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Feminist Peace Research

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Synonyms

Class; Critical Theories; Emancipatory; Epistemic Violence; Everday; Gender; Grassroots; Intersectional; Justice; Kashmir; Local; Margins; Normative; Northern Ireland; Oppression; Patriarchy; Positive Peace; Power Structures; Race; Sexuality; Standpoint Theory; Transdisciplinary; Transnational; Transversal Politics

Summary (Definition)

This chapter introduces the reader to feminist peace research whose analysis of the gendered continuum of violence offers key insights to the field of peace and conflict studies. Feminist thinkers have long worked with an understanding that violence and peace occur along continua that span multiple levels of analysis; they explore instances of peace- and war-making at the international level as well as at the state, group, and interpersonal levels. The approach of feminist peace research recognizes the importance of analyzing gender – but also sexuality, race, class, and other relations – as power structures within any given empirical setting. The orientation of feminist peace research is explicitly normative putting the transformation of gendered power relations at the center of peaceful societies. As this chapter outlines, adopting a feminist approach to peace research fundamentally challenges not just what peace means but also how one should research it.

Introduction

Scholars and activists unfamiliar with feminist approaches might think of familiar themes of women and peace, when they hear about feminist peace research. Studying women's involvements in peace movements and their work as peacemakers in their homes and communities is an important part of the larger research area but, as is outlined below, feminist peace research has a much broader agenda and offers key insights to the whole field of peace and conflict studies.

In terms of its scope, feminist peace research (hereafter FPR) is concerned not just with spectacular instances of violence, such as the event of war, but considers the everyday as a key site of concern (see chapter "▶ Everyday Peace"). Feminist thinkers have long implicitly (if not explicitly) worked with an understanding that violence and peace are gendered and that they occur along continua, an interconnected series of

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instances that share a fundamental quality (see, e. g., Donahoe 2019). For example, war is clearly a type of spectacular violence that affects men and women differently, but feminist scholars extend their concern to everyday violences such as domestic abuse or bullying of trans-community members. Violence occurs at these sites and so too can peace. The scope of FPR is therefore multi-level, exploring spectacular instances of peace-making at the international level as well as instances at the state, group, and interpersonal levels.

As Wibben et al. have argued, FPR aims to be "transdisciplinary, intersectional, normative, and transnational [which] challenge[s] disciplinary (and other) boundary-making, allowing for conceptual and methodological cross-pollination to occur" (2019, p. 86). What is more, "as a feminist endeavor, feminist peace research necessarily analyses gender, sexuality, race, and class relations as power structures within any given empirical setting" (ibid., p. 87). Feminism and peace research are each grounded by an explicitly normative agenda: gender equality for feminism, a world without violence for peace research. As Catia Confortini has argued convincingly, "[a]t the most elementary level, then, [FPR] integrates these two normative goals into an axiology of transformation of gender relations as a constitutive element of peaceful societies" (in Wibben et al. 2019, p. 88). Adopting a feminist approach to peace research fundamentally challenges what peace means and proposes different ways of studying it. In what follows, therefore, this chapter discusses feminist peace research by talking about each element: (1) feminism; (2) peace; and (3) research in turn, before turning to a (small) illustrative case study on Northern Ireland to show what this means in practice.

Feminism

Feminism, besides describing a form of activism, refers to a set of critical theories that interrogate power structures, mainly (but not exclusively) through the lens of gender. Due to its long histories and multiple sites of origin, it is not monolithic, being more accurately described as feminisms, multiple. While liberal, equality feminisms have often dominated mainstream understandings of feminist thought, it is the work of scholars whose experiences from the margins of (global) society illuminate about how the center functions that is emphasized here. These scholars teach that patterns of (gender) subordination intersect across dimensions of ability, class, caste, ethnicity, indigeneity, race, religion, sexuality, and more (see Agathangelou and Ling 2009; Chowdry and Nair 2004; Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2000; hooks 1984; Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 2020; Mohanty 1984; Tuhiwai-Smith 2012, and chapter "► Intersectionality and Peace," this volume). These intersections compound injustice among vulnerable populations and, Patricia Hill-Collins notes, "regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression" (2000, p. 18).

Feminisms are inherently normative: seeking not only to analyze and critique unjust gender structures but to develop emancipatory alternatives to them. While feminist scholars and activists emerge in a variety of locations and address specific grievances, they are united by the shared goal of gender justice. "Feminism is about liberation from gender discrimination and other forms of oppression," as Gwen Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey (2020, p. 2) argue. For intersectional feminists the struggles against any particular form of oppression can never be divorced from other struggles for justice. What this means in any specific case depends on the grievance being addressed. While gender oppression is a global phenomenon, it manifests in particular ways in different sites.

María Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman's (1983) discussion of the demand for "the woman's voice" – singular – in feminist theory and activism illustrates this issue nicely. Rather than attempt to capture "the woman's voice," they suggest that the purpose of theory should be to be "helpful, illuminating, empowering, respectful" (Lugones and Spelman 1983, p. 578). For them, "a theory that is respectful about those about whom it is a theory will not assume that changes that are perceived as making life better for some women are changes that will make, and will be perceived as

making life better for other women" (ibid., p. 579). It is not possible, therefore, to devise *one* feminist agenda that fits *all* (women, queers, trans), because "our visions of what is better are always informed by our perception of what is bad about our present situation" (Lugones and Spelman 1983, p. 579). Indeed, "how we think and what we think about does depend in large part on who is there - not to mention who is expected or encouraged to speak" (ibid.). This is crucial because "oppression works through systems of power and inequality, including the dominance of certain values, beliefs and assumptions about people and how society should be organized" (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 2020, p. 14) – those whose values dominate often fail to recognize their privilege and how it facilitates the ease with which they move in (global) society. It is only by centering those on the margins and by encouraging and valuing a wide variety of perspectives that scholars and activists get better at challenging all forms of oppression – hence the importance of focusing on feminist knowledges from the margins.

Feminist scholarship is also always transdisciplinary and transnational – not only has it developed across a wide variety of places and spaces, but since gender oppression is global (even as it expresses itself locally), resistance to it must be global (and local at the same time). This involves difficult conversations and has lead to the need to challenge simplistic notions of global sisterhood and "the image of a deracialized universal woman" (Falcón 2016, p. 12). Hence, Barbara Smith's early challenge for feminist politics is key: "What I really feel is radical is trying to make coalitions with people who are different from you. I feel it is radical to be dealing with race and sex and class and sexual identity all at one time" (Smith 1981, quoted in Collins 2000, p. 233). This also implies to "listen seriously to the concerns, fears, and agendas of those one is unaccustomed to heeding when building social theory, taking on board, rather than dismissing" (Sylvester 1994, p. 317).

Transversal politics (developed mainly by Yuval-Davis, see, e.g., 1994, 2006) is one way of capturing intersectionalities and problematizing assumptions of homogeneity as well as of universality. It is based on a recognition that position, identity, and values are not the same and are not necessarily co-located: Members of the same identity group, for example, can be differently positioned (in terms of, e.g., class, race, ability, life-stage, etc.), while, at the same time, similar positioning may not result in similar (social, cultural, economic, political, etc.) values. Like feminist standpoint theory, transversal politics recognizes the importance of point of view while also complicating the understanding of a standpoint by recognizing its shifting, unfinished character. Importantly, it emphasizes difference not in opposition to equality, but rather as making justice possible by acknowledging power differentials entailed in varied positionalities. It is the contention of FPR scholars that only by drawing on multiple feminist insights, while consistently interrogating their limits and their unfinished character, FPR scholarship can remain "true to feminist methodological and political commitments and to continual, radical, and deliberate critique, allowing for only temporal resting points" (Wibben 2011, p. 114).

Peace

As Betty Reardon (1993, p. 6) explains, "peace is a social environment that favors the full development of the human person." While much traditional scholarship reads the human as either male (such as in the tradition of "natural man" described by Thomas Hobbes in the *Leviathan*) or as neutral (where a human person could be any or no gender), feminist explorations of the human point to a number of crucial limitations with these accounts. For example, Natashia Marhia points to the importance of interrogating "how the 'human' has historically been constructed as an exclusionary – and fundamentally gendered – category" (2013, p. 19). This particular construction of the human in the "liberal humanist, normative intellectual heritage" (ibid., p. 20) underpins the human development and the human rights discourses, all of which have been criticized by feminists for their emphasis on individual capabilities

without considering often conflicting needs of the group, side-stepping the need for one's humanity to be recognized and valued by others, and a tendency to universalize an a priori understanding of what it means to be fully human. As Marhia (2013, p. 32, citing Butler and Robinson) concludes, "in order to address the uneven global distribution of embodied vulnerabilities [our understanding of the human] must also include 'the social relations that mediate human life in ways that ensure its quality and flourishing'."

Consequently, if peace is a social environment that favors the full development of the human person, then violence is that which interrupts human development or the social environment in which it thrives. In order to build peace, one must "endeavor to achieve... humane and equitable global social conditions" (Reardon 1993, p. 5) – and FPR points toward the ways in which intersecting oppressions shape these conditions, opening up "other ways to make grievances known" (Vellacott 2008, p. 203). Otherwise this "peace" (often referred to as negative peace) continues to be shaped by varied forms of violence, many of which are continuous with violence during war and whose effects are gendered, raced, classed, and more. Conditions of peace must occur across multiple levels, across all the sites in which human development takes place and can be interrupted with violence. "FPR understands peace as dynamic (Vellacott 2008) and constantly in the making, a process laying the foundations for relationships of mutuality within "multiple worlds" (Ling 2014)" (Wibben et al. 2019, p. 87).

In their recent article on feminist peace research, Annick Wibben et al. (2019, p. 87) propose that a key contribution of FPR is that it "not only provides insights into what can be termed 'spectacular' instances of violence but also sharpens our analysis of the everydayness and possibilities of peaceful coexistence and conflict transformation and prevention." Identifying the everyday as an additional key site of analysis has a number of implications for feminist conceptions of peace. Most importantly, such a focus grounds feminist peace in human experience, which allows the researcher to pay attention to intersecting forms of oppression, rather than what Choi (forthcoming) refers to as the "established institutionalized language of states."

This focus on everyday experiences of peace (and war) requires "paying attention [at] the level of the interpersonal and intercorporeal" (Wibben et al. 2019, p. 87) and moves FPR past the peace/war dichotomy, to identify the ways in which various violences may simultaneously overlap with various spaces of peace. "Formal peace can be negotiated in the state house while domestic violence continues in the family house" (Donahoe 2019, p. 88). A country supposedly at peace with its neighbors may suffer domestic crime, poverty, and racism and be lacking health care and education; a state's citizens may exercise civil liberties at the same time as indigenous rights continue to be stripped away. Researching these issues from the margins shifts the focus to ongoing violences, leading FPR scholars to note how each of these injustices maintain and invite violence into the lives of many. From this vantage point, "peace is never a return to normality when life before the war was already in a shape of war for certain gendered, sexualized and variously othered bodies and lives" (Choi forthcoming). Feminist scholars have often referred to this phenomenon as the continuum of violence that spans war and peace as well as the multiplicity of sites associated with them (e.g., Cockburn 2004; Enloe 2004; Kelly 1987; Reardon 1993).

Caroline Moser (2001) pointed out that thinking about violence as a continuum provides an heuristic to identify the ways in which types of violence are linked and reinforce each other. Paying attention to this continuum, argues Sanam Roohi, "can make us aware of insidious forms of violence that hinder peace or the promise of peace" (in Wibben et al. 2019, p. 92). Without such attention, she goes on, peace researchers "render opaque the everydayness of both peace negotiations and the eruption of [violent] conflict in places like Kashmir" (ibid.). Notwithstanding this (overdue) recognition, FPR argues that "feminist scholarship provides particularly located insights about how a wide range of practices and discourses - security, war, and citizenship being just three examples - are crucially gendered, sexualized expressions of patriarchal power" (Choi forthcoming).

FPR highlights peacebuilding practices along the continuum of peace beyond the spectacular as well. These practices are localized, particularistic, and bottom-up (see, e.g., McLeod 2015). A particular type of example is the people-to-people activities that are often rooted in care. As Vaittinen et al. (2019, p. 3) argue "care, and the gendered power relations that go with it, cut through social practices in all contexts of peace and conflict. For the understanding of everyday peace, engaging with feminist theories of care is therefore crucial." While not essentially (biologically) female, care acts tend to be interpreted as women's work and are henceforth devalued (Ruddick 2002). This is a topic FPR scholars emphasize because traditional scholarship neglects the historical reality that traditionally gendered care work has produced skills and resources among women that are "critical not only to human survival but to human *development"* (Boulding 2000, pp. 108–109) and therefore peace.

Given the importance of full human development (with the feminist caveats outlined above), more attention to the politics of care is a key concern for FPR. "Everyday practices of care not only sustain life through direct acts of care-giving, but in various gendered ways involving caring human beings they also sustain and help to build trust among and within communities" (Vaittinen et al. 2019, p. 3). Care, whether for children, elders, or the community at large, the rhythm of daily life with its rituals and celebrations that build trust, along with other everyday acts form cultures of peace (Boulding 2000) and amount to what Donahoe (2017, p. 2) terms slow peace because of the ways in which it is often banal, dispersed both across time and space rather than spectacular, and a process of accretion. From an FPR perspective, at each level of peacebuilding, whether international and spectacular, driven by formal practices or local, slow, everyday practices, peace is the ongoing challenge to create and sustain environments in which human beings thrive.

Research

The previous two sections introduced the reader to intersectional feminism and then outlined how a focus on the everyday, as a key site for peace research, stretches the definition not just of what peace might be but also where insights might be found. This third section turns to how these insights shape feminist research on peace. Since FPR "is prefigurative of feminist peace [. . .] we are committed to ask at every step of our research process the following question: how does my research contribute to human flourishing, gender justice, and a gender-informed positive peace?" (Confortini in Wibben et al. 2019, p. 88). This question is at the heart of feminist research in peace and conflict studies, even if it might not always be perfectly executed.

It is also important to note that "most writing that explicitly locates itself as part of the feminist tradition takes a political stance, but not all scholars that research women (or gender) do so [some work uses] gender only as a variable or takes an essentialist view of gender" (Wibben 2016a, p. 2). Feminist peace research, especially as it is currently being revitalized through efforts such as the Feminist Peace Research Network, takes a more explicitly intersectional feminist approach as outlined above. While some scholars "specifically anchor the discussion by building knowledge on the basis of women's experiences [. . .] others engage more broadly with feminist insights, even studying the experiences of men rather than of women" (Wibben 2016a, p. 2). Importantly, while social science often requires that "we have to think about women as a group—and of the structures that make it necessary to think of them as such and that also affect their everyday lives—we also need to pay attention to the ways in which individual women are situated in varied contexts which shape not only their experience, but also how they identify themselves and make sense of their lives" (Wibben 2016a, p. 3). As such, much of FPR is transversal, paying attention to a variety of perspectives shaped by identities, positionalities, and values, which are in constant flux as the conversation and those involved continue to change (see also Yuval-Davis 1994).

As a critical theory, feminism approaches research methods with a keen recognition that "knowledge is for someone and for some purpose" (Cox 1981, p. 128). Hence a feminist

understanding of the continuum of violence includes attention to epistemic violence, the term developed by Gayatri Spivak to describe the "type of violence that attempts to eliminate knowledge possessed by marginal subjects" (Dotson 2011, p. 236). The critique inherent in the term "epistemic violence" is that knowledge can function as a form of domination when it is designed and applied to silence the "colonial other" (Spivak 1994, pp. 24–25; see also Chowdry and Nair 2004; Tuhiwai-Smith 2012). While epistemic violence draws attention to how knowledge practices can silence and exclude, it is also possible for knowledge to be emancipatory by bringing awareness to patterns of shared oppressions as well as strategies for resistance. Here, feminist commitments to interrogating power structures, also as they appear in how research is conducted, what counts as knowledge, and who is allowed to participate in the conversations and to set its frame (Lugones and Spelman 1983), are crucial.

Feminist peace scholars have long been concerned with examining power: Almost 50 years ago, in 1972, Berenice Carroll challenged peace research's "cult of power" and Judith Stiehm's explored nonviolent power. They and other scholars have pointed out there are many ways to think of power. More recently, Jo Rowlands (1997) proposed four types of power: power-over (coercion), power-to (agency), power-within (empowerment), and power-with which is both collective and collaborative. While power-to and power-within are each important formulations for feminism, the feminist research process conscientiously engages the power-with formulation which emphasizes the value of the relational. To achieve this, feminists purposefully engage across levels of analysis in order to better understand relationships between people, structures of violence, and social relations (see also Agathangelou and Ling 2009; Tickner 2001).

This is true across multiple levels of research. Feminists are often drawn to research methodologies that pay careful attention to the ways in which subjects relate to one another and interact. Feminists are also cognizant of the ways in which they as researchers relate to research participants, pursuing methodologies that require them to engage directly with the populations they study, whether through interviews or ethnographic work (see also Ackerly et al. 2006; Tuhiwai-Smith 2012). These commitments also imply that feminist scholars often engage in research that emanates from and is directly applicable to particular activist communities (of which the researcher herself might be a part). Consequently, feminists prize participatory research where they work with or alongside communities (of which the researcher might have become a part in the process or of which they were already a part), emphasizing the need for reflexivity throughout the research process (see also Wibben 2016a, b). It is no surprise then that feminist scholars value working with colleagues as co-researchers, co-authors, and members of networks, creating knowledge that serves all those involved in the project.

Accordingly feminist research ethics emphasize "a self-reflexive commitment to revisiting epistemological choices, boundaries and relationships throughout the research process" (Ackerly and True 2010, p. 38). Unlike traditional science where objectivity (supposedly) arises from a view from nowhere, "feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges," writes Donna Haraway (1988, p. 581). Acknowledging that scholars are variously positioned, as transversal politics also emphasizes, and reflecting on the constraints this places on knowledge creation, makes for more accurate (objective) research. What is more, by emphasizing the "with" in their relationships with the populations they study, with colleagues, and with students, feminists privilege the relational elements of the research process: collaboration, community building, and respect for the agency of those working toward peace and toward a better understanding of peace. The knowledge garnered and created by FPR seeks to be not just illuminating but also respectful and empowering (Lugones and Spelman 1983), thus contributing to the full development of the human person. Thus, FPR as a normative endeavor contributes directly to the goal of peace.

Northern Ireland

Formal peace processes generally include elites among belligerent parties. These are rarely women. As Christine Bell and Catherine O'Rourke (2010) found, only 16% of peace agreements even reference women and only rarely do those "references illustrate good practice." The result is that those tasked with making peace are often those same men responsible for making war. The Northern Ireland peace process is an interesting exception because women were formally elected to participate in the peace process though Eilish Rooney (1995) notes that women's peacebuilding attempts here had been historically dismissed. A network of women in the community and voluntary sector organized to form the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (the Coalition). As an "identity conflict" characterized by the sociopolitical divide between Catholics and Protestants, the three decades of political violence known as the Troubles were formally concluded by the 1998 Belfast or Good Friday Agreement (see chapters "▶ The Troubles: The Northern Ireland Conflict" and "▶ Reconciliation in Northern Ireland"). The Coalition received a large enough share of votes that two of their members, Pearl Sagar (Protestant) and Monica McWilliams (Catholic), were granted seats at the all-party talks (see Aretxaga 1997; Sales 1997; Ward 2004, 2005). Women's participation in this peace process is a useful heuristic not simply for identifying ways in which women work for peace but also for exposing the ways in which peace and conflict processes are inherently gendered.

FPR analysis shows how gender operated in this case and how women contributed to the peace process in numerous ways and changed the dynamic between parties. The violence of many decades often spilt over into antagonisms and aggressive behavior between opposing parties during the peace talks. Members of the Coalition experienced this same antagonistic behavior, but what the public accepted as normal behavior between rival men looked abnormal when carried out against women. The members of the Coalition neither yielded nor returned the abuse and, instead, publicly shamed the leaders of the other parties for their bad behavior. This shifted public opinion and resulted in better interactions between all parties, allowing the space for productive discussions. It also alleviated concerns voiced publicly from numerous corners that perhaps the peace process was not a place for women (Donahoe 2017; Fearon 1999). Not only did Coalition members evidence the same capacities as their male colleagues, their engagement in the peace process challenged the gender norms of the process in its entirety and contributed positively to the final agreement.

Importantly, as members of the community and voluntary sector, the Coalition represented communities and a wide range of issues across Northern Ireland. The women's work was at the local, grassroots level, serving the everyday needs of their communities: running after school programs, education and training courses, writing grants for community centers, parks and memorials, and delivering critical information to their communities regarding unemployment and welfare. Callie Persic explains that as part of women's networks and representatives of communities, they were not committed to party politics (2004, p. 178) and posed no direct threat to the establishment. Rather than run as local candidates for office, they served as vote collectors.

This method of organizing is an example of transversal politics. Where women across Northern Ireland represented a multitude of differences in political identity, class, life stage, and other positions, they shared the political value of women's inclusion and peace according to Linda Holmgren (2014). While the Coalition did not win seats in any district nor get any individual member elected, they garnered enough votes overall to qualify for their seats at the peace talks. Their logic prioritized the needs of the communities for a cessation of violence and the recognition that those needs were unlikely to be served if the only parties at the table were the political arms of paramilitary organizations. Further the Coalition argued for and achieved the creation of the Civic Forum in the Agreement. The Civic Forum would sit in parallel to the government to ensure that the thriving community and voluntary sector which continues to employ women in the majority could

continue to serve as a conduit of information to and from the government (see chapter "▶ Civil Society Inclusion in Peace Processes"). As such, the Coalition strived to connect the government to the everyday needs of women and the community at large. In the first years following the peace agreement, the Civic Forum was stood down and never reinstated. The Coalition members lamented that this was a metaphor for the government, and "politics" in general, not caring for the needs of people on the ground (Donahoe 2017).

As a political party, the Coalition was short lived. May Blood, Avila Kilmurray, Bronagh Hinds, and Monica McWilliams, founding members of the Coalition with long resumes of ongoing political activism and public engagement since 1998, each stated clearly that their goal was not to create a formal political party (A Century of Women 2020). They organized "out of almost sheer badness" Avila Kilmurray described, in order to ensure that women would be represented at the peace talks (Donahoe 2017, p. 58). Monica McWilliams who continued to represent the Coalition in the Stormont government following the agreement described the Coalition as a temporary "affirmative action measure" and agreed in 2006 that it had served its purpose (Donahoe 2017, p. 74.) A common view was that the Coalition had failed and fell apart or that their mandate had diminished (Murtagh 2008, p. 37; Ashe 2012, pp. 234–235), but when read through the lens of transversal politics, a different picture emerges.

One key element of transversal politics is that coalitions are often temporary, because they are based in shifting, continually renegotiated, interests (Collins 2000; Yuval-Davis 1994). To dismiss the Coalition as a failed experiment also dismissed the purposeful and strategic work that these women did to ensure that the women of Northern Ireland would have a voice in their own peace. Additionally, in prioritizing power-with methodology, it was important to the researcher to give space in the analysis to the voices of these women who had shared their lived experience. They challenged the gender norms of political participation. As further evidence of their long-term impact, it is noteworthy that most of the political parties of Northern Ireland began putting women forward on their party lists as it was clear that the failure to run women candidates was costing them votes (Donahoe 2017, pp. 76–77).

FPR not only challenges the inherent patriarchy of peace processes that exclude women and draw attention to why women's participation is important (O'Rourke 2014); it must also employ a feminist critique as outlined above. While religious affiliation looms large as an intersectional concern in this story (Cockburn 1998, 2010), it is often narrated without attention to the whiteness of the process. Northern Ireland is touted as a successful case of women's inclusion and yet rarely is there mention of the silences that were maintained in the other forms of homogeneity present. One might also draw attention to the ways in which the Coalition was organized by the women listed above and others who were well-educated either through formal schooling or through professional careers. For example, their strategy required a deep understanding of the political and legal ramifications of the electoral process that was employed for the peace talks to recognize that the Coalition wouldn't need to garner enough votes to get women elected in any single community. As noted, their strategy also worked because it did not require their members to directly compete with the larger more established political parties. The privilege of knowing how to navigate the political process helped create the space in which the Coalition operated, but it is unlikely to be replicated in other spaces.

Though the participation of the Coalition in the formal peace talks is often the focus of research on gender and peace in Northern Ireland because it is spectacular, that is only part of the story. This focus on women and peace ignores an equally interesting parallel story about women in paramilitary organizations and their direct participation in violence (see, e.g., Alison 2009 and chapter "▶ Female Combatants and Peacebuilding," this volume). The spectacular story of formal peace talks also ignores the work of slow peace as actors in community development, a field dominated by women and often described as women's work, even when undertaken by men, operate after-

school programs to prevent kids from participating in riots or engaging in paramilitaries or write grants for international peace funding to operate centers for victims of domestic violence, for training and education to combat unemployment, and for physical and mental health services to combat problems with drug addiction and suicide. This less spectacular work takes place across the boundaries of the sectarian divide as women from historically opposing communities support and learn from each other (see chapter "▶ Women's Organisations in Post-Conflict Settings"). Men in Northern Ireland have been less likely to or able to cross communal lines in the same ways because for men this is more likely to be interpreted as treachery (Donahoe 2017). Community development efforts are sometimes deliberately oriented toward peace as in Women Together (Roulston and Davies 2000, p. 188), the Women's Peace Movement (Aretxaga 1997, p. 181), or the Peace People whose founders Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams were awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 (Fairweather et al. 1984; Edgerton 1986; Morgan 1996). Overall the varied efforts are purposeful in achieving power-with members of their own and other communities to fully develop the human person.

Key Takeaways

This chapter set out to show how taking a feminist approach to peace research has implications for the entire field: its strong normative orientation puts gender justice at the center of peaceful societies. After introducing the reader to contemporary intersectional feminisms which interrogate gendered power relations as they intersect with various additional forms of oppression, it turned to discussing implications for conceptions of peace that have long been championed by feminist peace scholars and activists (see also Väyrynen et al. forthcoming). Starting from the everyday experiences of peace and the varied types of violence that shape human lives across the peace-war continuum, feminists have paid particular attention to the corporeal and to relations of care that are fundamental to achieving gender justice and positive peace. Studying the everyday also requires strong ethical commitments, including recognition of how all (research) relations are imbued with power. Through ongoing reflexive practices, feminist scholars have developed unique practices of working with research participants and, indeed, creating new communities of knowledge and action in the process. These broader insights and commitments, including acknowledging a multiplicity of identities, positionalities, and values, are exemplified in the case study on women's involvement in the Northern Ireland peace process.

To conclude, the insights in this chapter are made possible because of a community of scholars and activists: the Feminist Peace Research Network (FPRN). The members' collective aim is to revitalize a feminist peace research tradition; one that includes not just recovered insights from the past (also beyond the one third world), but one that is truly interdisciplinary and transnational (see, e.g., Lyytikainen et al. 2020). This is not just an intellectual endeavor; feminist scholarship provides important insights that are needed to solve current crises: from ongoing wars and the resulting refugee flows, to climate change, environmental degradation, and the resulting global health implications, to the always present but ever-increasing inequalities that shape our ability to respond in a humane manner. This chapter is one piece in the larger puzzle of making feminist contributions to peace and conflict research visible (again) and encouraging colleagues to teach them. The articles and books cited here (including a forthcoming *Handbook of Feminist Peace Research*, edited by Väyrynen et al.) should provide plenty of material for those interested in digging deeper.

Cross-References

- ▶ Civil Society Inclusion in Peace Processes
- ▶ Everyday Peace
- ▶ Female Combatants and Peacebuilding
- ▶ Intersectionality and Peace
- ▶ Reconciliation in Northern Ireland
- ▶ The Troubles: The Northern Ireland Conflict

▶ Women's Organisations in Post-conflict Settings

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