



# Feminist Peace Research in Europe: A Snapshot

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**Abstract** This chapter explores the long trajectory of European feminists' contributions to peace research. Specifically, the coalescing of knowledge via specific Centers of Excellence has supported the recent development of feminist peace research (FPR) in Europe. FPR has also been influenced by the global normative framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS), which relies on research conducted outside of Europe. While the diversity of WPS informed research evidences a thriving FPR field in Europe, it also reveals the limitations of what constitutes 'Europe.' Ultimately, the chapter shows how FPR remains exclusionary, with implications for knowledge production hierarchies.

**Keywords** Centers of Excellence · Feminist peace research · Knowledge production · WPS agenda · Hierarchies

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## INTRODUCTION

Peace research is a multidisciplinary field and often inclusive of work that might also be designated as security studies, international relations, war studies, sociology, anthropology, and law among others. The overall goal of peace research is to capture the ways in which peace can be achieved and sustained for all people. As such, it is fair to say that peace researchers are often normative in their approach and draw from insights from academic scholarship, practitioner experiences, and political activism. Peace research brings together the studies of peace, activism, education, and specific practices undertaken by a broad range of political actors. However, as with many social science subject, feminist interventions have highlighted the tendency to erase the experiences of women and the implications of gender for what we know in peace research (Moran, 2010; Duncanson, 2016).

As the chapter shows, feminist scholars and activists have been at the forefront of the development of peace research itself through theorizing and practice (see Boulding, 2017). Despite the contributions of feminist scholars and activists, feminist insights that draw attention to gendered power relations are still often excluded from mainstream peace research (cf Confortini, 2010). It is why recent works have sought to excavate the importance of feminist engagements for peace research and its practices (McLeod and O'Reilly, 2019; see also Väyrynen et al., 2020).

Of course, there are many feminisms and gender itself is not a fixed concept, which further complicates how we can capture the vastness of feminist interventions in peace research. But, as noted in the first *Handbook on Feminist Peace Research*, “any purported solution to global problems without critical and interdisciplinary feminist analysis” is partial (Väyrynen et al., 2020, 1). Feminism is thus necessary for a holistic understanding of peace research. In accounting for the breadth of feminist contributions to peace research, particularly those that constitute a sort of ‘canon,’ this chapter understands feminist peace research to be “all research, thinking, and action that uses, implicitly or explicitly, feminist insights to understand and act upon the world in ways that foster peace with justice” (ibid., 2).

While feminist contributions are global and introduce criticality to peace research, the nature of global knowledge hierarchies means that Global North voices are overrepresented including in the conversations around peace research (Parashar, 2020; Haastrup and Hagen, 2021). This

chapter is, to an extent, a meditation on what the European landscape of feminist contributions to peace research reveals about themes of positionality, power, and power hierarchies in knowledge production. To do this, the chapter draws on decolonial thinking and proceeds as follows:

First, the chapter maps a broad history of feminist contributions to peace research, highlighting key figures and international historical moments. Second, I explore *where* Europe-based feminist scholars are researching different areas of peace research. Here, I argue that some of the innovation that has emerged in feminist peace research has coalesced around specific Centers of Excellence (CoE) which are based in specific institutions and in countries in Northern Europe, and nurture critical scholarship. Yet, the CoE model can also have the unintended consequence of being exclusionary. The chapter then turns to emphasize the impact that adopting the global normative framework, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, has had in developing feminist peace research in the last 20 years. While acknowledging the breadth of work undertaken in the context of the WPS agenda, I zero in on three areas: the explosion of work on sexual violence; work on women's participation, especially via negotiation; and the emergence of studies in hybridity. The concluding section reflects on the limitations of this mapping exercise. In particular, this chapter calls attention to how knowledge making up feminist peace scholarship in Europe provides important critical direction in peace research and yet potentially reproduces the problematic knowledge hierarchies that dominate international relations (IR) as a discipline.

## FEMINIST ENGAGEMENTS WITH/FOR PEACE

Galtung's notion of positive peace shows an awareness of thinking about structures of power, including gender, race, and class (2011).<sup>1</sup> And yet, the mainstream approaches to peace research have tended to exclude these perspectives in their broader analysis. Even critical interventions have only recently considered the gendered structures of power and their implications for the practices of peace. Feminist peace research sits within the critical interventions into studies of peace.

According to Väyrynen et al. (2020), feminist peace traditions challenge the notion of peace being the absence of violence/war/conflict.

<sup>1</sup> Galtung's approach has of course been critiqued by many. See Lawler (1989), Hansen (2016).

This is in keeping with Galtung's peace studies tradition. However, feminist engagements go beyond this to challenge the "polarisation of violence and peace" (Väyrynen et al., 2020, 4) and reconsider the linkages of peace with ideas of femininity. Feminists have challenged this sort of essentialism within international relations, yielding research about women that showcased their agency (e.g. Ketola, 2020). Beyond this, feminist works draw attention to how everyday violence, such as domestic abuse within 'peaceful' societies, is worthy of consideration in IR's preoccupation with peace and violence. In so doing, feminist contributions break the seemingly strong dichotomy between peace and violence, suggesting instead a continuum (Yadav and Horn, 2021).

As Wibben (2021) suggests, no history of feminist peace research is complete without acknowledging the work and impact of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). A self-described feminist peace organization, WILPF was created when women came together in the wake of World War I in The Hague to condemn the war and outline their principles for permanent peace (see Confortini, 2010, 2012). Although it is not the first such organization (Confortini, 2010), it has had staying power (Wibben, 2021; see also Confortini, 2010, 2012). As an organization, WILPF is firmly against militarism given its link to violence, denounces nuclear proliferation, and is a key international proponent of disarmament. In almost every sense, WILPF embodies feminist engagements in peace research—it merges education with activism and research in the context of specific beliefs that "women matter, that equality matters, and that gender is a construct: the product of unequal power structures" and that peace that is sustained is feminist, which is contingent on the end of patriarchy (WILPF website, n.d).

This was indeed the thrust of Norwegian-born Elise Boulding's (1920–2010) contribution to peace research. Boulding is considered a key contributor to the field of peace research. She documented the history of women in peace processes in her first book, *The Underside of History: A View of Women through Time* (1976). This work challenged the tendency to erase women's presence and contributions to peace via male-dominated social institutions that are implicated in militarization and violence.

Another theme that feminist peace scholars have championed has been peace education. The work of Norwegian educator and politician Birgit Brock-Utne is exemplary of feminist peace education (see Brock-Utne, 1985, 1989). For Brock-Utne, peace goes beyond the eradication of structural and physical violence (as in Galtung's notion) to

include equality of rights. In this articulation, peace is impossible without social justice. In her approach, Brock-Utne challenged the tendency of peace education to ignore questions of gender and introduced the idea of gender-specific socialization. Takala interprets Brock-Utne's gender-specific socialization as: "women's potential for promoting peace, crystallizing in the possibility that (feminist) mothers can bring up their sons so that they might grow up to refuse military service" (Takala, 1991, 233). Brock-Utne's works further outline the importance of women's activism against militarism, especially through disarmament advocacy as experiential knowledge of peace-making, which can be deployed in the service of peace education outside of formal education. There is, however, the tendency to frame women in essentialist terms as it links them to peace because of their capacity for motherhood.

No study on feminist peace research would be complete without acknowledging the work of Cynthia Cockburn. Cockburn (1934–2019) was a feminist peace academic and activist. She was known for working with (rather than on) feminist peace activists. In a sense, her work allowed the peace activists to articulate theory from experience (e.g. 2012). This tradition of scholarship is in part continued by feminists like Catherine Eschle, whose anti-nuclearism work focuses on the study of peace movements (see Eschle, 2016, 2020), peaceful protest camps, and anti-nuclear activists.

Feminist peace research has also emerged because of significant events and frameworks (legal and normative) in international relations. For example, the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000 has led to the explosion of work that constitutes a part of the recent feminist peace research canon. But this is nothing new. For example, the United Nations (UN) conferences on women have generated scholarship, activism, and education that reflect feminist insights into peace, drawing on the experiences of women transnationally.

## A MAPPING OF FEMINIST PEACE RESEARCH IN EUROPE

How does one define 'Europe' in general and in the context of feminist scholarship given the importance of transnational connections for feminist work? To do this, I decided early on that the scope of this work would be limited to scholars who were based institutionally in Europe. Europe, in my imagination, includes the European Union (EU) member

states; EU candidate countries; EU potential candidate states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo); Iceland; Norway; Switzerland; Ukraine; Belarus; Russia; and the UK. However, language limitation soon excluded many of those countries. For example, Russian language research on peacebuilding is inaccessible to me because of my language deficits, as is Spanish; Gaelic; and indeed anything that is not published in English. This is a significant limitation, as it narrows the scope of ‘Europe’ immensely to those works published in English.

Following this initial narrowing, I mined the journals *Peacebuilding*, *International Peacekeeping*, *Journal of Intervention and State-building*, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *European Security*, *International Negotiation*, *Conflict Security and Development*, *Cooperation and Conflict* and *Journal of Peace Research* using keyword searches for the terms ‘feminist,’ ‘feminism,’ ‘gender,’ ‘gender equality,’ ‘equality,’ ‘masculinities,’ ‘inclusion,’ and ‘critical’ as proxies for identifying feminist-linked research. These journals were chosen for their titles, scope, and their extent of cross-referencing feminist peace research. Using the search term ‘critical’ yielded an unmanageable number of articles. Following an initial set of results however, I manually sifted through the resulting articles by reading through abstracts to check for relevance including those works that used an explicitly feminist or gender analysis focus as well as those that did not. Among those works where a feminist or gender analysis was not the focus, I sifted through bibliographies that had the proxy search terms in their title. I then checked the authors of these works against their given institutions to delimit to ‘Europe.’ From there, I derived the first corpus of ‘feminist peace research scholarship.’ This approach is necessarily limited. As Wibben (2021) argues, focusing on key journals offers only a partial perspective, since the prominent journals can function as gatekeepers (Wibben, 2021, 17). Consequently, the hierarchies inherent in knowledge production, often facilitated by sexism and Eurocentrism, can be reproduced by such an approach. Therefore, to enhance representation, the second mode of searching was to use the [www.womenalsoknowstuff.com](http://www.womenalsoknowstuff.com) website to search for the terms ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘peace,’ and sift through the biographies to identify those who adopted a feminist or gender analysis in their work. As this is a US-based database, there is a skew toward US-based scholarship. Finally, the recently published *Routledge Handbook on Feminist Peace Research* has been an immense resource in which all contributors made up the third corpus of feminist peace scholarship.

This approach is imperfect inasmuch as it likely excludes early career scholars without journal article publications, or whose work may fall within this approach but does not self-identify as working within feminist peace research/peace studies. Moreover, this focus means that European-based feminist research is time limited to the last two decades. Seemingly incomplete, this is a necessary step to manage the scope of this chapter. Consequently, the following analysis does not claim completeness but rather offers an entry point to the ways in which feminists based in Europe have contributed to peace research in IR. This approach yielded a database that included approximately seventy names. These scholars, mainly women, are located across ‘Europe,’ but clustered around certain countries and even specific institutions in some cases. Countries that dominate in this database on feminist peace research are Finland, Norway, Sweden, and UK. Beyond these four sites, scholars from Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Ireland also feature, as does those from Spain and Italy to a very limited extent.

### CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE AND THE PRODUCTION OF FEMINIST PEACE RESEARCH

In Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK, scholarship clusters around certain institutions with long-standing histories of peace and conflict studies. The institutional diffusion of feminist peace researchers in specific institutions suggests that there are notional Centers of Excellence (CoEs) of feminist peace research. CoEs are “institutions that concentrate expertise and/or train the top experts” (Mieg, 2014). In these spaces, peace research encompasses both the research within peace studies undertaken by academic affiliates and peace education inclusive of modules and degree programs. CoEs “possess the ability to absorb and generate new knowledge,” which can be used to build new capacity in the specified fields (Hellstrom, 2018, 544). For example, in Finland, the Tampere Peace Research Institute based at Tampere University is an institutional home for several self-identified feminist peace scholars (see Väyrynen et al., 2020).

In the UK, feminist peace research is more diffused across several institutions. The University of Bradford is the ideal type example of a CoE—the oldest department of peace studies—and claims to be the world’s largest university center for the study of peace and conflict. The department hosts two prestigious peace projects: the Rotary Peace Centre

and the Quaker Peace Studies Trust. Despite the long history of peace research, feminist peace research hardly features at the center. Other noteworthy sites of peace research include the University of Manchester (Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute—HCRI), Durham University (Durham Global Security Institute—DGSi), and the University of Kent (Conflict Analysis Research Centre—CARC), and within them, some important feminist work is being undertaken.

For example, at CARC in Kent, feminist peace captures the interdisciplinary nature of peace research sitting at the nexus of conflict resolution/conflict transformation, peace studies, and terrorism studies (Toros et al., 2018). This feminist-informed research work primarily focuses on the experiential nature of war and invariably peace, drawing on a range of feminist methodologies and interrogating the masculinities of violent extremisms (Brown et al., 2020). Other research at CARC has expanded beyond into security studies by integrating the analysis of peace in the context of Global North interventions in the Global South. This work explores, in particular, the gendered implications of institutional practices of security sector reform (SSR) (Ansorg, 2017) and the role of unique Global North actors like the European Union (EU) (see Ansorg and Haastrup, 2018).

At Lund University (Sweden), there is a long-established peace and conflict studies program and feminist research. Work coming out of Lund explores themes like women's participation in mediation and hybridity with respect to peacebuilding practices. Sweden indeed appears to disproportionately nurture feminist peace research via research clusters and teaching programs at University of Goteborg (Peace and Development), Uppsala University (Peace and Conflict), Malmö University (Peace and Conflict Studies), and the National Defence college in Stockholm. For example, Uppsala University's peace and conflict research department is the home of the Nordic Africa Institute, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), and, like Bradford, includes a Rotary Peace Centre. In short, Uppsala is a world renown hub for peace research. Unsurprisingly, some feminist peace research has also emerged from this space including themes on the links between war-trauma and gender (see Brounéus et al., 2017). Within Europe, Sweden is arguably the leader with the highest proportion of CoEs contributing to (feminist) peace research.

The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) hosts the Journal of Peace Research as well as the Centre on Gender, Peace and Security. An interdisciplinary center, feminist researchers there have worked on themes like peacebuilding architecture (Tryggstad, 2016), women's inclusion in peace processes (Lorentzen, 2018), and conflict-related sexual violence (e.g. <https://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/GEO-SVAC/>).

While by no means exhaustive, a mapping of feminist peace research via specific institutions is instructive. Institutions play a role in nurturing and professionalizing peace research—they are not only places where this research happens, but they also train students, practitioners, and other researchers. Indeed, as Centers of Excellence, these institutions legitimize specific approaches to peace research, including feminist peace research, although not equally. In the UK context, for example, feminist peace research is still marginal in these centers, particularly when compared to the CoEs in Scandinavian countries. The ability to develop research tracks within CoEs mainly depends on the availability of funding, and the funding for feminist research has been generous to the Scandinavian institutions (Brorstad Borlaug, 2016). Coalescing institutions within specific sites of knowledge can, however, be exclusionary since these institutions serve as gatekeepers and the 'pure' sources of knowledge (Haastrup and Hagen, 2021). In Manchester, the HCRI can be associated with the peace research that has critiqued liberal peacebuilding and its impact, while Durham may be associated with the 'local turn' in peacebuilding research.

While a focus on Europe may be a logical delimitation based on geographical scope, it may also be one that reifies Eurocentric knowledge production and consequently, the coloniality of knowledge. Coloniality of knowledge refers to the ways in which knowledges of colonizing cultures are elevated over those of colonized cultures through a process of canonizing and normalizing "historically rooted, racially inflected practices" (Tucker, 2018, 220). What knowledge is being used when we think about the philosophies of humanitarian interventions, for example? Whose knowledge is integrated when thinking of models of best practices, of how we investigate and do research? Who determines the scope of inquiry?

In undertaking a mapping via institutions in this way then, I accept that this may also reproduce well-entrenched knowledge hierarchies around peace research. Importantly however, institutional mapping also reveals the ways in which the scholarship has leveraged the adoption of the global normative framework, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda,

while also highlighting blind spots in the type of work that is noticed. Indeed, the WPS agenda is likely the single most impactful policy frame for peace research since 2000. The WPS agenda originated with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Several other resolutions later, the agenda has been informed by feminist peace activism and scholarship. The subsequent section outlines the ways in which feminist peace scholarship coalesces around the WPS agenda through three tracks of research: negotiations, sexual violence, and hybridity.

### LEVERAGING THE WPS AGENDA IN PEACEBUILDING: NEGOTIATIONS, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, AND HYBRIDITY

The WPS agenda is constitutive of 10 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions as of 2020. In the first resolution, four pillars were delineated as the focus for implementing the agenda: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. The participation pillar focuses on the representation of women at ‘all levels of decision-making, including peace-processes, electoral processes ... and the broader social-political sphere.’ Within peace research, this directive has informed a large range of recent work on negotiation practices specifically, including mediation, and on the different meanings of participation in the context of the WPS agenda (O’Rourke, 2014; see also, Krause et al., 2018). The prevention pillar—the most visible pillar of the WPS agenda—integrates gender perspectives into conflict prevention and focuses on ways in which women can take part in prevention, as well as on how women’s experiences can inform conflict prevention. The fourth pillar focuses on relief and recovery, which extends the protection focus of the third pillar (protection) by prioritizing relief for the most vulnerable women from, predominantly SGBV (Haastrup, 2019).

There is now a vast body of work on UNSCR 1325 and WPS more widely, which balances empirical research with theorizing. Importantly, the subjects of inquiry largely encompass the broad definition of peacebuilding, first coined by Johan Galtung (1976). Galtung understood peacebuilding as the structure on which peace is built on to “remove the causes of war and offer alternatives to war in situations where war might occur” (Galtung, 1976, 297–298). Similarly, Lederach adopted a definition of peacebuilding as “more than post-accord reconstruction” but rather a “comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and

sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict towards more sustainable, peaceful relationships” (Lederach, 1997, 20).

As True (2013, 1) noted, peacebuilding offers important opportunities “for advancing women’s rights and gender equality” which are core feminist objectives within peace research. Indeed, many feminist works have made the case for a feminist perspective in peacebuilding broadly (Tryggstad, 2010; 2016). Yet, despite the opportunities provided by the WPS agenda, the systematic inclusion of feminist visions within the peacebuilding arena is lacking (True, 2013). The impetus to respond to this gap has driven a lot of the research I categorize here as feminist peace research on peacebuilding. Within this domain, I focus on the evolution of three key themes: negotiation as previously discussed, tackling sexual violence, and the notion of hybridity.

A first track of WPS research centers on international negotiation and mediation, which in turn has focused on patterns of representation within diplomatic institutions (Towns and Niklasson, 2018; Niklasson and Robertson, 2018; Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum, 2018) and on mediation. The work on mediation explores women who participate in mediation (Aggestam and Svensson, 2018) and women’s influence in international peace negotiations (Paffenholz, 2018; Turner, 2018, 2020). These works capture an area in the practice of the WPS agenda where much is still unknown. Mostly, the feminist engagements in Europe are focused on practices in the Global North, exploring for example, including WPS within the mediation architecture of the EU (Haastrup, 2019) or how women are positioned within these architectures. Much of this work confirms that women are still underrepresented in international negotiations; the WPS agenda has heightened both scholarly and policy awareness of this gap.

A second track of WPS research centers on sexual violence (SV). As the focus of one of the four pillars established in UNSCR1325, the issue of SV within recent feminist peace research has a seemingly outsized position (Meger, 2016). Some of the research on SV focuses on its institutionalization as a focal point of WPS within various arenas from the UN itself to the state level (cf O’Gorman, 2019; Kirby, 2015; Wright 2015). Other works have been case study specific, drawing on regions or countries to illustrate how SV manifests in conflict situations (e.g. Muvumba Sellström 2016, 2019; Swaine, 2020; Yadav, 2020). Both types of feminist peace research reinforce the ongoing challenge of tackling SV as gendered

violence in conflict-affected context. More recent work has asked for attention to men's experiences of SV (Touquet and Schulz, 2021). Yet, some of the scholarship on SV has been critical of its overt prioritization within the WPS context in Africa (see Aroussi, 2017). Some of this more critical work has shown that while feminists have rightly called attention to this issue, the nature of the challenge must also acknowledge the messiness not often accorded in the bid to identify perpetrator versus victim (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013). Other works like Boesten and Henry make the epistemological case for a reflexive feminist approach "that allows us to question the need and context of interviewing survivors and the associated insistence on disclosure" (Boesten and Henry, 2018, 568).

A third track focuses on themes of hybridity in the WPS agenda. Post-colonial scholars have engaged with the notion of hybridity within cultural studies. Building on the work of Edward Said, Bhabha's exploration of hybridization highlights the space in which the cultures of the colonized and colonizers meet to disrupt hierarchies and indeed the status quo that privileges the colonizer's culture (Bhabha, 1994). In the context of peace research, however, Roger Mac Ginty defines hybridity as the "interface between internationally supported peace operations and local approaches to peace that may draw on traditional, indigenous and customary practice" (Mac Ginty, 2022, 391). Unlike sexual violence, the study of hybridity generally, and in feminist contexts, is recent and emergent. It focuses on the interplay of power between 'local' and international interventions in peacebuilding processes and practices.

However, despite the innovation of hybridity, a feminist reading comes late. Mcleod (2015, 48–49), for example, offers a feminist critique of hybridity that provides a "textured understanding of the power relations between local and international gender-change agents," drawing on examples from Southeast Europe. As Mcleod identifies, while the study of hybridity shows the utility of critical perspectives for critiquing the liberal practices of peacebuilding, a feminist reading treats gender as central to the peacebuilding landscape to understand how the local and international interact. Partis-Jennings' work on Afghanistan (2021) demonstrates this clearly through this examination of female international humanitarian workers who occupy an uncomfortable space between the local and international due to the gender they occupy. This theme also resonates in Björkdahl and Höglund (2013) who focus on the 'friction' or precarities within the practices of hybridity. Hybridity in this sense unsettles

the boundaries of local/international and what implications this has for post-conflict sites.

Feminist peace research in the context of WPS implementation in peacebuilding and beyond is not restricted to the three themes captured so far. For instance, recent leadership in theorizing feminist peace research has been undertaken by Europe-based feminist scholars (Väyrynen et al., 2020; Wibben and Donahoe, 2020; Lyytikäinen et al., 2021). Others have focused on themes like nuclear non-proliferation (Duncanson and Eschle, 2008; Eschle, 2017; 2020) peacekeeping (Holvikivi, 2020) and masculinities (Duriesmith, 2020) often straddling peace research, and other subfields of international politics. While these feminist works offer important critiques to mainstream engagements of peace research (and international politics broadly), they too have their own blind spots.

## CONCLUSION

The focus on the three themes highlights the dominant and innovative directions within this field. Yet, in accepting these as somewhat exemplifying the field, it is also useful to reflect on the absences or silences in the story.

One thing that is keenly observed is the knowledge hierarchies that become apparent in an exercise such as this. We cannot ignore the dominance of Northern Europe in feminist peace research knowledge production, as this has implications for the politics of such production. With Europe being the focus and English language sources dominating, there is an inherent Eurocentrism that is compounded by the fact that the object of study is often ‘Othered.’ Moreover, the key journals in the field are English language journals so that even when they serve any demographic, the knowledge therein produces and reproduces the hegemonic language.

Insights from Black feminism and/or postcolonial/decolonial feminism show that such dominance often prompts a lack of reflexivity within critical feminist approaches (Haastrup and Hagen, 2021). The body of work undertaken by feminist peace research scholars such as Swati Parashar (2019) warns of the ways in which what and how we know, even within feminist undertakings, have blind spots. For example, Hagen challenges the field to engage more queer perspectives (Hagen, 2016), as to ignore the rich scholarship and perspective is akin to erasure. Other post-colonial/decolonial critiques (e.g. Ansorg et al., 2021) have underscored

ongoing blind spots of feminist knowledge produced in the Global North that are invariably extractive, i.e. research that reproduces power asymmetries in the research process between the researcher and researched (see Haastrup and Hagen, 2021); peace research is not exempt. Yet, a feminist research ethic can ensure constant reflexivity on positionality, including what research is undertaken and how it is executed.

Reflecting on the limitations brought on by the politics of location, this chapter advises caution against drawing the boundaries around Europe, since the knowledge that ‘Europe’ brings depends on the outside. In other words, knowledge-making in Europe that constitutes peace research often relies on cases in ‘other’ places, often outside of the boundaries of the Europe conceived here and particularly in Africa. Consequently, theorizing contributions to feminist peace research ‘in Europe’ is very messy. And it should be—an enduring contribution of feminist studies in international relations is messiness. Still, the sheer scope of works produced required making (the best) choices and thus is as good a start as any to understand the significant contributions of feminist peace research to understanding the world around us a little better.

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