The role of women in UN peacekeeping operations: How Security Council Resolution 1325 improved gender mainstreaming

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Resolution 1325 improved gender mainstreaming

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"Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace."

Kofi Annan,

United Nations Secretary-General

1. Introduction

It is empirically proven that grave sexual and physical violence against women increases as a result of arm conflict. The large-scale rape of women and girls has been used as a military strategy in numerous conflicts, most recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Darfur. Although the actual magnitude of violence is usually unknown, the Human Rights Watch (2009) reports that tens of thousands of women and girls in Congo have become victims of sexual violence during the past 15 years. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the agency coordinating work on sexual violence in Congo, noted that 15,996 new cases of sexual violence were registered in 2008 throughout the country and that 65% of the victims were children and adolescents younger than 18 years (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Not only the local militias but also international peacekeepers and humanitarian operators themselves committed violence against women. Since violence is widespread, human rights violations such as sexual violence and abuses often remain unpunished and women's voices remain silenced.

Despite the disproportionate impact that conflicts have on them, women have been largely marginalized in the security field. Gender hierarchies are inherent in the concept of security and embodied in institutions such as the Security Council. Previous feminist works have pointed out that the idea behind humanitarian intervention to protect vulnerable civilians often portrayed as women and children is largely problematic because it essentializes the role of women and dichotomizes the discourse (Barrow, 2010; Okpotor, 2017). In other words, it portrays women as victims that need to be saved as a justification to intervene and view women as not taking part in the conflict, instead painting them as pacifists. The invisibility of women in decisions regarding the use of force exacerbates gender inequalities and leads to the further marginalization of women during post-conflict reconstruction and state-building.

The major international response to such endemic sexual violence during conflict and the following marginalization of women has been the adoption by the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) on the 30th of October, 2000. Recognizing for the first time the important role of women in conflict resolution and in the promotion of peace and security, the UNSCR 1325 provides a unique framework to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping and peacebuilding policies and programs. The main strategy to promote gender equality, denominated gender mainstreaming, aims to address gender biases at all stages of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of peacekeeping missions. Gender mainstreaming has been widely

accepted by the international community due to its flexibility as it does not requires actors to fulfil the goal of gender equality in any specific way (Walby, 2005, p. 338). Consequently, the normative provisions and policies promoted by the UNSCR 1325 have often been deemed more like a window dressing rather than a source of change of the deeply rooted gender constructs intrinsic in conflict and security discourses. Contributing to the previous literature on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, this paper aims to assess the impact of the UNSCR 1325 on the gender mainstreaming of peacekeeping mandates. This endeavour is guided by the following research question:

In what ways has the UNSR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security affected the gender mainstreaming in the UN Peacekeeping operation mandates?

The following section reviews previous scholars' attempts to evaluate the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in peacekeeping missions, followed by an elaboration of the theoretical framework which looks at the debates around gender mainstreaming and its pervasiveness as an international norm through a critical constructive lens. After a discourse analysis of the peacekeeping mandates of the case study, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo, this research argues that gender content in MONUC and MONUSCO mandates has increased after the adoption of UNSCR 1325 but its implementation has been selective and inconsistent.

2. Literature Review

Although the adoption of UNSCR 1325 raised enthusiasm in the public sphere among feminist advocates and organizations, existing research has largely focused on the resolution's limitations and has evaluated its implementation on different grounds. Measuring the impact of peacekeeping missions and UNSCR 1325 in advancing gender equality is difficult due to a lack of empirical evidence that could prove the concrete progress in the field. Scholars have experimented with different research approaches to measure that impact. While some have looked at the content of the peacekeeping missions' mandates (Black, 2009; Tryggestad, 2009; Barnes, et al., 2011; Kreft, 2017), others have analysed peace agreements (Bell, & O'Rourke,

2010) and considered the indicators of women's living conditions and political participation (Charlesworth & Woods, 2001; Binder et al., 2008; Basini, 2013). Overall, previous findings pointed to the inconsistent implementation of UNSCR 1325, at the same time highlighting the revolutionary potential to mainstream a gender approach to conflict and peacebuilding issues (True, 2009).

2.1 Assessing the UNSCR 1325 implementation by looking at peacekeeping mandates

Although there is broad consensus over the relevance of peacekeeping mandates for measuring the impact of UNSCR 1325, the analysis of this type of source has led scholars to slightly divergent conclusions. In their book, *Women, Peace and Security: translating policy into practice* Barnes, Olonisakin and Ikpe (2011) draw together the finding from eight countries and four different regional contexts to provide guidance on how to assess the impact of UNSCR 1325, in particular at the national and regional level. The authors find that peace operations proved to be less influential than expected in transferring the provisions contained in the UNSCR 1325 at the local level due to different factors. Among these, the presence of explicit inclusion of UNSCR 1325 in the mission mandate and the mission leader's attention to gender issues play a large role. Kreft (2017) also highlighted that specific gender references in the mandate have been a prerequisite for ensuring gender-mainstreamed peacekeeping missions on the ground. After a quantitative analysis of 71 peacekeeping operations, she finds that gender provisions in peacekeeping mandates are not universally derided by UNSCR 1325 but are specifically applied to conflicts with high levels of sexual violence. However, such a quantitative analysis fails to consider temporal patterns to show changes across time and spaces as gender equality norms can take many years to filter through organizations and society in general (Barnes & al., 2011).

Other scholars, instead, have contended that the adoption of UNSCR 1325 appears to have significantly affected the Security Council (SC) language and led to a sharp increase in the number of references to women in the resolutions (Black, 2009; Tryggestad, 2009). However, this effective integration of gender mainstreaming could be the result of the pressure from NGOs such as PeaceWomen and various UN agencies such as UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to hold the SC accountable for its commitment rather than a structural change within the SC modus operandi. Therefore, scholars have argued that a continued

evaluation of the UNSCR 1325 implementation is needed to ensure that its language and practices are mainstreamed into the SC behaviour and language and that its language is not only tokenistic but brings practical change. (Black, 2009; Tryggestad, 2009).

2.2 Assessing the UNSCR 1325 implementation by looking at peace agreements and peace processes

Another way in which scholars have tried to evaluate the impact of the Resolution on Women, Peace and Security on peace processes is by looking at peace agreements, as they not only indicate the inclusion of women in peace-building strategies but also the plans for their future inclusion in the domestic political and social structure (Bell & O'Rourke, 2010). The analysis of peace agreements also demonstrated that, although references to women are connected to the issues raised by the Resolution, they are still inconsistent and unsystematic. Interestingly, Bell and O'Rourke (2010) and Barnes, et al. (2011) point out that the presence of the UN as a third party in the peace-making process has a positive impact on the inclusion of gender provisions in the peace process and facilitates local action thanks to the resources and moral support it can provide. For instance, in East Timor, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) established a Gender Affairs Unit (GAU) to promote women's equality in the social and political life of the country. However, Charlesworth and Woods (2001) reported that the living conditions of women in East Timor did not improve much since the end of Indonesia's occupation.

Similarly, other scholars have looked at the participation of women in peace processes and, more specifically, in disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) programs reporting the inconsistent implementation of gender provisions and the ongoing marginalization of women from governmental organizations (Binder et al., 2008; Basini, 2013). The reason behind this is that international and national institutions still fail to address the root causes that hinder women's participation in political and social development such as the access to the economic resources and education (Binder, et al., 2008; Basini, 2013). Since the concept of "gender" has been generally assumed to be about women, gender provisions have mainly tackled women's special needs, their protection in conflict situations and their involvement in reconstruction and peacekeeping programs (Charles & Woods, 2001; True, 2009). In its peacekeeping efforts, the UN has largely prioritized the establishment of governmental structures, rather than the rebuilding of the local economy and infrastructures

such as housing. However, economic opportunities and reconstruction plans should be beneficial to both women and men to address the economic and social aspects of women's empowerment as well as to promote gender equality (True, 2009).

Although the adoption of Resolution 1325 has shifted the narrative away from the *'women as victims'* narrative by looking at women as active agents in conflicts and peacebuilding processes, the construction of *'gender'* and gender-specific provisions in international humanitarian law is still problematic. Most of the previously mentioned literature has failed to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender, mainly focusing on the important role of women, which is an important but not exclusive aspect of gender dynamics. As Barrow (2008) points out, the essentialization of women as victims as well as peacemakers is detrimental to both men and women as they fail to" broach broader issues of how gender-based social constructions often exacerbate social, economic and structural inequalities that heavily influence physical violence and conflict" (p. 224). Although legal provisions are not sufficient to tackle gender issues and enforce respect for women's rights, the language of law plays an important role in constructing an understanding of gender-based violence in conflict (Barrow, 2008).

Based on these considerations, this paper aims to overcome the women-centric approach that has been used in evaluating the impact of the Security Country Resolution by looking at the gender mainstreaming of peacekeeping mandates.

3. Theoretical framework

Most of the previously mentioned literature has failed to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender, mainly focusing on the important role of women, which is a relevant but not exclusive aspect of gender dynamics. In order to overcome this limitation, this research will first look at the debate around gender mainstreaming and conceptualize it as a 'transformative' practice based on meaning-making. Subsequently, it will illustrate the significance of UNSCR 1325 and its main objectives. Considering the Resolution as a normative framework, this research will insert the evaluation of its impact on gender

mainstreaming in the mandates of peacekeeping missions into the broader spectrum of international norms' lifecycle and effectiveness.

3.1 Conceptualizing gender mainstreaming

Feminist scholarship in International Relations is rooted in the commitment to employ *gender* as a category of analysis (Okpotor, 2017). The term *'gender'* has been used to refer to the socially constructed features that are presumed to be intrinsically connected to biological differences between men and women, such as "strength, protection, rationality, aggression, public life, domination and leadership" attributed to men, and feminine characteristics, such as "vulnerability, emotion, passivity, privacy, submission and care," to women (Okpotor, 2017, p. 78). According to feminist theory, social and political relations are based on these assumptions and stereotypes of the roles traditionally assigned to men and women, and are therefore considered to be "gendered". The concept of war, for instance, is considered to be gendered as it is based on social and cultural discourses that portray women as weaker, incapable of taking decisions and victims of the war, while men are seen as the primary actors, perpetrating most of the violence (Kreft, 2016). Consequently, women are not considered active agents of conflict but their role is essentialized to that of victims or peacemakers at best. This exclusionary treatment has implications not only for the demobilization and reintegration of female combatants into the society but also for the invisibility of the different impacts of conflict on women. It has been demonstrated that the security of women is significantly connected to peace, as an increase in violence generally leads to a rise in cases of sexual and gender-based violence which remains unpunished. To address the feminist concerns about the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women, the UNSC has adopted Resolution 1235 on Women, Peace and Security acknowledging the marginalization of women in (post-) conflict settings and calling for UN peacekeeping operations to be gender mainstreamed (Kreft, 2016).

Although gender mainstreaming is frequently understood as a specialized tool of the policy world, it is also a feminist strategy growing out of feminist theory. Walby (2005) defines it as "a process of revision of key concepts to grasp more adequately a world that is gendered, rather than the establishment of a separatist gender theory" (p. 321). Indeed, gender mainstreaming incorporates many of the dilemmas that have divided feminist scholars over the past decade and provides an innovative way to solve them. One of the central debates in

feminist theory is the tension between "gender equality" and "mainstream": two essential components of gender mainstreaming. Thus, gender mainstreaming is an essentially contested concept. However, Elgstrom (2000) argues that new gender norms have "to fight their way into institutional thinking" challenging established norms because they could be seen as competing with the prioritization of gender equality even though they are not directly opposed (p. 458). Consequently, the process of implementation of gender mainstreaming consists of negotiations and compromises, rather than the simple adoption of new policies. This negotiation over the acceptance of gender mainstreaming relies also on its lack of conceptual clarity. Scholars have labelled the term "elastic" and have provided different definitions. One of the most comprehensive definitions has been provided by the UN Economic and Social Council which states:

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (1997, p. 2).

Although gender equality is considered the final goal, this and the other definitions do not specify what kind of equality has to be achieved. On one hand, if gender equality is conceived in terms of opportunity, gender mainstreaming is applied as a strategy of inclusion. In other words, it introduces a gender perspective without challenging existing structures but "selling gender mainstreaming as a way of more effectively achieving existing policy goals" (Walby, 2005, p. 323). On the other hand, if it is conceived in terms of equality of outcome, gender mainstreaming assumes a more transformative power to address institutionalized practices and norms that perpetuate existing gender hierarchies. This flexibility allows different actors to adopt gender mainstreaming as a tool to solve the policy problem of gender inequality based on how they interpret what the problem actually is. Consequently, different meanings are assigned to gender mainstreaming making it "an open signifier that can be filled with both feminist and non-feminist meanings" (Lombardo & Meier, 2006, p. 161). Thus, gender mainstreaming assumes different connotations according to the process of intentional and unintentional meaning-making that it goes through.

The rapid global diffusion of gender mainstreaming in different policy areas can be explained as the result of the above-explained flexibility that allows policy-makers to adapt the concept to their necessities. However, this has often led to a restrictive understanding of gender mainstreaming that only considers issues of non-discrimination or equal opportunities for women and men. Feminists have highly criticised this narrow approach to gender mainstreaming as it does not challenge existing gender hierarchies and fosters the essentialization of women's roles. This research will overcome this simplistic understanding of gender mainstreaming by adopting a " transformative" conceptualization that sees it as "neither the assimilation of women into men's ways nor the maintenance of a dualism between women and men but rather something new, a positive form of melding, in which the outsiders, feminists, changed the mainstream" (Walby, 2005, p. 323).

3.2 The UNSCR 1325 and its pillars

Following this conceptualization of gender mainstreaming, this research aims to assess how gender issues are framed in UNSC resolutions and, in particular, how women's rights and needs are enhanced in the peacekeeping mission in the DRC after the adoption of UNSCR 1325.

Although the UN Global conferences on women that took place between 1975 and 1995 had contributed to raising the awareness and building momentum among the international community, they did not have a significant impact on the gender mainstreaming of conflict and security issues at the UN level. The topic was still facing a lot of resistance in the SC, the main body responsible for the maintenance of peace and security and the only one with the authority to issue binding resolutions on member states. After the rising international pressure, the Namibian presidency of the Security Council organized a special debate on Women, Peace and Security on 25 October 2000 which led to the elaboration and unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 (Barnes, Olonisakin, & Ikpe, 2011). This resolution acknowledges "the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security" (UNSC, 2000). Therefore, the adoption of UNSCR 1325 is considered such a significant benchmark because it overcomes the historical narrative of women as victims instead of affirming for the first time the role of women as active agents in conflict resolution.

Despite the fact that its importance is widely recognized by the international community, the UNSCR 1352 has been criticized for its ambiguity and its failure to address some of the more deeply rooted gender constructs. The ambiguous language of the Resolution opens up to numerous different interpretations that could undermine its implementation but it is certainly a result of the compromises that had to be made in order to finalize a universally accepted document. Concerning the gender dynamics intrinsic in peace and security discourse, the Resolution seems to reinforce the essentialization of women as peacemakers, as opposed to one of the men as aggressors.

Nevertheless, UNSCR 1325 provides a unique framework that could be incorporated into existing peacebuilding policies and programs and, for the first time, brought gender issues into the mainstream of security discourses. For the purpose of the analysis, the main objectives of the UNSCR 1325 will be classified into the three following pillars:

1)   the participation of women at all levels of decision-making

2)   the inclusion of gender perspectives to prevent and mitigate the impacts of conflict on women

3)   the protection of women from violence during and after conflict (Black, 2009).

This will allow to assess the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at different levels in the peacekeeping mandates.

3.3 Understanding the effects of international norms: a critical constructivist approach

The idea of evaluating the impact of the UNSCR 1352 on gender mainstreaming in the mandates of peacekeeping missions can be inserted into the broader issue of norms diffusion and effectiveness. Indeed, the Resolution provides a normative framework which involves gender mainstreaming as an international norm of women's participation. According to Krook and True (2010), international norms are defined as "ideas of varying degrees of abstraction and specification with respect to fundamental values, organizing principles or standardized procedures that resonate across many states and global actors, having gained support in multiple forums including official policies, laws, treaties or agreements" (pp. 103-104). These norms do not always achieve what they originally aim for as their interpretation varies across countries and time. Constructivist scholars have attempted to theorize the complex effects of international norms in different ways, mainly pointing to the dynamic processes of norm

creation and diffusion. Scholars have provided four main explanations of norms' life cycles: 1) globalization that leads us towards a common world culture (Meyer, et. al., 1997); 2) tipping point and norm cascades (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998); 3) boomerang effects though the intervention of transnational advocacy networks (Finnemore and Sikkik, 1998), 4) spiral models of internal change and resistance (Ikenberry, et al., 1999).

The effects of the gender norms stipulated in the USNCR 1352, in particular, have been theorized by Kreft (2017) using the three-stages model of norm cascades. According to this model, first, norm entrepreneurs introduce a new norm and try to convince the "critical mass" of states to adopt it. Once it amounts to a tipping point – in the case of gender norms, this is represented by the adoption of UNSCR 1325 – the norm cascades to more states that initially comply for strategic reasons. Finally, the norm is internalized and becomes a taken-for-granted feature of domestic and international politics. This perspective recognizes that norms are actively built by agents and emerge in a highly contested normative arena, yet, "it does not explore the contested space within and among norms and how it might result in the fluidity or evolution of norms themselves" (Krook & True, 2010, p. 107).

As demonstrated by the definition of gender mainstreaming, norms are processes rather than static and unitary "things". In order to better assess the fluid and evasive nature of norms, a critical constructivist approach seems to provide greater analytical leverage because of the role it confers to discourse and the way in which power dynamics shape it. Indeed, the vagueness of norms such as gender mainstreaming is the result of competing interests that construct, articulate and transform norms' meaning through discourse. Similarly to constructivism, this perspective recognizes the importance of ideas in shaping political relations and behaviours. However, critical constructivism rejects the assumption that norms acceptance is represented by the signature and ratification of international treaties, rather, it considers norms to be intrinsic in language and revealed by repeated speech acts that prove their general acceptance and institutionalization (Krook & True, 2010). For this reason, this research will adopt a critical constructivist theoretical approach focused on norm construction practices to analyze the patterns of origins, adoption and implementation of gender mainstreaming. This approach allows the uncovering of power dynamics behind discourses concerning gender, as discourse shapes what people do, reveals what can and cannot be said and, as a result, who can and cannot speak. Moreover, the dynamism behind norms' lifecycles helps to explain not only the emergence of new norms but also the failure to implement these norms as a result of conflicting interpretations (Krook & True, 2010). Thus, this theoretical

lens seems to be more appropriate for analyzing the evolution and implementation of gender mainstreaming as an international norm affirmed in Resolution 1352.

4. Research Design

This research will explore the impact of the UNSCR 1325 on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping mandates, thus it will look at peacekeeping mandates before and after the adoption of the Resolution. A single case study allows for a detailed observation of the temporal patterns of normative change, making it the most suitable research design. As argued by Halperin and Health (2017), investigating a case study will increase the validity of the findings; in particular, the research will result in high internal validity, given the extensive coverage of one case. On the other hand, the main limitation of this research design is that the findings cannot be extensively generalized to other contexts. However, the results of the analysis can shed light on the effects of gender norms in general and, at least hypothetically, be applied to other contexts. Moreover, a case study design has been used for "examining whether concepts and theories travel and whether (or not) they work in the same way in cases other than they were originally developed" (Halperin and Health, p. 154). As this research aims to see whether there has been a normative change, namely whether gender mainstreaming has changed in peacekeeping mandates after the adoption of the UNSCR 1325, a case study seems again the most appropriate research design.

4.1 Case selection

The case that will be analysed is the long-lasting peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The country has been selected for two main reasons. The first reason follows one of the two criteria suggested by Geddes for case selection namely, that the case selected should be representative of the bigger pool of cases from which the theories that have been formulated can be tested (as cited in Halperin & Heath, 2017, p. 216). Since its independence from Belgium in 1960, the Democratic Republic of Congo has been the stage of a series of violent conflicts which saw both internal and external actors fighting over a territory rich in natural resources. Although the country signed its first peace agreement in 2002 committing to international obligations, acts of violence have continued and have particularly

impacted women and girls in the form of systematic sexual and gender-based violence (Sadie, 2015). As demonstrated by previous literature, peacekeeping missions in conflicts with an elevated rate of gender violence score higher in terms of gender content in the mandates (Kreft, 2017). Thus, the case of the DRC has been chosen because it is a typical case in which a conflict produced different consequences for men and women. According to previous research, this could influence the gender content of peacekeeping mandates.

The second reason is of practical nature. The long-lasting peacekeeping mission in DRC has been established on the 30th November 1999 with Resolution 1279, before the adoption of the UNSCR 1352. This allows to observe the content of the peacekeeping mandate before and after UNSCR 1352 and assess its effects.

4.2 Methodology

For what concerns the methodological approach, this research will follow the Krook and True (2010) model illustrated above to analyse gender dynamics in peacekeeping mandates. According to Krook and True (2010), a discourse analysis allows uncovering the meaning and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming norms, especially in peacekeeping mandates. Qualitative discourse analysis does not allow for a high degree of generalisation compared to quantitative methods, but it is suitable for the in-depth investigation of a single case study as it allows for the detection of endogenous mechanisms. Since the aim of this method is to uncover the linkages between discursive practices and a specific context, it can be considered both an interpretative research method, based on the idea that people's actions are shaped by their values, ideologies and beliefs, and a constructivist method of analysis as the language adopted socially constructs the meaning we attribute to the subjects of our discourses (Halperin & Heath, 2017).

Overall, the research will focus on the discourses of the UNSC, as it has primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security and can legitimately initiate a peacekeeping mission The language of the mandate is deemed to be highly relevant because it shapes all mission decisions, including the allocation of resources. Thus, this research will focus on the content of peacekeeping mandates to uncover gender norms and their effectiveness.

The following investigation will analyze UNSC Resolutions and President Statements, from the beginning of the MONUC peacekeeping operation in 1999 until the present date. Although evaluating the impact of the UNSR 1325 based on women's political participation and living conditions is difficult due to a lack of empirical evidence, the reason to look at peacekeeping mandates is twofold. First, in the context of newly emerging international norms of women's participation, "formal gender stipulations are arguably a prerequisite for truly gender-mainstreamed missions" (Kreft, 2016, p. 133). Second, peacekeeping mandates are the result of negotiations between major international actors therefore their analysis illustrates how these norms influence the global political discourse.   Moreover, the documents can be easily accessible from the official website of the UN Peacekeeping and the UN Digital Library (https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/monuc/documents.shtml; https://digitallibrary.un.org/search?ln=en&c=Resolutions+and+Decisions&jrec=1&p=%22UN+Organization+Stabilization+Mission+in+the+Democratic+Republic+of+the+Congo%22+OR+MONUSCO&cc=Resolutions+and+Decisions&sf=year). In total, there would be 9 resolutions and 7 SC President statements concerning the Peacekeeping mission in DRC dated before the UNSCR 1325 (1999-2000) and 90 resolutions and 49 president statements issued after. Although it might be expected that Resolution 1325 would require some time to have an impact, the date of the resolution itself was chosen as the only clear point from which to measure. Moreover, as MONUC was initiated only the year before the adoption of the resolution, there is less material to analyze compared to after the resolution. Nevertheless, the larger pool of documents issued after the UNSCR 1325 allows observing the evolution of gender discourse and of the implementation of the provisions provided by the UNSCR 1325.

5. Analysis and discussion of results

5.1 Presentation of results

Building on the theoretical and methodological framework previously illustrated the analysis will focus on the gender discourse of the Resolutions and President Statements before and after the adoption of Resolution 1325. First, it will look at the syntactic features and their structures classified according to the three main pillars of the UNSCR 1325: 1) protection of women from violence during and after the conflict; 2) the inclusion of gender perspectives to prevent and mitigate the impacts of the conflict on women; 3) the participation of women at all levels of

decision-making. The results are going to be presented in temporal order to show the evolution of gender norms. Subsequently, it will discuss the main findings retrieved from the resolutions dated before and after the adoption of the UNSCR 1325. The results of this investigation will help to shed more light on the evolution and effects of norms, in this case, the implementation of gender mainstreaming provisions as an effect of the UNSCR 1325, which is considered to be a pillar for the inclusion of women and gender issues in the field of peace and security.

5.1.1 Protection of women from violence during and after the conflict

In 1999, the UNSC issued Resolution 1297 establishing the MONUC mission in the DRC in order "to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to displaced persons, refugees, children, and other affected persons, and assistthe protection of human rights, including the rights of children". In this first resolution, and the previous ones related to the situation in the DRC, the SC only addressed the issue of children or other vulnerable categories but did not include women and gender issues in the framework. Although the high rates of sexual violence in the conflict were acknowledged, the issue has only been mentioned in one out of the 7 presidential statements dated before the UNSCR 1325 in reference to the protection of the civilian population. Women have been mentioned for the first time in Resolution 1291, issued in 2000, as a *'vulnerable category'* that deserves particular attention when delivering humanitarian assistance (UNSC, 2000).

After the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the Security Council recognized for the first time in Resolution 1468 "sexual violence against women and girls as a *tool of warfare*", officially condemning the violation of International Law committed by the conflicting parties in the DRC and stating that there will be no impunity for such acts and that the perpetrators will be held accountable (USNC, 2003). In the following resolutions issued between 2003-2007, the issue of sexual violence has been addressed unsystematically and framed similarly with only reference to women and girls as the victim. It is important to emphasize that the SC has recognized that the perpetrators of sexual violence and abuses are not only the conflicting parties but also the United Nations personnel against the local population. In Resolution 1592, the SC calls to "take appropriate action to *prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by their personnel in MONUC*, including the conduct of pre-deployment awareness-training, and to take disciplinary action and other action to ensure full accountability in cases of such

misconduct involving their personnel" (UNSC; 2005). Moreover, it repeatedly requires information and reports regarding the implementation of the "necessary measures to achieve actual compliance in MONUC with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse" (UNSC, Res. 1635, 2005). After Resolution 1756, issued on the 15th of May 2007, there has been a change in the language adopted by the SC: from referring exclusively to v*iolence against women/sexual violence* to the inclusion of *gender-based violence (SGBV)*. However the two terms have been used interchangeably and the inclusion of the term *'gender-based'* has been inconsistent, although it is used more frequently in later resolutions.

Concerning the practical provisions, the SC stresses the importance of collaboration with the local government and other concerned institutions in elaborating the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence. The president's statement issued on the 12th of September 2010 highlights the importance of collaborating with the Government of the DRC to "support efforts undertaken by all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to protect and assist the victims and to prevent further violence" (UNSC, 2010). Moreover, in Resolution 2348 (2017) and RES1325 (2019), the Security Council "acknowledges the crucial role of *United Nations Women Protection Advisers* deployed in MONUSCO in supporting the Government of the DRC to implement its commitments on addressing sexual violence in conflict and calls on MONUSCO to ensure that "they continue to work closely with the Government of the DRC at both strategic and operational levels". The support to local, regional and national institutions is further reiterated in the following Resolutions, demonstrating the SC's serious commitment to collaborate. Although the reference to sexual and gender-based violence remains unsystematic, the SC language becomes more comprehensive in the last resolutions. For instance, it refers not only to women and girls as beneficiary of prevention and protection programs, but also specifically to men and boys (Resolution 2136, 30 January 2014 & 2198, 29 January 2015). Finally, in Resolution 2612, the UNSC (2021) affirms the commitment to strengthening its sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response "by ensuring that risks of sexual and gender-based violence are included in the Mission's data collection and threat analysis and early warning systems by engaging in an ethical manner with survivors and victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and women's organization".

5.1.2 Inclusion of gender perspectives to prevent and mitigate the impacts of the conflict on women

The first mention of the inclusion of gender perspectives can only be seen after the adoption of Resolution 1325 on Women's Peace and Security. Before that, the impact of conflict on women was highly disregarded and women's role during conflict and conflict resolution was essentialized to being victims, neglecting their diverse contribution to the conflict and conflict resolution processes. Resolution 1493 affirmed for the first time "the importance of a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000)" and "calls on MONUC to increase the deployment of women as military observers as well as in other capacities" (UNSC, 2003). The following UNSC resolutions regarding the MONUC operation often refer to the Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, without further including and implementing a gender perspective in their language (for instance, USCR 1565, 1592, 1804, 1807). There are no precise guidelines on how to include a gender perspective, only the requirement by the UNSC "to take into account gender considerations as set out in its resolution 1325 as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate and to keep the council informed" is mentioned (UNSC, Res. 1756, 2007). However, Resolution 1906 (2009) refers to the Bulletin issued by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2003, where the special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse are outlined. In particular, the Bulletin gives instructions on the policies and procedures for handling cases of sexual harassment perpetrated by the United Nations staff (SGB, 2003).

In the resolutions issued after 2007, the UNSC introduced a special paragraph with instructions for the Security Sector Reform (SSR), recognizing the important role of women in the security building process. Therefore, the UNSCR required women to be included in the new security institutions not only as a vulnerable category but also as active agents through the following measures. First, in Resolution 1756 (2007), the UNSC provides technical assistance, training and mentoring support for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of cases of gender-based violence. Secondly, it requires the involvement and representation of women in stabilization activities and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants through, inter alia, the provision of gender advisers (UNSC, Res. 2147, 2014; UNSC, Res. 2211, 2015). Third, it calls for the employment of not only gender advisers and human rights protection units as part of MONUC, but also of women's protection advisers "to engage with the parties in conflict in order to seek commitments on the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence" (UNSC, Res. 2098, 2013). Finally, it promoted the

establishment of the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC) signed in 2013 to address the root causes of the conflicts taking into account women's experiences (UNSC, Res. 2147, 2014). The PSC Framework outlines the principles of engagement and cooperation on the national, regional and international levels. In order to ensure that the implementation of the PSC Framework is gender-sensitive, the UNSC recalls the 11 July 2013 Bujumbura Declaration which is the product of the Regional Conference on Women, Peace, Security and Development and provides benchmarks, indicators and follow-up measures (UNSC, 2013; UNSC, Res. 2147, 2014). Moreover, it urges the UN Country Team and the DRC government to regularly report the situation on the ground, including sexual violence and the impact of conflict on women and children, and the actions taken in this regard (UNSC, Res. 1794, 2007; UNSC, Res. 2098, 2013). In light of these reports, the UNSC recognizes that there has been limited progress in ensuring an inclusive SSR capable of delivering security and justice to all through independent, accountable and functioning justice and security institutions (UNSC, Res. 2502, 2019). However, it reaffirms the essential role of women, including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding and the maintenance of peace and security in the DRC (UNSC, Res. 2463, 2019; UNSC, Res. 2502, 2019).

5.1.3 The participation of women at all levels of decision-making

Similarly to the inclusion of a gender perspective, the issue of women's participation was only introduced in the MONUC/ MONUSCO mandates after the adoption of the UNSCR 1325. In 2001, the UNSC president affirmed for the first time " the need to ensure adequate representation of Congolese women" in the process of dialogue towards peace.

However, the first Resolution that mentioned women's participation was Resolution 1991, issued the 28 June 2011. In particular, the Resolution promotes the holding of free, inclusive and transparent elections as a key condition of democracy and of the stabilization of the DRC, "emphasizing the need to promote the participation of women in the electoral process"(UNSC, 2011). Moreover, recalling resolution 1325, it considers other key criteria for the democratic transition such as constructive political debate, freedom of expression, assembly, equitable access to media and safety for all candidates, election observers, human rights defenders and actors from the civil society *including women* (UNSC, Res. 1991, 2011;

UNSC, Res. 2053, 2012). Moreover, "it recalls the need for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to promote and facilitate inclusive and transparent political dialogue among various Congolese stakeholders, including women groups" (UNSC, Res. 2053, 2012). Thus, the UNSC commits to assist the government of the DRC "in ensuring the participation, involvement and representation of women at all levels, including in stabilization activities, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, as well as in the national political dialogue and electoral processes, through, inter alia, the provision of gender advisers" (UNSC, Res. 2147, 2014). These references show that the participation of women is not only related to the electoral process but also to democratic life in general. However, their role as decision-makers seems to be overlooked.

Following the increase of episodes of sexual violence in the Great Lakes region, the UNSC (2017) reaffirms that there is an urgent need to address the violence and "take into account the link between women's participation in peace and security decision-making for peace and gender equality". Despite the UNSC's commitment to support regional initiatives and influence local decision-makers to "improve women's visibility, empowerment and resilience", it only mentions women's involvement in decision-making in relation to the issue of gender-related violence (UNSC, Res. 2389, 2017).

When it comes to the political process, the language adopted by the UNSCR seems to become more inclusive after 2017. As previously observed, Resolutions and presidential statements issued before 2017 were referring only to the *'inclusion of women'* and '*promotion of women's political participation*', whereas, from Resolution 2389 on, the UNSC (2017) stresses the importance of "the *full participation of both men and women* in the political process". Moreover, it urges the Government "to ensure an environment conducive to a free, fair, credible, inclusive, transparent, peaceful and timely electoral process, in accordance with the Congolese Constitution and the 31 December 2016 Agreement, which includes, for women and men alike, free and constructive political debate and freedom of opinion and expression" (UNSC, Res. 2389, 2017). Also in the SC president's statement issued the 26 July 2017, the UNSC requires women's political participation to be "full and equal".

However, the UNSC does not only promote women's participation at the political level but also their effective and meaningful involvement in other sectors of the peacekeeping operation. For instance, Resolution 2409 commands the troops- and police-contributing countries "to *increase the percentage of women military and police* in deployments to MONUSCO" as a necessary step for the successful implementation of the mandate (UNSC,

2018). Moreover, it recognizes the fundamental role of women civil society leaders and organization members with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, public institution and decision making. In the specific case of the Ebola outbreak in 2018, the UNSC highlighted the different impacts that the epidemic has on men and women and, thus, stressed the *"importance of the full, active and meaningful engagement of women"* in the development of a gender-sensitive response to address the specific needs of men and women (UNSC, Res. 2439, 2018). Also in other resolutions issued after 2017, the UNSC not only mention women's participation but it adds that the participation has to be "f*ull, effective and meaningful"* in all aspects of the operation (UNSC, Res. 2502, 2019; UNSC, Res. 2463, 2019). In Resolution 2502 and Resolution 2556, the UNSC (2019) requires a more specific criterion as it calls "MONUSCO to support the government in advancing women's political participation, in particular a*chieving the 30% constitutional quota*". Moreover, it adds to the provision of women's full participation the requirement of employing women in senior leadership positions (UNSC, Res. 2556, 2020; UNSC, Res. 2612, 2021). Resolution 2556 and Resolution 2612, which are the last ones published by the UNSC, prove to be the most inclusive and complete in terms of women's participation as it requests MONUSCO and other relevant stakeholders to create "a legal, political and socio-economic environment conducive to ensuring the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and full involvement and representation of women at all levels" and specifically refers to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and all resolutions addressing women, peace and security "by seeking to increase the number of women in MONUSCO in line with resolution 2538 (2020), as well as to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations, including by ensuring safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environments for women in peacekeeping operations" (UNSC, 2021).

5.2 Discussion of results

Overall, the language adopted by the UNSC in MONUC and MONUSCO mandates seems to have significantly changed towards greater gender sensitivity after the adoption of Resolution 1325. Before December 2000, the language of mandates explicitly states that the main motive of the peacebuilding mission was to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population, with special attention to vulnerable categories such as children. By adopting this universalising and generalizable language, resolutions issued before the adoption of UNSCR 1325 are gendered because they make no reference to women, leading to the assumption of sameness to

men. The use of the general term *civilians* is problematic because it has implications for who benefits from the humanitarian aid and the demobilization of resources after the conflict. Moreover, the initial absence of women from the *vulnerable categories* mentioned in the mandates is particularly concerning given the high rates of sexual violence reported by the SC president (UNSC, 1998). Even when women have been included in the discourse before UNSCR 1325, they have only been portrayed as victims and vulnerable, primarily to sexual crimes. This essentialization of women's roles neglects their political agency and capacity to support and fight for (un)just causes, as it fosters the dichotomy of men-combatant and women-victims (or, at best, women-civilians).

After the adoption of UNSCR 1325, gender mainstreaming started to penetrate the discourse gradually, providing more space to women and gender issues. Although at the beginning the major improvements can be seen with respect to UNSCR 1325 pillar regarding *protection of women from violence during and after the conflict,* in later resolutions the two pillars related to gender inclusiveness and women's participation are also increasingly taken into account. More importantly, they are framed in more inclusive and comprehensive terms, overcoming the men-women dichotomy. For instance, a major change related to the first pillar has occurred in 2007, when the language changed from exclusively vi*olence against women/ sexual violence* to including *gender-based violence*. The latter refers to violence that targets individuals on the basis of their gender - rather than focusing on the men-women dichotomy grounded on the biological sex, the term gender proves to be more inclusive towards sexual orientation and other gender identities. Similarly, this change in language from only women and girls as targets of violence to "survivors" and "victims" implies the idea that sexual and gender-based violence does not only affect women and girls and men should not be excluded from the prevention and response strategy. In collaboration with the government of the DRC, the UNSC extensively touches upon the measures adopted against SGBV but, in some cases, the language is vague. For instance, when it requires engaging with the victim in an *ethical manner*, it leaves space for interpretation of what constitutes an *ethical manner*. This vagueness could translate in more flexibility for the local government in deciding which measures to adopt, but also increases the risk that the measures adopted are inconsistent with the principles of UNSCR1325.

Concerning the second pillar, namely *the inclusion of gender perspectives to prevent and mitigate the impacts of the conflict on women,* similar trends of implementation can be seen in the analysis. References to the important role of women in conflict resolution and

peacebuilding processes increase and become more detailed over time. After 2003, the Resolutions often recall UNSCR 1325 and other normative frameworks to provide strategies for the inclusion of gender perspectives, for instance through the employment of gender adviser units as part of the peacekeeping mission. the reference to the inclusion of women in stabilization activities and *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants* stands out as it overcomes the essentialization of women as victims or peacemakers as it implies their active participation in the conflict. Nevertheless, there are no precise guidelines on how to actually include a gender perspective. Again, this reflects the flexibility of gender mainstreaming in the meaning-making of a *gender perspective* and what it implies for the people on the ground. The failure to implement these norms – demonstrated by UNSC recognition of the limited progress in ensuring an inclusive SSR capable of delivering security and justice to all – can be seen as the result of conflicting interpretations given to the norm (UNSC, 2020).

In the final pillar related to *women's participation,* gender mainstreaming is mainly applied as a strategy of inclusion. In resolutions issued after 2011, the mandates started to refer to women in relation to the democratization of the country calling for the free participation to the electoral process and democratic life of citizens, *including women*. Moreover, their role as decision-makers is initially considered in relation to the urgency to tackle sexual violence.

Through time, the UNSC's language evolved towards inclusiveness and accuracy. In the Resolutions issued after 2017, women's participation is required to be *full, effective and meaningful* in all aspects of the operation. However, this initial attribution to women's participation remains vague, as the UNSC does not explain what full, effective and meaningful participation entails. After 2019, the MONUSCO mandate included support in achieving the *30% constitutional quota* to enhance women's political representation, reiterating the *inclusive* understanding of gender mainstreaming, However, in the last resolutions, the SC recognizes the importance of constructing a *legal, political and socio-economic environment* conducive to ensuring women's participation. This suggests a move towards a more *transformative understanding* as it looks at the structural conditions that hinder or foster women's active participation in decision-making. Nevertheless, more effort is needed in order to address the underlying socioeconomic inequalities that hinder women's political participation and fuel violence against women.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to assess the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the peacekeeping missions by looking at the gender mainstreaming in the UNSC mandate for MONUC and MONUSCO. The analysis showed that after the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in October 2000, gender mainstreaming increasingly permeated the mandate of the peacekeeping operation in the DRC. Although it is difficult to establish causation, it is possible to state that the UNSCR 1325 has been relatively effective in increasing women's involvement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Nevertheless, the implementation has been unsystematic and still presents some limitations. In the first resolutions, the meaning of gender mainstreaming is limited to the inclusion of women's issues, such as the protection of women and women and girls affected by armed conflict. Thus, they are still portrayed as passive victims protected by male soldiers and the militarized state, perpetuating the stereotype of women as nonviolent peacemakers and men as violent aggressors. This narrative is dangerous not only because it denies women's agency but also because it has implications for the distribution of resources during the intervention and the DDR programs.

Through time, the gender content of peacekeeping mandates in the DRC increased, demonstrating a shift of the UNSC towards a more inclusive and transformative approach to gender mainstreaming. In the latter resolutions, there are more references to the importance of including gender perspectives to mitigate the impact of UNSCR 1325 and more provisions to ensure women's participation at all levels of decision making. However, there is still a large degree of ambiguity on how to implement these provisions demonstrating that gender mainstreaming's meaning-making is influenced by power dynamics and ideological differences that hinder its implementation in policies and procedures. In other words, the ambiguity of gender mainstreaming has allowed the SC to adopt it mainly as a strategy of "inclusions" rather than "transformation" of gender dynamics.

However, to effectively implement Resolution 1325 and improve women's living conditions, the UN peacekeeping and peace-building missions should alter aggressive constructions of masculinity in societal, state, and military institutions to transform social and economic gender inequalities that impede women's participation and increase their vulnerabilities.

This research has attempted to overcome the limitations of previous literature on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 with an exclusive focus on women by avoiding the men-women dichotomy and adopting a more comprehensive understanding of gender mainstreaming. However, it presents some limitations itself. First, the single-case study has limited explanatory power because the results cannot be automatically applicable to other peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations.

Moreover, adopting a feminist perspective, it could be argued that the UNSCR 1325 and its adoption of gender mainstreaming is not enough feminist-oriented as it foster a traditional/masculinized vision of state security, privileging physical security and institutional structures over social and economic security (True, 2009). This has many implications for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping missions and, more importantly, for the substantive improvement of women's living conditions after the conflict. For this reason, future research should continuously review the UNSCR 1325 progress to guarantee that its language is mainstreamed in SC resolutions and behaviours and that is not only tokenistic. More importantly, it should assess whether the adoption of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping mandates is truly indicative of a tangible change of women's roles and living conditions in post-conflict countries.

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