming as gender balancing (see e.g. Sjoberg, 2015). In other words, scholars claim that NATO only adds women into a masculine environment, while ignoring gender differences (Newby & Sebag, 2021, 156; Waylen 2008, 261).

Building on the established literature so far, the proceeding accounts address two missing connections.

First, the literature on legitimacy only partly acknowledges how IOs react to changing environments in strategic ways to increase their legitimacy. The later analysis will try to capture this dynamic, by focusing on the usage of discursive patterns and their relevance in the process of legitimation.

Second, the literature on WPS and NATO identifies factors directly within NATO decisions, highlighting the question of why NATO adopted the WPS agenda or problems of integration and implementation.

However, the relevance of the WPS agenda in NATO's legitimacy and justification for intervention was not yet considered, therefore this thesis asks: *to what extent (NATO) member states use the WPS agenda to enhance NATO's legitimacy thus justify NATO's military interventions?*

3. Theoretical framework, conceptualization

Early scholars recognized the importance of legitimacy as the prerequisite for authority (see e.g. Ehrhart et al., 2014). Without coercion, institutions create 'appropriate behavior' to foster their goals, which in turn provides them with legitimacy (Hurd, 2019, 719; Stephen, 2018, 100).

This thesis utilizes a sociological-constructivist understanding of legitimacy, which contextualizes institutions within their wider environment. Using this approach means locating 'legitimacy' within the relationship of the institution and the 'relevant public' or 'legitimacy constituency' (Stephen, 2018, 99 & 103). This means, for example, member states or the wider public are the relevant constitutive actors for the legitimacy of an IO (Stephen, 2018, 99 & 103). Later this concept is only referred to as the 'constituency'.

To capture this constitutive and reciprocal relationship inherent to legitimacy in a sociological-constructivist understanding, this thesis defines legitimacy following Suchman (1995):

> "Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions." (574)

Simultaneously, legitimacy is understood "[…]as the belief in the rightful use of authority by an institution and […] is operationalized as the observable behavior of either deference to the institution or opposition to it." (Hurd, 2019, 718). Meaning that legitimacy is not a static concept, but is contested and takes on different degrees because of the relationship between the institution and the *constituency* (see e.g. Finnemore, 2009; Hurd, 1999). Only a stable belief in the legitimacy of an IO can generate acceptance in different situations. This loosens the limitations of coercion and cost-benefit calculations and brings about "[…] self-motivated compliance by self-interested states." (Hurd, 2019, 719; Steffek, 2003, 254).

It follows that the *constituency* is at the center of legitimacy consideration. The *constituency* is not a uniform actor but consists of different groups. One type is the *audience*, for example, the member states or actors within the states (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 586). Further, Tallberg and Zürn (2019) define the *audience* as all actors bound by an IO's authority. Another group is the *observers* not restrained by IOs authority, which the analysis will not consider, as later explained (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 586).

In conclusion, the concept of legitimacy as defined here is steadily contested and entails a process of legitimation that gives agency to the IO and the *audience* (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 585f.).

The Process of Legitimation

The connection of an IO to its *audience* becomes especially important for the concept of legitimacy as presented by Tallberg and Zürn (2019). Legitimacy is hereby the outcome of a process of legitimation (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 585f.). IOs convey an image through discursive or behavioral practice, making the process of legitimation communicative (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 588). In this thesis, the focus is on discursive practices regarded as a precondition for behavior

because whenever discourses shift they limit or expand the subsequent legitimate possibilities for international and domestic action (see Zürn, 2018).

The process of legitimation as conceptualized by Tallberg and Zürn describes a situation "[w]here actors deliberately seek to make a political institution more legitimate, by boosting beliefs that its rule is exercised appropriately […]" (2019, 585). Here, the actors of legitimation are found within the *audience*, as previously defined (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 583). Tallberg and Zürn state that the *audience* has no other possibility to judge the legitimacy of an IO other than through the image and communication it produces, meaning the output or influence (2019, 592). Therefore, to enhance legitimacy, an IO needs to be aware of discursive changes within its audience, while considering the specifications of the targeted domestic or international public (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 591).

Consistently, the discursive specifications of legitimation vary along three dimensions: *intensity, tone,* and *narrative*. In a given timeframe, *intensity* is the strength, measured by the number of legitimation events. This dimension will not be considered later, because of its quantitative quality. The *tone* is the direction to which the frame is controlled, operationalized as the positive or negative tone of messages towards the agenda or IO in general (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 589). Lastly, the *narrative*, defined as "[…] patterns in the standards invoked to justify or challenge IOs." (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019, 585).

Presuming that the legitimacy of NATO relies on its *audience*, this provides the *audience* with agency to legitimize not only the Alliance but also its military interventions.

4. Methodology: Discourse & Case selection

The presented concept of legitimacy is based on discursive understandings around 'sense-making-practices' and 'meaning-in-use', which are not automatically part of treaties or agreements, but are reflected in a communicative interaction through language (Krook & True, 2012, 106;

Wiener, 2009, 192). By analyzing the WPS discourse within the *audience* of NATO, the aim is to capture the creation and change of language patterns within certain categories (Klotz & Lynch, 2007, 19).

Social Groups: *Audience*

Since this thesis approaches legitimacy with a constructivist-sociological conceptualization the first step is identifying the social groups participating in the discourse, focusing on the *audience* (Deitelhoff, 2009, 46; Wiener, 2009, 191). As previously stated, the *constituency* is not a homogenous group but divided in *audience* and *observers*. The former is the main driver for legitimacy, which translates into different social groups considered in the analysis (Tallberg & Zürn 2019, 588).

Tallberg and Zürn locate the *audience* on the domestic level of communication, therefore the analysis focuses on NATO member states (2019, 588). In respect to NATO, this thesis first conceives the *audience* as all actors bound within Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 (NATO, 1949). The two selected examples for the analysis are a least-likely and most-likely case for legitimizing NATO through the WPS agenda. Based on the Global Gender Gap Report 2021 by the World Economic Forum, the least likely case is identified in Turkey; with a rank of 133 (2006: 105) out of 156 by far the country with the biggest gender gap among NATO countries. The selection of the most likely case hints at the NATO member state with the lowest gender gap, which is Iceland ranking first 2021 (2006: 4). However, Iceland does not have an army, a defense ministry, or is accepting the 2% goal for military spending by NATO member states as agreed upon in 2014 in the Wales Summit (Matthijs, 2020, 40). To capture similar interests in security and military issues Norway as the country with the second-lowest gender gap of the NATO countries is chosen in place of Iceland. Norway ranks stable third in 2021 (2006: 2) and simultaneously is not an EU member state which becomes important as membership within international communities always implies a convergence of interest, meaning with

two non-EU states, the effect of EU's normative power is mitigated (Katzenstein, 1996; Wiener, 2009, 191). As governments are the center of the discourse analysis regarding NATO's legitimation, how the member states use the WPS agenda reflects into official statements connecting the WPS agenda with the military and NATO.

	Discursive Actor	**Cases**	**Data**
Legitimation	Member States	Turkey	Official Government Statements (e.g., Reports, Speeches, Official Websites)
		Norway	

Table 1 Case and Data Overview

5. NATO and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

*5.1. **NATO's changing mandate***

When the 12 original member states founded NATO with the Washington Treaty or North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, the goal was to establish a collective defense community (NATO,1949, 2020). The Alliance understands the concept of collective defense as the sharing of burdens, risks, responsibilities, and benefits among the members (NATO, 1949, 2020a). At the time, Western states needed such an Alliance to coordinate action against their common enemy, the Soviet Union (SU). In light of the Cold War, NATO instated itself as a 'institutionalized pluralistic security community' (Risse-Kappen, 1996, 397), which was only a defense alliance and limited to its military capabilities (see Flockhart, 2011, 263).

The end of the Cold War surprised most observers and drastically changed the perception of security and peace; war became increasingly associated with peace (Bevir & Hall, 2013, 17; NATO, 2021a; Newby & Sebag, 2021, 152). Without an immanent collective threat, NATO almost collapsed, as member states questioned the purpose of NATO altogether (see e.g. Bevir & Hall, 2013, 17; NATO, 2021a).

But new challenges, like terrorism, climate change, and cyber-security reinstated NATO's importance (Efjestad & Tamnes, 2019, 17; NATO, 2017; Robison, 2020, 300). The new conflicts

demand new agendas, leaving the ‘state-centric’ approaches to security behind and shift towards 'civil-centric' approaches focused on human security and state-building (see e.g. Avant et al., 2010; Bevir & Hall, 2013, 19 & 22; Chinkin, 2019, 2; Finnemore, 1996, 161; Prescott, 2013; 56).

The Alliance realized that the concentration on nation-states and collective defense was no longer sufficient, therefore NATO expanded its mandate within a new Strategic Concept in 2010. Generally, the Alliance broadened its security target to 'territory and population' (NATO, 2010). Besides, stressing the importance of collective defense, NATO added two new security strategies to its core tasks: Crisis Management, meaning management of crises before they arise, and Cooperative Security, meaning active engagement in political developments (NATO, 2010). The recent developments in the Crimea Crisis reveal the importance of collective defense for NATO (Hardt & von Hlatky, 2020, 139). While the examples of NATO missions in Yugoslavia, Kosovo, or North Macedonia highlight that NATO even before 2010 expanded its original mandate, beyond collective defense crisis bound to Art. 5 (NATO, 2010; 2020b).

Nevertheless, NATO’s transformation did not diminish problems within the Alliance, namely the problem of aligning member states' interests or the decreasing military capabilities.

Since its foundation the ‘alignment problem' prevailed in NATO but the terrorist threat seemed to converge member state’s interest (Flockhart, 2011, 274). Countering terrorism did redirect questions about NATO’s importance, but entailed more complex security challenges which did foster even more controversy among member states (Efjestad & Tamnes, 2019, 12; NATO, 2016; Nevers, 2007, 36). For example, the Alliance was not aligned in their opinion on how to approach terrorism with NATO. Not all member states recognized terrorism as important for their security as it was for the US after 9/11 (see e.g. Nevers, 2007, 59).

Furthermore, the problem of decreasing capabilities is one bound to the decreasing contributions of troops and money NATO receives. For example, only 10-member states in 2021 adhere

to the 2% defense expenditure requirement (NATO, 2021b). At the same time troop numbers for example by Germany, declined from 2010 to 2017 by 23,5% (Matthijs, 2020, 40).

These examples highlight that terrorism alone cannot solve the continuous problems within the Alliance, but NATO needs alternatives to secure its relevance and capabilities. This is one argument why women's advocacy groups and feminists proclaim NATO adopted the WPS agenda in 2007 (see e.g. Gender and Security, 2011; Otto, 2010; von der Lippe, 2012; Wright, 2016, 2019).

*5.2. **Women, Peace and Security***

The incorporation of women's rights into the realm of military considerations started with the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 which refocused on gender equality and the empowerment of women in all aspects of life (NATO, 2019; UN Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995). Along this process of international recognition, a wide array of women's rights advocacy groups lobbied for widening the scope of women's rights to more than family and humanitarian issues. Specifically, NGOs and activist groups called upon the military to recognize the importance of women in conflict situations, empower economic participation, and open up possibilities to participate in peace negotiations (see e.g. Women for Women, 2018).

Feminists proclaim that IOs have a history of paying lip service to their 'antimilitaristic' approach, propagated when it comes to women's rights in the military (Enloe, 2000, 3f.; Otto, 2010, 239). On the one side, this contradicts with military interests, as feminists attach strong pacifistic arguments to their demands and advocate for lowering defense spending (Enloe, 2000, 3f.; Otto, 2010, 254 & 239).

On the other side, the agenda-setting of women's advocacy groups coincided with skeptical opinions by military actors on whether 'soft' issues are topics suited for traditional forums of military diplomacy (Otto, 2010, 257; Women's Watch, 2001). This discourse provides for explanations why the UN was slow in considering women's rights in connection to military

considerations. On the 31st October 2000, the UN adopted the fundamental WPS resolution UNSCR1325, which for the first-time connected gender to the military (Cohn, 2008; Otto, 2010, 259 & 239; UN, 2000b). The main principles of UNSCR1325 are prevention, participation, and protection. Prevention means acknowledging the role of women in preventing conflicts. Participation targets the lacking representation of women in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and all other negotiations in conflict. The last principle, protection recognizes the special situation of women in conflict situations (UN, 2000b; 2019a). In addition, the resolution recognized the special situation of women after the conflict (UN, 2000b; 2019a).

As only the Preamble includes the word 'equality', UNSCR1325 leaves most discursive practices in place (UN, 2000b). Even so, before, the discourse regarding women's rights was solely connected to family and children in need of military protection, neglecting all independent agency of women in crises environments (Otto, 2010, 254; Puechguirbal, 2010, 172).

Nevertheless, UNSCR1325 brought about an important innovation: women advocacy networks now work within the institutions responsible for the military decision, rather than lobbying from outside (Otto, 2010, 255 & 241). This also changed the extent of influence these networks have not alone within the UN, but also within the diplomatic military discourse (Otto, 2010, 257). The WPS resolution emerged as a starting point for a constituency, by many observers said to be one of the most active within IOs, the Friends of 1325 or now Peace Women (Cohn, 2008; Otto, 2010, 240; von Hlatky 2019, 364; Wright, 2016, 356).

UNSCR1325 included a set of complex standards and issues which led to a series of redefining resolutions. The UN resolutions are divided into those focusing on women's participation in conflict (UNSCR1889, 2122, 2242, 2493) and those focusing on gender-related violence (UNSCR1820, 1888, 1960, 2106, 2467). By now, the WPS agenda stands for a whole collection of resolutions and action plans not only within the UN.

NATO adopted UNSCR1325 without change in 2007, as a framework for gender-based analysis and perspective within military missions (NATO, 2007; Otto, 2010). NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoppe-Scheffer commented not long after: „It is essential that we benefit from the energy and talents of our entire population, not just one half." (NATO, 2008a).

NATO's implementation of UNSCR1325 goes even beyond the UN resolution in its Action Plan 2007 (NATO, 2007). The provisions of UNSCR1325 are not only legally binding for its member states, but NATO also instate annual conferences and a permanent Committee on Gender Perspectives (NATO, 2021c). To adapt the agenda to NATO-specific policies, the Alliance passed the Bi SC Directive 40-1 in 2008. The directive specified the original WPS resolution by defining implementation procedures and role descriptions, for example of gender advisors (NATO, 2008b). Women's advocacy groups regarded the directive as using conflicting language, especially in the role description of gender advisors (Bastick & Duncanson, 2018, 562; Gender and Security, 2011). Particularly, the directive uses terms such as female perspective or gender perspective contradictory, with no further explanation (NATO, 2008b; see also Bastick & Duncanson, 2018).

This is the reason, why in 2012 NATO instated a Secretary-General Special Representative for WPS which showed further commitment to the WPS agenda at the highest level of command. In the NATO Summit 2018 in Brussels, member states passed a renewed WPS Action Plan, which is not limited to peace operations but aims to harmonize understandings of UNSCR1325. For this purpose, NATO defined its own WPS principles: integration, inclusiveness, and integrity. Integration targeting the effective implementation of gender practices. Inclusiveness focuses on the increased representation of women across NATO, and finally, integrity, meaning raising accountability and awareness (NATO, 2018a).

Women's advocacy groups criticized the outcome for being too vague to overcome the problem that NATO member states are not following the general approach (Peace Women, 2019; von Hlatky, 2019, 364). Therefore in 2021, the Partnership Symposium in Brussel extended the core

principles to make them more inclusive for member states' considerations, partly by strengthening accountability mechanisms (NATO, 2021d).

Together, there are at least three consequences for NATO through the WPS agenda. Foremost, the WPS agenda is a tool for operational effectiveness, further, it expands communication channels, and lastly, NATO gains discursive leverage within the population in the host countries.

First, as previously discussed within the feminist literature on the implementation of UNSCR1325, the WPS agenda is a tool for operational effectiveness. From NATO's perspective, the argument that NATO co-opted the WPS agenda to 'fill competence gaps' (Egnell, 2016, 86) is positive for securing military success. This is evident for example in the Brussel Summit Declaration in 2018, which states the "[…] increased representation of women in NATO civilian and military structures and in Allied and partner forces improve our effectiveness and contribute to a more modern, agile, ready, and responsive Alliance." (NATO, 2018b)

Second, the WPS agenda expands the communicative channels for NATO, because the UNSCR1325 on WPS is strongly connected to non-state actors, like NGOs or feminist activist groups. This argument reflects on two former mentioned developments: the shift of war from 'state-centric' to 'civil-centric' and the active constituency of UNSCR1325 on WPS. Combined, NATO gains access to relevant non-state actors which helps to achieve the goals of NATO 2030 in expanding its role as a political and military alliance (NATO, 2021e).

Third, NATO gains access to the local population in the host country, because NATO fights the new conflicts against non-state actors which originate their agenda in identity categories, such as, ethnicity, religion, or gender (see e.g. Chinkin, 2019). Gender translates into local cultural norms, so for example to connect with the local population female soldiers were essential in Afghanistan (see Wright, 2016). Human Rights Watch and a UN Women report reflect on this point, by stating that the Taliban regime strictly segregates the society between men and women. NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and NATO needed women to reach the female part of the population (see Human Rights Watch, 2021; UN Women, 2021).

Nevertheless, these accounts solely reflect on the potential of the WPS agenda to strengthen considerations about operational effectiveness for NATO. It does not explain how the WPS agenda positively contributes to legitimizing the whole Alliance and its future interventions.

5.3. ***Legitimation through Women's Rights in the Military***

Therefore, following the previous depiction of NATO's history with the WPS agenda, hereon after the analysis assesses to what extent the WPS agenda is used to legitimize NATO and its military interventions. The structure of the analysis, first concentrates on Norway, followed by Turkey, asking to what degree the member states narrate the WPS agenda in connection to NATO and whether the tone towards NATO is positive.

5.3.1. ***Norway****: WPS and the dual purpose for legitimation*

To begin with, Norway generally recognizes the WPS agenda in connection to war: "Women and children are among the most vulnerable in conflict and war situations […]" (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report Nr. 27, 2008, 26). The reference point for action lies recurrent within the discourse around the WPS agenda and UNSCR1325. Further, Norway brings gender rights into connection to 'diversity' as "[…] it correlated with values such as justice, legality, legitimacy and ethics." (Norwegian Ministry of Defense Report Nr. 14, 2013, 26). This means more women are enhancing diversity connecting it to equality, the rule of law, and human rights. The logic behind this is that "[…] more groups of people identify with the Armed Forces, which helps enhance legitimacy." (Norwegian Ministry of Defense Report Nr. 14, 2013, 26). Pointing to the fact that Norway generally uses the WPS agenda to legitimize the military and touching upon the new paradigms for military interventions, focused on humanitarian intervention as previously stated.

In addition, statements concerning the practical military application, indicate that Norway uses the WPS agenda in relation to operational effectiveness and in connection to NATO.

By first, stretching the need for 'a higher ratio of female employees' after the experience within the NATO mission in Afghanistan (Norwegian Ministry of Defense Report Nr. 14, 2013, 8). Second, by connecting the WPS agenda in the same report to female capabilities, since "[t]he main objective […] is to ensure operative capability", which is a "[…] question of having varied composition among personnel […]" (Norwegian Ministry of Defense Report Nr. 14, 2013, 25f.). Or by stating, that with both increased female soldiers and their unique capabilities, the armed forces secure "[…] operative capabilities in cooperation with allies." (Norwegian Ministry of Defense Report Nr. 14, 2013, 12). The Norway's Action Plan 2011-2012 narrates the WPS agenda similarly because Norway adopted the WPS agenda to enhance 'competence- and capacity-building' in IOs like NATO or the UN (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012a, 11). This is why the 'gender balance within the organization' of the Armed Forces in Norway needs to improve (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012a, 3). The Norwegian government emphasizes that women have special expertise and are therefore needed in military missions. Lastly, Norway connects the WPS agenda to the flexibility of the working environment in a report about future military and global challenges. In this report, Norway emphasizes that "[t]he military profession is unique as it involves working in times of peace, crisis and war." (Norwegian Ministry of Defense Report Nr. 13, 2009, 8).

All three discursive patterns do not translate into fundamental change as "[…] women and men becoming more equal once they have been recruited to the organization." (Norwegian Ministry of Defense Report Nr. 14, 2013, 26).

These patterns suggest that Norway uses the WPS agenda in connection to NATO to enhance operational effectiveness, by ensuring for higher troop numbers and specific feminine capabilities. At the same time, the WPS agenda legitimizes NATO as a military alliance through securing resources necessary for military success, indirectly also justifying future interventions.

In the area of women's rights, Norway sees itself in a 'leading role' to empower women regarding the WPS agenda (Norwegian Government, Women, Peace and Security, 2021). Norway recognizes NATO as one of the key partners when promoting a gender-related military agenda because it is one of the strong 'regional actors' among the IOs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report Nr. 33, 2012b, 16). Moreover, Norway states that it "[…] will help to ensure that Nato's and the UN's policy and operational guidelines relating to women, peace and security are implemented." (Norwegian Government, Women, Peace and Security, 2021).

These examples show that Norway regards NATO as having expertise in the field of WPS and being one of the most important institutions capable of translating the agenda. Norway hereby depicts NATO in a positive tone, revealing that the adaption of a WPS agenda generated a new form of discourse besides basic military and security issues, ultimately legitimizing the Alliance and its activities.

Furthermore, the Norwegian Government directly addresses the legitimation of military interventions through the WPS agenda in connection to NATO

First, because the WPS agenda lowers domestic pressure, and second because it gives more legitimacy within missions.

First, the WPS agenda reduced domestic critique of Norway's engagement in NATO missions, because:

> "[…] Norwegians' impression of the Taliban regime […] was associated with misgovernment, the harsh and violent oppression of women, not least, arbitrary and gruesome executions." (Norwegian Ministry of Defense & Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report Nr. 8, 2016, 199).

The Norwegian public did not criticize the justification for the engagement in NATO missions, because the intervention was 'effective' in bringing for example education, especially to girls and women (Norwegian Ministry of Defense & Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report Nr. 8, 2016, 103). The Norwegian argument that women's rights are justification for military

interventions is directly legitimizing NATO and indirectly further interventions. Taking all together the WPS agenda strengthens NATO's legitimacy for action, as Norway has leverage in its domestic discourse about future military missions.

Second, the incorporation of a WPS agenda generates a narrative of more legitimate NATO operations, positively understood by the local population:

> "At the same time, local women can provide information and perspectives that men are not aware of or do not focus on. International experience shows that safeguarding the security of women increases the local population's confidence in the operation." (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign, 2012a, 11)

Not only female soldiers or military personnel can enhance the operative effectiveness, but the local population has more confidence in the operation for which women are understood to be important on both ends of the relationship. Ultimately, this is a consequence of implementing the WPS agenda and reflects on discursive patterns which enhance NATO's legitimacy.

Taking into account the presented examples of Norway's discourse around the WPS agenda in relation to NATO, the thesis draws the following conclusions.

The findings highlight how the Norwegian discourse uses the WPS agenda in the context of humanitarian interventions and operational effectiveness. Both discourses depict NATO in a positive tone further legitimizing the Alliance.

In conclusion, Norway's usage of the WPS agenda enhances NATO's legitimacy in two ways: first, NATO secures operational effectiveness because member states are less likely to be domestically pressured to pull troops. Second, local populations and officials see NATO missions as more positive. In consequence, NATO is more legitimated in its action within a positively narrated discourse.

5.3.2. ***Turkey:*** *The different voice on the international level*

In contrast to Norway, Turkey does not mention the WPS agenda in connection to the military publicly. In connection to the whole society female participation plays a role, but is detached from the military. As stated:

> "We believe that our women, empowered by the richness in their hearts and their God-given acumen and capabilities, will spearhead a transformation that will embrace Turkey and the world. " (Speech by President Erdogan on the Role of Women and the Foundation of the Republic, 2021a).

Hereby the Turkish discourse connects women to economic capacity, as means to promote economic development with their unique capabilities. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2008-2013 follows this line of discourse, as "Gender equality is crucial for the development and lies at the core of economic and national development […]". Only the connection of gender equality to economic capability is apparent.

Within the Action Plan Turkey mentions UNSCR1325 on WPS once with the weak addition 'in accordance to' (National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2008-2013). In comparison to Norway which 'promotes' and 'follows up' on UNSCR1325 provisions, the WPS agenda seems not determined within the Turkish discourse on military (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report Nr. 13, 2009). Women's rights and gender rights stay within the Ministry of Family and Social Policy reducing the Turkish discourse around WPS to family and women's issues not important to foreign affairs or defense.

It appears that the Turkish discourse does not connect the domestic narration of WPS to the military. In conclusion, the Turkey does not use the WPS agenda to legitimize NATO or its action before its domestic public.

This stands in contrast to the international arena, where the connection between the WPS agenda and the military plays a central role. Here, Turkey engages in the discourse which connects the WPS agenda to the military.

Observers and activists comment on the official Turkish discourse that the Turkish Government implements WPS initiatives, because of pressure from NATO, for example, to achieve the 4% share of female soldiers (NATO, 2018c; Degirmencioglu & Kahana-Dagan, 2020).

Nevertheless, Turkey acknowledges the importance of WPS, for example in a Security Council meeting. But limits its domestic importance by: "Emphasizing […] the ultimate responsibility for advancing the women, peace and security agenda lies with individual countries […]" (UN Security Council Meeting, 2019b).

However, when Turkey is explicitly asked by the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) or the UN about its opinion on the WPS agenda the narration is similar to the Norwegian discourse. The Turkish discourse also connects the WPS agenda to women's capacities and their proportion in the armed forces. For instance, through 'increasing their [female soldiers] numbers', 'enhancing the employment rate', and highlighting the 'personal skills and capacities' of women (OSCE, 2017, 19). Recognizing that "[…] despite the progress achieved so far, much remains to be done particularly in the area of implementation […]" (UN, 2010).

Similar to the Norwegian discourse which stresses the importance of WPS for NATO missions, Turkey states that women "[…] play an important role in establishing relations with local populations […]" (OSCE, 2017, 23), enhancing operational effectiveness. Turkey mentions NATO without necessity in the questionnaires which suggests that Turkey follows a different discourse on a domestic or international level in relation to the WPS agenda. This indicates that on the international level, Turkey is conducting a discourse with a positive tone towards NATO and uses the WPS agenda in connection to the military.

Even if Turkey engages in a discourse narrated positively around NATO and the WPS agenda, the more general discourse is about NATO as a military alliance. This is evident in repeating comments about the 'collective defense mechanism' as the 'backbone' of the Alliance

(President Erdogan NATO Summit, 2014). Or by mentioning the importance of its 'founding principle' and that NATO is fighting for the 'rightful cause' (Turkish Minister of National Defense, 2021; President Erdogan, NATO Leader's Summit, 2021b). For Turkey, the future of NATO lies within refocusing on military concerns. Reflected in statements, such as: "[t]he concept of security threat is undergoing a very profound transformation. NATO should be more active during this process and update itself in the face of new threats […]", mainly by "[…] boost[ing] the Alliance's defense and deterrence structure […] (President Erdogan, NATO Summit, 2016). Further strengthening the observation that Turkey enhances NATO's legitimacy in the discourse within the international community. But not by using the WPS agenda and not in light of NATO as a political alliance, but NATO as a military alliance or in connection to operational effectiveness.

Finally, it appears that the Turkish discourse uses the WPS agenda to a different extent depending on the targeted domestic or international audience. Gender equality and women's issues stay within the economic and family realm on the domestic level. While on an international level, Turkey uses the WPS agenda to legitimize NATO. Overall, the tone towards NATO is positive, especially regarding its military importance. But also towards NATO as an important actor and center of expertise for the WPS agenda. Whereas Norway also legitimizes its own NATO engagement with the WPS agenda, Turkey only uses the WPS agenda to confirm the legitimacy of NATO missions. In the end, it is surprising that Norway and Turkey use the discourse around WPS to legitimize NATO engagement. Indicating that NATO successfully adopted a WPS agenda with UNSCR1325 to initiate a process of legitimation.

6. Conclusion

This thesis explored to what extent the NATO member states use the WPS agenda to enhance NATO's legitimacy and future interventions. Specifically, analyzing the extent to which the

constituency adopted the *narrative* of the WPS agenda and the extent to which the *tone* towards NATO is positive.

The process of legitimation achieved within the member state's discourse reflects two distinct, but also similar narrations. Similarly, both member states use the WPS agenda to legitimize NATO missions, by specifically emphasizing the importance of operational effectiveness.

The Norwegian discourse uses the WPS agenda also as leverage in its domestic discourse and makes NATO a WPS reference point.

In contrast, the Turkish discourse does not use the WPS agenda in connection to the military on a domestic level. Here the discourse stays within family and women's issues associated with economic capacity. However, on the international level, the Turkish discourse, similar to Norway, legitimizes NATO's course of action by connecting NATO with the WPS agenda.

Together, the use of the WPS agenda enhances NATO's legitimation domestically, internationally, and within missions and makes a justification for interventions possible. Additionally, it seems that both NATO member states use the WPS agenda to legitimize NATO, independent of their domestic situation in relation to gender rights. In short, the positive narration concludes in a process of legitimation for NATO and its future interventions through the WPS agenda.

In the end, the extent to which the WPS agenda enhances NATO's legitimacy functions in two ways. First, NATO secures operational effectiveness because member states are less likely to be domestically pressured to pull resources. And on the ground the local population sees NATO missions more positive. Secondly, when member states narrate the general discourse around NATO in a positive tone, NATO can act more independently and is more legitimate for future interventions.

Further research should consider the different understandings of the WPS agenda as part of the military legitimation process. These differences are relevant as new forms of war and conflict emerge which NATO cannot solely solve with hard security solutions but also needs political and societal solutions. In addition, future analyses need to consider the interconnection between

different IOs and what the adoption of one resolution as UNSCR1325 implies for other organizations. This is a limitation to the former analysis as the influence of other institutions like the UN cannot be accounted for. Besides, the variation in the Turkish discourse does not tell more about the actual implementation but resides on a superficial level of official statements. In other words, what Turkey states on an international level might not reflect domestic principles of gender equality.

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