

Bridging the Gap: Early Warning, Gender Inequality and the Responsibility to Protect

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Abstract

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) scholars and practitioners have expressed reservations about the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle because of its popular use as a synonym for armed humanitarian intervention. On the other hand, R2P's early failure to engage with and advance WPS efforts such as United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 (2000) has seen the perpetuation of limited roles ascribed to women in implementing the R2P principle. As a result, there has been a knowledge and practice gap between the R2P and WPS agendas, despite the fact that their advocates share common goals in relation to the prevention of atrocities and protection of populations. In this article we propose to examine just one of the potential avenues for aligning the WPS agenda and R2P principle in a way that is beneficial to both and strengthens the pursuit of a shared goal – prevention. We argue that the development of gender-specific indicators – particularly economic, social and political discriminatory practices against women – has the potential to improve the capacity of early warning frameworks to forecast future mass atrocities.

In 2005, the United Nations (UN) World Summit adopted the concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P) in paragraphs 138-140 of its outcome document (UN 2005: paras.138-140). R2P's roots lay in the repeated failure of the international community to prevent or halt genocides in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda during the 1990s (Ban 2010a: para.4). Informed by the earlier 2001 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) and United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan's *In Larger Freedom* report (2005) (ICISS 2001; Annan 2005), Member States formally accepted their enduring responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. They also agreed that the international community should assist states to this end and that when states failed to protect their populations, the international community had a responsibility to take 'timely and decisive action' to protect populations until the sovereign is able and willing to do so (UN 2005). Notably, states'

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and the international community's commitment to R2P included a specific commitment to *prevent* these four crimes.

A notable, but often overlooked, consequence of the delineation of R2P in relation to the four crimes is that UN Member States effectively recognized that 'sexual and gender-based violence is as worthy of international attention as other forms of violence' (Bond and Sherret 2012: 144). It could be argued, of course, that sexual and gender-based violence had little need for such political elevation; a series of United Nations Security Council Resolutions have linked women's peace and security (WPS) to international peace and security since the landmark Resolution 1325 (2000) (S/Res/1325, 31 October 2000).¹ However, the inclusion of widespread and systematic sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) as acts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide requires (ICC 2014: 10-16), we argue, that the prevention of these crimes be mainstreamed into R2P's prevention agenda and, at the same time, R2P's prevention agenda be mainstreamed into WPS.

To date, as Bond and Sherret (2012: 141) note, there has been a failure to connect the R2P and WPS agendas. Many WPS scholars and practitioners are cautious about the R2P principle because of its popular expression as a synonym for armed humanitarian intervention and the lack of gender inclusivity in the original formulation of R2P under ICISS (Charlesworth 2010; Shepherd 2012). As a result, WPS advocates in the field have been wary of R2P and concerned about its potential effects on their work. As the UN Secretary-General has repeatedly explained, the popular representation of R2P as a contemporary euphemism for humanitarian intervention is inconsistent with what was agreed in 2005 and the UN's implementation strategy (Ban 2009: para.10a;

also Ban 2010a, Ban 2011a, 2012a). On the other hand, R2P's failure to engage with the protection and prevention agenda outlined within the WPS agenda (with exception of Ban 2009; Ban 2013) may also account for some of the caution of WPS advocates concerning R2P.

The failure to connect the two agendas has prompted criticisms that R2P has failed to incorporate a gender perspective, and, in particular, the requirements of the WPS prevention, protection and participation agenda, as laid out in Resolution 1325 (2000) (Stamnes 2012: 176-177). Similarly, concerns have been expressed about the need to expand the gender-focused protection and participation aspects of Resolution 1325 (2000) beyond the WPS community, in order to engage all actors and early warning mechanisms throughout the UN system (Skjelsbæk 2012: 162). Gaps and misperceptions have limited the exchange of knowledge between academics, policy-makers and practitioners working in these two areas, despite the fact that they share common goals in relation to the prevention of mass atrocities and the protection of populations (George 2013). In this article we examine one potential avenue for connecting WPS and R2P in a way that is beneficial to both agendas and strengthens the shared pursuit of preventing mass atrocities in the first place: the development of gender-specific indicators in early warning frameworks to predict countries at risk of genocide and mass atrocities, specifically widespread and systematic sexual violence (Bond and Sherret 2012: 144). Like others, we are concerned that women-focused economic, social and political indicators remain relatively untested as factors that may inform conflict prevention and, of special interest to us, prevent mass atrocities (Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez 2002; von Joeden-Forgey 2013; UN Women 2014).ⁱⁱ Our focus on female indicators does not mean that we exclude the existence of gendered

violence (sexual and gendered violence that targets both men and women), rather our particular focus is informed by earlier studies connecting gender norms (masculine/feminine social, economic and political roles) within a given society to women's access to social, economic and political resources, to the occurrence of mass atrocities (Rehn and Sileaf 2002; Justino et al 2012; Skjelsbæk 2012).

In this article, we argue for integration of gender-specific indicators into early warning frameworks for prevention of genocide and mass atrocities (which, in essence, indicates those countries at risk of failing to uphold their responsibility to protect) for two reasons. First, if the best predictor of a country's peacefulness is its level of violence against women - there should be efforts to analyze how women's status in society relates to violence and, more generally, to the risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (Hudson et al 2012). In particular, the inclusion of information about women's human rights and violence against women into existing early warning frameworks should improve their capacity to predict not only widespread or systematic SGBV but also other atrocity crimes (Palermo and Peterman 2011; von Joeden-Forgey 2012). We argue that the WPS and R2P agendas can contribute to this goal, even more so when they align their focus on the value of gender specific early warning.

Second, scholars have yet to consider the extent to which gender-specific indicators may be useful for predicting the R2P crimes (Davies and Teitt 2012). Currently, there is little evidence to support *or* reject the inclusion of gender-specific indicators to improve early warning of the R2P crimes in general, and widespread and systematic sexual violence more specifically. What is certain is that this lack of systemic analysis

has contributed to an inconsistent – essentially *ad hoc* – approach to prevention of these crimes, and understanding of their relationship to other mass atrocity crimes (Palermo and Peterman 2011; Ban 2011b; Security Council Report 2012). When is sexual violence in conflict a weapon of war, or, additionally, also a tool of ethnic cleansing or political attack used prior to conflict to escalate tensions within society, or to forcibly displace and disempower (Buss 2009)? As things stand, the literature offers no clear answer to this question.

The article proceeds in three parts. First, we briefly chart the mass atrocity crimes listed under the R2P principle to examine how and where alignment with WPS may be valuable. We highlight, as one such area, the mandated requirement for the UN Secretary-General to present annual reports on situations of widespread and systematic sexual violence to the Security Council (Ban 2011b; Ban 2012b; S/Res/2106, 24 June 2013). In the second part of the article, we consider the added value of incorporating gender specific indicators to predict those countries where the risk of such atrocities is high. We compare one suggested gender-focused early warning framework that relies on open source data (Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez 2002; Hill 2003) against two highly respected genocide and mass atrocities risk profiles – Gregory Stanton’s *Genocide Watch* and Barbara Harff’s *Genocide Prevention Network* (hereafter referred to as the ‘Genocide Watch’ and ‘Genocide Prevention’ lists) (Harff 2011; Genocide Watch 2012; see Butcher et al 2012). We consider the extent to which inclusion of gender specific indicators alters these general early warning lists. In the third, and final, part of the article we discuss our key findings. We find that gender specific indicators, especially those relating to women’s experience of social, economic and political inequality, are underutilized in early

warning frameworks for genocide and mass atrocities. We argue that the UN Secretary-General annual reports on situations of widespread and systematic sexual violence are an opportunity to promote dual WPS-R2P ambition of preventing such crimes through targeted prevention strategies at national, regional and international levels.

Women, Peace and Security and the Responsibility to Protect

At the 2005 World Summit of the United Nations General Assembly, under the R2P principle, states agreed never to commit four crimes: war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide. These crimes are commonly understood to reference the 1948 Genocide Convention, the Geneva Conventions on the laws of war, and the 1998 Rome Statute, which provides the legal foundations for the International Criminal Court (ICC), operational since 2002 (O'Brien 2012). As such, the 2005 summit document introduced clear parameters for the scope of R2P and the crimes to be prevented in order to protect civilians (Bellamy 2009: 75). As noted above, one of the consequences of the delineation of R2P in relation to these four crimes is that UN Member States have effectively recognized that 'sexual and gender-based violence is as worthy of international attention as other forms of violence' (Bond and Sherret 2012: 144). This requires attention to detail on the preventative measures states must adopt to meet their responsibility to prevent these crimes, as well as to address how the international community may assist states with this obligation. As noted in the UN Secretary-General's fifth report on R2P, prevention requires addressing the relationship between gender inequality and atrocity crimes, specifically SGBV crimes (Ban 2013a: 7-8). This statement provides a political opportunity to outline a mutually reinforcing prevention agenda, by both R2P and WPS advocates.

As noted already in the introduction, one of the main sources of tension between the R2P and WPS agendas has been the prevailing view that R2P advocates are primarily concerned with armed humanitarian intervention (Charlesworth 2010). In this vein, some scholars have suggested that R2P reduces women to being victims that must wait to be ‘saved’ by armed (male) humanitarians and is thereby complicit in the risks faced by women by ignoring their agency and empowerment (Stamnes 2012). Such concerns about R2P are not unique to the WPS agenda. They have been echoed, for instance, in relation to R2P’s equally problematic relationship to the protection of civilians agenda (Strauss 2009: 48). However, as with its relationship with the protection of civilians, we suggest that R2P can serve as a mutually enforcing mechanism for these existing norms rather than challenge or undermine their existence.

When it comes to the inclusion of WPS, the version of R2P that was adopted by Member States in 2005 is significantly more open to a prevention and protection agenda promoted by WPS than its earlier definitions. The 2001 ICISS report argued that sexual violence was worthy of international attention only when it was used for ethnic cleansing (ICISS 2001: xii, 15, 32), while the World Summit’s delineation of four crimes as being the subject matter of R2P allowed widespread and systematic SGBV to be considered an ‘R2P problem’ in its own right (i.e. not contingent on the crime being an act of ethnic cleansing). What is more, R2P calls upon Member States to fulfill their legal obligations with respect to protecting populations from these crimes and demands that they receive international attention comparable to other forms of violence proscribed by the relevant laws. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-

moon, among others, has sought to counter the one-dimensional view of R2P and argues that the implementation strategy of R2P prioritizes prevention and early warning to prevent and deescalate crises – a pillar of prevention much in common with pillar of prevention articulated in Resolution 1325 (2000) (Ban 2009; Luck 2009: 18). In his first R2P report, the Secretary-General referred to the responsibility of sovereigns to prevent mass atrocities, including sexual violence, by fulfilling their individual obligations to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), Resolution 1612 (2005) and Resolution 1820 (2009) (Ban 2009: para.34). In his 2010 report on R2P and early warning, the UN Secretary-General said that there was a gap in the process of accumulating and accessing data relating to the early warning indicators for conflict that specifically highlighted the risk of R2P crimes (Ban 2010a: para.10[b]). The Secretary-General noted that R2P crimes do not only occur within contexts of armed conflict and, furthermore, these crimes were to be understood and recognised as possibly having different preconditions to generalized armed conflict. Though the linkage was not made that particular year (since 2009 R2P report, the first WPS reference has been in 2013 [Ban 2013a]), this argument was quite similar to one being presented by the Secretary-General in the same year concerning the need for greater emphasis on prevention in the WPS agenda, specifically, the prevention of widespread and systematic SGBV.

In WPS Resolution 1960 (2010), the Security Council called for improved data collection specific to the risk of SGBV. The Secretary-General was called upon to identify, in his annual report pursuant to Resolution 1820 (2008), those parties engaged in conflict suspected of conducting acts of systematic sexual violence. In a departure from this reporting duty first outlined in Resolution 1820 (2008) and

Resolution 1888 (2009), Resolution 1960 (2010) suggested the Security Council use the Secretary-General's annual report on situations of sexual violence in armed conflict as a means by which the Council would become more actively engaged in action to prevent these crimes (Security Council Report 2012: 15-16). The Security Council also called upon the Secretary-General to develop criteria for listing and de-listing parties suspected of proscribed activities. The approach taken towards reporting situations of sexual violence in armed conflict, and the list of suspected parties, has been *ad hoc* and largely qualitative, drawing on information from gender advisors in peacekeeping operations, advice from UN Country Teams and the Secretary-General's Special Representatives, the documentation and reporting of such crimes in individual country reports, information from the International Criminal Court, Human Rights Council, or Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other *ad hoc* sources. There remain some deficiencies, not least the lack of transparency in the methods used to list and de-list and absence of clarity about how the UN system will address situations where the potential listing of government forces may cause political problems in situations where peacekeeping missions or Country Teams require the cooperation of the same government. Nonetheless, the naming and shaming of such actors is an attempt to put pressure on them by ending the culture of impunity, and to improve the Council's response to escalations by mobilizing and refining ongoing analysis both in the field and in New York (Security Council Report 2012: 16).

One of the principal reasons identified by the Security Council for the lack of progress on the prevention of SGBV, noted in Resolution 1960 (2010), has been the failure of Member States and UN offices to 'cooperatively engage with...actors,

national institutions, civil society organizations, health-care service providers, and women's groups to enhance data collection and analysis of incidents, trends, and patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence to assist the Council's consideration of appropriate actions, including targeted and graduated measures' (S/Res/1960: para.8).

Accordingly, the Secretary-General was charged with establishing a 'monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangement' (MARA) to 'name and shame' perpetrators, as well as to precipitate the escalation of conflict-related sexual violence by reporting on situations of 'armed conflict, post-conflict and other situations of relevance' to the implementation of Resolution 1888 (2009). Furthermore, Resolution 1960 (2010) called for the broadening to include specific gender indicators that could facilitate early warning for the prevention of these atrocities, in turn calling upon Member States to improve their data collection and analysis in these areas.

The Security Council approved the creation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security, tasked with creating a strategic framework that would guide the development of MARA. This has led to the establishment of a UN Matrix of Early Warning Indicators of Conflict Related Sexual Violence to guide the actions of the Security Council to prevent, halt and prosecute such crimes (Ban 2011b: paras.60-63). As noted above, fulfillment of this framework requires Member States to provide data in relation to gender-specific indicators including specific acts of violence against women, implementation of international human rights law pertaining to gender equality, economic and social indicators for women and UN specific indicators (i.e. women in peacekeeping missions) (Ban 2010b: Annex). These

indicators are intended to guide the development of a prevention framework that will inform the UN system, and specifically the offices under the Secretary General, on gender-focused risk analysis for the prevention of widespread and systematic SGBV. The UN has set the target of ensuring that half of its early warning systems (those tasked with responding to escalating events, i.e. the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and Office for Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA]) include gender-specific indicators by 2014, with gender-specific indicators being included as standard across all the system's early warning analysis by 2020 (Ban 2011b: Annex). During this time, however, it appears there has been no discussion or even recognition of the shared interests in prevention and early warning between the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on WPS and the Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect. This lack of engagement is problematic for the R2P agenda in light of repeated recommendations that there is a need to deepen the agenda's understanding of gender-specific responses and recommendations to prevent mass atrocity crimes (Skjelsbæk 2012: 154-171).

To date, there has been two references in the five UN Secretary-General reports on R2P (Ban 2009; Ban 2013b) to the need to direct more attention and research to record best practices in the alleviation of gender inequality and the promotion of gender empowerment to prevent mass atrocities, including SGBV crimes (The International Coalition for The Responsibility to Protect *undated*). However, beyond these suggestions, there has been little direction on how to start building such knowledge. Widespread and systematic SGBV is increasingly identified as a product of war (Taylor 2013), but the specific preconditions for SGBV and reasons why it is

prevalent in some armed conflicts but not others remain disputed (Wood 2009; Cohen 2013). As we discuss below, the difficulties in collecting gender sensitive data (and the limited understanding of gender sensitive data) has led to their exclusion from early warning frameworks; thus the relationship between SGBV and mass atrocities, irrespective of the presence of conflict, is discussed but not presented as fact in these frameworks.

In this section we have identified a particularly strong overlap between R2P and WPS to improve early warning assessments to prevent atrocities. However, as the recent UN Secretary General reports on sexual violence in armed conflict situations suggest, serious questions remain regarding the collection and interpretation of the relevant data. Despite a shared interest in early warning frameworks and prevention toolkits to prevent mass atrocities, there has been little detail provided on how R2P and WPS could align their shared concerns to start generating the knowledge required to build political momentum towards prevention and early warning. The first step is to evaluate the added value of including gender inequality in frameworks for predicting mass atrocities (Ban 2013b: 7-8), and it is this question that we turn to in the second part of the article.

Gender-Specific Indicators and Early Warning

In 2002, Suzanne Schmeidl and Eugenia Piza-Lopez noted that there were few, if any, early warning systems for conflict prediction, let alone genocide, that incorporated gender-specific indicators (Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez 2002: 8). Little has changed (Bond and Sherret 2012; von Joeden-Forgey 2012). Existing frameworks referred to for predicting mass atrocities and genocide do not refer to SGBV or gendered

indicators in their frameworks or policy planning (Harf 2003; Stanton 2004; Albright and Cohen 2008; Woocher 2011; Butcher et al 2012). Despite the fact that legal developments in relation to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity refer to gender-specific crimes – such as mass rape, forced sterilization and abortions, forced impregnation and forced marriage – two of the most highly sourced and respected annual risk analyses, those produced by Barbara Harff's *Genocide Prevention Advisory Network* and Gregory Stanton's *Genocide Watch* do not analyse gender-specific indicators (Butcher et al 2012: 12).ⁱⁱⁱ Nor does it appear that there has been consideration of whether a focus on such indicators or prior existence of widespread and systematic SGBV in a country may affect the country risk lists produced.

One potential reason for the 'gender silence' in early warning analysis for mass atrocities may be that the primary focus to date has been on defining what is to be 'tested' in these frameworks – ethnic and minorities versus the political-socio-economic targeting – and what modeling provides best predictive capacity (Ulfelder 2011). It seems that the gendered context and influences that informs *who* of the targeted groups is targeted for these crimes is not of consequence. In addition, the concept of an early warning framework is still relatively new. Regarding early warning for widespread and systematic sexual violence, Secretary-General Kofi Annan came close to explicitly calling for such a framework in his 2006 violence against women report when he called on the Security Council to address 'the responsibility of the State to address violence against women', and recommended:

The Security Council intensify efforts to address gender-based violence against women and consistently monitor measures taken within the framework of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. Towards this end, the Security Council should consider establishing a dedicated monitoring mechanism to increase the effectiveness of the Council's

contribution to preventing and redressing violence against women in armed conflict (Annan 2006: para.397).

However, it was not until Resolution 1960 (2010) that the Security Council started to identify the need to prevent violence against women through developing an early warning system (MARA), but the focus has been only on monitoring known perpetrators from committing further acts of sexual violence. Thus all ‘early warning’ focus in MARA is on escalating acts of sexual violence and the perpetrators rather than the structural conditions that gave rise to such acts (i.e. an early warning framework that focuses on intervening variables that may prevent as well as predict).

Another potential explanation for the silence could be that the need for gender-focused early warning has received only sporadic interest from the Security Council and that this interest has been limited to its thematic agenda on WPS, particularly conflict-related sexual violence. In other words, there has been little cross-fertilization of WPS into other Security Council themes, missions and agendas (Aroussi 2011). This is particularly highlighted in discussions about sexual violence in the Security Council where there has been active political opposition to discussions of widespread and systematic sexual violence in conflicts that are not already on the agenda of the Security Council, despite precedents in other thematic areas, specifically in discussions of Children in Armed Conflict (Security Council Report 2012: 5).

A recent examination of the Security Council’s progress on WPS since Resolution 1325 (2000), conducted by the NGO *Security Council Report*, revealed key failings ‘in terms of the continuing development of the Council’s response to sexual violence’: the lack of ‘reporting consistency between different country-specific

situations' and failure to implement ongoing monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence.' In other words, the relationship between political violence and sexual violence has not been understood as linked – this is a failure in early warning to prevent these crimes (Security Council Report 2012: 2). More careful thinking and analysis of gender-specific root causes may highlight where mass atrocities, including widespread and/or systematic SGBV, are likely to occur in situations of conflict, post-conflict and civil unrest (Ban 2012b: paras.1-4; UN Women 2014). This requires R2P and WPS advocates seeking each other out to outline a shared prevention focus.

Early Warning and SGBV

In light of the discussion above, this section explores the opportunities and challenges in relation to gender inequality in early warning frameworks for genocide and mass atrocities. Arguments for early warning frameworks to include gender-specific indicators have been raised by UN Women as recently as 2014 (UN Women 2014). As mentioned above, in the landmark exploratory study in the field, Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002) examined the potential for gender-specific indicators to inform assessment of the underlying risk of genocide and mass atrocities (root cause indicators, i.e. political participation of women) in addition to developing their own framework for understanding the escalation of risk (precipitating indicators, i.e. high volume of female refugees fleeing conflict). A series of UNIFEM-led studies used this model to explore the utility of local information gathering for early warning about escalating violence (i.e. identifying SGBV early to prevent it from becoming widespread and systematic) (Mosser 2007). This study interweaved generalized forms of violence against women (i.e. rates of domestic violence) with instances of

organized violence against groups of women (i.e. armed groups attacking villages and mass rape).

In the rest of this section, we explore how contemporary application of these earlier studies relates to existing early warning frameworks for mass atrocities (R2P crimes). We compare the earlier mentioned and respected early warning risk lists - *Genocide Watch* and *Genocide Prevention Network* – and compare their 2012 risk lists against a 2012 risk list developed from gender-specific indicators suggested by Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002) (see Figure 1) as (equally) capable of identifying the risk of mass atrocities (see Table 1-3).

Before moving on to comparing the datasets, it is important to clarify some potential problems in the analysis. First, gender focused data collection is relatively new. The UNDP and the World Bank – primary sources of the data covered above – have only been collecting data with a ‘gender perspective’ in mind since early 1990s (i.e. 1994 for UNDP). This means that data collection still relies heavily on self-reported surveys from Member States (the primary source for data collection on domestic and sexual violence). Such data is unlikely to be fine-tuned to the gendered implications of data collection in countries with high levels of inequality in their political, judicial and security sectors. For example, significant grievances may not be recorded when women lack access to the formal legal system (Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011: 79). Second, there are methodological problems limiting the accuracy of data. For example, data on female infanticide relies on estimates, often from case studies which are then extrapolated countrywide. The final challenge is the reliance on data produced over different timeframes and the problem with data collection irregularities.

For example, it is difficult to compare data on literacy rates with female attendance rates at primary or secondary school, because many states do not provide regular data on the latter. If such data is to be used for early warning purposes, it must be collected regularly and as accurately as possible (Hudson et al 2012: 152-153).

The definition of violence described by Secretary-General Annan in his landmark 2006 report (see above) focuses on the systematic inequality and lack of empowerment that legitimates violence against women in the home and in society, and the possible overlap of this violence with conflict-related sexual violence. Such ‘very early’ early warning knowledge may be vital for understanding countries at risk of widespread and systematic SGBV but, equally, it may not be. We attempted to incorporate these relevant claims by using a ‘wider’ set of gender-specific indicators in addition to the more limited set of indicators suggested by Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002).

Our starting point was to look at the countries deemed at high risk of mass atrocities (R2P crimes) by Genocide Prevention and Genocide Watch lists. We then compiled a set of gender-specific root cause indicators to generate a gendered ‘preconditions’ list based on the indicators identified by Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Root causes for genocide early warning – gendered indicators

****INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE ****

We soon encountered a number of problems in preparing data that replicated the Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002: 9-11) framework. First, their suggested UNDP Gender Empowerment and Gender Development Index measures have evolved since

2011 into the Gender Inequality Indices (GII) in the UNDP annual report on human development indicators (HDI) (UNDP 2011). It is difficult to find data for some of the economic indicators, such as wage inequality, for many of the countries identified as being at high-risk according to the Genocide Watch and Genocide Prevention lists. The GII comprises most of the substantive political, economic and social measures that Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (Figure 1 above) recommend. But, additional economic data and information about female suffrage and Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) coverage are not included in the GII. We examined separately the relationship between GII rank, CEDAW adherence and female suffrage, as recommended by Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002: 9-11). None of the (small number of) countries that have failed to ratify CEDAW correlated to countries with high GII scores (a high score for a country means their female citizens experience high levels of inequality). Likewise, given that female suffrage is now nearly universal – in principle at least – except in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, there appeared to be little use in applying a suffrage indicator (i.e. Htun and Weldon 2012). In other words, states that have signed to CEDAW but not ratified the instrument (Iran, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tonga and US) are small in number. This, combined with the absence of female suffrage (only Qatar and Saudi Arabia), indicates that such gender-specific data limited will not provide strong early warning indicators of mass atrocities and widespread and systematic sexual violence.

This limited the socio-economic aspects of gender-specific indicators to the GII dataset (Klasen and Wink 2003). We identified three potential alternative composite gender indices: the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (GGI), the Economist Intelligence Unit's Economic Opportunity Index (WEOI), and the

OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). The GGI is a comprehensive annual economic survey but does not consider gender-specific indicators such as reproductive health, political empowerment and (unpaid) labour market participation. The Economist Intelligence Unit's Women's Economic Opportunity Index (WEOI) would have been a useful alternative dataset, but it is not open source (authors did not have available funds to subscribe). The OECD SIGI released its second dataset (first was 2009) in May 2012. This dataset covers non-OECD and non-EU countries that have populations over one million. The focus is on developing countries undergoing rapid economic, social and political development. There are 102 countries surveyed in SIGI, with full data available for 86 non-EU and non-OECD countries. The values range from 0-1 with Argentina scoring the best SIGI at 0.0069 and Mali the worst at 0.6011 (OECD 2012). The SIGI indicator range is much more extensive than GII, with fourteen variables in five categories (see below). Indeed, SIGI attempts to cover the gender knowledge gaps identified by Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002) concerning the inclusion of domestic/'private life' variables that affect women's empowerment (Klasen and Wink 2003). As such, it includes variables that are often overlooked in other composite gender equality indices, including discriminatory family codes, restricted physical integrity, son bias (fertility preference towards boys and suspected practices of infant femicide), restricted resources and unique entitlements, and restricted civil liberties. The inclusion of SIGI indicators was an attempt to respond to critiques about the systematic (economic) bias against women's lived experience in extant frameworks.

As Table 1 shows, all datasets identify a common group of states, though the levels of risk they identify in each country are significantly different. If we were to predict

those countries at highest risk of mass atrocities just by virtue of their gender inequality indices, we see that the GII and SIGI lists produce quite different rankings on this performance. In examining Table 1, compare GII (greatest inequality to those that sit just above the ‘world average’ shaded according to 70% range; 60% range; 50% range and 40% range), with the SIGI range (SIGI range is 0-1, all countries listed that performed worse than median performer – Myanmar, ranked 43rd with SIGI value 0.2405). In comparing the GII and SIGI worst ten performing states, in terms of gender inequality, the two lists agreed on four states’ performance in this area, although it should be observed that GII did not report data for four of SIGI’s worst ten (Guinea, Nigeria, Somalia) and SIGI did not profile two of GII’s worst ten (Central African Republic, Papua New Guinea). Most significantly, in terms of data coverage – and ramifications for early warning – neither GII nor SIGI posted data (due to lack of consistent data) for six of the countries identified by the Secretary-General’s reports to the Security Council (2012) as having a high risk of SGBV (Ban 2012b).

*** INSERT TABLE 1 HERE ***

Given disparities in the number of countries identified as ‘high risk’ in the frameworks, cognizant of the fact that policy-makers need to set priorities and allocate resources, we then reduced each list to (a maximum of) twenty-two countries. We compared situations of ‘high risk’ in the lists to see whether gender inequality provides early warning of countries at risk of atrocities, particularly sexual violence.

*** INSERT TABLE 2 HERE ***

*** INSERT TABLE 3 HERE ***

This analysis produced mixed results, open, of course, to competing interpretations (see Table 3). The central finding is that in relation to the specific risk of SGBV, none of the non-UN lists correlated closely with the places of concern identified by the Secretary-General in the same year (2012). Of course, the counter argument could be that these lists are not expected to correlate – but that is our point – they are not expected to correlate and this should be a concern for those interested in addressing high-risk situations of SGBV.

The Genocide Watch list produced the highest replication (11 out of 22) with the UN Secretary-General’s list of countries at high risk of widespread SGBV, but this was still relatively low. The GII and SIGI fell short of the Genocide Watch list by three cases, though gaps between the datasets may explain the failure to list these cases. For example, GII did not provide data for Egypt, Guinea and Somalia, unlike Genocide Watch and SIGI. If we presume that the high SIGI rating for Egypt, Somalia and Guinea would have been replicated in the GII scores, then if we make the same presumption for the GII cases that SIGI did not include (Central African Republic, Cote D’Ivoire, Liberia and Kenya), then the GII list would be equal to Stanton and the SIGI list would be most correctly aligned with the Secretary-General

2012 list. However, the assumption that GII would produce the same scores as SIGI for these countries could be queried given that GII and SIGI scores did not always correlate for the same country.

Findings

Do gender inequality lists demonstrate their early warning capacity for countries at risk of atrocities, particularly sexual violence, and do they have greater capacity to highlight risk than early warning lists that exclude gender indicators? As shown above, the results here are mixed. GII and SIGI were able to produce lists that were comparable to the (most expansive) Genocide Watch early warning list and the UN Secretary General list on countries at risk of widespread sexual violence - even though the GII and SIGI use only socio-economic gender inequality indicators and no armed conflict indicators. However, none of these lists was accurate in identifying over 50% of the countries described as being at high risk of widespread and systematic SGBV by the Secretary-General. But, the Secretary-General's list is a political list and may not reflect all cases and all risks – as the significant differences between the 2012 list and recent 2013 list suggests (Ban 2012b; Ban 2013b).

This preliminary research suggests that gender-specific indicators may be as useful as traditional non-gendered measures for early warning of imminent mass atrocities. Moreover, failure to consider systematic gender inequality and/or the systematic use of sexual violence as high-risk indicators needs to be reconsidered. Indeed, given the gaps in gender data which negatively impacted on the gender indices, it is possible that gendered indicators might outperform general early warning predecessors. In turn, these frameworks might be improved by including gender-specific indicators,

particularly when the focus is on predicting widespread and systematic sexual and gender-based violence. This underscores the importance of states implementing their commitment to Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and strengthening their collection and publication of gender-focused indicators.

A second finding is that the UN system has a solid understanding of high risk of sexual violence in situations of conflict, post-conflict and civil unrest even prior to the establishment of the 2014 Early Warning Matrix (Ban 2012b: Annex), but the list is political and vulnerable to exclusions that would not occur if weighed by evidence alone (Security Council Report 2013: 5). This poses the question of whether resources should be poured into refining analytical models before producing lists. While there is an urgent need to improve the quality and quantity of data relating to already established gender focused indicators, the evidence here suggests that there are real limits to what can be achieved with large-*N* risk assessments that are ultimately vulnerable to political decisions regarding who is listed and who is not. Moreover, lists do not mitigate the need for ongoing system-wide collection and assessment of information from the field and its incorporation into policy-making.

Our analysis suggests that gender inequality indices alone are as likely to identify risk of SGBV atrocities. This leads us to the view that related early warning frameworks must regularly engage with gender-specific indicators. Of course, attention to gender-specific indicators is insufficient for effective early warning frameworks, but so too is it insufficient for gender-specific indicators to be continually excluded from these frameworks. Cooperation between different agencies and mandates is required in order to use these frameworks to undertake preventative actions in high-risk situations.

At this stage, we argue, the logic for suggesting such analysis could be best promoted by the alignment of the R2P and WPS agendas.

Conclusion

It was right to argue in the past that R2P paid little attention to hard-won advances by WPS advocates in the three pillars of prevention, participation and protection. While the two agendas remain distinct in terms of their definition and scope of their application, a shared interest in prevention of atrocities in the first place is an important cross-cutting theme. The risk, at present, is that both communities ignore potential complementarities stemming from this shared ambition, and thereby miss chances to bring interested and engaged partners together to promote the prevention of atrocities. Without an alliance, evidence-gathering exercises and advocacy for preventative action will remain disjointed. Moreover, connections from shared data, shared evidence and shared policy responses amongst the R2P and WPS communities could address, as we see above, the gaps in understanding the relationship between gender-based human rights abuses, gender inequality and the commission of mass atrocities.

The obligation of states, as well as regional and international organizations, to fulfill their ‘responsibility to protect’ requires gendered participation in the prevention and mitigation of mass atrocities. The main message from the R2P principle post-2005 has been to advance efforts on the *prevention* of mass atrocities. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted at the 2013 UN General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on ‘The Responsibility to Protect – State Responsibility and Prevention’:

‘Let us...remember that the responsibility to protect seeks not only to protect populations at the eleventh hour but, first and foremost, to prevent crises from erupting at all’ (Ban 2013c). The WPS agenda has established an equally strong record in advocating for political will to address gender inequality as a conflict prevention measure.

However, in the area of mass atrocities crimes – which can occur outside of the conflict environment – understanding how gender inequality heightens risk of these crimes and how to bring gender-based atrocity crimes to the attention of the UN Security Council has remained politically challenging. The challenge is for the Security Council to agree to be briefed on SGBV atrocities *outside* of armed conflict, which will likely persist if gender inequality remains a relatively unacknowledged indicator of risk in early warning frameworks – as stated in the recent UN Secretary-General’s report on R2P (Ban 2013b: 5, 7-8). Existing early warning frameworks have little ability to establish the relationship between gender inequality and the risk of mass atrocities that could have been of particular assistance in recent situations such as Mali, Syria and Central African Republic, where widespread and systematic targeting of women and men for sexual torture, rape and slavery was reportedly deployed against ethnic and political groups prior to the onset of these conflicts (Ban 2012b).

Therefore, we propose, as a first step that the WPS and R2P communities, primarily located in New York, should be brought together to discuss shared areas of focus and cases of mutual concern. This could be facilitated as a working group on women and R2P – a suggestion put forward by the International Coalition for the Responsibility

to Protect. There must also be deeper engagement with gender inequality, gendered discrimination and the role of the R2P principle in assisting states to address these human rights violations. It would be an important step forward for R2P friendly states to specifically address this issue at their annual Ministerial Meeting of the Responsibility to Protect, organized by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect, undated).

The Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Special Adviser for the Responsibility to Protect, to date, have not addressed the role of gender inequality and gendered violence in early warning frameworks. It would be valuable for this Office to provide an exploratory paper on R2P and WPS that details the state, regional and international level responsibilities to address the relationship between gender inequality and human rights atrocities; deeper knowledge of this relationship is vital not just for the prevention of SGBV crimes but also for broader atrocities prevention measures, as noted in the 2013 UN Secretary-General R2P report (Ban 2013b: 5).

It is not enough to say R2P must have a gendered approach without the WPS community being engaged in the development of this approach. The WPS agenda has a long history at state, regional and international levels that will be valuable to the R2P community in progressing mutual agendas, particularly the prevention of mass atrocities. Conversely, the R2P community's emphasis that addressing the conditions that lead to mass atrocity crimes, including widespread and systematic sexual violence, is the primary responsibility of states adds political and normative force to implement WPS commitments in at state, regional and international security

institutions to address structural gender inequality. As this article has identified, there are presently few early warning frameworks to advise on a gendered approach to preventive diplomacy that is directed at the prevention of mass atrocity crimes.

Engagement with this task alone, of mutual interest to WPS and R2P communities, would go a long way towards establishing a roadmap for states and the international community to uphold their responsibility to protect and women's peace and security.

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ⁱⁱ One exception is Caprioli M and Boyer MA (2001) Gender, Violence, and International Crisis. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45: 503-518.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.genocidewatch.org/>. It should be noted Genocide Watch did list 'women' in DRC as being a group of 'victims' experiencing current massacres. How this analysis was determined, and why 'women' were not identified as victims in other current or potential massacres is unclear.