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A feminist perspective on German decision-making in the UN Security Council

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I would like to thank my supervisors for the support and advice, as well as my family and friends that have helped me through these stressful times!

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Introduction

Problem Statement

The United Nations Security Council is still viewed as one of the main multilateral organisations concerned with peace and security. With the power to make binding decisions for the entirety of the United Nations (UN), the Security Council is an important organ in multilateral peace keeping (Hurd, 2002).

One of the thematic issues the UNSC has begun to consider only fairly recently is women's role in war and peacekeeping. Resolution 1325 is the first resolution recognising the need to include women further in the work specific to the council. While the creation of the resolution was primarily pushed for by NGOs and actors from civil society, it was eventually passed with the open support of some member states present in the Security Council in 2000. However, the implementation of resolution 1325 and any following resolutions of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has been lacking (Basu, 2016; Cohn, 2008; Tryggestad, 2009).

As at any given time, there are at least four European countries represented in the Security Council – the UK and France as permanent members, one Eastern-European country as non-permanent member and at least one Western-European country as non-permanent member – Europe still appears to hold some dominance in the UNSC. Being the region that has produced the most National Action Plans on the Implementation of the WPS agenda, European countries seem to be important actors in pushing for WPS matters at the UNSC (Guerrina & Wright, 2016).

In 2019 and 2020, Germany was the non-permanent member that held one of the seats in the UNSC. As the largest economy in the European Union, Germany holds a strong economic and political position in Europe and the world (Bulmer & Paterson, 2013). This influence could be crucial in implementing and passing UNSC resolutions. According to the German National Action Plan for the implementation of the WPS agenda, '[t]he Federal Government's aim is to integrate a gender perspective systematically into all relevant areas.' (Federal Foreign Office, n.d.-a, p. 1). This would imply that Germany would also implement a gender perspective into their foreign policy, including their work in the Security Council.

However, it appears that the German state seems to be in a dichotomy about the importance of gender and women in its international work. On the one hand, the German representation to the UN Security Council and the German foreign ministry have explicitly agreed to focused on the importance of the WPS agenda in the Council's work (Böhme,

Heinlein, & Kappert, 2018). On the other hand, the German parliament has just declined several petitions to implement a feminist foreign policy, including one that called for a better employment of the WPS agenda (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020). This dichotomy shows the different approaches various German political organs take in relation to feminist-informed foreign policies. Thus, the question arises who actually influences Germany's work in the Security Council and how decisions about WPS are made. Hence, this thesis attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: How does the Germany representation to the UNSC come to its different positionings in the Security Council?

RQ 2: Who are the different actors involved in the decision-making process and how much influence do they hold in regard to the final outcome of Germany's positioning in the UNSC?

Sub-RQ: In what way can the different actors influence the implementation of the WPS agenda and a feminist foreign policy in the Security Council?

To explore these questions, I will first give a brief overview over the UN Security Council and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, before turning to a more theoretical background on feminist foreign policy, decision-making in foreign policy and institutionalism. Since this thesis explores German foreign policy and the UNSC, I have 'studied up', a method to examine institutions and elites. This will further be explored in the methodology chapter. Lastly, the thesis ends in an analysis of structure and agency to answer the above asked questions.

Background

The UN Security Council

The United Nations has been one of the most important and influential International Organization since its establishment at the end of the second World War. Since then, they have continuously expanded, both within their working range and their membership numbers. However, one of the most important tasks of the UN is to establish international peace (Sievers & Daws, 2014). Hereby, the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC) is the main organ of the United Nations concerned with questions of international peace and security (Basu, 2016).

The UNSC has a continuous membership number of fifteen different states, whereby five of them are permanent (also known as the P5), which the other ten seats are allocated to different non-permanent members. These non-permanent members serve a two year term, before handing of their seat to the next country (Sievers & Daws, 2014). However, these two types of members hold different kind of powers within the Security Council. While their tasks and responsibilities are de facto the same, the P5 retain the right to veto any decision the UNSC has made. Hence, this gives them a greater power to make decisions in the Council, being able to reject resolutions that may go against their personal interests. ‘The effective decisionmaking power in the Council is monopolized by the Permanent Five.’ (Hurd, 2002, p. 41).

This decision-making power may be of great benefit in international politics, since the UNSC holds power over more than just its current members. Sievers and Daws (2014, p. 7) point out four different decision-making capacities of the UNSC that are secured in the UN Charter: (1) Article 24(1) gives the UNSC the ability to act on behalf of the entirety of the UN members – to date 193 states; (2) The UNSC has the power to make binding decisions, both for UN member states, and for non-members if the UNSC feels they threaten international peace and security; (3) UNSC decisions can only be made with the approval of all permanent members; and (4) the UNSC is obliged to function continuously, rather than just at set times like other UN organs do (Sievers & Daws, 2014; United Nations, n.d.). Hence, the UNSC arguably holds great power and responsibility, being able to not only approve the use of force in an international setting, but likewise shape conflicts between and within different states by doing so (Malone & Malone, 2004).

Examining the inner workings of the UN Security Council, Hurd (2002) points out another advantage of the P5. While officially discussions about different resolutions occur during the official UNSC meetings, informal meetings become increasingly important in the decision-making process. Not all members of the Security Council will participate (or will be invited to participate) in those informal meetings, even if many decisions are de facto made in those meetings. Increasingly, officially recorded discussions from formal Council meetings are merely a reflection of discussions that have already occurred and have been resolved behind closed doors (Hurd, 2002).

Furthermore, penholderships may hold some power in the UNSC. A penholdership is the responsibility of a UNSC member nation to lead negotiations and draft resolutions concerning a particular topic. The allocation of the penholdership is mainly done by the so called P3 – France, Great Britain and the United States. That means that non-permanent

members are dependent on the approval and support of these countries to first-hand work with the topics they are interested in the most. However, Co-memberships are also possible. While this was usually done between two non-permanent members, the first collaborative co-penholdership between a permanent and non-permanent member was established in 2019 (Christian & Coni-Zimmer, 2020; Security Council Report, 2021)

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Until the beginning of the 21st century, women were often overlooked as an actor and a factor in relation to war and security in international politics. Although the UN had passed the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, the UN Security Council did not seem to concern itself with women issues until UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was approved in 2000 (United Nations, 1979; United Nations Security Council, 2000). UNSCR 1325 recognised the special role that women often played in war and conflict, and the need to include women further in peace-making and peacekeeping efforts. In the past two decades, UNSCR 1325 has evolved into what was coined the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, which to date includes eight resolutions. In short, these resolutions recognise the important role of women in the peace making and conflict prevention negotiations, and the increased threat whereby sexual violence and rape is used as a tool of war (UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, n.d.).

The groundwork for UNSCR 1325 was laid out in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, and then continued through the work of several NGOs and activist groups. Hereby, the activists attempted to bring women's issues onto the agenda of the UNSC by adapting to UN language to receive the support from the diplomats at the Council (Cohn, 2008). This has resulted in the WPS agenda that include women's representation in decision-making processes, protection from gender-based violence in war, and the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace-keeping missions (Tryggestad, 2009).

However, that process and the outcome has often been criticised as being too conformant, and thereby excluding issues of intersectionality, toxic masculinity and the wrongful association of certain gender roles. WPS for example portrays women as 'naturally peaceful and nurturing' and fails to question underlying power relations (Cohn, 2008). Furthermore, it appears that the WPS agenda has mostly brought rhetorical changes to the UNSC, and is still lacking in practical application (Tryggestad, 2009).

Germany

Germany appears to play a vital role on the international stage, being involved in many multilateral efforts and international organisations. Since the end of World War II, the German state seems to have put great emphasis on international cooperation and has centred its foreign policy around the importance of multilateralism. Aside from its recent involvement in the UN Security Council in 2019 and 2020, Germany has recently hosted the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) in 2016, and held the presidency at the 2017 G20 meetings, while likewise being continuously involved in both the UN and the EU (Narlikar, 2020).

Germany's most recent membership in the UN Security Council was the sixth time that the country had held that position. This was the second time Germany was a non-permanent member within the decade, potentially also a sign of the continuous German effort to extend its influence within the Security Council. Alongside Japan, India and Brazil, Germany has campaigned for a reform of the UNSC including a permanent membership in the Council. Thus far, these calls for reformation have been fruitless (Federal Foreign Office, 2020). Some scholars predict that Germany might become more of a semi-permanent member, increasing its influence through a series of non-permanent memberships (Gowan, 2013); while others point out that Germany has already achieved a "quasi-membership" through their large financial contributions and frequent invites to participate in third-state consultations (Hurd, 2002). Through this, the state could still push for topics of their interest, such as the WPS agenda.

Among other topics, Germany also championed the WPS agenda during its membership. In 2017, German foreign minister Heiko Maas made this part of Germany's campaign for the UNSC membership of 2019/20.

There is a close connection between equal opportunities, the protection of human rights, sustainable development and the preservation of peace and security. The central organ in this field, the United Nations Security Council, is of particular importance. Germany is a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2019/20. If we are elected on 8 June, I can promise you that the agenda for women, peace and security will be a priority in our work.

(Maas, 2018)

While Germany held the presidency over the UNSC, Resolution 2467 was passed. This resolution emphasises a survivor-based approach to conflict-related sexual violence (Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2019). Germany was a vital player in the passing of this resolution, co-chairing the Informal Expert Group together with Peru. Moreover, Germany was the co-penholder for the Resolutions on Afghanistan, North Korea, Libya and Sudan; and co-lead discussions on humanitarian issues in Syria (Security Council Report, 2019b).

Theoretical framework

Feminism in state's foreign policy

In recent years, foreign policy has experienced a shift towards a more feminist-informed political agenda. In 2014, Sweden was the first country to officially implement a 'feminist foreign policy'. Hereby, Sweden pledged to focus on rights, resources and representation of women in their work with other nations (Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond, & Kronsell, 2019; Thompson & Clement, 2019). Nonetheless, other countries also applied policies that put women's issues as a priority. The US saw women's oppression as a security threat during Hillary Clinton's time as Secretary of State, the UK pushed for the elimination of sexual violence during conflict, Australia and Norway both promoted gender mainstreaming in international institutions, peace-making processes and development aid, while Canada was at the forefront of pushing for the adoption of Resolution 1325 (Aggestam et al., 2019; Basu, 2016).

However, some scholars have noted the neo-liberal nature of state-led feminist foreign policies. States applying an official feminist foreign policy often hold a somewhat positivist understanding of feminism and gender. Scholars furthermore question whether a true feminist foreign policy is even possible. Modern states are founded on a patriarchal understanding of the relation between gender, politics and the state, and thus often reinforce gender inequalities through their institutions. Even Sweden, the champion of state-led feminist foreign policy, has a rather neo-liberal understanding of gender inclusion that could be viewed as "market feminism" (Bergman Rosamond, 2020). Market feminism focuses on the inclusion of women into the economy, without addressing structural limits that lead to gender discrimination (Thomson, 2020). In Sweden, this can be observed through their "rights, resources, and representation" approach, which does not challenge underlying

structures that hinder gender equality (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018; Thompson & Clement, 2019). Similarly, Canada's foreign policy rests on a strong support and focus for military operations, which are usually constructed as a masculine field, whereas their feminist approach assumes women to hold the socially-constructed roles in society of mothers, wives, and servants (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018).

Furthermore, most of the state-led attempts to feminist foreign policy seem to have a monadic understanding of gender, nearly exclusively focusing on women. It appears that international politics often uses the terms women and gender interchangeably, ignoring both gendered issues connected to men and people that do not fit the gender binary (Thompson & Clement, 2019). "This reinforces the binary and undermines work to overcome white, ethnocentric and western-centric, cis feminism's historical (and current) sins." (Thompson & Clement, 2019, p. 5). Lastly, current feminist foreign policy seems to disregard the interplay of gender discrimination with other forms of discrimination. This ignores the intersectionality of the people those states attempt to work with and for (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018; Thompson & Clement, 2019). I will further discuss the concept of intersectionality in the conceptual part of this theoretical framework.

Feminist Foreign Policy Analysis

Contrary to the practical shift towards more feminist foreign policy, the academic foreign policy analysis appears to hardly have included any feminist and gender-related ideas. Whereas International Relations Theory has moved from 'conventional' ideas towards more critical approaches, including critical feminist theories, foreign policy analysis is still seen as a more 'gender-neutral' field of study (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018). Ignoring gender as a factor in foreign policy has made the academic field somewhat "gender blind" (Bergman Rosamond, 2020).

However, combining foreign policy analysis and feminist theory is not unheard of. As Aggestam and True (2020) point out, there are several cross points between FPA and international feminist theory. One of these overlapping points is in the structure-agency debate. International feminist theories hereby seem to favour the structural aspect of this debate, looking at patriarchal structures within the international system, IR or diplomacy. The locus FPA on the other hand is often in the agency debate, examining for example the influence of leadership on foreign policy making. However, these preferences are not fixed, and the two theoretical approaches can hence be combined into a common feminist foreign policy analysis (Aggestam & True, 2020).

Analysing the structure and agency in the decision-making process of Germany in the UNSC might provide us a greater insight in the general feminist foreign policy analysis. While many scholars have focused on individuals on the highest levels of foreign politics (see for example: (Brummer, 2013; Kaarbo, 1997; Sharma, 2016)), this paper attempts to also consider lower-level actors. Hence, I am hoping to provide a deeper understanding of how certain feminist policies are implemented or excluded, and what influence the lesser ranking bureaucrats, administrators, and advisors possess.

Foreign Policy Decision-making: Structure and Agency

The structure-agency debate is an important one in International Relations, and Foreign Policy alike. Hereby, decision-making and behaviour is analysed through either structural limits that order and define certain behaviour, through institutionalised social, political and economic structures. Agency on the other hand refers to the autonomy of the individual actors to excerpt their free will to make their own choice (Vadrot, 2017). Thus, the structure-agency debate explores the “relationship between actors and their environment” (Hay, 2002, p. 89).

However, the nature of foreign policy makes the conceptualisation of structure and agency in the decision-making process complicated. The double-sided nature of foreign policy – situated between domestic and international politics, actors, interests etc. – complicates the analysis of it (Carlsnaes, 2008). Nonetheless, the structure-agency debate cannot be ignored when analysing the foreign policy decision-making process.

[A]ctors and structures are always present in, and indeed crucial to, the making of foreign policy. [...]In the real world we find a number of actors, both domestic and international, who are closely involved in foreign policy decision making in one manner or another; and equally there are a number of structures on both sides of the domestic-international divide which decisively affect these actors in many different ways.

(Carlsnaes, 2008, p. 114)

Hereby, where the focus of the structure-agency debate in foreign policy analysis lies is often dependent on the level of analysis. Generally, there seems to be a greater focus on the actor’s influence to the decision-making process on lower levels of analysis – such as the

individual or group level – while research focusing on the state, cultural or international level appear to favour a structural analysis (Carlsnaes, 2008).

The list of actors involved in the foreign policy decision making process is long, and difficult to complete. While some actors are clearly involved, and well-known to the public – such as the heads of state, national parliaments, foreign ministers, etc. - others appear to be operating more in the background – like the vast amount of civil servants and experts working for different institutions involved and stakeholders in foreign policy decision making (Carlsnaes, 2008).

Likewise, the structural factors of the decision-making process are also vast and exist on all levels of decision making. While traditionally IR scholars have often focused exclusively on the structures existing in the international system, they exist on all levels, and in many different forms (Carlsnaes, 2008). This focus on the international system has neglected the agency of individual actors in mainstream IR theories. Realist theorists tend to focus on power relations between different single entity states, while liberal scholars emphasise international regimes and organisations (Hill, 2015). Examining the decision-making process in foreign policy, we can find both theories focusing on the structural aspects as well as others focusing on agency.

A commonly used model especially prominent in the more conventional IR theories such as realism is the Rational Actor Model. The Rational Actor Model examines the decision-making process for events in foreign policy analysis, and is based on the same principles as the Rational Choice Theory. Rational Choice Theory, like the Rational Actor Model, assumes humans to be ‘mutually disinterested and rationally self-interested agents in the attempt to maximize the degree to which they can successfully pursue their particular ends and satisfy their particular preferences, whatever those might be.’ (Neal, 1988, p. 637). Shahryarifar (2016) divides the Rational Actor Model into four steps. Firstly, a problem is identified. Next, all possible outcomes to that problem are ranked before a consequence assessment of all options is conducted. Lastly, a rational choice should be made based on the most ideal choice – a combination between the ranking and the preferred consequences (Shahryarifar, 2016).

The main structural aspect of the Rational Actor Model is the idea that the main actors of foreign policy making are states. Hence, the state is seen as a unitary actor, reacting to the structures of the international system and the behaviour of other states (Freedman, 1976). This approach is most commonly associated with the realist school of IR. At the basis of realist theory lie the assumptions that the international system is anarchic, meaning there is

no overarching hierarchy or form of governance between the different nation states, and that states are the unitary actors of IR. While states can cooperate and coerce each other into “order”, each sovereign state remains in a position to break this order (through war). State behaviour (and thus the decision-making process within that state) is explained through the constraints and structures of the international system, rather than internal processes (Donnelly, 2000).

A theory challenging the Rational Actor Model is the Bureaucratic Politics Model. The model focuses on the different actors within a state that have an influence on the decision making in foreign policy. Hereby, these actors are part of small groups within the bureaucratic system that have different aims, different resources and different preferences. Hence, these preferences stem from a combination of the individual characteristics and the role the actors hold in the bureaucracy. Hereby, the various actors will be involved in many different issues and can likewise enforce various strategies to reach different goals (Freedman, 1976).

This theory of bureaucratic politics points out how well established structures in political institutions often hinder the implementation of new ideas (Drezner, 2000). This is especially applicable to foreign policy making. Firstly, the interest-group in foreign politics is often smaller than for domestic politics, and members of the parliament and government often hold less interest in the specifics of a state’s foreign policies. This increases the influence of the interest-groups involved in foreign policy making, who are likely to uphold existing bureaucratic structures (Drezner, 2000). Secondly, some scholars appoint foreign policy as the result of negotiations between different organisations with different goals. The addition of a new actor would require that newcomer to negotiate within the already existing bureaucratic actors (Drezner, 2000). Hence, according to the bureaucratic politics theory, decision-making in foreign policy is highly dependent on pre-existing bureaucratic structures within a state.

Hollis and Smith (1986) contest these theories. They argue that the people involved in the decision-making process hold more significance than either the Rational Actor Model or the Bureaucratic Politics Model account for. They use the example of the US-Iranian hostage crisis of 1970/80 to identify shortcomings in the two models and exemplify the influence the different actors and advisors on the American side had for the outcome. They conclude that ‘the Rational Actor model needs an improved notion of a reason for action and that the Bureaucratic Politics model needs an improved concept of role.’ (Hollis & Smith, 1986, p. 272).

Looking at this from a feminist perspective, many scholars seem to especially criticise the structural composition of foreign policy making. International Relations – both as a scholarly field and in practice, are based on inherently gendered ideas and understandings, that appear to be favouring men and masculinities. (see for example: Enloe, 1989; Hooper, 2001). Hence, the structures that might influence foreign policy decision making will undoubtedly benefit the reproduction of these underlying gendered structures.

Reviewing the decision-making process in German foreign policy might reveal important interest points for feminist policies. Although Germany does not officially employ a feminist foreign policy, this does not necessarily mean that there are no pro-gender norms in German foreign policy. Looking at the Norwegian case for example, Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad (2020) examined that Norway does in fact implement many pro-gender norms in their peace engagement, while refusing to explicitly name their foreign policy feminist.

Pro-gender norms appear to be at the forefront of many feminist foreign policy analysis. Hereby it is noted that many countries enforce pro-gender norms in their foreign policy without explicitly committing to a feminist foreign policy (see for example Norway (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2020) & South Africa (Haastrup, 2020)), while other countries might say they use a feminist foreign policy while not actually portraying many pro-gender norms in their foreign policies (see Canada (Parisi, 2020)). Hence, analysing in what ways Germany might include pro-gender norms in their foreign policy might give an indication in what ways their policies are in fact feminist-informed.

Hereby, I understand pro-gender (equality) norms in line with Aggestam and True (2020, p. 144) definition. They identify four different types of commitments a country can make to include pro-gender norms in their foreign policy: (1) implementing gender mainstreaming in areas of foreign policy, security, trade, and/or development assistance; (2) development assistance that specifically targets gender equality; (3) an explicit focus on gender equality in the international security sector, with emphasis on women's security, the WPS agenda and human rights; and (4) other forms of foreign policies that establish tools that aim to advance gender equality.

Returning to the case of Norwegian foreign policy, Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad (2020) note a connection between Norwegian identity and the implementation of pro-gender norms in their peace engagement. Because Norway views themselves as a gender-equal nation, these norms and values are also implemented in their work. These norms and values are partly implemented because it serves the image that Norway wants to achieve abroad, but

partly also because the different actors in Norwegian peace engagement hold these norms and values due to their personal experiences with gender-equal socio-political life in Norway (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2020).

National identity can therefore influence a nation's foreign policy. The construction of such an identity is multifaceted and complex. Aggestam and True (2020, p. 153) note: "The foreign policy orientation also includes state identity, which is (re-)constituted by a broad range of historical, domestic, and international conditions, actors, and practices." State identity can therefore be seen as part of the cultural understanding of a nation, which in turn is defined as the socially shared beliefs according to different constructivist theories (Alexandrov, 2003). On a more individual level, national identity can be seen as a person's understanding of their belonging to a certain state. Hence, if these shared beliefs are based on pro-gender norms, this could influence the behaviour of different state actors both in foreign policy and domestic politics.

Foreign policy can be used by state governments to reinforce certain national identities in its own society, like Putin's attempt to restore Russian national pride through increasingly assertive foreign policies (Hill, 2015). On the other hand, national identity also creates the basis for foreign policy. It describes an understanding of us vs. the other that defines the border between domestic and foreign policy. Hence, national identity and foreign policy are both intertwined and reinforce each other (Hill, 2015).

Identifying whether German foreign policy actors also hold pro-gender values might therefore be beneficial in identifying if and how Germany's positioning at the UNSC is influenced by pro-gender norms.

Furthermore, when it comes to the official positioning of a government of a state, the domestic process might be of high importance, since the different actors involved will have different values and hence show different interests. Part of the decision-making process is hence the negotiation of a National Role Conception. The National Role Conception is the understanding of foreign policy maker of their own country's role in the international system (Wish, 1980). Hereby, the different actors in the decision-making process likely disagree on the country's position, and hence have to negotiate the final National Role Conception for different foreign policies and the country's general stance in the international system. This will come down to domestic power relations between the different politicians and stakeholders (Brummer & Thies, 2015). Examining these power struggles in relation to the national role presented by Germany in the UNSC might give us a better understanding of

whose preferences and interests are represented in Germany's positioning in the Security Council.

New Institutionalism

To further understand the decision-making process in German foreign policy, it will be vital to understand the institutions that lay at the base of it. In the case of the German membership in the Security Council, both formal and informal institutions at the UN and in German foreign policy may have an influence on the decision-making process and are thus of interest for our analysis.

To examine international organisations such as the UN, many scholars apply institutional theories. Institutionalists concern themselves with different formal and informal institutions, and more specifically their establishment and evolution. Hereby, there are different theories about the relation between agency, structure, and institutions (Mackay, Kenny, & Chappell, 2010). A few of these theories – namely those of New Institutionalism - will shortly be portrayed below, before examining its potential for a gender-sensitive analysis as suggested by Mackay et al. (2010).

New Institutionalism (re-)emerged in the late 1970s and renewed the emphasis on the importance of institutions in political analyses. New Institutionalists can generally be categorised into four theoretical approaches: 1. Rational Choice Institutionalists; 2. Historical Institutionalists; Organisational/ Sociological Institutionalists; and 4. Discursive Institutionalists (Mackay et al., 2010).

Rational Choice Institutionalists, like scholars subscribing to the ideas of the Rational Actor Model, centre their theory around the idea that all individuals make rational choices to attempt to reach a personal goal. Weingast (2002) divides the analysis performed by rational choice institutionalists into two further categories. Firstly, they examine the influence that institutions have on the individual and their ability to pick the 'best' choice for their goal, while secondly rational choice institutionalists are also interested in the evolvment and survival of institutions in the long term (Weingast, 2002).

In the former analysis, institutions act as an exogenous structure that constrain the room of action for all individuals involved. It examines 'how institutions constrain the sequence of interaction among the actors, the choices available to particular actors, the structure of information and hence beliefs of actors, and the payoffs to individuals and

groups.’ (Weingast, 2002, p. 661). Thus, returning to the structure-agency debate, rational choice institutionalists emphasize the importance of agency in the decision-making process while viewing the structures of institutions as a purely constraining entity.

The second analysis of Rational Choice Institutionalists studies how institutions survive, and why they exist in the first place. To explain the existence of institutions, Rational Choice Institutionalists utilize game theory. In game theory, the most rational choice for each individual actor will sometimes lead to collective action problems, whereas the most rational choice for each actor will lead to an undesirable outcome. These collective action problems can be solved through cooperation, where all actors choose a ‘irrational’ choice to gain greater benefits. Institutions exist to coordinate this cooperation so that uncertainty over other actors’ actions is reduced, or incentives for cooperation are increased (Mackay et al., 2010; Weingast, 2002). Following this line of thought, the sustainability of these institutions is ensured if they provide more benefits to important stakeholders in than other institutions would do (Mackay et al., 2010).

Contrary to Rational Choice Institutionalists, Historical Institutionalists put a greater emphasis on structural aspects in their study of institutions. As the name suggests, historical institutionalism analyses institutions through the study of historic events and empirical cases. The biggest factor hereby is the continuity and sequence in which certain historic events occur, that led to the creation of different formal and informal institutions (Mackay et al., 2010). These institutions then follow path dependency and limit the choices for further action. Hence, institutions develop and evolve through the specific historic events they go through, but likewise reduce the number of possible future events through structural limits. However, Rational Choice Institutionalists not only see the structural limits of these institutions, but also recognise they might provide actors involved with opportunities to achieve their goals. Hence, actors might be constricted through structural aspects of institutions, but may likewise be able to execute their agency and use these structural aspects for their personal benefit and self-interest (Mackay et al., 2010).

A different approach to institutions is taken by the organisational or sociological institutionalists. Institutions are not created through the necessity of solving collective action problems, but rather develop as a shared understanding of ideas and rules of society. Institutions simultaneously limit human agency and are created through it. Sociological Institutionalists do not only view formal rules and laws as institutional, but also socially constructed ideas about morals, appropriate behaviour and the underlying ideas that structure the relationship between different actors within a society (Mackay et al., 2010).

Lastly, Discursive Institutionalists put a great emphasis on discourse and ideas. They examine how behaviour is influenced through such. Hereby, institutions are viewed as the interaction between the discourse, ideas and how they are communicated. Institutions then influence an actor's agency through shaping their ideas about their self-interests and goals (Mackay et al., 2010). 'In other words, even when actors act on the basis of self-interest, this action involves ideas about interests that incorporate a wider range of reasons for acting' (Mackay et al., 2010, p. 575).

To return to the feminist perspective on Institutionalism, Mackay et al. (2010) argue that all four types of New Institutionalism hold potential for a feminist lens. Since there is no one feminist theory, but rather a large collection of diverse feminist theories, which of the four approaches is most compatible to a Feminist Institutionalism depends on one's theoretical standpoint. However, the majority of New Institutionalist Scholars has thus far failed to incorporate ideas about the relation between institutions and gender (Mackay et al., 2010).

Examining the relationship between gender and institutions could provide a better understanding into the workings of International Organisations and Institutions. Gender is the social construction of ideas about the differences between men and women, that shape social interaction. These socially-constructed ideas form the basis for different understandings of power and social hierarchy. Hence, gender is not only to be considered on a personal level, but likewise as an important factor in institutions. Hence, institutions are gendered, and likewise reinforcing the socially constructed ideas about gender.

Not only are gender relations seen to be 'institutional', these relations are 'institutionalized', embedded in particular political institutions and constraining and shaping social interaction. Feminist theoretical and empirical work on gender and institutions suggests that gender relations are cross-cutting, that they play out in different types of institutions, as well as different institutional levels, ranging from the symbolic level to the 'seemingly trivial' level of interpersonal day-to-day interaction, where the continuous performance of gender takes place.

(Mackay et al., 2010, p. 580)

Methodology

Since this thesis applies a feminist approach to foreign policy, the methodological approach to this study will also be from a feminist perspective. Feminist IR theory came into the picture with the fourth Great Debate in the IR scholarship¹². This debate, first emerging in the 1980s, concerned itself with issues related to the philosophy of science and how ‘proper’ science should be conducted. Three different contradictions dominated this debate, although they are sometimes summarised into two categories (Kurki & Wight, 2012).

Firstly, based on Max Weber’s work, there is the question between explaining vs. understanding (Kurki & Wight, 2012). Hollis and Smith (1990) differentiate the ideas of explaining and understanding into an inside and outside perspective. Scholars adapting to the ‘explaining’ or ‘outside’ philosophy of science view the study of International Relations similarly to studies of natural science. They look international relations and try to explain what instigated certain events or statuses. Simply speaking, “[t]o explain an event or state of affairs is to find another which caused it.” (Hollis & Smith, 1990, p. 3).

The ‘understanding’ faction of IR on the other hand takes a more ‘insider’ perspective to the study of IR. The basis for their research are usually the different actors involved in certain events. To truly understand an event or occurrence one has to first explore how the different actors view them, before being able to dissect those further to explore the deeper reasons behind their views and actions. “We must know how the actors defined the issues and the alternatives, what they believed about the situation and each other, what they aimed to achieve, and how. Only then can we ask more pointed questions about their clarity of vision, their underlying reasons, and the true meaning of the episodes.” (Hollis & Smith, 1990, p. 2). Hence, scholars of the understanding faction focus on the social constructions of meanings, values, language, and beliefs. Though scholars subscribing to the ‘explaining’ faction might not necessarily disagree with the influence such can have, they usually do not recognise those as ‘scientifically explorable’ since they cannot be empirically justified and verified (Kurki & Wight, 2012).

Secondly, scholars distinguish between positivism and postpositivism. These terms refer to theories of science and are hence different from epistemological and ontological

¹ The first Great Debate in IR refers to the idealist vs. realist debate in the early 20th century, while the second Great Debate occurred in the 1960s between traditionalists and modernist. The third Great Debate in the 1970s focused on questions on inter-paradigm (Kurki & Wight, 2012).

² Some scholars do not see the inter-paradigm debate as part of the Great Debates of IR and therefore refer to the three Great Debates, rather than four.

approaches. Hereby, positivism is often (but not always) associated with an empiricist epistemology. Scholars following a positivist approach assume that scientific knowledge is attained only through observable, quantifiable data. Science is only valid if it followed a strict set of logical methodological guidelines. Any non-observable factors are used to explain collected data, without holding actual scientific merit (Kurki & Wight, 2012). Contrary, postpositivism rejects these methods as a valid form of studying especially when it comes to social processes (Kurki & Wight, 2012).

Lastly, the rationalist and reflectivist approaches are a combination of the two forementioned pairings. Rationalism, inspired by Rational Choice Theory, adapts a positivist approach to science and likewise a empiricist or ‘explaining’ perspective. Reflectivists on the other hand are critical of these theories and thus adapt the idea that social science is always subjective. Reflectivism examines the non-neutrality of the researcher at the basis of their scientific methods (Kurki & Wight, 2012).

Building on that, many feminist scholars approach scientific research in a reflective, post-positivist and ‘understanding’ manner. Enloe (1989) – often recognised as one of the first scholars to combine feminism and IR – notes that conventional IR has often overlooked women because of their state-centered understanding of international politics. Building on that, we can observe the different epistemological and methodological approaches many feminist scholars apply. While conventional scholars usually apply a positivist understanding to their research, feminist IR – like other critical IR theories – applies a reflectivist approach. This might lead to a misunderstanding between the two approaches.

Although different feminist scholars have applied different epistemological and ontological understandings, and there is no one feminist approach to these questions, a majority of feminist IR scholars have applied a more post-positivist, reflectivist and qualitative approach to their research. Many were inspired by the third debate of IR that has led to more critical IR theories. While conventional IR scholars assume science to be neutral, quantifiable and easily attainable, critical scholars including many feminist scholars question these notions. Many feminist IR scholars have examined the gendered power biases that are portrayed in these notions. They have challenged the ideas that states and international institutions are gender-neutral, examined the gendered structures of war and security understandings and explored the general biases of the IR discipline (Tickner, 2006). These ideas inform a vast variety of feminist IR studies and scholarship. “Feminists study the routine aspects of everyday life that help sustain gender inequality; they acknowledge the pervasive influence of gender and acknowledge that what has passed as knowledge about

human behaviour is, in fact, frequently knowledge about male behaviour.” (Tickner, 2006, p. 25).

While conventional scholars like (neo-)realists and (neo-)liberalists often view states and transnational actors as the main (non-gendered) actors in IR, feminist IR scholars examine the gendered constructions of IR institutions (Tickner, 1997). They examine how these institutions were established through gendered power relations, and how the practices of these institutions often reproduce these power relations. This means that both theoretical and practical IR are dominated by institutions of hegemonic masculinity.

Institutions of hegemonic masculinity are institutions that were historically dominated by men and thus are made up of norms that favour men or masculinities but are often presented as normal or the standard (Kronsell, 2006). While this has been criticised in IR theory, it is also found in IR practice. “Quite obviously also, IR’s practice – the diplomatic corps, the defense security, and military organizations – are institutions of hegemonic masculinity where gender has been silenced [...]” (Kronsell, 2006, p. 111). Large international and national organisations and institutions are reproducing gender inequality. Many institutions ignore the inequalities that exist in practice and thereby reproduce them. One example is the obliviousness to unpaid labour, such as care work, that is often completed by women. Since this kind of labour will frequently be ignored in economic institutions, these gender inequalities are not addressed properly, leading to a reproduction of such (Prügl, 2004).

Likewise, diplomacy continues to be a gender unequal institution. Historically, diplomacy has been reserved for men only, and still to this day there is an enormous imbalance between male and female diplomats, despite increasing efforts to change that (Aggestam & Towns, 2019). The long dominance of purely male diplomats has led to ‘forms of ingrained masculinity norms, scripts and practices.’ (Aggestam & Towns, 2019, p. 19). Hence, it may be difficult for a woman to enter this institution, as underlying structural limits need to be crossed. However, diplomacy is not the only institution that has a gendered history and thus structural barriers for women to equally participate (Aggestam & Towns, 2019). The vast majority (if not all) international organisations and institutions are somewhat based on the historic or current discrimination of a group based on their gender.

Consequently, applying this theoretical approach to my research, I am assuming that the UN Security Council as well as German foreign policy making are in fact not gender neutral, but gendered institutions.

Studying institutions and elites instead of grassroots movements or local “isolated” cases is often referred to as *Studying up*. The term was first coined by anthropologist Laura Nader, and was originally used in ethnographic studies. She claimed it was important to understand how elites might actually influence and structure institutions (Nader, 1972). In recent years however it has more frequently been adopted by other social sciences, including IR. Hereby, the focus often lies on studying elites, especially political elites.

Elites are small and usually cohesive groups that have the power to make decisions on behalf of a vast amount of people. These decisions may often have large consequences for those not involved in the decision-making process. Elites will form a tight network with each other, in which collaboration and facilitation reproduce social, economic, and political advantages (Aguiar & Schneider, 2016). Considering this approach in this thesis might be beneficial. Political elites are seen as the small group in a state that holds the political decision-making power. This includes both politicians and bureaucrats. However, while there are female elites, it is often a difficult status to reach, especially in intersection with race, class, and other discriminations (Aguiar & Schneider, 2016). Hence, studying up and examining elites is exactly what this study attempts to achieve.

Methodologically, this is why I am applying qualitative methods to examine the decision-making process. To examine gendered practices in the UN and foreign policy, I will deconstruct the process and practices to examine further what norms are institutionalised within the UNSC and state’s foreign policy making, and in what way individual actors are able to challenge and change these gendered norms. Hence, this is a question of structure and agency, that I am hoping to dissect.

Population & Study area

This study was partly interview-based, and partly document based qualitative study. As I will examine the political action of Germany during its recent UNSC membership, the main population for the interview-based portion are employees of the German Foreign ministry working on UN-related issues and the German Permanent mission to the UN. This means the population is fairly small. This is due to the nature of this study. As I am studying up and examining decision-making processes among the political elite of Germany, this population ought to be quite limited (Aguiar & Schneider, 2016).

I have supplemented the small population with through records by the UN Security Council for the years of 2019 and 2020. As Bryman (2016) notes, official documents are beneficial as their authenticity is easily proven, and are usually clear and comprehensible.

By combining interview-based and document-based qualitative research, I will hopefully be able to not only examine official statements from the German government and representation to the UN, but also look at underlying structures and the workings behind these statements.

Sampling

Sampling from such a small and elite population, I have applied both purposive, snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling, which is done to sample a group relative to the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Since this research is not generalisable to a wider population, purposive sampling is a valid method for this thesis. Furthermore, since the population is a well-connected group of people, snowball sampling was a good method to reach relevant interviewees. In snowball sampling, an initial group of participants is asked to recommend further individuals that might be of interest for this research. This sampling method is recommended for both the study of networks and of hard to reach groups (Bryman, 2016). Hence, this method seems appropriate for the study of elites and was thus applied.

Since the population is fairly small, the sample size also represents that. In total, there were three semi-structured interviews. All three interviewees are employees of the German Foreign Ministry and Diplomatic Service; and have worked with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in recent years. However, even though the sample size is small, a good overview was achieved.

Additionally, I have sampled one document from the records of the UN Security Council. This document was also sampled through a purposive method, as it appeared to be the most useful to my study. Documents supply a great benefit to a sample, as they are usually easily verified and accessed (Bryman, 2016).

Data Collection

As mentioned previously, the data collection will be through a combination of interviews and document analysis. For the interviews, I have conducted semi-structured interviews. Hereby, due to the current global pandemic, I was unable to conduct these interviews in person. Hence, these semi-structured interviews were all conducted via Zoom. Though online interviews were the only option to conduct the interviews at all, there were

several disadvantages to them in comparison to in-person interviews. Firstly, in-person interviews often flow easier and more directly than online interviews, due to the lack of delay in transmission (Bryman, 2016). This is something I have noticed as well, as I encountered some technical difficulties during two of my interviews. Hence, the interviewees had to repeat themselves, interrupting the natural flow of the conversation. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, before being anonymised. Thus, in the analysis I will refer to the interviewees by numbering them, so that they cannot be identified after.

Semi-structured interviews bear the benefit that the interview is somewhat guided, while simultaneously allowing for flexibility. This is important to be able to explore ideas that come up during the interview further, and to ask follow-up questions on the information the participants provided. However, the interview guide used in the semi-structured interviews (see: Attachment 1), prevent a complete aversion from the topic and provide a good guide throughout the interview (Bryman, 2016).

As the document-based part of the research is based on official statements and speeches, all needed documents should be available online. These documents will primarily come from the meeting and voting records of the UN, but might also include official statements published by the German foreign ministry and the German mission to the UN. The document I have sampled for my research is the Record of UNSC meeting 8514. During that meeting, Resolution 2467 was passed under German leadership, and foreign minister Maas was present himself (United Nations Security Council, 2019). I sampled this specific document since I believe it will give me further insights into the German political elite. Likewise, I am using this document to triangulate data collected in my semi-structured interviews.

Analysis

To answer the research questions I have applied a thematic analysis. In a thematic analysis, the data is scanned for central themes and subthemes. This is done through coding. Coding is a method to sort through the collected data and organise them into different themes or categories (Bryman, 2016).

In my analysis, I have coded for four different themes: 1. Structural advantages to the implementation of the WPS agenda; 2. Structural limits to the implementation of the WPS Agenda; 3. Advantages derived from actor's agency; and 4. Limitations derived from actor's agency.

Analysis

To analyse the decision-making process of Germany in the UN Security Council, I will firstly, outline the process in itself before analysing benefits and hindrances in the process concerning the women peace and security agenda.

Firstly, the prioritisation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda was in collaboration with other European states. There is an agreement among non-permanent European members of the UNSC to continue working on issues that have been started by prior members to hopefully bring them to conclusion. Interviewee #1 mentions that the European member states share values and interests, and are thus inclined to follow each others leads. As Sweden was a member of the UNSC right before Germany, the WPS Agenda has been a priority. Like mentioned above, Sweden was the first country to announce a feminist foreign policy and has hence made the WPS agenda a big priority during their time on the Council.

This agreement among European states clearly shows an informal institution. The norm to continue working on issues that other states have declared a priority is a structural boundary that limits the decision-making options for the German state. Following the ideas of historic institutionalism, this could be viewed as path dependency. Since the end of World War II, European cooperation and multilateralism has increased massively. As pointed out, most European countries view themselves to have similar values, and to champion international order and human rights (Interviewee #1). Applying the idea of path dependency, this cooperation is now considered a norm – or informal institution – that also applies to outer European arenas. Hence, the decision-making power of individual European states in the Security Council is limited by this norm of multilateral cooperation.

However, as seen in our case, these structural limits may be beneficial to the advancement of the WPS agenda. Since ideas about gender equality are engrained as a value in the institution, the institution is in fact gendered. As gender equality is not satisfactorily implemented on a broader stage in the UNSC and its working areas, European countries may feel inclined to push for their ideas of norms and morality onto the international political stage.

Nevertheless, these structural limits do not mean that there is no agency involved. Interviewee #2 points out that prior to the 2019 – 2020 seat on the Security Council, there was a lot of discussion on whether to prioritise the WPS agenda or a resolution on Children in Conflicts. Since the topic of Children in Conflict falls nicely into the European values of

human rights, this topic should have easily be highlighted without upsetting other European countries by breaking the norm. Likewise, Germany prioritised Children in Conflict during their last UNSC membership in 2012 (Interviewee #2). The selection of the WPS agenda over the Children in Conflict Agenda was – among others – chosen through the personal interest of foreign minister Maas and the representative to the UN Heusgen. All three interviewees have pointed out that the two senior officials were personally interested in the topic of gender equality. Thus, the prioritisation of the WPS agenda cannot solely be ascribed to the structural limits of European norms, but are likewise a decision made through the agency of senior leadership in German foreign policy. One could question to what degree the personal interests of the senior leadership are due to an institutionalised discourse on gender equality that informed personal values of these actors (see: discourse institutionalism), however, the exploration of this idea lies outside of the scope of this thesis.

Next, since Germany has prioritised the WPS agenda, they were co-chairing the informal working group of for the Agenda (Security Council Report, 2019b). Interviewee #2 points out that part of that work involved a tight collaboration with Civil Society involved with the UNSC. All three interviewees have mentioned how consultations with members of both the German and international civil society is a vital part of their work. Hereby, this occurs through both formal and informal meetings at the Council. In formal consultations, important members of the civil society will brief the entirety of the Security Council on a specific topic. These consultations are used to firstly, receive a better overview over the issues at hand, and secondly, to get an idea about the public opinion about the work of the foreign ministry and permanent mission to the UN.

Lastly, I will briefly look at the actual decision-making process of the work in the Security Council with the WPS agenda. All three interviewees have pointed out that the work is based on a tight collaboration between the German Permanent Mission to the UN and the German foreign ministry. Hereby, there is a hierarchy in the decision-making process that is influenced by the perceived importance of the topic. Generally, the decision-making power for most resolutions lies within the OR department of the foreign ministry. The OR department is the Directorate-General for International Order, the United Nations and Arms Control, and works closely with the permanent mission to the UN (Federal Foreign Office, n.d.-b). Interviewee #1 explains that for most resolutions the head of the Directorate-General has to approve the directives that the foreign ministry sends to the permanent mission. However, for some resolutions the state secretaries will hold that decision-making power, and

occasionally, the foreign minister himself will make the final decision. The latter happened for the debate and passing of Resolution 2467 on Sexual Violence in Conflicts.

However, two aspects hinder the decision-making power of the Directorate-General. Firstly, the directives sent to the Permanent Mission to the UN are often pointers, not fully written out discussion points. Thus, Permanent Representative Heusgen has the agency to phrase and emphasise certain topics to his liking. Secondly, Interviewee #2 points out that the senior leadership with the decision-making power tends to follow the advice of the junior experts. While they have the power to make decisions based on their personal preferences (at least to a degree), the de facto decision-making will more likely occur on a lower level.

Next, I will examine the benefits and hinderances for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Germany's recent UN Security Council membership. Firstly, looking at aspects that support the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, several structural benefits can be identified. Within the bureaucratic system of German foreign policy making, there are set procedures to ensure the inclusion of the WPS agenda in most of the official UNSC correspondence. These institutionalised procedures are formalised through the form that is used to give directives to the German permanent representation to the UN. Interviewee #1 points out that this form has a field to fill in background information and pointers on the WPS agenda for the specific case. Through this, the foreign ministry attempts to achieve an overarching, cross-cutting inclusion of the WPS agenda. Interviewee #3 also points out the interconnection of the WPS into all topics. Both claim that the WPS agenda is relevant in nearly all resolutions the UNSC works with, and that Germany has been fairly successful in implementing that.

Next, the existence of institutionalised networks in favour of the WPS agenda is an important structural benefit for the advancement of it. All three interviewees have mentioned their close collaboration with civil society, and emphasised the importance of that. Interviewee #3 for example mentioned the close collaboration with Network 1324, a German collaboration of NGOs that concern themselves with gender issues and the WPS agenda, while Interviewee #2 explained the collaboration between the German permanent representation and the NGO working group on women, peace and security. Both these examples cover predominately large, well established NGOs and Civil Society Actors that have gained direct access to political elites in the German foreign ministry and the UN Security Council.

However, though not as well established as the networks in Berlin and New York, Interviewee #2 also points out the collaboration with grassroot movements. Hereby, two

institutionalised structures facilitate these consultations. Firstly, the vast network of embassies provides opportunities to consult grassroots actors locally and use that consultation in their work in the UNSC. This however, is not as well established, and often depends on the willingness of the individual embassies to engage with local grassroots activists (Interviewee #2). Secondly, the Security Council itself has structures in place to invite grassroots activists to their official meetings. The invitation of these activists is done through the presidency of the Council, and thus also depends on the willingness of the specific country to do so. Germany however has made an increased effort to bring in more grassroots activists, according to Interviewee #2. This is also reflected in the presence of several external actors in the meeting on Resolution 2467. Five external speakers were invited to address the Security Council right before their vote on the agenda (United Nations Security Council, 2019).

Hence, both nationally and internationally institutionalised networks provide the structures to include members of the Civil Society in the decision-making process by listening to their input and criticism.

However, it appears that the personal ideas and agency of different stakeholders play a potentially larger part in the implementation of the WPS. Firstly, looking at the top-level elite, several important actors can be identified that have helped the implementation of the WPS agenda. As mentioned earlier, both foreign minister Haas and permanent representative Heusgen have shown a personal interest in the WPS agenda, and have pushed for the passing of Resolution 2467 on sexual violence in conflict. All three interviewees have mentioned the importance of this. Since the final decision-making power lies with these two actors, their support is vital for a proper implementation of WPS. Likewise, this interest in the WPS agenda was acknowledged by several actors on the UN Security Council. During the final debate on Resolution 2467, foreign minister Maas took over the German seat in the Security Council and consequently the presidency of the meeting. This further shows a personal interest of an elite actor in German foreign policy making. As it appears to be the procedure, many speaker in the meeting thanked the German delegation for sponsoring and highlighting Resolution 2467. However, British representative Ahmad also recognised the ‘personal efforts in prioritizing on this important issue [...]’ by the German foreign minister (United Nations Security Council, 2019, p. 14).

In the case of the recent UNSC membership, this has appeared to be beneficial to the implementation of the WPS agenda. However, as Interviewee #2 points out, these benefits are not eternally secured. As Germany will have national elections in 2021, the actors involved in foreign policy and the UN Security Council might change. Though the

interviewee does not believe that the WPS agenda would fall of the agenda of the German foreign ministry even if a change of government occurred. They believe that gender equality is an engrained norm in German culture and would thus not cease to be considered in German foreign policy making.

Interviewee #2 also mentions the increased interest among a broader range of actors in national politics and foreign policy making. ‘[A]cross the board in Berlin there is a lot more people who care about it, there is a lot more [...] attention to the issue, and political and well as on working level.’ (Interviewee #2). This is also noticeable through the increased support of the Bundestag – the German national parliament. This increased interest in gender issues and the WPS agenda may suggest that there is an institutional change happening.

However, there are also several aspects that hinder the implementation of the WPS agenda in German foreign policy making. Firstly, as mentioned above, the structures of the UN allocate more power to the permanent members of the Security Council. This has proven to be difficult, as Russia, China and the United States all had criticism on the initial draft that Germany provided for Resolution 2467. While these concerns were sufficiently addressed and the resolution was passed, some cuts had to be made to ensure this outcome. As the United States threatened to veto on the inclusion of sexual and reproductive rights, parts on that were cut from the final draft (Security Council Report, 2019a). These difficulties were examined by several stakeholders. Firstly, Interviewee #2 pointed out the complications that occurred through the politics of the former American Trump administration. While the US had been traditionally a close ally during previous German Security Council memberships, their national politics during the 2019 – 2020 turn was staining that collaboration. Hence, difficulties with three of the five permanent members has put structural limits on the implementation of the WPS agenda. This was not only criticised by the interviewees, but also noted during the UN Security Council meeting on Resolution 2467. While many states expressed their worries that language on sexual and reproductive health was cut from the resolution, the French representative directly condemned threats of veto as a tool to implement their own ideas. ‘We deplore the fact that permanent members of the Council should threaten to use the veto to challenge 25 years of progress on women’s rights in situations of armed conflict.’ (United Nations Security Council, 2019, p. 32).

Secondly, Interviewee #1 points out the lack of female representation in German foreign policy elites. They criticise the lack of women in the diplomatic service as well as leadership positions within the foreign ministry. This aligns with the idea that many international institutions are gendered, and still favour men over women. Interviewee #2

mentions the benefit an increased number of women in foreign policy would have on the WPS agenda. They mentioned the lack of understanding as one of the main hinderances for the implementation of WPS. Hereby, this lack of understanding both pertains to the misunderstanding what the WPS exactly entails, and the assumption that the WPS agenda is purely a human rights issue. Interviewee #3 agreed with that notion and mentioned that some actors in the foreign ministry and the UNSC view the WPS Agenda as a development issue, rather than a security issue. Through this, the agenda runs at risk to be excluded from important peace and security discussions. Hence, interviewee #3 wished for a broader understanding of the WPS agenda and its immediate inclusion into peace processes in general.

Conclusion

To conclude, many different factors play into the decision-making process of German foreign policy in the Security Council. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the actors involved in the process. Hereby, I was able to identify three sets of actors with varied involvement in the process. Firstly, the political elite has the largest impact on the decision-making process. This includes both senior leadership within the foreign ministry and the permanent mission to the UN, as well as lower ranking bureaucratic agents such as the interviewees. Those actors are directly involved in the decision-making process and are responsible for implementing the WPS agenda into their work. Secondly, well established networks of civil society in Germany and the United States are also involved in the decision-making process. Hereby, they hold a more passive position, in which they are invited to consult with the actors directly involved in the process. They are directly connected to the political elites, however, hold no de facto decision-making power themselves. Lastly, grassroots activists are only sometimes involved in the decision-making process. They usually do not have direct access to the political elites, but have to be invited to participate in specific discussions and consultations. Hence, their influence on the decision-making process is limited.

Secondly, whether Germany is able or willing to implement the WPS agenda into their work in the security council depends on several factors. Structurally, it appears that the German foreign ministry apparatus has adapted to include the WPS into their work in the Security Council. This is both secured through the formalisation of WPS standards in their work and the personal interest and agency of high-ranking political actors. However, some counteraction occurs through the misunderstanding of the WPS agenda, and the limitation of

its working range. Some actors attempt to exclude the agenda from discussions about international security and peace keeping.

Moreover, on an international level there appear to be more structural hinderances. Especially the inner workings of the UN Security Council and its unequal distribution of decision-making power among the council members have shown to be a hinderance to the implementation of the WPS agenda. Hence, to truly apply a feminist inspired foreign policy in the Security Council, the underlying structures of the institution would need to be adjusted. If and how that could be achieved lies outside of the scope of this paper, but may be an interesting topic for further research.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

1. What is your role in developing statements/ speeches for the German foreign ministry/German representation to the UN?
2. How does the process of developing statements/ speeches/ etc look like generally?
3. What kind of instructions do higher up personnel give you? How often is your work reviewed?
4. In what way do you feel like it is possible to include personal opinions/ values/ ideas in your work?
5. Who has the final say in the phrasing of opinion statements/ policy suggestions/ speeches?
6. In what way do other countries' embassies and foreign ministries influence the opinion of the German representation/ foreign ministry? (e.g. through the shared presidency with France in the UNSC; through multilateral organisations (UN; EU; NATO; G8; OECD; EEA))
7. Are there any UN Declarations/ practices/ resolutions that are considered when developing opinions?
 - 7.1. If so, which ones? How do you ensure that you follow them?
 - 7.2. If they seem to clash with German interests, what takes precedence?
8. How important is the WPS in your work? How often do you think about WPS when developing statements that are seemingly unrelated?
 - 8.1. How often do you work with other topics to make sure the WPS agenda is included (i.e. Syria, Libya, Afghanistan; Sudan, North Korea)
9. Do you practice gender mainstreaming at the foreign ministry/ German representation to the UN? If so, how often is gender mainstreaming specifically talked about/ considered?
10. How often do you employ external advisors on WPS/ gender mainstreaming/ gender equality or other related subjects?
11. What are the most important aspects you want to achieve/ include in your work? How well do you manage to do so?
12. How do you personally feel about WPS/ gender mainstreaming/ gender equality/ etc? How important are these to you?
13. In regard to the UNSC, how much do you try to anticipate what other members might say about different topics?
 - 13.1. Do you attempt to accommodate for that?

- 13.2. How much does criticism/ disagreement from other countries influence Germany's positioning on certain topics?
14. Ambassador Heusgen has said in an interview with the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation that Germany has done what it said out to do during seat in the security council? How are these goals formulated before the begin of the membership? Who decides on the topics?
 - 14.1. How where the goals specifically for the WPS agenda set?



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