

## Intersections of Gender, Political Economy and Security Panel Transcription

00:26:

Professor Laura Sjoberg (LS):

Welcome to our panel discussion on the intersection between gender, political economy and security. We are happy to have four fantastic panellists who I will introduce briefly here and a set of questions that we're interested in. Our format will be that we'll have the panellists discuss some of these questions and then leave some time at the end for questions and answers and discussion with those of you who are attending as audience. So, we appreciate having all of you here. The Royal Holloway Gender Institute is co-hosting this with the Royal Holloway Centre for International Security and we're thrilled to be in this partnership with the Royal Holloway Centre for International Security as we present this panel. So, I will introduce the panellists briefly and then ask the first question so that we can get started in our conversation.

01:25:

So, we have here Professor Swati Parashar who is Associate Professor at the School of Global Studies, the University of Gothenburg, which I totally mispronounced but since my last name is Swedish and I mispronounce that too, I get a pass, maybe? Her research and teaching interest are in critical security and war studies, feminist and post-colonial International Relations, women militant and combatants, violence and development in South Asia. Her recent co-edited book with Jane Parpart on 'Silences' has been making noise with cross-disciplinary audiences. OK, maybe I just think I'm funnier than I am. Outside of research interests and publications, Dr Parashar writes social and political commentaries on various local and international media outlets. She also writes a feminist blog Kaalrati, which aims to rethink and reclaim silences, solidarity, difference and diversity.

02:19:

We also have with us Dr Marsha Henry who's Associate Professor in the Department of Gender Studies at the London School of Economics. She was a founding member of the Centre for Women, Peace and Security there, and served as deputy director between 2015 and 2018 and as interim director between 2018 and 2019. Her research interests include a focus on gender and development, gender and militarisation, and qualitative methodologies. These interests have concentrated on documenting social experiences of living and working in peacekeeping missions and peacekeepers from the Global South. Her recent work addresses military masculinities and the challenges of conducting research on sexual violence and conflict.

03:02:

Dr Daniela Lai, our third panellist, is a lecturer in International Relations at Royal Holloway, University of London where she also did her PhD several years ago. So, before coming back to Royal Holloway she held positions as lecturer at London Southbank University and a fellowship at the LSE Department of Methodology and at UCL as a teaching fellow. Dr Lai's research interests lie in transitional justice and peacebuilding, politics and political economy of international interventions and post-war transitions. Her very recent book, *Socioeconomic Justice, International Intervention and Transition in Post-war Bosnia and*

*Herzegovina* which considers the experiences of socioeconomic violence during war and how they subsequently allow strong but unheeded justice claims in its aftermath.

03:52:

Last but not least, we have Professor Spike Peterson who is Professor of International Relations in the School of Government and Public Policy at the University of Arizona, so I know it's pretty early in the morning for Spike right now. So, Professor Peterson is a highly decorated scholar having been awarded the LGBTQA Scholar award in 2018 and the Charles McCoy Lifetime Achievement award from the American Political Science Association in 2016. Dr Peterson has published more than 100 books and articles on a wide variety of subjects on gender, security, political economy and theory. And she has so many awards to her name that it's difficult to list them, but we are lucky to have all four of our panellists here and we're gonna start a conversation between them and hopefully learn a lot about the intersections of gender, political economy and security.

So, how this will work is I will kind of bring up one of the questions that we have and then we'll allow the panellists to volunteer in order to talk about them and engage from there. So, the first question we have is, how would you describe the key concerns of feminist approaches to political economy and the key concerns of feminist approaches to security?

05:20:

Dr. Swati Parashar (SP):

Thank you, first of all. This is gonna be fun. I like the way this has kicked off. Very unusual! But thank you Laura for organising this very important panel and I think it's so wonderful to be back with friends. For a while now I've been attending, you know, giving talks and panels and conversations I've had with people outside IR and outside the friendly faces that we are used to. I'm so happy to see Spike and you and Jillian after so long, I think I mentioned that it's really been about a decade since I saw you. So really happy to be here.

05:59:

This is a very important discussion to be had because of obviously, the lessons that we have learned from the pandemic, right? That the intersections between security, gender and political economy actually holds the key to understanding governance. And also, the kind of necropolitics, if I can use that term that we have seen in this pandemic, and you know, the management of it. And also, some of us who wish to see a different world, wish to, you know kind of see a different kind of things to unfold with our sense of hope, I think for all of us this intersection is absolutely critical. Some parts of the world, as we have seen, has actually witnessed so much suffering in this pandemic. I'm thinking immediately of my home country, India, where I have not been able to visit for the past one year or so. Large-scale internal reverse migration that occurred from urban to rural. I think the coverage worldwide, you know, just watching the people and the hardship of people just walking miles and thousands of kilometres. I think some of those images are going to stay with us and haunt us for a while. The kind of economic precarities, the insecurities that we have found that intertwined, they are so intertwined, and they have in the most obvious way and how that has come through when we think about this pandemic's governance and management.

07:33:

Coming to the main points that you make, the questions that you have asked us Laura, for me two things are critical. One, when I think of political economy, to me it is tied to questions about global inequalities and that's broadly defined right now, we can come back to it. But it was very, very evident in the last year that we really are looking at a world where inequalities are rampant it is not just between the south and the north. But then, Global South states – it's also within the north and what has unfolded has been absolutely educative in that sense.

08:09:

The other thing that I think is absolutely critical in thinking about political economy is this larger disconnect between states and societies. States and citizenry. And I'm sure that there are different ways in which we can express this. Some of us would like to call it, 'oh, we have, you know, popular states right now.' But I don't think this disconnect is more pronounced in the Global South, as used to be said. I think we are watching it everywhere in the world. That very masculine states that want to be, if I can say so, want to be accessible to the public, want to be anti-elitist, want to make policies of the people, but on the other hand they are very, very exclusionary and far removed from the realities of ordinary people. And I think this is the age of contradictions in some sense. So, if I had to just kind of pick up on two of the things, I would say the inequalities and this kind of dissonance, this disconnect between states and citizens. And thinking about feminist, you know, what is of concern to us as feminists in terms of security – I have always studied violence in one form or another and I think it continues to educate us. We continue to adapt ourselves to different kinds of violence. I think the pandemic was one kind which had within it several other kinds of violence. But I think we really need to expand our notions of what we mean by violence and I think we are too fixated with wars and conflicts and we still use that language. Later on, I will come to talking a little bit about studying food and security, hunger and famines but I do want to talk about how violence is absolutely central in expanding notions of it when we think about security and feminism. So, let me stop here and I'm sure that we can come back to it. Thanks, Laura.

10:08:

LS:

Thank you. Any other panellists volunteering to follow on from that? O.K. Then I'm gonna call on Marsha. What do you think, Marsha?

10:18:

Marsha Henry (MH):

Yeah, sure. I mean, how do you do that? That's really unfair, Swati, considering Swati and I were having all these discussions in Whatsapp over the course of the day. I think she strategically outmanoeuvred me here by going first. How do I follow such a brilliant and energised start? I guess what's really exciting about being on this panel is that I think some of the disciplinary nature of these discussions which I think were foundational to feminist political economy and feminist approaches to security, at least twenty years ago when I

started to be a little bit of an interloper in feminist IR, but there was an openness and a richness within the feminist security studies and feminist political economy fields because they were already drawing on these interdisciplinary perspectives. So, for me the key concerns of these feminist approaches to both political economy and security have been to draw on a range of, you know, to be inspired by a range of conceptual frameworks from, you know, a variety of disciplines and subfields. And, I mean, one of the things that I think has been quite constant and I see a kind of return to it over and over again or at least a kind of, renewed commitment is really about looking at structures and structural inequalities. So, Swati was illustrating some of those inequalities through kind of, you know, some examples in particular but you know, for me, feminist approaches to political economy are about recentring agenda analysis into arenas like the world of work, issues of money, you know, and enumeration and the structures of society. So, for me these approaches, both the feminist approaches to political economy and the feminist approaches to security you know, to not be divorced from analyses of structural forms of power. And so, for me, those are the key concerns. They cannot do that. And so, what Swati said about violence, what Spike has said many years ago and Gillian Young has said in scholarship, you know, we need to keep paying attention to power. And not just, and this is not to dismiss discourse as some kind of you know, fad, I wouldn't want to minimise it, but to really pay attention to some of those structures and those systems of oppression that persist and reappear in new forms. So, I think I'll leave it there and see what that might inspire in terms of conversation or perhaps invite to correct.

13:19:

LS:

I think Daniela just raised her pen?

13:21:

Dr Daniela Lai (DL):

Yes. Thank you, Laura. And thank you all and also, I want to say that I'm really grateful to be on this panel with all of you and for your work and for your work being such an inspiration to our research. Not just for me but for many other scholars and I feel probably 95% privileged and 5% intimidated to be on this panel with you. But yeah, it's really amazing and with respect to the question I think, building on the things both Swati and Marsha have been saying, when thinking about feminist political economy, I had a few things in mind specifically. For example, these questions about social reproduction and how important they have been for feminist IP, as all of these activities that enable production, that sustain, reproduce the workers, and they are so central to the economy but have always been kind of relegated to secondary position in mainstream literature and I think that the pandemic, as we've mentioned has been also quite an important reminder that these questions haven't really gone away despite you know, some of the progress that may have been made recently but that the traditional distribution of gender roles is still very much present.

14:50

And then the other thing I thought of was also the challenging of assumptions about how formal and informal economies are defined and separated? And also, the attention and

emphasis on the lived realities of people and importance of looking at them as an important unit of analysis for studying global politics and international relations more broadly. And kind of trying to decentralise what we mean by 'international', highlighting the importance of everyday practices.

15:25:

And then the last thing I wanted to mention that I think probably refers to both security and political economy, is that, when we talk about security and political economy, I was thinking we do mean fields of study, as in what feminist security studies study, what feminist political economy focus on, but they are also fields of interventions and they also refer to this kind of context where the policies then intervene and that these can be three different things and then very often they are misaligned and especially when we think of academic debates and policies there sometimes can be this disconnect with lived experiences and that I see, one of the contributions of feminist studies is trying to question exactly what we mean by security and what we mean by political economy or specific economic models and how it is used in terms in ways that do not neatly correspond then to the terms that people then end up using to describe their experiences. So, yes. I think I will stop there. Thank you.

16:41:

LS:

O.K. I'll turn the floor over to Spike.

16:43:

Professor V. Spike Peterson (VSP):

O.K. That's just marvellous. Thank you so much Laura, and everyone who's here. And I'm sorry, I want to locate myself in a few ways. One of them is that I'm in the United States, that my feminism is very much shaped by, all of my scholarship is shaped by this extraordinary context within which I spend most of my time. It was a delight to hear these different takes on this initial question and I had made some notes starting from a different perspective, in part to locate myself and I identify basically as a critical theorist without particular specification although I'm generally understood to be a feminist theorist, I'm probably that but it's always been more complicated to me. And so, I come out of feminist activism and civil rights issues, and then I'm an ardent critic of positivism and then when I came into my PhD program when I was 34, that's what I wanted to learn about. What was going on in the world in terms of inequalities and the critique of positivism was surfacing by feminists. I will say, earlier and I think more systematically and systemically than Foucault and the other boys who get cited all the time.

18:09:

So, the feminism that I, that is my feminism, there's so many, we know that and it's important I need to clarify that, so here's mine. That it has always been more complex than just male, and female understood as sex difference or body parts. The really fabulous and transformative insight from feminist theorising from my perspective is the recognition that the entire system of gendering, as in masculinity, has more power, privilege, authority, credibility generalisations than femininity so that all that is associated with 'masculine' is

valorised – over-valorised – that with femininity. And that means that everything about gender is about valorisation. Differential valorisations. So, in terms of political economy, that's obviously relevant because, what is political economy? Fabulous Gloria Steinem quote, 'what is economics but a system of values?' So, to me, political economy's always been gendered because of that valorisation. Think of labour markets, who gets paid to do what.

19:26:

And then the security issue is just a variation of that, if you will, that because that which is associated with femininity. 'Not all women are only women' is devalorised in terms of objectification and in security situations. Much more likelihood of harm and violence. Symbolic, perhaps especially symbolic and also material. So that's what I think feminism brings to both of those and I hope clarifies what I think feminism is most fabulous about. Thank you.

20:06:

LS:

Thank you, Spike. Maybe we'll ask the next question and kind of allow for responses and conversation as we deal with the next question, too? So, the next question was, 'why is it important to you to teach at the intersection of political economy and security? And to do your research at that intersection, too? And if you want to provide particular examples that would be great but that's something that maybe our students and some of our audience that doesn't work at the intersection of political economy and security can benefit from. Do I have any volunteers to start this one?

20:48:

SP:

That's great. No, so I think the questions that you ask, Laura, I think both of them are linked – they speak to each other. Why is it important and what examples can we think of from our own work? And to me, working at the intersections of postcolonial state, postcolonial lives, postcolonial discourses, and feminism I think it comes in some sense not as a big revelation that you absolutely have to study the political economy and the intersections of economy and security. But to me the critical thing is that security is always to be destabilised and I think in all my work, this anxiety about security is constantly played in anything that I write and the way in which I have thought about the postcolonial. I would say that the entry point that I saw for myself in security as I said was through political violence, but I think that, you know, I consider myself a member of a very large community of feminist scholars who work on questions of violence. But I also see that there are very particular ways in which we have defined violence, even within feminism. We have created the field of feminist security studies, we define it in particular ways, we have focused on war and wartime sexual violence and everyday life and war. But I do think that the questions remain about, you know, the presence of violence as both normalised and exceptionalised. So, in some sense, are we exceptionalising the normal or are we normalising the exceptional? And we have to keep asking these questions, right? Your point is, why are we interested? Why do I do what I do? And I think, to continuously ask those questions about the texture of violence, the

historical continuities, right? And that's where the postcolonial political economy analysis comes through: the location of violence. It's also transformatory potential that we've talked about, it's ethical and moral dilemmas and most importantly, the body counts, right? And this is a discourse, this is a debate that I have had with some colleagues within the postcolonial, you know, set-ups where we've argued that perhaps have, we paid too much attention to epistemic violence and discursive violence at the cost of actually doing the body counts now? Because when we think about these global inequalities, somewhere we are losing track of the actual people on whom violence occurs. So, the injuries and the coloniality of it, right? So, I think these questions about violence are fundamentally about security and insecurity, so I want to hold onto that.

23:39:

In terms of my own work, I think when I started working on, you know, looking at women who had access, women's access to violence, advocacy of violence in militant wars, not just perpetrators of violence, I think they were much more than that, you know, how they performed war labour as I would argue. I think in that gendered space of war, where women were performing war labour and which was not, as we know, studied by feminists, I think it was very important for me to understand the household economies and that's where I started paying more attention to my own sort of, you know, a little bit of, if you'd like, being uncomfortable with political economy as if that was a field that wasn't for me. So, I gradually kind of, brought myself into that debate because I realised I had to study how household economies were shaped, how gendered structures were affected, how hierarchies were set up, and how the political economy of the household shapes war, war-related labour, and gender roles. I think I started with that and particularly looking at women combatants, women performing war labour. Increasingly of course, I have now expanded and perhaps, I hope, with the larger community that will come through: thinking through violence as more than just acts of war and thinking about, for example, violence that is erased, violence that is slow and less spectacular, so I'm thinking of famines and hunger deaths, a project that I have been engaged in for the last couple of years. And it has been incredibly rewarding, in some sense, to think about ways in which different societies have thought about reparative justice, have thought about restorative justice, have thought about hunger deaths, and that is something that is going to stay with us for a very long time. In fact, all statistics reveal that more people die now because of lack of food and food insecurity than actually in wars. And of course, famines are part of war. So, I think, the more that I widen my scope of trying to understand different kinds of violence and injuries on bodies, the more that I think political economy is absolutely critical to it. So, let me stop here and come back to it later. Thanks.

25:57:

VSP:

I have some examples maybe, perhaps. They're very much in line with what Swati has said and we all are in various way writing about, studying, researching. But I found one of the times that my international political economy, my critique capitalism and economic systems, and understanding of security issues was in regard to a period of time when I was very much into critiquing informalisation, primarily because informalisation merges so many areas of crucial inquiry: the household, the various forms of labour that are often feminised,

exactly why they are considered less valuable and inclusive of other hierarchies of difference. So, who does most of the world's informal labour, people who are otherwise vulnerable, different types of communities, races, ethnicities, age groups, even? O.K. So, I see that I think it was Daniela's piece that refers to some of this informal economy that Goodhand and Pugh did, if I'm remembering that, thank you. And it seemed to me really a good example of how important feminist critique is. So, looking at informal wars, if you will, the unconventional warfare that we focused more on a decade ago for various reasons but did suggest how global financial systems have altered the operation of war and conflicts more generally. Which is not often well integrated into either of the security studies, certainly the political economy studies. So, if we think about the kind of 'new wars' that Mary Kaldor – it's a generalisation as far as I'm concerned – that shifts from territorial to political identity objective, as a real distinction between earlier wars and some that continue. It's therefore about identity, crucially. And that the financing of it is decentralised and often criminal in a way that gets very interesting for IPE and international political economy. In terms of gender, we think about three different economies in the broadest sense. Coping, what is the economy, who are their primary actors in that economy, they all overlap, and what are they doing? And what are the incentives to move toward a peaceful, or at least a conclusion of the conflict resolution? O.K.? So, in combat and coping economies it's primarily the feminised persons who are doing social reproduction and they are literally coping. So, the objective is innocence. Primarily to survive, to get through this, and keep what is considered the domains of the private, the household, the family, kin networks, community, together in the meantime. This can also involve black market activities, right? But there's less of the economic featured in it even though it's throughout it.

29:28:

And then a combat economy, which of course is the fighting, the struggling, and who is mostly doing that. Shifting, but most of the time more often male. So that's a very masculinised economy if you will, but now includes both entrepreneurial activities as well as fighting or combat activities and the objective is military but for some it also becomes complicatedly profit-seeking as another way of survival to bring those groups together.

30:00:

And then the third economy is the criminal economy which is more systematically integrated in these unconventional wars because it is both a source of supplying finance and making profit. So, there are external actors who are involved. Those who are able to produce funding often criminally, and the gendering of that economy is more masculinist in who we think of as typically controlling more of the economic resources but feminised in the particular ways in which criminal resources are often accumulated. This also shapes what the long-term objectives are. So, in the coping economy we can presume – hard to test – that there is a desire for resolving a conflict in some fashion. In the combat economy, depends on who you think will benefit and who will not through your personal investment and whether you want to move past this particular conflict. In the criminal economy, seeking profits doesn't mean you want the conflict to terminate at all. So, different insights on the more traditional, conventional notion of warfare. Sorry, I didn't mean to go on for so long.

31:24:



LS:

Daniela, you want to weigh in here?

31:28:

DL:

Yes, sure. So, when I saw these questions about why it was important for me to be at these intersections, I kind of thought that I always found it easier to research at intersections of all these things because I never saw myself as fitting somewhere really neatly and probably political economy and security was one of these. So, a lot of my research so far has dealt with questions of justice or what happens in the aftermath of widespread violence against civilians and the kind of processes that are set-up to deal with it but I looked at these topics very much from the perspective of it was affected by the violence and the mismatch between their experiences and ideas about violence and how they theorised justice and the way that international organisations which implemented interventions there then dealt with it and the way they thought about violence and justice.

32:30:

And so, I encountered problems in doing this because, which I think highlights the importance of these intersections in political economy and security, because the kind of violence that the international organisations were mostly worried about were very much linked to these understandings of wartime violence linked to physical integrity as the main concern. And as the result, the need to justice was seen, in the aftermath of the violence, was seen and there was of course a lot of this moral rhetorical 'doing what's right', but also in terms of protecting the stability and contributing to ending conflict and international peace and security that was used as a justification for the setting up of some of these justice mechanisms like the International Criminal Tribunal in the former Yugoslavia and preventing future conflict so the justice that these justice mechanisms do then is also very narrow minded in scope, focused on violations of physical integrity, defining international humanitarian law, but then when researching how people went through these experiences of violence during the war and what they thought justice meant, then I realised how, and it became very apparent how socioeconomic violence, what I called socioeconomic violence in my research, was really central and how these experiences of violence were always bound to be multidimensional. So, different dimensions were connected with one another. And so, trying to make these connections between socioeconomic violence, between policies of what was called ethnic cleansing, or different types of physical violence and gender-based violence required me to look at political economy and security as two things that had to be really interconnected. And it was a necessary part of my work to bring these questions together in a way that, very often I've found, made more sense to the people I talk to during the course of my research than the international organisations that I was also sometimes interviewing and who did not really see the connection between these two things in the same way. So that was the rationale for looking at these intersections based on my own research.

35:04:

I thought of other examples: one example I will mention now before I will shut up that comes from my teaching, actually. I assigned Marsha's article on the peace exploitation to my students last year and we were talking about the experiences of peacekeepers and peacekeeping economies and so they looked at this article, it's a really nice article, I really liked using it for teaching, looking at the Indian and Uruguayan women who were part of peacekeeping contingents in the UN and what it means that you are trying at the same time to address these gendered imbalances in peacekeeping forces but then at the same time the UN had to rely so heavily on contingents provided by the Global South and the kinds of inequalities that are embedded in that and for the students it was really a moment where they saw, during that week, the disconnection between security and political economy made sense because a lot of the IR modules they'd studied up until then hadn't really had that much in establishing that connection and it was almost like something clicked in that week, which I thought was really quite telling. So, I think I like now using peacekeeping to teach about this as an example.

36:33:

LS:

I think that this transitions to Marsha.

36:37:

MH:

How great, Daniela. I feel that so often the articles we write just end up in a little archive somewhere and it's so nice and so exciting to hear about somebody actually using it and it having some resonance, so thank you so much for working with it, actually in such an interesting way.

37:01:

Well, I mean, actually Daniela, I was hoping that you were gonna actually talk a little bit about your research in Bosnia. So, I was gonna just mention this, the, one of the ways in which I think it's important to research and teach at the intersection of political economy and security is precisely because it draws attention to two things that I think other people have touched on. Which is, one is the need to sort of start at least some of our analyses from lived experience and so if we start some of our analyses or start some of our discussions from live experience then we have to pay attention to geopolitics. And if I talked to any of the activists and feminist scholars, living and working in Bosnia they will tell you they can't do anything without a political economy framework, you know? Nothing that they think about, you know, does not include the political economy of the pre-war period, during war and now the very long post-war period. So, I think actually political economy also allows us to address perspectives and experiences from a variety of conflict and post-conflict and peace context as well. That perhaps we might not otherwise pay attention to if it wasn't, if we weren't living in those particular contexts. So, I think it stimulates a different set of questions and concerns and so, yeah and I think that in doing that, it perhaps also challenges security – feminist security studies in particular – to pay attention to lived experience, of course many people have done that in their analyses, but to remember and then when you do that you have to pay attention to questions of race, questions of

ethnicity, questions of other axes, questions of class actually because as you said, Daniela, socioeconomic violence is about global class politics and you know, and the war on the poor, really. So, if you, if you don't pay attention, if you don't, aren't stimulated to ask those kinds of questions through a particular subfield or particular discipline, I have a quite promising opinion of political economy and perhaps a more sceptical one of feminist security studies in what I'm saying there. And I think political economy approaches provide some more question marks that we, you know, and curiosities that we need to keep exploring. So, I think I'll just leave it there.

39:45:

LS:

Thank you, I appreciate it. Maybe there's a good link here to the question of 'what are some of the harms of ignoring the economics of security and the (in)securities of economics?' So, most traditional scholarship kind of goes one way or another on the security/political economy question and many, most of your research demonstrates the problems with that. So, I was wondering if each of you might talk about the potential harms of missing one part of this or another. Marsha, you wanna start?

40:31:

MH:

Yeah, I may as well! Because I was thinking I could kind of link that to some of the work that I've been doing more recently on trying to understand gender-based violence in the post-conflict setting in Bosnia and my colleagues at LSE who wrote a recent article trying to bring together – it's so, so complicated, that's the scholastic harm or using or ignoring certain kinds of conceptual and theoretical traditions and it's just like, we tried to shove everything we could into that article. And I mean, that's some of the limitations of – we were really trying to sort of say that, look if you take this political economy perspective and take the feminist literature on that you take literature on continuums of violence and you put them all together, is there a way in which you can capture the post-conflict situation or vulnerable individuals and I think if you don't try and do sometimes, if you don't try and do some ambitious work, you know, drawing on all these traditions, you may end up, you know, you may end up giving a very selective perspective and so, you know, one of the challenges that we had in doing that research was drawing on such an amazing amount of work that has been done. So, it's not that it hasn't been done, it's about trying to find it, trying to recover it and trying to incorporate it. And I guess one of the issues that came up was this real challenge between, you know, so we were talking about gender, you know, we were drawing on research on gender-based violence that had been conducted by one of my co-authors and all of the terms that individuals were using in this research were terms that maybe in another context, we would have really struggled with. So, they talked about sex trafficking, they talked about victims, they talked about, you know, stigma. Women in Bosnia being stigmatised by divorce so not being able to leave abusive and violent relationships. And, you know, part of me was trying to consistently incorporate these individuals and their experiences into politically critical categories. So, I wanted to, you know, name them as sex workers and sometimes I wanted to name them as prostitutes, sometimes I wanted to name them as victims, sometimes I wanted to name them as

survivors. So, not only were we struggling with all these political economy traditions, but we were trying to do less harm in how we represented these individuals. So, I don't know, that doesn't answer the question about you know, reducing harm but it just tells you about some of the complexities about trying to draw on this scholarship and then what kind of ethical obligations arise in doing that because at the end of the day you are representing individuals' lives and they have a lot at stake with that. So, maybe I'll just start with that.

43:55:

LS:

Spike seems like she wants to add onto the end of that. So, maybe I'll let Spike go next?

44:01:

VSP:

Thank you very much, Marsha. I really enjoyed these comments. And it reminds me how much I engage in abstract theorisation. And that made me forget what I was going to say! That I have actually done no international security fieldwork, I do very little fieldwork. So, it's really helpful for me to hear people who do so and what the insights and knowledge production that emerges from that that I'm recognisably out of touch with. But what I was thinking about is the harms. Because I think without paying attention to structural inequalities in which feminist theorising has a particular contribution of saying all structural hierarchies and inequalities feature some version of celebrating things that are associated with masculinity over those with femininity including aggression, and assertion, and independence, and power, and order and all that kind of thing. But the political economy part has to me always been, as a critic of capitalism for a long time, that it is the system most fundamentally determining or shaping the distribution of resources cultural, material and all of the rest in which that shapes all of our lives so profoundly and that one of the ways, one of the very important ways it does is through its impacts on security and the kind of, both as cause, resentment, for being insecure, for the inequalities subjected to, and also for gains in various ways of different orientation. So, what feminist, I believe, add more than most of the alternative critical traditions, I'm not excluding anti-race, post-colonial, post-structural, is affect matters. And without paying attention to why people are engaging in conflicts in these important underground security issues, you have to grapple with how we are attached to identities, and desires, and goals, and objectives and all the rest of this. So, we need to be able to see it. We want to address insecurities and violence, O.K.? What are the motivations affecting investments going on underpinning and spurring such actions? And also, what the processes are. Which was kind of why – looking at different economies. Who's doing what? How does this shape what we do? And then the financial features of, that shape all of our lives, especially since globalisation, perhaps depending on how you define terms, but certainly since the globalisation of finance.

47:07:

So, the harms are, in fact, knowing what the hell we're talking about, O.K.? I mean, just, one of my biggest critiques of the discipline, you know, the mainstream discipline of international relations, is how little it has informed a critique of power across the array and

complexity of power relations. And I think that intersectionality is still just disregarded in ways that, yes, you can debate intersectionality and all that. But, fundamentally looking at how systems of power interact, is a requisite for making sense out of the world we live in as far as I'm concerned, and thus spoke Spike.

47:54:

LS:

Thank you, Spike. Daniela, you wanna go next?

47:59:

DL:

Sure, I will try. So, I think the very obvious thing for me to mention would be that it is actually really harmful to – so if you are ignoring the economics of security and securities of economics it means that we are really, really reproducing this disconnect from lived realities on the ground. And I think that I have been, I was thinking specifically of the recent article that Maria Martin de Almagro and Caitlin Ryan wrote, I think Maria is also in the audience so I thought I should mention her. Which was really important because it highlighted these pitfalls of isolating security and political economy and highlighted this disconnect between what they call I think, the matter realities of women's lives and genders of economic empowerment that are embedded within women's peace and security initiatives and I think that's just one recent example of literature that tries to, again connect security and political economy in a way that also moves the debate forward in theoretical terms.

49:09:

Also, I think one of the harms we want to probably avoid in this is this risk that if we tackle these dimensions of economic security and security dimension of political economy, ending up with a securitised version of political economy and a very instrumental view of economics where gender is seen in a very instrumentalised way. Probably, this kind of critical scholarship that people on this panel were speaking, now do, is try to avoid that because of this continuous questioning and trying to, as Swati said earlier, destabilise the idea of security so that we avoid this risk of ending up with, removing issues from public accountability because they are labelled as 'security issues' and as a result then also end up seeing economic exclusion in instrumental terms when we talk about economic inclusion of what are routinely called 'marginalised groups' on various grounds including gender but also race or sexuality or disability. That these are always seen as useful in so far as they prevent poor economic outcomes or a relapse into conflict or they are needed because they put forth a set of, a model of economic growth. I so I think this is one of the harms that we want probably to try to avoid with this more critical view of security and political economy. And I think I will stop here if that's O.K.

50:53:

LS:

Yeah, that's fine.

50:56:

SP:

So, I was saying that a lot has already been said so I'll keep this brief. A couple of quick points: one is that you know the entire political economy of the colonial encounter continues to shape global inequalities. I have just edited with a colleague, a *Third World Quarterly* special issue on colonial legacies in Africa and you know, almost all the papers touch upon how these inequalities continue to govern life. I mean, it's quite an eye-opener to see how much we are still ignorant of what the ground situation is. So, a little bit to focus on how coloniality is still very much part of the way the world is shaped but also how struggles for sovereignty and even struggles, contestations over hegemony that we are thinking of not just in terms of state factors but also non-state different social movements, different groups of people, all the various conflicts that we see around this. I mean, it is linked to, again, these are conflicts over resources, these are conflicts over who gets to make decisions on behalf of who and also inequality. So, I think there is a little bit about those struggles for sovereignty and hegemony that I'd like to point out. But, amidst all this I think the big harm that I see that actually we would do to ourselves is to not unpack the role of the 'state', right? If we were to ignore political economy, I think a big chunk of that analysis helps us really unpack the state and I think we did this as I said, this is the age of contradictions. The state wants to disappear out of our lives and at the same time it is very much present, and present in a particular way. I think the whole distinction between Global South and North states having very specific characteristics, I think we have dismantled that in the past few years. So, I think if we just tried to capture the state and understanding of the state, I think security and political economy are very closely linked and I think we tried to do that in that book, *Revisiting Gendered States*, in which Spike very kindly wrote the preface which followed from Spike's own book. I think the discussions, that's an ongoing discussion and I think more people need to take that on. Some people call it the 'post-globalised world order' I'm not sure, I'm just throwing it out to people to think through, you know. But are we in this 'post-globalised' or 'de-globalised' world order where we're seeing this diminishing support of the state-led development approach but yet the state is very much a part of our lives and I think this is where, how the state is so, you know, so much a part of formal, informal economies and how, you know, it's part of so many conflicts, how do we think about it? I think it's really critical.

53:49:

For me, I think I want to emphasise here, the harm is that if we don't see ourselves as feminists, as just ivory tower academic, allow me to say that. When we are so much connected with social movements or we are trying to connect with the policy world, we are trying to work with colleagues on the ground, we are doing much more than, you know, producing articles which half the time don't even get read. We are trying to, you know, work with people, build solidarities, work with different movements. And I think in that context I don't think we can afford to ignore this intersection that we're talking about today. But I want to stop at this very important point which may come back later to haunt me, but I want to emphasise that there is, you know, there is also the political economy of feminist research, right? And there are harms done through ignoring the economics of security research and I think we don't often talk about how we as academics, as scholars, into the business of knowledge production, what's that knowledge production economy can do?

When we hyper-visibility some topics or some issues or we don't – we have power, we make political decisions about what we research, and I think we can talk about this as well as part of this intersection. Thank you.

55:12:

LS:

Thank you. So, being conscious of a little bit of time I'm gonna go to last question which we had to ask, which is 'what does this approach that combines political economy and security tell us about the current global political landscape including but not limited to the pandemic?' So, our hope was that maybe you would just give us a couple of insights into that that we can use to transition into getting questions from the audience. Let's see, who hasn't gone first yet? Spike, you want to go first?

55:55:

VSP:

Yes, and I will try to be brief. I think that not so much depending on the pandemic is certainly a part of everything now. But so differentially experienced globally. It's a whole other topic. I think a lot about what I call 'the global new rights', this proliferation of extremist movements, etc., especially here and who I feel real anxiety about how deeply entrenched much of this is and I don't think that we can understand what aspect of today's politics without paying serious attention to racism and heterosexism which are driving forces both in terms of the impetus for emotional investment, and some of these extremist movements, the willingness to be, the vulnerability of seeing them as making sense and a return to traditional values, which from a feminist perspective mean a traditional notion of femalehood, family life, reproduction, and household reproduction. So, I think it's very relevant in that context especially. Thanks.

57:30:

LS:

Anybody interested in going next? Alright I think I'll just call on Daniela then.

57:42:

DL:

Sure. I don't know, thinking about the pandemic, what I thought was that at the beginning of the pandemic last year there was this, for a while, tendency to describe the coronavirus as something that was going to make us so vulnerable and that we were all in this together and that this virus didn't discriminate and it became very clear very quickly how this was of course not the case and that Covid-19 was not going to remove these inequalities in affecting everyone but was actually going to exacerbate them. And I think that these kind of approach that combines security and political economy was important to see through these really bad takes on the pandemic that we had at the start and see how people in certain professions, for example where you had a majority of people from poorer backgrounds or minority backgrounds or certain, or women and where people were these categories were

over represented after having higher incidents of Covid-19 or the impact that this had on people who were vulnerable to domestic violence and so on. All of these things have made it clear that we needed a different lens to understand the impact of the pandemic and that these kind of feminist approaches to security and political economy can make us more aware of the politics that also underpin some of the decisions being made about how to deal with Covid-19 and thinking about, do we have to protect health or do we have to save the economy but then whose jobs are we actually trying to save here and what kind of trade-offs are we being presented with between protecting people from Covid and protecting some fundamental rights and freedoms and so on and I think that, yeah, I think these kind of critical view helps us see through some of these trade-offs and see exactly how do we prioritise and what kind of political choices are made in prioritising certain policies and certain social groups over others. And some people's and some groups wealth or protection or wellbeing is always a secondary thought but certainly not a priority but something that we'll have to deal with later on, somehow. Yeah, that's it for me.

1:00:23:

LS:

Swati?

1:00:26:

SP:

Yeah, thanks. A lot has been said again but again, to flack off a quick point about something that I talked about the disconnect between states and citizens, and I know the popular word is to say we are living in the times of populism, we have populist governments, we have populist parties but to me I think populism is also slowly using political purchase. I don't think we have quite nailed it down. I know it's become very much part of the political vocabulary these days, but I'd like to stay away from that and argue that we are watching a particular kind of state emerge in different parts of the world, even the populism that we talk about has different origins, has different contexts and I think we have to unpack a lot of that. But I think there is this interesting moment to watch this disconnect which we can perhaps arrest and perhaps address through the work which we do which is this disconnect between as I keep saying, that on the one hand, the state wanting to be part of our lives and yet ceding responsibility and leaving, you know, who has access to citizenship, who is a citizen, I think these are debates that we've had throughout the pandemic, right? Who deserves the vaccine, who is to be taken to the hospital, who is to be left out, who is the disease carrier? Which bodies are bearers, carriers of the diseases and which bodies need to be protected? So, I think those kinds of things can be unpacked through the work that we do but also how, I think it is an opportunity for us, this feminist approach to political economy and security is an opportunity for us also to have some stage in the policy world as well. I know that most of us are happy saying that, you know, we do our work and all, but I think feminist work is very influential, it's very much part of policy circles now. We have seen global impacts that feminist work is making but again, my question is, we have to then think about our own feminist politics. What I call the political economy of research and how we want to do good, right? We want to influence policy, we want to change the ground realities and we want to create a better world, I mean, we all want to do that. But we end



up creating, producing precarities with what we do through our erasures, through our silences, through even our utterances, through what we visualise, through what we write about. I think it's a great moment for self-reflection for all of us as we think about, you know, the future of where feminist analysis and feminist scholarship will go. Thanks.

1:03:23:

LS:

Thanks. Marsha?

1:03:25:

MH:

Great. I'll try and keep it brief so that we can hear from the audience. And I think on that note, Swati I maybe just want to invoke the institution of the neoliberal university and how they have recruited so many students from all backgrounds, all over the world from all over the world, into programs during a pandemic. They have at the same time that so many early career researchers and post-docs and temporary lecturers and so on have been put in more precarious positions including to do with visas, to do with how they're gonna eat and live and so I think what has happened in the pandemic today is a complete underestimation or a complete negligence of the gendered division of labour in universities if I can say that. So, you know, just a very good example is, you know, that there recently, you know, in November at my university they, you know, there was a big vote about whether we should continue in person teaching and I can tell you the male dominated departments voted that we should continue to do in person teaching and you know, and we were in shock that this was occurring, you know. So I think and I hope students who I know there's lots of students from my classes and from my department here today participating and I hope they're able to do a political economy analysis of some of their professors but also of the institutions learning, you know, in terms of how they have both tried to address some of the issues that are raised by the new economic situations that are arising but you know, the ways in which they have also contributed to increasing inequalities both inside the institution and outside the institution and you know, when I hear stories of students that don't have enough to eat and that local communities and local groups are providing food for postgraduate students, international postgraduate students, I really, I think of that as literally a crying shame and if a political economy analysis can help us to address some of those inequalities, I hope it will continue to. Thank you.

1:06:21:

LS:

Well, thank you. And thank all of our panellists for addressing these questions. Now I want to give members of the audience an opportunity to ask questions if they would like to. Please raise your hand if you would like to ask a question and then we can kind of cycle through some of the questions that the audience might have. O.K. So I have, we'll try to collect one or two, a couple of questions and I have one from Guiliana first.

1:06:55:

Guiliana:

Hi. It's not so much a question but really a comment. I was really struck when you asked, or started to speak, you were not just introducing yourselves, but you were very aware of your situatedness, you know, you were kind of situating yourselves as women, as scholars, and I just thought, most of my male colleagues wouldn't do that. And of course, this leans to all the things you were saying that you know, that sense of your feminism impacting your scholarship and your scholarship impacting our feminism, it's really interesting. But also, maybe there is a sense in which we kind of feel the need to kind of situate ourselves but perhaps because we are, you know, given all of the contexts of inequalities that you've been talking about and then, kind of, gender, that situating yourself is a moment to take stock of who you are, where you are and what's happening around you. So, I thought it was really quite striking. So, sorry it's not really a question but I was very struck by that.

1:08:04:

LS:

Thank you, Guiliana. I got a batch of questions I'll ask so we can have a couple of questions floating around which was: have you found ways that are more or less useful to talk to students about how it's necessary to interact political economy and security when we're talking about some of these issues? Was the question I got by back channel. So, maybe Guiliana's comment and this question and that can be our first round of things to talk about among the panellists. So, anybody wanna go first?

1:08:42:

SP:

Yeah, I think I'm this front bencher in the classroom, right? This annoying person who has something to say but thank you very much, Guiliana. I just want to point out, I think it's become part of our training but it's also if you look at the number of public spaces and scholarly spaces and policy discussions occupied by men, it's so annoying. I mean, this might be, or you know, the safety of panels that you and I attend is just amazing because when I look at my social media, themes of events that are organised there is just, it's almost like a tsunami of men. 'Man-els'. And it really annoys me, as if they're the ones making important discussions about, there's a conference going on in India right now, an internal migration newspaper, their media houses also organise these events and they're all men! I mean, on such an important topic it's just incredible that you see so many men around and I think it's become part of our training and I think it also allows us to perhaps reflect on where we want to go with our work, and I think some of, and I've said, some of the critique that we receive, also as feminists and we engage in that self-critique but we are also always watching out, you know, even within our own community, I think, we are quite aware that we're not doing everything right. And I think this helps us keep on track and on toes I would say. In terms of students, that's a great question. I'm not sure I'm the best person to answer it but I would just say that I find students so incredibly informed and the classroom is so global that I would not say that I think they often come up with their own ideas of how they want to talk about it and you just calm them and it's no longer the classroom that was ten years ago. If you just look at the mobility of students, mobility of ideas, the kinds of you

know, things they talk about. I think I'm more guided by that they and how they want to study but perhaps others have better ideas. Thanks.

1:10:56:

LS:

Any volunteers to go next? I think since everybody's smiling slyly, I'll ask Spike if she has anything to say.

1:11:10:

VSP:

I think for me I don't actually, I don't have any graduate students anymore and I don't teach political economy. My unit is so disinterested in pretty much everything I do that it forecloses many options. What I teach undergrad classes in gender and politics which I teach as a survey intro into gender studies, and feminist and international relations and political theories. I find my students aren't so well informed. Some percentage of them are fabulous and others struggle with the prior education that they have received which, larger topic, right? I want to just very quickly make a point I think is really crucial to me and informs the large discussion and is a pitch for the relentless critique of, as long as global financialisation, right, is the basis structure of the current global economy, global everything in terms of how it controls the value of money, right? Then the state is corporatized, the state is acting like a competitive firm, and so are universities and so are all of us, you know, in a way as participants of the system. We cannot mass participate, we can only shape how we participate, O.K.? But realising how we are coerced into this, structurally coerced into this through the, not just neoliberalism, but the global financial which loses state control over finances and monetary policy in a way that they previously had more control. Thank you very much, I think it's been wonderful, and I think I'll be quiet now.

1:13:10:

LS:

Marsha or Daniela, do you have anything to say? Daniela do you have anything to add or should we go to another round of questions?

1:13:25:

DL:

I think a lot of smart things have been said and this question, I don't think I can add anything original.

1:13:36:

LS:

Alright, then we can go to another round of questions. So, same thing if you'd like to ask one raise your hand and then I can also collect them on the back channel. So, we have a hand raised by Emily Clifford.

1:13:49:

Emily:

Hi, can you see me? Is that O.K.? Thank you so much for the talk, it was amazing. A wonderful way to start the weekend, I think, infusing. But I just wondered whether we could talk more about how this intersection between political economy and security can be used to understand and resist violence? So, I'm thinking mostly both in practices and the normalisation of violence but I'm trying to at the moment, work out how this resistance could be theorised a bit better? I'm gonna leave it there but thank you.

1:14:19:

LS:

Thank you, and I get one more back channel question that I can add to that for bringing around our conversations and that was: is there a political economy and security dimension to contemporary protest politics? And if so, kind of, how can we engage? So that seems like it kind of had a little bit of a difference from Emily's question but also related to it so it seems great to talk about both of them at the same time. So, anybody interested in volunteering to go first?

1:15:09:

DL:

I mean, just really briefly I'd like to address this last point. I think there definitely is a security and political economy angle to contemporary political protests. I guess it's not very original what I'm about to say but if you look at the Black Lives Matter protests in the U.S. and also in the U.K., I think you can quite clearly disentangle the two and see how they are related if we consider that a lot of them have to do with things like police violence but at the same time are rooted in structural inequalities that go back to systems of disenfranchisement and exclusion that have very clear economic roots and dynamics as well? And I don't think you can really separate these protest movements, for example, from long standing claims to reparations that have been made and discussed for a while and then you know, maybe they were a bit more prominent at some point in the 1990s/2000s and then people stopped talking about it or at least it became less prominent in public discourse but I think the protests have really brought it back up on the agenda, so that was a very, maybe, not very original but straightforward answer to that last question.

1:16:41:

LS:

O.K. Thanks, anybody else on resistance to violence and/or protest politics?

1:16:48:

VSP:

I'll just, I think probably for me the most important thing in regard to resistance these days is really recognising the intersection of power structures and not just focusing on one. Sometimes that's a really strategic need, I get that, but in our understanding of what is going on here, O.K? We have to think more complexly than the easier and desired answers permit. Thanks, Swati.

1:17:20:

SP:

Yeah, I just want to add to what Spike said and I completely agree with you, Spike. I think we have to unpack resistance as well. I don't think we can use it the way that we do, and I speak with some kind of disappointment, I guess, when I see a lot of discussions on resistance or resistance theories that largely have ignored the kinds of struggles that feminists have put up or, you know, Black Lives Matter or what the entire post-colonial, decolonial project has been. I find, you know, current theories of resistance or discussions of resistance, completely, you know, stripped of these kinds of very important you know, projects that people have undertaken and, in that context, I want to emphasise that for me the important learnings now are actually turning to the past and that's a project that we have given up on. We're not so invested. But it's not history, it's just, you know, archives, people, projects, you know, movements that we have just, you know, left behind and we're all so much in the now, in the contemporary that I think we need to step back a little bit and get some perspective of what has happened in the past. I think I find amazing revelations through that but very quickly, I agree with Daniela on the point of protest politics, I mean, my home country has protests every day, we had the farmer's protest right now and we've had protests against citizenship pacts and I'm sure you read about it, a lot of coverage in the press, in the international press, not always very accurate and very sympathetic or even you know, knowledgeable but still it is there for us to know. Social media is full of it. There's been a number of protests on violence against women for a very long time and different aspects and I think of course the link is there, but I do think that protest politics is sometimes loses its meaning because of the kinds of conversations that we don't end up having and lack of investment in building those solidarities, you know? Movements take a long time to, I mean, feminist movements in India, for example has taken a very long time to, you know, bring up issues and work slowly at the grassroots. You can't just, you know, we had an anti-corruption movement in 2010-11 and everybody was out on the streets, hundreds and thousands of people but we didn't go anywhere with it. So, I'm just saying that the protest politics itself is very interesting to watch. There's a lot of performance within that as well, I would say.

1:20:02:

MH:

Maybe I could just add something? Thanks, Emily, for asking that question about resistance because I think resistance is a little bit like the term political economy, which would be, just asks us to do what Spike was talking about, which is to consistently and continuously critique and be paying attention to the system of capitalism. So, I think the term 'resistance' itself requires us to think to some degree in Marxist terms or to think in some way about how the economy is working and what it's doing and I guess, Daniela mentioned one of my

articles that actually, in thinking about how I ended that article or how I end another article that I wrote on peacekeeping was to sort of say that actually when we think about the political economy of peacekeeping or humanitarian spaces more broadly or spaces that are insecure, we tend to kind of, draw on a lot of these theories which, a lot of theories which help us understand the nature of security for example, or the nature of economy in a post-conflict environment and yet somehow we can do those analyses without actually centring or paying attention to those who are the beneficiaries of these or who are the hosts or who are the most vulnerable. And so, you know, part of what I've been doing more recently is to kind of look back on what happened to use of those critical theories, you know, along the way when we are thinking about these humanitarian spaces or in these peacekeeping spaces – where are the peace kept? And all of the resistance that they're engaged in, in terms of hiding back against these neoliberal policies, fighting back against it. Not to romanticise this because there's lots of co-optation and complicity involved in these global governance institutions but certainly, I think resistance, if I want to think about it in, you know, in terms of feminist curiosity, resistance, I think in genders are kind of continued questioning and curiosity and it keeps some of that, you know, those questions about capitalism at, you know, at the forefront of our minds.

1:22:46:

LS:

Thank you, Marsha, and thanks to all of our panellists and all of our audience members that made this such a lively conversation. I think that, rather than try and collect another round of questioning and answer it in a minute and a half, we'll call an end to our formal session but thanks again to our panellists, to our audience, to the Centre for International Security, we've been thrilled to host this conversation and it's great to have a bunch of people from the Royal Holloway community and from around the world attending, listening to and being a part of these conversations. So, thank everybody very much.