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From international norms to local relevance

the effectiveness and suitability of the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda in advancing women's security and equality

Sulin, Laura

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From international norms to local relevance: the effectiveness and suitability of the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda in advancing women's security and equality

By

Laura Welsh (Sulin)

Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations

Coventry University

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Abstract

The United Nations Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda has become a well-known and internationally recognised framework within the field of peace and conflict studies over the past 20 years. Resolution 1325 and nine subsequent resolutions together form the 'Women, Peace and Security Agenda', which has played a significant role in bringing the discussion of women's roles in conflict and post-conflict situations to the forefront of the international security agenda. However, many have argued that the Agenda has not proved to be as transformational for women's rights as originally thought.

Based on 20 qualitative semi-structured interviews with civil society members and individual experts, this thesis studies how the WPS Agenda is translated from an international level policy framework to local level application through two examples: South Africa and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Using feminist security theory and intersectionality as the lenses of analysis, the primary line of inquiry of this thesis is to understand whether and to what extent the UN WPS Agenda is a transformational and suitable framework for improving women's security in South Africa and Palestine

This thesis make two distinct, original theoretical contributions. Firstly, this thesis argues that, in order for the Agenda to be transformational, it needs to move towards a feminist approach to security, whereby security is seen in terms of the security of the individual rather than state security. This thesis argues that WPS Agenda's current emphasis on armed and internationally recognised conflicts disregards the everyday violent realities women face and hinders the transformational potential of the Agenda. The findings of this thesis have specifically supported Cynthia Cockburn's (2004) insight that we should understand violence as a continuum, and they also support the way that security is defined by feminist scholars such as Tickner (1992), Enloe (1990), and Cohn (2004). This thesis shares the understanding of how feminist theorising starts with women's experiences of everyday life but also how these

experiences intersects with other identity markers, such as class, ethnicity and race (Wibben (2011). Drawing from this notion, this study also highlights the importance of linking the theoretical discussion on intersectionality and debates in the field of feminist security studies together as currently the theoretical discussions in these two fields happen in silos rather than in conversation with one another.

Secondly, this research contributes to the theoretical discussion about intersectionality by developing the thinking around intersectionality by using it as a lens through which we can understand women's experiences at the national level, gaining insights not only into how women experience security but also into how their own identities or social locations can affect the ways in which they are able to participate in decision-making and political processes. Most importantly, in addition to many of the categories already highlighted for intersectional analysis, this research emphasises the importance of including geographical location as a key factor in intersectional analysis in order to understand not only how this affects the lives of women but also how it reflects different power relations. This research demonstrates how, political, racial, and ethnic divisions are problematic when it comes to the implementation of the WPS Agenda and, if they are not taken into consideration, there is a danger of further division, as well as the exclusion and silencing of the different voices that need to be heard as part of the process.

The findings of this study demonstrate the value of the WPS Agenda, and how it is perceived as a useful tool for improving women's lives both in South Africa and Palestine. However, the data also shows how the Agenda could be developed further in order for it to serve better women in different contexts, situations, and places in the world, and this is where critique and findings of this study are essential. By conducting interviews with individual South African and Palestinian experts and civil society organisations and understanding how they see the linkages between security, intersectionality and the WPS Agenda, this study makes a positive contribution to enabling the voices of the people the WPS Agenda directly affects.

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List of abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSVR	Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation
ECOSOC	Commission of the Economic and Social Council
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
IR	International Relations
NAP	National Action Plans
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
oPt	Occupied Palestinian territory
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SANDF	South African National Defence Forces
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WCLAC	Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling
WILPF	The Women's International League for Peace & Freedom
WNC	Women's National Coalition
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Preamble

When I started my PhD journey in January 2015, I chose this topic because of my passion for understanding and examining issues related to the advancement of gender equality and women's participation, particularly in situations of conflict. It felt natural to embark on a journey to examine a UN Resolution and to focus attention on 1325, which was hailed as transformational resolution and celebrated as a major advancement for women's rights.

While 1325 is often cited optimistically, over the last 18 months as I have written up my thesis the situation for women has become bleaker than ever. The global COVID-19 pandemic is said to have set back gender equality by 25 years, according to a UN Women report (BBC News, November 2020). This is due not only to the number of lives lost but to the side effects of the pandemic, ranging from domestic violence to mental health effects and the burden of unpaid domestic labour which has had a disproportionate impact on women.

COVID-19 has been the latest driver of inequality for women both in South Africa and Palestine, the contexts this thesis explores. Lockdowns and school closures have increased the amount of unpaid care work that women are expected to contribute (United Nations, 2020a). There has also been an increase in incidences of domestic and gender-based violence being reported during the past year; however, in reality, the numbers are probably higher again due to the difficulties that women have faced in accessing appropriate services during lockdowns (United Nations, 2020a; GAPS et al., 2021).

Although in principle domestic laws and international commitments to conventions and frameworks position South Africa to deliver on equality for women, in practice the country is still experiencing challenges with regards to guaranteeing women's rights and security and, in particular, gender-based violence. These difficulties have been further exacerbated by COVID-19, as a series of lockdowns has increased the rates of reported gender-based violence incidents. During the first seven days of South Africa's first lockdown, 87,000 calls reporting some type

of gender-based violence were made to the police (PowerFM, 3 April, 2020). The president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, declared it to be "another pandemic that is raging in our country" (Amnesty International, 2021a, p. 14).

In May 2021, Palestinians saw some of the worst violence in years, both in Gaza and East Jerusalem, when violence escalated between Palestinians and Israelis due to a court case relating to the eviction of Palestinian families from the Sheik Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. In June 2021, Naftali Bennet and the leader of the opposition formed a coalition to oust the incumbent Benjamin Netanyahu from office. Bennet, who assumed office in June 2021, has described himself as more right-wing than Netanyahu and is outspoken in his support for Israel as a Jewish nation state; he has also championed the rights of Israeli settlements in the West Bank (BBC News, June 2021). Political instability in Palestine seems only to have been increasing over the past year, and when political priorities shift to more immediate concerns, such as annexation plans and the healthcare struggles that arise from a global pandemic, the question remains as to whether women's issues will really be seen as an ongoing and urgent priority.

In these global and local contexts, it seems as timely as ever to conduct research that helps us understand how we can advance women's security and participation in situations of conflict and if international instruments such as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda can truly be transformational for women living in these countries and beyond.

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The United Nations Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda has become a well-known and internationally recognised framework within the field of peace and conflict studies over the past 20 years. Resolution 1325 and nine subsequent resolutions together form the 'Women, Peace and Security Agenda', which has played a significant role in bringing the discussion of women's roles in conflict and post-conflict situations to the forefront of the international security agenda. Davies and True (2019, p. 3) have argued, that currently the WPS Agenda "stands at this juncture with significant potential to bring knowledge and social transformation to prevent conflicts, protect human rights and promote recovery from conflict and insecurity". The contribution made by the WPS Agenda to women in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as its innovative nature, should not be underplayed. For example, as Cohn (2004) points out, for women in war-torn countries, reference to Resolution 1325 offers a whole host of opportunities and promise for change. Progress towards achieving these resolutions has, however, been slow and mixed. A lot of hope was invested in the WPS Agenda's ability to address gendered exclusions, forms of discrimination, and violence that is generated by conflict; however, many argue that the agenda has not proved to be as transformational as was originally thought (see, for example, Shepherd, 2016; Basu, 2016; Basu et al., 2020).

One should not really be surprised that the agenda has not necessarily been as transformative as was intended; after all, as Davies and True (2019) argue, the WPS Agenda is expected to engage with patriarchal normative frameworks, which the political institutions are known to be, but at the same time actively engage with these same institutions in order to transform gendered power relations. It is about balancing local-level intentions, often dominated by women, while also ensuring engagement with international and national-level institutions, which are dominated by elite men (ibid.). The WPS Agenda is not perfect, and neither is its

implementation. However, none of the advances it has produced would have been likely to happen without the Agenda. Davies and True (ibid.) suggest we should use the feminist pragmatist perspective that small, incremental progress might just be better than revolution. The WPS Agenda is not based on any gender theory but a trial-and-error process whereby the different stakeholders are committed to transforming gender equality and peace over time (ibid.).

It should be noted that the critiques on the WPS Agenda reflect the huge expectations that have become attached to framework that is only 20 years old while the institutions trying to implement it are still very much trying to learn through trial and error. Ní Aoláin and Valji (2019, p. 54) argue "that a trenchant critique speaks to a work-in-progress and not a completed project." Hence there is a danger that the scholarship is analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the agenda prematurely (ibid.). As Basu et al. (2020) suggest in their review of the academic scholarship around the WPS community, the literature has really only been developed during the past 10 years, while an increasing number of new resolutions have also been being adopted into the WPS Agenda. Although Ní Aoláin and Valji's (2019) point could be argued to be true, it is because of the development of critical research, literature, and 'lessons learned' initiatives in this area that the Agenda and its potential have been able to be developed during the past 10 years. The aim of this thesis, though critical, is also to develop and contribute to this existing literature by showcasing that there is clearly a need and willingness to implement the Agenda at national level. As the findings of this study will demonstrate, local civil society organisations value the WPS Agenda as a useful tool for improving women's lives and security both in South Africa and Palestine. However, the data also shows how the Agenda could be developed further in order for it to better serve women in different contexts, situations, and places in the world, and this is where critique, though perhaps premature as Ní Aoláin and Valji argue, is essential.

This thesis examines Resolution 1325 and the broader WPS Agenda by considering their role from the level of international policy framework to their local-level application through the examination of two places: South Africa and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).[1] The primary line of inquiry is to understand whether and to what extent the UN WPS Agenda is a transformational and suitable framework for improving women's security. The study is based on qualitative semi-structured interviews with 20 civil society members and individual experts in South Africa and Palestine. This study is not aiming to provide a comparison between these two contexts, but rather uses them as illustrative examples to explore the challenges and conceptual understanding of the WPS Agenda at the national level. Intersectionality and feminist security theory are used as framework of analysis to study how the WPS Agenda is understood and applied in South Africa and Palestine and what are the challenges that affect the implementation of the Agenda.

Using feminist security theory as a framework, this thesis argues that a feminist approach to security should be applied to the WPS Agenda, which has often been criticised for conceptualising security too narrowly and focusing largely on post-conflict contexts and situations of armed conflict. In addition, this thesis uses the concept of intersectionality to include the perspective of people who belong to multiply marginalised groups to analyse the transformational potential of the WPS Agenda in South Africa and Palestine. One of the critiques of the WPS Agenda is that it privileges gender above any other significant power relation, such as race, class, or sexual identity in understanding women's experiences in conflict. This thesis will examine how, for example, ethnicity, race, religion, and/or geographical location, especially the urban/rural divide affect how the WPS Agenda is utilised in South Africa and Palestine. Understanding this puzzle, allows us to better conceptualise

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[1] This thesis will hereafter use the term 'Palestine' to refer to the occupied Palestinian territories.

women's experience and subjectivity, because as Wibben (2011) argues, insisting that there is only one singular narrative on women or security is "itself a form of political violence" (p.2).

It should be highlighted, that this thesis understand the WPS Agenda, as the Security Council women, peace and security resolutions[2] that form the Agenda, the related National Action Plans (NAP) and the activities/programmes and policies produced by international organisations, governments and civil society which are related to the WPS Agenda. Due to the declarative nature of the founding Resolution 1325, Aharoni (2014) has argued that the Resolution 1325 can be understood partially as a "regulative norm", meaning it is a norm that establishes recognised standards and constrains behaviour but even more so it is a "constitutive norm" that defines the identity of the actors such as civil society organisations and states (ibid, p.2). The findings of this study will demonstrate how the WPS Agenda could be understood fit into this definition by Aharoni. The data indicates how the participants understood the Agenda especially as a regulative norm policy that sets the standards for their operation. As will be discussed in Chapters 4 & 5, the scope and therefore the conceptualisation of the WPS Agenda can be said to have broadened to include a range of actions additional to the formal policy processes of the Agenda and NAPs themselves. The data of this thesis highlights what Cohn (2017, p.1) has written, how the "WPS Agenda has been a catalysing focal point and frame" for women's organisations around the world in conflict and post-conflict zones but also for national governments, international institutions, and activists. Shepherd (2021) consequently has argued that the WPS Agenda is shaped and retold across different contexts, and through these local contexts the various imaginings of what the Agenda is and can be become more visible (ibid.). This is certainly the case in South Africa and Palestine, where the findings have demonstrated how the Agenda has been utilised differently to serve the purpose and needs of

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[2] At the time of writing, the WPS Agenda consists of 10 Security Council resolutions

each of the places. Therefore as part of this study, the various imaginings of the Agenda by the research participants will be discussed.

This introductory chapter sets out the conceptual and theoretical basis for this research and the scholarship and literature in which it is situated in. The chapter will start by briefly discussing the definition of gender used, before illustrating the gendered effects of conflict and the impact conflict has on women. Clarity about both of these factors is essential background for this thesis and for the potential the WPS Agenda can offer. The chapter will continue by discussing the significance and scope of this research. The contribution to knowledge and research objectives are then briefly discussed. Lastly the chapter will outline the content and structure of this thesis.

1.2. Defining gender

To understand the scope and focus of this thesis, this section will briefly outline some of the key debates surrounding the definitions of gender and how it is constructed.

The term 'gender' is used in the social sciences to describe a person's or a social group's views and social practices around masculinity and femininity. Cohn (2013, p. 3) for example argues that gender is a "social structure which shapes individual identities and lives. It shapes how people see themselves and are seen by others", and a prominent feminist scholar, Ann Tickner (1997), defines gender as a set of socially and culturally constructed characteristics which are linked to factors such as power, rationality, and autonomy. Peterson (2004) has written how gender as a social construct is not something that is natural or given, but is learned. Similarly, Judith Butler (2002, pp. 9-10) has argued that gender is culturally constructed and is therefore "neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex". Butler (ibid., p. 33) has also asserted that while "gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be", the notion that the term 'women' constitutes a common identity persists in ways that remain problematic, and so 'women' has "become a troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause of anxiety" (ibid., p. 6). Others have argued that gender is an active process,

such as sociologist West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 126) whom have referred to it as "Doing Gender". What they mean by "doing gender" is the involvement of different, socially guided, interactional, and micro-political activities that "cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'nature'" (ibid., p. 126). West and Zimmerman argue that gender is the outcome of various social situations that we encounter in our societies. Therefore, it is important not to collude with the assumption that there is just one gendered experience because gender is lived and experienced differently and is dependent on its context (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2011).

This study is based on the understanding that gender is socially and culturally constructed (see for example Tickner, 1997 and Cohn, 2013) but also a form of power relation (Confortini 2006, Tickner 1997). The study argues, that gender is not the only identifying social structure or power dynamic that affects women. The term 'woman' is often used to describe women as if they are all the same, without taking into account the different identities that are constituted when gender intersects with , among other factors, race, ethnicity, class, or sexual identity (Butler, 2002). This thesis will go on to argue that it would be beneficial to broaden the scope of the WPS Agenda and its understanding of women, by taking into account other intersectional identities, in order to create a truly inclusive framework. When a range of identifiers such as class, race, nationality, ethnicity, and age are taken into consideration, gender can be understood as one factor which forms part of these multi-sectional identities. Henry (2007) emphasises that gender relations are dependent on a variety of factors, ranging from identity to geo-political context, and goes further to suggest that these factors include not only race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, and nationality but also facets of west/east, north/south, and developed/developing binaries. This nuanced view of gender will be discussed in more depth in the next section of this chapter which will look at the concept of intersectionality. Although this thesis does not call for a broader Gender, Peace and Security Agenda, it does argue that the WPS Agenda should include an understanding of the different intersectional identities that

women hold, rather than just focussing on discussing women as one homogenous group. It goes on especially to discuss how facets of geography such rural/urban divide, effects gender relations.

As this thesis argues based on the findings of the study, gender should be seen also as a form of structural power relation. Understanding and examining unequal gender relations and power structures within conflict is a key endeavour of feminist peace research (Wibben, Confortini, Roohi et al, 2019). Both Tickner (1997) and Cohn (2013) have argued, that it is vital to recognise this because it means that gender is a way of hierarchically structuring relationships amongst different people and different activities that are often associated with either masculinity or femininity (Cohn, 2013). As Cohn (ibid.) argues, gender, just like class, race, and colonialism, is a system of power that relies on distinctions between different categories of people and privileging some over others, giving access to rights, authority, responsibilities, and resources along the lines of group membership. Cohn's definition of gender as a power relation is closely linked to definitions of intersectionality whereby people are understood to have differing intersectional identities which are also linked to different power relations. In a structural sense, gender is always a primary way of demonstrating the unequal power relationships between men and women. Scott (1986) claims that, although the different forms of gender relations may vary, they are always used as a way of signifying relationships of power, but because gender is often seen as belonging inside the 'household', it has sometimes been seen as irrelevant to international relations discussions. This definition of gender and other intersecting identities as forms of power relations is a key starting point for this thesis.

This thesis takes women as its primary focus of analysis because this is the focus the United Nations Women, Peace and Security resolutions use, as their name suggests[3]. However, it should be noted that there has been an increasing volume of research and debate about

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[3] Men and masculinities are only mentioned in Resolution 2467 (2019)

recognising violence against men, and on men and masculinities more generally, within the WPS Agenda (see, for example, Duriesmith, 2020; Myrttinen, 2019). For example, Dolan (2014, p. 80) calls for a new, gender-inclusive resolution on gender-based violence (GBV) in order for the interventions around GBV to be released from their "patriarchal mode of 'doing gender'". He argues that Resolution 1325 has failed to respond to conflict-related sexual violence because of a reluctance to "confront the reality of conflict-related sexual violence against men and boys" (Dolan, 2014, p. 80), and there has been an increasing movement to call for an inclusive Men, Peace and Security Agenda to supplement the existing WPS one (Duriesmith, 2020). Myrttinen (2019) similarly calls for a broadening of the WPS Agenda into a "Gender, Peace and Security" Agenda, which would include men and masculinities in order to address the needs of men and boys and go beyond just thinking about sexual violence in conflict. Although there has been support for the idea of a Men, Peace and Security Agenda, the suggestion has also been contested as some argue it would reinforce gender as a binarised construct, while others have argued that this step would take attention away from the needs of women (Duriesmith, 2020).

Although this thesis argues that a more intersectional approach needs to be taken to the implementation of the WPS Agenda, it suggests that the focus of the Agenda should still be kept on women rather than adding men into the mix. One of the achievements of Resolution 1325 is that its sole emphasis is on women, an element that was completely absent from Security Council decision-making before this resolution was issued, and its emphasis on the role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as their full participation in all efforts to maintain and preserve peace and security, is truly historic. Diluting the Agenda with too many elements – in this case, the idea of bringing in the issues that men experience during conflict – risks it losing its focus on women and ending up as an Agenda about everything and everyone.

1.3.   The gendered impact of conflict

The end of the Cold War generated fresh optimism for a new world order where the rule of law, democracy, and human rights would become principal values. However, it became quickly clear this would not be the reality when violent conflicts erupted, for example in Haiti, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia, followed by the atrocities of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda (Chinkin, 2019). These conflicts were termed by Mary Kaldor (2012) as so-called "new wars", a term for conflicts which were characterised by fighting between state and non-state actors, operated across state borders, and were often fought in the name of identity (for example, religious, tribal, or ethnic identity). Kaldor (2012) further noted that in these conflicts extreme violence was targeted especially against civilians and increasingly against women in forms such as torture, rape, other forms of sexual violence, and executions. Chinkin (2019) has also demonstrated that in these conflicts where violence against civilians was exacerbated, women often suffered a disproportionate amount of violence and were subjected to gender-based violence and rape.

The UN Secretary General's 1999 report to the Security Council noted the different impacts that conflict and armed conflict have on women and men. It highlighted that women and children are usually disproportionately impacted as civilians by conflict, which leads to an increasing number of women acting as head of household and dealing with increased workload. The effects of conflict, including the breakdown of families and social ties in communities, often make women especially vulnerable to gender-based violence, including rape. The report further went on to note that women also constitute the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons (UN Security Council, 1999). It was during the 1990s that an understanding developed of the impact conflict has on gender, and this further paved the way for the adoption of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. However, it is notable that, even though the impact of conflict on women was recognised in the reports to the Security Council

and in thematic resolutions, the focus was very much on women's role as victims and as a group of people who need protecting, rather than on recognising women as active participants and agents of change in peacebuilding (Chinkin, 2019).

It was also during this time, in the 1990s, that the Security Council recognised how harm to individuals could pose a threat to international peace and security. This led to an increasing number of reports and initiatives within the UN designed to focus on safeguarding individuals rather than just on securing borders and territories. As Chinkin (2019) has noted, there was a need to redefine what security means and move away from the notion of securing borders and towards a concept of security for people. In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the concept of 'human security' in its Human Development report, listing seven types of security: food, health, economic, environmental, personal, community, and political (UNDP, 1994). The specific concept of women's security did not make the list (Chinkin, 2019) as the notion of human security was focused very much on freedom from physical harm. However, this did mark the UN's move towards a more feminist approach to security, which emphasises the security of individuals rather than just the security of state and borders.

The decade following the Cold War saw issues such as human security and civilian protection, with a real focus on gender equality, being given space for discussion within international institutions for the first time. However, the 1990s also saw extreme violence, armed conflicts, and a new awareness of the threat of terrorism. The international women's movement that had gained traction during the UN's Decade of Women from 1975-1985 focused on combatting violence against women both during armed conflict and in "peacetime" (Chinkin, 2019, p. 33). These developments in global politics and institutions allowed the Security Council to shift its thinking away from state-centric security to a more focused approach. In practice, this focus was on violence against civilians and bringing human rights and international humanitarian law within its decision-making processes. Chinkin (2019) has argued that this created a

conducive environment for the acceptance of the Security Council's resolution on addressing women's experiences in armed conflict. However, what separated Resolution 1325 from all other initiatives at the UN level is that it recognised women's right to participate as decision-makers in all levels of the conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding process (Cohn, 2004). The resolution ensured women's inclusion and agency at all levels of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and it did not just focus on women as another vulnerable group needing protection, as the previous UN statements and reports had done (Chinkin, 2019). Its adoption was a historic moment for the women's movement and marked a shift in thinking at the highest level of the UN.

Gender cuts across all issues in societies, from political to economic and social contexts, and so it is vital to take the impact of political violence and conflict about gender equality and gender relations seriously (Moser, 2001). The scale and level of violent conflicts is increasing, and the evidence shows that the effects of these conflicts on the human rights of women and girls are severe (Davies & True, 2019). War and conflict affect societies' social, economic, and political domains. The consequences of conflict are multifaceted and can include (un)employment, as well as effects on relationships, health, security, home, and societies' infrastructure. Fighting and war have been seen historically as practices primarily, though not always, engaged in by men. War is also often symbolically and practically linked to masculine norms (Cohn, 2013), and although conflict will always have severe consequences for both men and women, the effect conflict has on women will always be different (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011; Cohn, 2013).

The misrepresentation of women and men in war and conflict has resulted in insufficient recognition of women's role and participation (Moser, 2001). Any generalisations that women would be inherently 'more peaceful' than men, or that women would always have only one role – the role of victim – to play in war needs to be rejected (Charlesworth, 2008; Cohn, 2013).

There are plenty of examples of female combatants and aggressors during conflict and wars and we should not draw conclusions about someone's 'more peaceful' nature just because of gender. As Otto (2006) argues, the view of women as more peaceful is extremely limited as well, because if we understand that women's contributions come from their so-called womanly instincts, what will follow is that their political agency will be limited to feminized tasks such as nurturing and mothering.

The gendered reality of war is complex and women's roles and experience in it are varied (Cohn, 2013). As Moser (2001, p. 5) has observed, "for women as much as for men, the experience of violent conflict, as with social life, is not built upon a single discourse". Women may play roles as combatants but are also survivors in the aftermath of wars. Hence it is important not to represent women and their experiences of conflict as singular as if they would all be the same. This an important factor to take into account when planning and implementing the WPS Agenda, as will be discussed later on in this thesis. This same principle is valid with regards to the diversity of the nature of wars and conflicts. Women's experience of war and conflict is diverse – women can be victims of terrible crimes in conflict situations, and they may be accounted for as refugees, child carers, heads of households, or victims of sexual violence. They can also be perpetrators and supporters of wars or militant groups, and these 'roles' might overlap – both women and men can be in both the victim and perpetrator categories (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011). Different intersectional identities also mean that people experience conflict in diverse ways, as will be discussed later in this thesis. For example, a young Palestinian woman from the rural Area C of the West Bank might experience the Israeli occupation differently than a professional woman living in Ramallah in Area A. As Ní Aoláin et al. (2011) argue, people might have had different experiences, for example of sexual violence, displacement, or loss of livelihood, even if they were combatants in the same conflict (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011). It is the brutalisation of the body that, Cockburn (2014) says, marks

the difference between sexes in war. Women and men are tortured, beaten, and assaulted differently during war, both because of the physical difference between sexes but also because of the different meanings that are culturally ascribed to gendered bodies (Cockburn, 2014).

The so-called new conflicts (Kaldor, 2012) of the 21st century produced a whole new array of issues to be considered. Inequality with regard to the distribution of power and resources had become more prominent. This, together with structural inequalities within and between states, led to regional conflicts and to the escalation of international armed conflicts. If we think of some of the recent conflicts around the world (for example, in Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Ukraine and South Sudan), they are largely intra-state conflicts. War and conflict come in different forms, including civil war, armed conflict, internal armed conflict, and the war on terror. Different political and legal mechanisms have been put in place to control, regulate, and contain conflict (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011) and Cockburn (2004) has noted that conflicts are complex and do not necessarily have a clear end point; instead, there is often a continuum of violence where occasions and different types of violence connect events together, moving from one occasion to the next with gender linking these occasions together. With regard to this notion, it is crucial to consider what is actually meant by 'security' and how we define conflicts. This will be one of the central arguments of this thesis and will be discussed in depth in the chapters that follow.

Moreover, women's experience of and roles in war are often captured in a single narrow definition of women as victims. This way of defining women is dangerous in itself as it presumes a notion of 'women' which understands that all women are the same and have the same experiences, rather than taking into account the intersectionality of women's experiences (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011). It is essential to take these matters into account when discussing and examining the implementation of the UN WPS Agenda because, as Harders (2011, p. 132) states, "the transformation of violent conflict is impossible without using gendered lens". For example, the way societies use different types of violence is gendered. Armed forces are largely

still dominated by men; heads of states, as well as foreign and defence ministers, are often men; and women are still often seen as victims of violence (ibid.).

It is in this context that the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda is considered to be important as it highlights women, not only as victims of war, but also as agents of change and participants in peace processes. The Agenda makes a gender perspective relevant in everything from peace agreements to planning refugee camps and reconstructing societies after armed conflict (Rehn & Sirleif, 2002).

The next section will set out the research aim and objectives and will outline the significance of study.

1.4.   The research puzzle – why this research matters?

The literature and research conducted around the WPS framework over the past 20 years is vast. Thanks to this substantial body of work, the conversations and research in this area have developed and progressed significantly. These include for example: wartime sexual violence (Aroussi, 2017; Reilly, 2018; Simic, 2010); the implementation of the WPS Agenda through international institutions (Wright, 2016; Haastrup, 2019; Guerrina & Wright, 2016); National Action Plans and localisation of the Agenda (Swaine, 2017; Aroussi, 2017; True, 2016; Shepherd, 2016); women in peacekeeping (Karim, 2017; Henry, 2012; Deiana & McDonagh, 2018); discussions around the imperialist, westernised agenda of the framework (Aroussi, 2017; Pratt, 2013; Basu, 2016); the politics behind the UN Security Council (Shepherd, 2008; Willet, 2010; Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011, Tryggestad, 2009); countering violent extremism (Ní Aoláin, 2016; Aroussi, 2020; Asante & Shepherd 2020); perspectives on masculinities in the WPS Agenda (H. Wright, 2020; Duriesmith, 2017; Myrttinen, 2019); and the implementation of the WPS framework at national levels (Basini & Ryan, 2016; Basu, 2016; Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2015).

Although the WPS Agenda was a welcome policy initiative due to its involvement of women in peacemaking processes, in practice it is conceptually and normatively flawed (see, for example, Basu et al., 2020; Willet, 2010; Shepherd, 2016). Willet wrote in 2010 (p. 156) that "the implementation of 1325 has been woefully inadequate" and another 10 years later, Basu et al. (2020, p. 3) argued that the WPS Agenda, together with the countless National and Regional Action Plans and policies resulting from it, "constitutes a vast normative infrastructure of significant ambition but questionable impact."

The work around the WPS Agenda has developed significantly over the years, thanks to advocates, academics, civil society organisations, and decision-makers, the discussion of the Agenda's effective implementation differs little whether the criticisms were written in 2010 or 2020. An interview with Madeleine Rees, secretary general of WILPF for IPI Global Observatory (2020), echoes these statements, as she reflects that we are not getting anything about WPS right: "Even the INGOs [international non-governmental organizations] cannot [get things right] because the structures within which we are trying to work are inimical to being able to realize what needs to be done" (ibid.). Rees highlights in the interview how, in many places, the way "it has been done" is actually very neo-colonial and has not included the people that the policy has been written for (ibid.). This was echoed by the most recent Global Study on the Implementation of the Resolution 1325 (Coomaraswamy, 2015), in which the Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, stated:

> (there is) a crippling gap between the ambition of our commitments and actual political and financial support. We struggle to bridge the declared intent of international policymaking and the reality of domestic action in the many corners of the world where 1325 is most needed. (ibid, p. 5)

Basu et al. (2020) have reviewed 240 articles and book chapters on WPS to trace the development and trends in the field over the past 20 years in their book *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security* (2020). Significantly, the authors point out that it has become

possible to talk about the WPS community in academia only in recent years, as over half of the publications reviewed were written from 2016 to 2018.[4] During the first decade after the adoption of Resolution 1325, only a few academics focused on and wrote about the topic. A similar trend was also happening with regards to the development of the WPS Agenda itself – it was only in 2008 and 2009 that the first consecutive resolutions addressing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda were adopted. Between 2010 and 2019, a further six resolutions were adopted, which meant that discussions moved from talking solely about Resolution 1325 to discussions about the WPS Agenda as a whole (Basu et al., 2020).

Although there is a significant body of academic research around the different themes and policy issues of the WPS Agenda, there is limited knowledge on how and if intersectionality is considered within the Agenda and how security is viewed and defined within the framework.

Much of the current literature on the critique of the implementation of the WPS Agenda pays particular attention to issues including its selective nature and how the WPS agenda is applied to some conflicts but not others (Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019; Ní Aoláin, 2016; Aroussi, 2017); its essentialism, whereby women are primarily treated as victims (Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019); its failure to challenge war from a feminist perspective (Cockburn, 2007; Shepherd, 2016; Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019); and it failure to take into account intersectionality, ignoring factors such as gender identity or race and treating women as one homogenous group (Pratt, 2013; Jansson & Eduards, 2016; Hagen, 2016; Haastrup & Hagen, 2020)..

However, there is a lack of clear empirical evidence in academic research with regards to the need to employ an intersectional analysis in the implementation of the WPS Agenda. Several policy papers and reports by international NGOs, such as one produced by the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2013, p. 3), recommend that the discussion should "also include insights from intersectional and post-colonial feminist analysis.

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[4] This study does have some limitations with regard to which articles and chapters were included.

By widening its theoretical foundation, the WPS agenda would be better prepared to identify the context-specific structural and sociocultural causes of conflict, thus being able to formulate more effective policies". In its recent policy brief, International Alert (2020) recommended that an intersectional approach should be adopted to enable analysis of women's varied experiences of post-conflict contexts. However, almost all of these accounts actually fail to bring anything new to the conversation apart from repeated recommendations that an 'intersectionality' lens should be applied to the implementation of the WPS Agenda. None of the reports written by international organisations, NGOs, and, in some cases, academics, provide empirical evidence drawn from asking the people the WPS Agenda targets what they think of intersectionality. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to and fill existing gaps in knowledge by bringing new empirical data to the discussion on intersectionality and the WPS Agenda. By conducting interviews with individual South African and Palestinian experts and civil society organisations and understanding how they see the linkages between intersectionality and the WPS Agenda, this study makes a positive contribution to enabling the voices of the people the WPS Agenda directly affects.

The main aim of this thesis is to understand this better and whether and to what extent the WPS Agenda is a transformational and suitable framework for improving women's security in South Africa and Palestine by using feminist security theory and intersectionality as lenses of analysis. The related objectives of this study, then, are:

1) To understand and examine how the WPS Agenda is interpreted and applied by civil society organisations and other stakeholders at national and local levels in South Africa and Palestine; and

2) To critically analyse the obstacles that prevent the Agenda from having tangible impact to improve women's security in South Africa and Palestine.

This thesis contributes to the existing scholarship on the WSP Agenda and the gaps identified within it. Firstly, it expands the knowledge on existing theory by contributing to the literature on feminist security theory and by highlighting violence as a continuum. This study advances the understanding of feminist security as an emancipatory project. It shares the feminist understanding that international politics are gender hierarchical, and how this is "inherently unjust" (Sjoberg & Tickner, 2011, p.11) and is based on the feminist notion which is interested on women's experiences and understanding how gender intersects with other identity markers, such as race, ethnicity and class (Wibben, 2011a).

Secondly this study argues the importance of intersectionality within the WPS Agenda in order to understand how political, racial and ethnic divisions are problematic when it comes to the implementation of the Agenda. Should these not be taken into consideration, then there is a danger of further division, as well as exclusion and silencing of the voices that need to be heard as part of the process. Empirically this study provides new evidence from underrepresented people from places where limited research has been conducted before.

This thesis emphasises the importance of conducting gendered and gender-sensitive analysis to assess how conflict affects people, and it also stresses that this analysis need to be taken into account when the WPS Agenda is being implemented. Sharoni (1998, p. 1061) highlights the fact that gender-sensitive analysis is also important because it enables us to examine "not only relations between men and women but also other social relations, particularly those grounded in unequal divisions of power and privilege". Sharoni (ibid.) argues that, in order to understand potential obstacles to peacebuilding efforts, we must understand how gender shapes our identities and experiences and how these identities and experiences challenge conceptions of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations more broadly. This important issue, informs one of the main criticisms of the WPS Agenda I present in this thesis, which is that the Agenda presents women as one common identity without taking intersectionality into account.

In order to achieve the aims of this research, qualitative research was conducted in South Africa and Palestine. In Palestine, the focus of this thesis is on the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. The two different contexts of Palestine and South Africa were chosen because of their relationships to the overall aim of this study and its theoretical framework. Palestine and South Africa share similarities with regards to inequalities and the challenges that face women's security, and their different political statuses have the potential to offer new perspectives. The political and social contexts in these two countries have their differences, but they also share a lot of similarities. According to different peace indices, such as the Global Peace Index (IEP, 2020),[5] South Africa ranks roughly in the middle with regards to its level of peace, meaning that it is not considered to be a country in conflict. Palestine, however, is a state operating under a foreign occupation which has lasted for the past 60 years.

Research on the WPS Agenda is limited, especially in the context of South Africa, where the focus has been on a few limited issues such as peacekeeping (Hendricks, 2017; Alchin et al., 2018). Research on the WPS Agenda is often focused either on conflict or post-conflict countries, rather than countries such as South Africa, which is not traditionally not considered to be either of these. The literature on the WPS Agenda within Palestine has been focused on the implementation of Resolution 1325 and has often being critical about the fact that it has not brought real change to women in Palestine (Farr, 2011; Richter-Devroe, 2012, 2018; Abuarguob, 2020). The majority of academic literature on Palestine and Resolution 1325 dates back to the period when Palestine had not made huge advances in its implementation, as the National Action Plan itself was only developed in 2016. For example, Richter-Devroe (2018) argued that many Palestinian women and men had minimal support for and belief in 1325 and find that it does not respond to the real needs of people; instead, they saw it as another patronising colonial attempt to save brown women. By conducting research in these places,

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[5] For example, the Global Peace Index (2020) ranks South Africa as having a medium level of peace.

this thesis will contribute to knowledge by providing new empirical evidence from South Africa and Palestine.

The subsequent chapters look at whether and how the WPS Agenda is applied in these contexts and the challenges that need to be overcome for the Agenda to be truly transformative.

1.5. Chapter overview

In order to provide background knowledge to answer the aims and objectives of this research, Chapter 2 will start by examining the key literature that has critiqued the WPS Agenda and addressed the challenges involved in its implementation over the last 20 years. This will further the argument of this thesis by reviewing the literature to understand how the Agenda can be applied in national level and what are the key critiques of the Agenda that hinders its transformational potential. It will give a broad overview of the key debates around the WPS Agenda before moving on to investigate the literature around the central questions of the thesis: who implements the Agenda and where, which situations should the WPS Agenda be applied to, and which women is it meant to help?

 The Chapter will then move on to focus on the literature about feminist security theories, discussing and analysing the work of feminist scholars such as Enloe, Tickner, True, Wibben and Cockburn. It will define and examine intersectionality, framing the background and conceptual framework for the thesis in order to examine challenges for the implementation of the WPS Agenda through the lens of intersectionality and feminist security theory. The chapter will also examine the key debates around intersectionality theory and how they are relevant when looking at the implementation of the WPS Agenda.

Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology used to conduct the research and it will also examine the process of deciding on research methods, positionality, and ethics before moving on to explain the fieldwork and data collection phase.

Chapters 4 and 5 will introduce the research findings produced from the data collected and focus on analysing, through various themes, the interview data collected from civil society organisations and independent experts in both Palestine and South Africa. These chapters will highlight the challenges for women's security in both countries, as well as exploring how the Agenda is understood by the different actors within those countries, how it is utilised, whether it is a relevant Agenda for their situation, whether or not it can be effective for all women, and the challenges for implementation.

Chapter 6 will discuss the research findings and how they fit with the findings from the existing literature set out in Chapter 2. It will identify the new insights this research contributes to the debate by bringing the two examples of South Africa and Palestine into a discussion with each other. Although the two countries have, to some extent, different political and social contexts, the study demonstrates that common themes and issues can be identified across both of them.

In Chapter 6, I will also reflect on the cases of South Africa and Palestine to consider to what extent the WPS Agenda is an effective and useful framework for improving women's security. I will review the overall aim of the thesis before going on to discuss the challenges that hinder the full potential of the Agenda. The chapter argues firstly, in the light of feminist security theory, that the WPS Agenda is conceptually flawed due to its narrow definition of security and peace, which limits the scope of the Agenda. Secondly, the chapter discusses the failure to recognise intersectionality within the WPS Agenda itself, also noting how important it is to consider the geographical location, especially the urban/rural divide, amongst all the other intersectional identities women have. Lastly, the chapter will discuss who designs and funds national WPS Agendas and the complex challenges this issue can generate before moving on to a discussion about the challenges involved in implementing the Agenda.

Chapter 7 will conclude by summarising the findings of this research, as well as outlining its contribution to knowledge and its limitations. It will also set out ideas for future research

projects on this topic. The thesis will conclude by offering reflections on the research and the policy implications of these findings.

2. Literature review: Feminist security theory and intersectionality – a framework for interpreting and analysing the WPS Agenda

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will directly contribute to a critical investigation of the research aims and objectives of this thesis by developing the theoretical and conceptual background needed to analyse and interpret this study's research findings. It will introduce the framework in which this research is placed by reviewing the literature on intersectionality and feminist security theory, highlighting the connections between the two theories, and using them as lenses to analyse the implementation of the WPS framework in South Africa and Palestine. To understand the suitability of the WPS Agenda for improving women's security, and how the framework is interpreted and applied in national level, and the challenges for this, the chapter will first provide contextual understanding of the WPS Agenda, by examining the history of the resolution, significance and current critiques. It will also look at the role is for National Action Plans with regards to the potential implementation of the Agenda, and who participates in designing them as well as to which situations should the WPS Agenda be applied to, and which women are they meant to help?

2.2. An introduction to Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security" and the broader WPS Agenda

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on "Women, Peace and Security" was adopted on 31 October, 2000. Together with nine supporting resolutions it forms the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which aims to protect and promote the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Resolution 1325 contains four core pillars which are prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. UNSCR 1325 reaffirms the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the importance of

women's participation and full engagement in all efforts to maintain and preserve peace and security (UNSCR, 2000). It recognises that women have the right to participate as decision-makers at all levels of the conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding process (Cohn, 2004).

The resolution 1325 consists of 10 preambular paragraphs, identifying principles, and 18 operational paragraphs. It encourages the increased participation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international conflict prevention and resolution initiatives, as well as calling for the protection of women's rights, including women's protection from gender-based violence, in international law (UNSCR 1325, 2000). The resolution calls upon member states, local actors, and the UN itself to adopt a gender perspective at all levels of their operations, including peace negotiations, agreements, and peacekeeping missions (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011).

Over the past 20 years, the scope of the WPS Agenda has broadened to include a further nine supporting resolutions. As discussed previously, Resolution 1325 is divided into four pillars. Shepherd (2019, p. 100) argues that "the division of the WPS Agenda into these pillars is a heuristic device, one that bears close resemblance not only to the ways in which priority is afforded to certain issues in practice but also the organisation of the WPS policy architecture". Shepherd argues that, in her view, the WPS Agenda consists of two agenda-setting resolutions (UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2242), two resolutions that focus on participation (UNSCR 1889 and UNSCR 2122), and four resolutions on protection (UNSCR 1820, UNSCR 1888, UNSCR 1960, and UNSCR 2106). Agreeing with Basu and Confortini (2017), Shepherd concludes that prevention has been articulated inconsistently throughout the resolutions and therefore is the weakest of the pillars (Shepherd, 2019).

Resolution 1820 (2008), Resolution 1888 (2009), Resolution 1960 (2010), and Resolution 2467 (2019) focus on sexual violence. Resolution 1820 recognises sexual violence as a weapon and

tactic of war. It also states that rape and other forms of sexual violence can be understood as war crimes, crimes against humanity, or as acts with respect to genocide. One of the key priorities for Resolution 1820 is the protection of women from sexualised violence in conflict and zero tolerance of sexualised violence perpetrated by UN Peacekeeping personnel (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016). Resolution 1888 reiterates that sexual violence aggravates conflict and is an impediment to international peace and security. It also calls for the Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative on conflict-related sexual violence (PeaceWomen, 2009).

 Resolution 1960 calls for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict. It also develops mechanisms for monitoring, reporting on, and analysing conflict-related sexual violence and integrates Women's Protection Advisors into field missions (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016). Resolution 2467 (2019) recognises that sexual violence occurs as a continuum of violence in conflict. It also recognises the need for a survivor-centred approach and recommends that prevention and response should be non-discriminatory in nature. It further urges member states to strengthen measures that help victims to access justice with reparations and strengthen criminal law (PeaceWomen, 2019). The adoption of Resolution 2467 received considerable attention, as pushback from the US on the draft resolution meant that Resolution 2467 makes no direct reference to sexual and reproductive healthcare. Allen & Shepherd (2019) argue that the choices made about words matter, as the words employed in each resolution are carefully negotiated and represent agreed commitment from the Security Council. The complete absence of language referring to sexual and reproductive health, they argue, reflected the Trump administration's continued war on women (ibid.).

Resolution 1889 (2009) calls for the development of indicators and mechanisms to evaluate the implementation of Resolution 1325 and focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding and women's participation. It also acknowledges the need to increase the participation of women at all levels of peace and security governance (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016). Resolution 2106 (2013) aims to operationalise the structures and measurements arising from the previous

resolutions rather than creating new ones, and it is also the fourth resolution within the Agenda that focuses on sexual violence in conflict. It emphasises how important it is for the Security Council, member states, and parties to armed conflict to do more to implement the previous mandates. It also includes language on women's participation in combating sexual violence (PeaceWomen, 2013).

Resolution 2122 (2013) affirms that an integrated approach is needed if sustainable peace is to be achieved. The resolution also recognises the important role that civil society plays and commits to ensuring that field visits also include meetings with local women's groups and organisations. It encourages member states to increase funding mechanisms to support the work of local civil society organisations and asks for Secretary General's Special Envoys and Special Representatives of UN Missions to consult local women's organisations. Resolution 2122 also reiterated the intention to convene a high-level review in 2015 to assess and evaluate the implementation of Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 2122, 2013).

Resolution 2242 (2015) recognises for the first time the role of gender as a cross-cutting issue within the agenda on combatting violent extremism. It asks member states and UN entities to gather gender-sensitive research and data on the drivers of radicalisation for women and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights. The resolution also focuses on the implementation of the WPS Agenda, understanding the need to implement the agenda across all country situations in the Security Council's agenda, and encouraging the development of National Action Plans. It also encourages the participation of civil society organisations in relevant international and regional peace and security meetings. It promotes the strengthening of mechanisms that allow women in post-conflict and conflict situations to access justice, including the prosecution and investigation of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence (UNSCR 2242, 2015).

Lastly Resolution 2493 (2019), recognising the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325 in 2020, calls on member states to commit to the implementation of the previous nine resolutions and to ensure women are able to fully and equally participate in all stages of peace processes. The resolution also calls on member states to promote women's civil, political, and economic rights, as well as increasing funding for activities related to women, peace and security (UNSCR 2493, 2019). This resolution was initiated by South Africa, which was a non-permanent member of the Security Council until 2020 (PRIO, 2019). As discussed in Chapter 1, this thesis aims to understand how these resolutions are understood and utilised by the research participants in South Africa and Palestine. The resolutions are much broader than just the texts and documents which frame them, and there are multiple ways in which member states can utilise the WPS Agenda, as this thesis will go on to demonstrate.

General Recommendation No. 30 of the CEDAW committee on women in conflict and post-conflict contexts recognises the important nature of both CEDAW and the WPS Agenda (True, 2016). CEDAW's recommendation makes it clear that implementing Resolution 1325 is the responsibility of every member state, and this view has also been encouraged by the Security Council in its subsequent WPS resolutions. One of the most common ways to implement the WPS Agenda into national and local contexts is through National Action Plans (NAPs). These are plans drafted by national governments, often in consultation with civil society organisations, to outline their strategy for implementing the agenda. So far, as of September 2021, 98 UN member states have drafted their own National Action Plans on Resolution 1325 (PeaceWomen, 2021). A few regional organisations, such as the African Union and the European Union, have also drafted their own Regional Action Plans (George & Shepherd, 2016).

In order to understand the challenges of implementing the WPS Agenda in a national level, it is important to briefly look at the legal basis for the implementation. The discussion about whether the resolutions on women, peace and security are legally binding has been a cause of

constant disagreement. Academics such as Shepherd (2011) have suggested that Resolution 1325 is legally binding for the signatories of the UN Charter and therefore should be taken as a political document worthy of in-depth analysis. However, several others (Swaine, 2017; Willett, 2010; Tryggestad, 2009) argue that this is not the case. For example, Swaine (2017) argues that the discussion is open to a variety of interpretations depending on how one looks at the provisions of the UN Charter and how far the different resolutions are considered binding. According to her, Resolution 1325 could be considered legally binding on UN Member States thanks to Article 25 of the UN Charter under which "the Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter" (Article 25, United Nations, 1945). However, there are no legal sanctions or enforcement measures the UN can enact if the WPS Agenda is not implemented under this rule, and so Member States can expect no consequences if they do not implement the framework. This is an issue that has, for many years contributed to the UN's reputation as an ineffective body that cannot enforce concrete measures on its member states. The interviewees whose views are explored further in Chapter 5 reflected their view that Palestinians generally have low trust in UN resolutions as they have been ineffective in bringing real change in the past (Palestine Civil society 6, 8). For example, UN Resolution 2334 (2016), which concerns Israeli settlements and states that breach international law, has not produced any real change on the ground. Binding authority is reserved for resolutions attached to Chapter VII of the UN's Charter, on threats to peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression (Swaine, 2017). Willett (2010) highlights that the Resolution 1325 is not a treaty, and therefore there are no mechanisms for its ratification, verification, or compliance and therefore incentives are lacking for states to comply.

The role of CEDAW with regards to the implementation of the WPS Agenda should also be considered. CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 30 addressed the relationship between the WPS Agenda and CEDAW by stating that it is important for member states both to

implement the resolutions in order to comply with their obligations under CEDAW and to report periodically on their WPS-related activities to the Committee (O'Rourke & Swaine, 2019). Recommendation No. 30 regards implementation of the resolutions as "constitutive of state obligations under CEDAW" (ibid., p. 673) and CEDAW is a binding treaty signed by 189 state parties. However, as Chinkin and Rees (2019) note, CEDAW has only rarely been referenced in the WPS Resolutions, which is why it is noteworthy that it was included in the operative paragraph in Resolution 2467. Chinkin and Rees (ibid.) argue that this reference makes 2467 a stronger resolution in terms of its binding power, but this is a largely academic point when, as O'Rourke and Swaine (2019, p. 671) argue, because of "its endemic problems of under-enforcement, CEDAW is often conceptualised as principally 'cultural' rather than 'legal' tool for the advancement of women's rights".

The lack of specific enforcement measures to pressure member states into implementing the Security Council's resolutions has led to the need for other implementation measures, such as the National Action Plans. A National Action Plan provides a way for a member state to plan an implementation strategy which fits its own specific context, and this makes adoption less onerous. Meanwhile, pressure from civil society organisations and other agencies has created sufficient momentum for member states to regard it as prudent to adopt these implementation tools (Swaine, 2017). For example, as the findings showcase, both in the case of Palestine and South Africa the adoption of the National Action Plans was partly credited to the work and lobbying of the civil society organisations.

It is often argued that drafting a National Action Plan means that the respective governments are committed to the implementation of 1325 both in their international and national activities (Shepherd, 2011); however, as this thesis will go on to discuss, often these plans are just another piece of paper and do not signify or deliver on any real commitment to improving women's security. The different power dynamics in and between various member states also have an impact on how or whether the WPS is being implemented in their respective countries. This

will be discussed in depth in the following sections. Shepherd (2011) has written about the number of national governments that have already drafted their own NAPs and suggests this demonstrates how seriously the WPS Agenda is taken and that national governments are willing to pursue policies in order to promote the equal participation of women in both peace and security initiatives (ibid.). However, in practice it is not so straightforward, as the adoption of a NAP has become normalised as an easy way to demonstrate implementation without any concrete commitment to promoting true equal participation by member states. Further, as Swaine (2017) argues, NAPs have often been used by donor countries in the Global North as a way to enact their foreign aid policy commitments to conflict-affected partner countries. There will be further discussion about the challenges involved in adopting NAPs and whether and how member states are using them to implement the WPS Agenda in section 2.2.4.

The next section will briefly discuss the history of Resolution 1325 and the global events, policy priorities, and civil society work that enabled the adoption of the Women, Peace and Security resolution.

2.2.1 The background and history of the adoption of United Nations Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security"

The United Nations as an organisation has, in principle, committed in its founding charter to equal representation in its own work. Article One of the UN Charter states the purpose of the United Nations as being "*To achieve international co-operation […] in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion*" (United Nations, 1945). In 1946, the Commission on the Status of Women was established by the UN Economic and Social Council as the principal policymaking body with a focus on the advancement of gender equality. Later, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10th December 1948, it reaffirmed that "*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and*

rights" and that "*everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, […] birth or other status*" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Although the WPS Agenda is a UN Security Council resolution, the origins of Resolution 1325 lie in long-term lobbying by women's organisations and the four UN World Conferences on Women, which started in the 1970s (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011). Before 1970, gender had only played a marginal role in the international policy arena and institutions (Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2002). [6] One of the first substantive decisions that raised the profile of women in global governance was made when the United Nations declared 1975 to be the International Women's Year and subsequently named the next decade (1976-1985) as the United Nations Decade of Women (ibid.). The decade was characterised by several high-profile events and conferences on the advancement of women's rights, culminating in the Third World Conference on Women in Kenya in 1985. The outcome of this conference, the document on *Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* (1985) would later turn out to have an impact not only for gender programs and policies but also on the formation of an advocacy network itself (Hafner-Burton & Pollack, 2002). Women's movements in their statements at these conferences, from the beginning of the Decade for Women in Mexico to Beijing in 1995, have always argued that real security and peace could never be achieved without securing equal rights for women (Tickner, 2019).

In 1979, the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was ratified. It was the culmination of the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women which was established in 1946 to promote women's

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[6] The four UN World Conferences were held in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995).

rights and monitor the situation of women (CEDAW, 1979). This Convention holds member states accountable for advancing women's rights and gender equality in domestic law and in practice. As True (2016, p. 314) emphasises, "This is the closest the world comes to a global norm recognizing the legitimacy of women's rights to equality and justice". By signing the treaty, the member states commit to achieving equal political, economic, and social rights for women and men and to report their progress to the CEDAW committee, which holds public hearings that hold states accountable not only to the CEDAW committee but to the civil society organisations that are able to access the committee's records. In 1992, the CEDAW committee adopted a ground-breaking formulation that described gender-based violence against women "as violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately" (Chinkin, 2019, p. 27). The committee stated that this sort of violence is a form of discrimination that inhibits women's ability to enjoy freedoms and rights on a basis of equality with men (ibid.).

However, it was not until the Fourth World Conference on Women, organised in Beijing in 1995, that women achieved a breakthrough with the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Platform for Action stressed the importance of a gender perspective and the contributions of women to peacebuilding and identified "the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation" (United Nations, 1995). This was identified as one of 12 major areas of concern and the platform urged international organisations, governments, and civil society organisations to take action on these matters (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011). The Beijing Platform for Action represented the culmination of the great cumulative effort that women's movements had invested in envisioning gender equality.

It was against this historical backdrop that the adoption of Resolution 1325 became possible. The Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) took the lead in pursuing the adoption of Resolution 1325 in the UN Security Council. Different women's advocacy groups had lobbied for years to place women's issues right at the top of the Security Council's agenda. The right time came after the then Security Council President, Bangladeshi Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdury, linked peace inextricably with gender equality in his International Women's Day Statement in 2000.

WILPF gathered a coalition of NGOs that lobbied the Security Council to adopt a more feminist security and peace agenda, and as well as lobbying individual member states the coalition also drafted the initial version of Resolution 1325 (Otto, 2016). [7] Resolution 1325 was mainly a civil society initiative, but it required considerable support from powerful UN member states. As Aroussi (2015) claims, the WPS Agenda might not have been so successful in its efforts had it not been for the support it received from powerful Western states. For example, the US and UK have taken the lead since the adoption of 1325 to shape the priorities of the WPS Agenda by sponsoring the adoption of new resolutions (ibid.). The ways in which Western states have influenced the WPS Agenda and its implementation will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.4 of this Chapter.

For the NGOs lobbying for Resolution 1325, the goals were multi-faceted. Not only did they want to have gender considered as a routine component in the range of work undertaken by the Security Council, but they also wanted to make sure that when the Security Council was dealing with a particular member state the Council members would have enough information to include gender provisions as mandates of relevant UN missions. As Cohn et al. (2004) noted, the working group also wanted to have gender expertise included as part of fact-finding missions

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[7] The six founding members of the NGO Working group were the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Amnesty International; International Alert; the Hague Appeal for Peace; the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children; and the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice (Cohn, 2008).

and delegations and to make sure that all peacekeeping operations had gender units. Lastly, they also wanted to raise the visibility of women's grassroots organisations and their peacebuilding efforts – the aim was to change the focus from women as victims to women as strong actors in peace and peacebuilding (ibid.).

Both Harrington (2011) and Tryggestad (2009) have argued that the adoption of Resolution 1325 was enabled both because of the advocacy of a large transnational network of women's advocates but also due to significant international events that aided its adoption. As Harrington (2011) observes, one should also consider the significance of the effects that post-Cold War politics had on the adoption of the resolution. The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the discourse and both women's rights and human rights became issues for international governments. The significance that the human rights frame had for the success of the international feminist advocacy only makes sense when it is considered in the context of the much broader transformation of security discourse which followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War (ibid.). This casts back to the global political shift after the end of Cold War, which was discussed in Chapter 1. Therefore, it can be argued that the adoption of UNSCR 1325 was enabled by a chain of significant developments within the field of international relations with regards to changes in the wider international security architecture, the concept of security, the nature of conflicts, and the role of international NGOs (Tryggestad, 2009).

Drawing on this context, and the history and content of the WPS Agenda, the next section will focus on examining why the Agenda is considered to be internationally significant.

2.2.2. The significance of Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda

Resolution 1325 – which has often been referred to as "ground-breaking" or as a "landmark resolution" (Tryggestad, 2009, p.539; Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011, p.490) because it directly addresses women and armed conflict – was unanimously passed by the Security Council and celebrated as a major breakthrough for women's rights (Tryggestad, 2009). The resolution

represented a "new, daring and ambitious strategy for anti-war feminists" (Cohn, 2004, p. 3). Although it failed to address demilitarisation, this was the first time the issue of women's role and participation in peacebuilding was discussed and debated in the Security Council, and this makes it a historic resolution, as Tryggestad (2009) has argued. As Swaine (2019, p. 765) writes, Resolution 1325 "represented an effort to draw gender as a framework into the wider realm of international peace and security". Rehn and Sirleif write in their *Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peacebuilding* (2002):

> Resolution 1325 is a watershed political framework that makes women – and a gender perspective – relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning refugee camps and peacekeeping operations and reconstructing war-torn societies. It makes the pursuit of gender equality relevant to every single Council action, ranging from mine clearance to elections to security sector reform. (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002, p. 3)

Resolution 1325 celebrated its 20th anniversary in October 2020 and the resolution is debated annually in the Security Council with regards to its implementation and whether adequate actions have been taken. Global actors from states to international organisations and civil society organisations have continued their efforts to implement the resolution and it has become "a living commitment from the United Nations and member states to include gender considerations in their peace activities" (Aroussi, 2015, p. 26). Within the UN, Resolution 1325 together with the WPS Agenda is perhaps the only resolution which has such an active constituency around it, and the only agenda that has its annual anniversary marked by Security Council meetings, dedicated events, and several panel conversations (Cohn, 2004), which makes it significant in itself. The resolution has been translated into over 100 languages and is a well-known strategy applied across international and national levels. It can be argued that Resolution 1325 is more than just a one-off gesture but still lives on more than 20 years after

the resolution was passed. Certainly it has led to the creation of a whole international policy framework to advance gender equality in peace and conflict settings.

The passing of Resolution 1325 has been praised as historic because, not only was it the first time gender issues were debated at Security Council level in the UN, but the resolution was also a civil society initiative, emphasising the importance of a bottom-up approach to lobbying for change (Aroussi, 2015). It is an important achievement in itself, showcasing how civil society organisations are also able to lobby resolutions to Security Council level. As Gibbings (2011) writes, throughout the 1990s, member states pushed the Security Council to be more democratic and interaction with civil society organisations was considered as a move in the right direction. Previous UN resolutions and policy reports had treated women as victims of war rather than agents of change, and so the adoption of Resolution 1325 was the first time as UN Security Council dealt with women's experiences in conflict situations and their contribution to conflict resolution and prevention (Cohn, 2004). The initiative to pass and implement 1325 was a bold move to influence one of the most powerful global governance institutions in relation to peace and security; it was especially significant considering that previously women's movements had tried to lobby women's issues mainly at the level of the UN General Assembly or the commissions of the UN, such as the Commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (Cohn, 2004). The significance of this, and the historic implications the resolution has had, should be remembered even when it seems that, particularly in recent years, the WPS Agenda has faced increased critique.

It is notable that that this was the first time a resolution which was largely drafted by civil society organisations composed of women was adopted at the Security Council level. One achievement of the resolution itself was that it marked the culmination of work by a large transnational network of women at all levels of policymaking and it entailed the cooperation of women from a variety of backgrounds including both conflict and non-conflict settings (Cockburn, 2011).

One could argue the WPS Agenda is unique in terms of the reach and development it has achieved over the past 20 years. Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and related international, governmental, and local organisations have tried to develop different strategies to implement the resolution. In addition to this, a global study was commissioned by the UN to look at the impact of the WPS Agenda (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011). The different mechanisms for implementing 1325 have also enabled the creation of a whole industry of academics, policymakers, NGOs, donors, and consultants around the WPS Agenda. Not only are there vast numbers of donor programmes for 1325-related activities, but since 2000 there has also been an increase in the number of NGOs and non-profits which are focused on Resolution 1325. The resolution has also served as a reference point for UN member states that are drafting their own policies and programmes for their organisations which are wanting to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into a wide range of peacebuilding efforts (Gibbings, 2011). As Cohn (2017, p. 1) writes, the "WPS Agenda has been a catalysing focal point and frame" not only for women's organisations around the world in conflict and post-conflict zones but also for national governments, international institutions, and activists.

As has been emphasised above, since the adoption of the initial Resolution, there has been an expansion to form a whole Women, Peace and Security Agenda. One could argue that the UN, other international organisations, governments, and non-governmental actors have aimed to continuously improve and develop the framework in order to keep it relevant to the current global climate. The UN has taken into account the recent developments in the global security policy arena, for example, by adopting UNSCR 2242 on the role of women in preventing violent extremism. The Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (Coomaraswamy, 2015) outlines a number of successes in the implementation of the WPS Agenda throughout the years. One of these successes is the adoption of a comprehensive normative framework with regards to sexual violence in conflict. The Security Council also

appointed a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to report to the Council. The study also highlights the fact that the number of senior women leaders within the UN has been on the rise, from special envoys to the Secretary General and the first female commander of a peacekeeping mission (ibid.).

The effects of the WPS Agenda can also be seen at grassroots level. An interesting aspect of the diffusion of the resolution is the different ways women in local communities have found to make use of it, especially given that, as Cohn (2004) argues, Resolution 1325 was never designed as an organising tool for women's movements. In practice, as the data in this thesis demonstrates, the WPS Agenda is increasingly used by women's NGOs and movements as a tool for their own work.

This section has provided a brief, descriptive overview of Resolution 1325 and the broader WPS Agenda. One could argue that the Agenda represents a noteworthy and binding set of resolutions for member states; however, in practice, the adoption of National Action Plans – the most common tools used to implement the Agenda at national level by member states – has been slow. The next section will examine what National Action Plans are and how they have been used by member states. The section will demonstrate that NAPs were originally adopted mostly by Europeans countries which used them as foreign policy tools. It is only during the last 10 years, as more states have adopted NAPs, that the geographical spread of the Agenda's implementation has become wider.

2.2.3. National Action Plans – instruments for member states to implement the WPS Agenda?

National Action Plans drafted by national governments and international and regional organisations, and in some cases assisted by civil society, provide one of the most common ways for member states to enable and monitor the implementation of the WPS Agenda (Aroussi, 2017; Swaine, 2017). The aim of the NAPs is to translate the international framework of WPS into a localised context and to fit into the domestic strategy of particular member states

via specific national and local objectives (Jacevic, 2019). As the WPS resolutions are not backed by the same kinds of enforcement measures as CEDAW, which is a treaty framework, other means of encouraging the implementation of the framework needed to be developed. In 2002, the Secretary General of the UN called for the implementation of Resolution 1325 through the adoption of National Action Plans by member states in the hope that this would advance the implementation of the Resolution in relevant areas of peace and security (Swaine, 2017).

As Swaine (2017, p. 8) writes, NAPs have become "the default response to any question about how the WPS agenda should be implemented". States are encouraged to develop their own National Action Plans and, as Aroussi (2017) argues, this supposedly demonstrates their commitment to the WPS Agenda and their willingness to implement it. However, as adopting a NAP is a voluntary act for member states, they may adopt one purely to demonstrate their country's modern status and in order to cement their status as a well-governed state, without actually considering the appropriate implementation methods or budget required to deliver on its promises. Commitment to a NAP also demonstrates that countries are willing to comply with the agenda that is now known worldwide and has gained significant importance with regards to advancing women's rights (Swaine, 2017; True, 2016). The WPS and the resolutions issued subsequent to 1325 have been heavily lobbied for by governments, NGOs, and international organisations in the Global North, although, as Aroussi (2017) has argued, this is just another way for Global North countries to practise imperialist policies by implementing WPS strategies that are external-facing rather than internal-facing. This is especially stark within the context of the UK's National Action Plan which takes no situations within in its own borders into consideration, the most glaring omission being the conflict in Northern Ireland (Hoewer, 2013). There has also been a development whereby donor countries, such as Finland, have twinned with other countries, such as Afghanistan, in the Global South to assist them in developing their own National Action Plans (Ministry for Foreign Affairs for Finland, 2016).

International organisations have also pushed donors to fund Global South countries to develop National Action Plans, as has been the case in Palestine, where the development of the first NAP was assisted and funded by several international organisations. One could argue, as Aroussi (2017) does, that the WPS is just another tool used by Global North countries to further advance their liberal peace agenda and give legitimacy for Western interventionist policies. For some, the WPS Agenda is a diplomatic tool, as Wright (2016) suggests. According to her research, NATO member states have come to value Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda as a diplomatic tool that enables them to further their own agendas and increase their influence within NATO (ibid.).

It should be noted, as was discussed in Section 2.2, that the adoption of NAPs is in no way mandated or enforced by the Security Council and member states are not obliged by any international law to adopt one (Swaine, 2017). Although NAPs represent the most common way to implement the Agenda, they should not necessarily offer the only way; for example, NAPs might not be appropriate for states that have no resources to implement the resolutions successfully or have weak institutions (Aroussi, 2017). As Shepherd (2021) points out, in many locations women's organisations and local civil society organisations work directly with WPS-related initiatives without any reference to an actual formal NAP and with limited resources. As the data in this study states, this was the case in South Africa where the civil society organisations were working with initiatives related to 1325 even before a formal NAP was adopted in the country. Although this demonstrates how NAPs are not the only way forward regards to the implementation, the later chapters will discuss why implementation without a formal NAP has also its challenges.

In September 2021, 98 UN member states, or 51% of all UN member states, had adopted National Action Plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325 (PeaceWomen, 2021).

Figure 2.1. National Action Plans for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Source: Peacewomen, July 2021

South Africa announced that it had adopted its first NAP in November 2020 and Palestine is currently in its 2nd edition NAP. It should be noted that, according to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's (WILPF) analysis, only 36 NAPs include a budget for implementation (PeaceWomen, 2021). This is a notable flaw in the system as this thesis goes on to explain through examples drawn especially from Palestine. The implementation of a NAP cannot be properly efficient without adequate and earmarked budgeting to deliver on its aims and objectives.

Swaine wrote in 2017 that regional disparities exist in the adoption of NAPs, with European countries having the highest levels of adoption and the Americas and Oceania having the lowest (Swaine, 2017). The situation has not changed much since 2017 as, out of the 86 NAPs which had been developed by August 2020, just over 32% were from European countries.[8] However,

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[8] Many countries are already on their second or third iteration of their NAPs.

many of the African nations have adopted their own NAPs and over 29% of the NAPs adopted by August 2020 were from African countries. In proportional terms though, far more European countries (32 out of 44 countries) have developed NAPs than African ones (25 out of 54 countries). This difference has been noted by academics as well, and, as Swaine (ibid.) writes, the main actors in the development of NAPs are often donor countries that believe their obligations to fulfil the implementation of their own WPS Agenda can be accomplished through their relations with donor recipient countries, which are often countries in conflict or post-conflict situations.

Certainly, the NAPs developed by many European countries are solely outward-focused and look only at how to help foreign aid recipients implement the principles of Resolution 1325 (Swaine, 2017; Haastrup & Hagen, 2020; Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019). In fact, Haastrup and Hagen (2020) question whether NAPs are actually the right way to localise the WPS Agenda or whether instead they are actually just reinforcing an existing state of affairs based on global racial hierarchies. They highlight the fact that NAPs are so much more than just policy documents because in reality they reflect different power relations and states' intent to use them as a tool for actions that suit their own purposes (ibid). An example of this is the Palestinian NAP which on one hand is used by Palestinian stakeholders as an advocacy tool to advocate against the Israeli occupation, on the one hand UN Women was not able to fund the Palestinian NAP because of the inclusion of the fourth pillar on advocacy against the occupation within the NAP (Palestinian civil society 5).

Haastrup and Hagen (2020) argue that the WPS agenda is just another example of global political practice which is rooted in the exploitative nature of interactions between the Global North and so-called Global South countries. They discuss how this restricts the agenda's emancipatory potential and how the aims of the Agenda are rooted in the racisms within international relations itself. They argue that the focus of NAPs drafted by countries in the Global North has been on the 'other' women who are located in the Global South (ibid., p.

146). The strategy of formulating a NAP as a foreign policy tool perpetuates colonial roles, with Global North countries positioning themselves as being obliged to save women in countries located in the Global South (ibid.). However, while these kinds of dynamics in global governance policies do not only concern the WPS Agenda, the notion that the Global North is the material, conceptual, and institutional home of the Agenda limits the potential of the implementation of the resolutions according to Basu (2016). Although, contrary to the notion that the NAPs are largely dominated and directed by the Global North, Basu (ibid.) argues that the Global South can contribute to the implementation of the resolutions as well, and the development of these resolutions has seen the involvement of many gender advocates around the world.

Similarly, Björkdahl and Selimovic (2015, p. 313) have suggested that the unresolved tensions between the different pillars of Resolution 1325 are reproduced in NAPs, meaning women are written yet again as "sexed security subjects and as beneficiaries and damaged victims in need of care. Hence the National Action Plans reinforce gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations in the national post-conflict context". As Basini and Ryan (2016, p. 392) suggest, the very notion of "NAPs and their structure reflects the way liberal peace asks the targets of intervention to 'own' processes initiated by the 'international'". The way that member states are expected to implement the WPS Agenda through NAPs, then, effectively reinforces top-down, hierarchical imperialism.

Even though the adoption of a NAP is often regarded as, in itself, a measure of the successful implementation of the WPS Agenda in member states (Swaine, 2017), many challenges arise in the actual application of NAPs after this point. As was discussed earlier, the lack of specific budget allocations for the implementation of NAPs, as well as the absence of appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems, hinder their success (ibid.). Most existing NAPs are also internally focused and have many bureaucratic hurdles to overcome in order to ensure truly inclusive decision-making, and their emphasis is often on intra-governmental coordination

(Jacevic, 2019). Member states are also responsible for their own accountability measures with regards to the implementation of their NAP, and hence a system of checks and balances should be in place in order to assess the implementation process (Swaine, 2017). Some of these issues will be discussed further later on in this thesis when the challenges that affect implementation in Palestine and South Africa are discussed.

2.2.3.1 The localisation of National Action Plans

The localisation of the WPS framework and especially NAPs is seen as important in order for the WPS Agenda to be transformative and secure local ownership. NAPs should not be regarded as a 'one-size-fits-all' solution, whereby identical plans are formulated without taking into consideration the local and national contexts that operate in the country involved. It is important to consider the historical, material, socio-cultural, and ideological priorities which should guide WPS policy-making in localised contexts and to understand what kind of NAP would actually be useful in that specific situation (George & Shepherd, 2016). The majority of global conflicts are located in countries in the Global South and hence these countries' localised experiences need to be understood as part of the WPS narrative (Basu, 2016). When a government develops a NAP in consultation with local civil society and focuses on the specific economic, social, and political issues relevant to that country's gender issues, it enables the NAP to be more transformative in that local context. This is evident especially in the case of Palestine, where the NAP has been tailored to the ongoing situation and focuses strongly on the occupation and the effects it has on the lives of Palestinian women. Similarly in South Africa, the recently developed NAP has focus on intersectionality even though it is an element absent in the Agenda itself. The NAPs both in South Africa and Palestine demonstrate how the localised context has been taken into consideration when drafting the NAPs. However, as George and Shepherd (2016) argue, it is important to consider how much the original aims and goals of the WPS framework have to be stretched to be able to fit into a specialised local context.

Certainly, it is not always clear what is meant when international organisations and academics talk about 'the local'. The term is used frequently as a means to describe good practice in implementing the WPS Agenda where it is conducted in partnership with 'local' actors. For example, as Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran (2020) explain, the local is often used to describe a place and also a group of actors, referred to as 'the local population', which in WPS language means the women and girls who are living in conflict situations and fragile contexts. For Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran (ibid.), this means that the local population is often made synonymous with local civil society organisations and specifically women's organisations. These organisations are usually the intermediaries who connect women and girls from around the country and represent their voices to national and international stakeholders, as if they are representative of all the women and girls in that country. This is problematic in itself as these women's organisations are usually represented by certain types of "woman activists" (Almagro, 2018), who, Almagro posits, occupy an elite role: these activists commonly speak English, share a particular socio-economic background, and have been selected by international NGOs to work on advocacy. As Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran (2020) argue, 'local' is not a homogenous space that is local in an all-encompassing way. Local is also a political space and, as this thesis will show, the civil society organisations working on these issues represent different standpoints situationally and politically in the countries where they work. It matters what we mean by 'local' and who represents local views. Achilleos-Sarll and Chilmeran (ibid.) argue that it is important to understand that the localisation process of the WPS Agenda is not just about local actors adopting and implementing this international framework but should also be about contesting and shaping the agenda to create new ways of supporting women's participation. Shepherd (2021, p. 5) endorses this view and suggests that the activities conducted by local organisations bring the Agenda to life and "are an essential component of the ways in which the agenda can be apprehended and known". These local contexts and ways of using the WPS Agenda are what allow the agenda to be reshaped and reimagined, as

Shepherd argues (ibid.), although, as Haastrup and Hagen (2020, p. 137) point out, when we are thinking about the development of NAPs it is important to interrogate "who has power, and the possibilities of instrumentalising NAPs to the advantage of those in power".

The importance of defining what is actually meant by 'local' and 'women' will be discussed further in this thesis, especially in Chapters 4 and 5, where we will see that it is often civil society organisations that are seen as representatives of local women and give voice to them. However, these civil society organisations are often represented by certain types of women – often well-educated, urban, and English-speaking – who then represent women from all around their country. This is problematic in itself, as without acknowledging the intersectional lens in these discussions, the danger is that these organisations and the people leading them will ignore how their own ethnicity or race functions and privileges them and consequently contributes to the domination of other women (Crenshaw, 1989). It is important to acknowledge and distinguish what is meant by the phrase 'local women', as well as to discern who they actually represent when they are talking on behalf of other women.

It is also expected that the process of developing a NAP will be inclusive, ensuring that all of the relevant stakeholders will be part of the process, from governmental ministries to civil society organisations. Resolution 2242 (2015) calls upon Member States to further integrate the women, peace and security framework into their strategic plans and include civil society, and especially women's organisations, into the process through broad consultation processes. The inclusion of civil society organisations is important, as they are seen to be able to provide expertise on matters concerning women's lives at the grassroots level, as well as holding governmental agencies accountable during the implementation process (Swaine, 2017).

However, the crucial issue here is not only that local civil society organisations are included, but that their opinions and recommendations are meaningfully taken into account in the development of NAPs. The 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325

noted that there has been a 50% rise between 2011 and 2014 in engagement via regular consultations with women's organisations in UN-led peace processes. However, the same study noted that sometimes these consultations were merely considered to be part of these processes and did not actually include any preparation, representation, or follow-up (Coomaraswamy, 2015). As Almagro (2018) points out, the danger with this sort of process is that the participation of local women's civil society organisations meets donors' criteria for getting the stamp of approval from civil society and asking women to participate. Local women's organisations know the actions they need to take and the criteria they need to meet in order for a NAP to be sustainably implemented, but it is the international community that knows how best to transform the information they receive into a practice that will ensure women's involvement in peace and security governance (ibid.). The risk with this sort of superficial incorporation of the views of civil society is that the consultation process ends up being either a tick-box type of exercise without any meaningful impact or just a few organisations are consulted on the assumption that they will be able to speak on behalf of all women. In order for a NAP to work for the majority of women in the area it covers, it would need to take into account a variety of views from women from different backgrounds, geographical areas, ages, races/ethnicities, religions, and sexual identities. However, incorporating the views of 'all women' in practice has its challenges, as the data analysis sections of this thesis will demonstrate.

With regards to the implementation of the NAPs and whose responsibility it is to implement them, the Agenda calls for member states to develop appropriate measures to ensure implementation of Resolution 1325. For example, Resolution 1889 (2009)

> Welcom[es] the efforts of Member States in implementing its resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level, including the development of national action plans, and encourage[es] Member States to continue to pursue such implementation.

In 2004, the United Nations Security Council encouraged in its presidential statement the national-level implementation of Resolution 1325 but also advocated collaboration with civil society, and particularly with women's organisations, as a means to implement the resolution. Usually it is the national government that is the leading agent in developing a NAP and initiating the drafting process, as well as ensuring that it has partners across the government's sectors and civil society to ensure appropriate implementation of the plan (Miller et al., 2014). For example, many of the National Action Plans allocate a specific duty or a role to civil society organisations in relation to implementation. According to PeaceWomen's (2021) analysis, 69 out of the 92 NAPs (75%) follow this pattern.

Now that NAPs have become the status quo for implementing the WPS Agenda, support to help states draft NAPs has become, as Swaine (2017) notes, an industry in itself, largely dominated by international organisations. It is also common for UN Women and other international organisations, such as the EU, to support the development of National Action Plans and in some cases to provide funding for this process as well. UN Women has a clear mandate to work with member states on this and it has developed guidance documents and supported the NAP process in several countries, including Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Georgia (ibid.). As this study's data shows, UN Women, along with other international organisations, has also supported the development of the Palestinian NAP.

Lastly, it is debatable whether NAPs really constitute the only right way to implement the WPS Agenda in member states or if implementation could be ensured through other means. Is such a specific tool appropriate for implementing the women, peace and security framework or is there a risk that gender and women's issues will become once again a separate issue and an add-on, when in fact these issues should be taken into account and woven into policies more holistically and comprehensively? Swaine (2017) suggests that evidence from gender-mainstreaming policies shows that, in order for gender inequalities to be effectively overcome, specific and targeted actions need to be undertaken and reliance on a wider national policy

framework offers an inadequate approach. For example, in the case of South Africa, the national legislation with regards to gender rights is already fairly comprehensive, but, as the situation in the country shows, women are still victims of sexual violence, murders, and femicide. Therefore as Swaine (ibid.) argues, targeted action which specifically focuses on improving women's security is the only way forward to ensure women's security is given the priority it needs. The Security Council has no formal mechanism to force member states to demonstrate their commitment to UNSCR 1325 through regular reporting and monitoring requirements. It is a challenge to institutionalise UNSCR 1325 in a way that is truly meaningful for women and will advance women and their role in peace and conflict situations.

The next sections of this chapter will focus on critically reviewing the literature on intersectionality and feminist security theory, using them as lenses to analyse to discuss how security and intersectionality is viewed within the WPS Agenda.

2.3 Analysing the WPS Agenda through feminist security lens

Resolution 1325 has placed women and girls at the forefront of international security and peace efforts, reaffirming the "important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security" (UNSCR 1325, 2000, p. 1). However, the notion of peace and security here requires further investigation, especially in relation to what is meant by these concepts. Considering the Security Council's focus on traditionally 'hard' security issues (such as terrorism, nuclear weapons, and arms control) and the protection of state borders, as was discussed earlier, the way peace and security are conceptualised within the Agenda is not straightforward. The WPS Agenda's militaristic view of security has been often criticised (Otto, 2016; Cohn, 2004). For example, as Otto (2016) argues, the WPS Agenda is very much rooted in the idea that peace is dependent on

securitised states and military strength. Otto (ibid.) claims that feminists' aspirations for peace have been reduced to looking at security from this perspective and, as a consequence, have focused on increasing women's participation within the frames of war. Rather than the WPS Agenda looking at how to prevent war in the first place, it focuses on increasing women's participation in situations of conflict. Co-drafter of the resolution Cora Weiss stated in 2011 that the "purpose of eliminating conflict-related sexualised violence must not be to make war safer for women" (Shepherd, 2016, p. 324). The WPS resolutions should not in any way support or normalise war but should actually act as a catalyst for the demilitarisation of society (Shepherd, 2011). Secondly, the way the Agenda conceptualises security is very narrow and focuses largely on post-conflict and armed conflict situations without considering other aspects of security such as human security, which takes into account food, health, economic, environmental, personal, community, and political security.

As Sylvester (2007) argues, feminism has always positioned itself outside and above the conventions of war. Feminist theory aims to understand and examine global politics through for example, by looking at sexual relationships, marriage dynamics and the masculine expectations of men and feminine expectations of women, rather than just traditional issues of International Relations such as states propensity for war or balance of power (Sjoberg & Tickner, 2011). Therefore, it is not possible to understand global politics, without taking into account feminist point of view (ibid). The Agenda's emphasis should also take into consideration the so-called continuum of violence (Kelly 1988, Cockburn 2004) whereby violence and security issues move into the everyday lives of individuals. These assumptions will structure this chapter's analysis of feminist understandings of security and the discussion and debates around feminist security studies. Firstly, this section will look at the historical context and development of feminist security thinking. It will then move on to critically review

the central debates around it and lastly examine how security and peace are defined within the WPS Agenda.

2.3.1 The development of and historical background to feminist security thinking

During the Cold War, global politics and international security issues were largely dominated by national security matters, weapons of mass destruction, and dynamics that affected the balance of power. In International Relations as an academic discipline, security is defined in terms of state or national security (Tickner, 2019). The realist view of the IR approach to security assumes that states exist in a hostile global environment where wars could start at any time and conflicts between states are always a possibility (Walt, 1991). According to this view, at the most basic level, security means the protection of geographical boundaries and the integrity of the state and its "values against the dangers of a hostile international environment" (Tickner, 1997, p. 624). At its outset, the discipline of international relations was grounded in realist discourse and discussions of security issues were largely concerned with militarism, protection of national boundaries, and sovereignty. For the realist school, the idealist worldview of human progress and the possibility of building a harmonious international system were not feasible. The realist school's way of thinking takes the state as the starting point and assumes that individual states are able to protect and secure their people (Blanchard, 2003). A focus on states' freedom from external threats represents one of the more traditional ways of thinking about security. Military power is a central element of international politics according to the realist school (Walt, 1991), and this view of security was dominated by Cold War politics, and especially the policy of nuclear deterrence adopted by the US and Soviet Union.

In this international security landscape, women were completely absent from the security system (Willet, 2010). Gender was not thought of, and it was not considered to be a significant matter worthy of being taken into consideration. IR focused attention on the consequences of war rather than the insecurities people suffer because of war (Tickner, 2019). In 1991, Stephen Walt noted that some writers, such as Buzan (1983), had suggested broadening the concept of

security to include topics such as environmental hazards, poverty, and AIDS. Although Walt argued that these non-military issues reminded scholars that military power does not guarantee well-being, he disagreed with the notion of broadening the field on the grounds that it would risk expanding the field of security studies excessively. He suggested that, if the logic of the expansionist approach was adopted, issues such as child abuse, economic recession, or diseases could all be viewed as threats to security, and this might destroy the intellectual coherence of security studies as a field and make it more difficult for scholars to develop solutions to security problems (Walt, 1991). Although IR scholars are concerned of broadening the field to too many interpretations, generally feminist contributions to security studies are considered to fall under the "opening the security studies", by questioning the meaning of security (Wibben, 2011, p. 25).

The 1980s and 1990s saw a more general shift in international community responses to new types of conflict, and security started to be defined in broader terms that went beyond the realist definition of security and its attention to the national security of states (Tickner, 2019). In the 1990s, changes in the global security landscape produced academic responses, for example, when Ann Tickner (1992) called for a rethinking of security from a feminist perspective in her book *Gender in International Relations*. Scholars such as Tickner (ibid.), Cynthia Enloe (1990), and Jean Elshtain (1987) highlighted the way conflict, security, and militarism impacted men and women differently. It was Cynthia Enloe (1990, p.25) who famously asked the question of international politics, "Where are the women?", when talking about international politics and security. As Blanchard (2003, p. 1295) noted, "feminist security theory emerged from a cross-ideological, trans-epistemological, multivoiced conversational debate among multiple feminisms, including liberal, empiricist, modified standpoint, and qualified postmodern perspectives, among others".

Blanchard (2003) has suggested that Enloe's and Elshtain's work cleared the way for feminist critiques of IR and also highlighted the need for gender-sensitive critiques of security politics.

The questions, raised by feminist scholars, demonstrated that international security and the political arena were dominated by men who were able to exercise influence while women were neither to been seen or heard anywhere in discussions about international security. Cynthia Enloe's (1990) important book *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* highlighted a new vision for security. In different essays, Enloe noted that security is not just a matter of high-level politics but also arises in ordinary incidents. Enloe finds gender in spaces traditionally associated with security, such as diplomacy and military bases, but also in more ordinary arenas, such as tourism. As she points out, "making useful sense – feminist sense – of international politics requires us to follow diverse women to places that are usually dismissed by conventional foreign affairs experts merely as 'private', 'domestic', 'local' or 'trivial'. As we will discover, however, a disco can become an arena for international politics" (ibid., p. 28). Similarly, Tickner emphasised that the assumptions and values which were driving international politics at the time were all linked to concepts of masculinity. Feminist theorists in IR have argued that the realist field of international security is "dominated by elite, white, male practitioners" and acts as a patriarchal system which makes women invisible from the politics of international relations (Blanchard, 2003, p. 1292).

Although gender relations vary across cultures due to the socially constructed way gender is formed, they all have one feature in common, which is the inequity of power relations between men and women (Willett, 2010). As Enloe (1990) states, in order to conduct feminist gender analysis, one must always also investigate power. Tickner (1992, p. 66) believed in consideration of the human dimension of security and argued that:

> not until hierarchical social relations, including gender relations, that have been hidden by realism's frequently depersonalised discourse are brought to light can we begin to construct a language of national security that speaks out of the multiple experiences of both women and men.

Similarly, Enloe (1990) talked about power and the need to make it visible in order to understand the gendered workings of international relations. As she noted, it is important for feminist investigation to unequal international relations, so "that we not create [sic] a false (and lazy) dichotomy between the allegedly 'mindless victims' and the allegedly 'empowered actor'" (ibid., p. 31). As she claims, even if women are pushed to the margins of the power system, they still continue to strategize and exert their power even with the minimal resources and power they have available. However, unequal power relations between men and women is not the only hierarchy to focus on. Often the focus is largely on discussing this binary power hierarchy between men and women, equally important is to understand how power manifest itself amongst women. Not all women are equal, and as the findings of this thesis highlight, factors such as race, educational background, class status, geographical location and age can significantly effect on one's capabilities to exert their power within society.

When Tickner and Enloe started calling for a more feminist way of thinking about international security in the early 1990s, it was at a time when the scope of international security and the realist paradigm had started receiving more scrutiny generally. However, the history of the movement goes back long before this: the demand to define peace and security as a promotion of social justice and elimination of violence in all its different forms stretches back all the way to the Women's Peace Congress in 1915 (Tickner, 2019).

The Women's Peace Congress formulated a set of principles for a just settlement of World War I and noted both the violence women faced during war and the desire of women to build positive peace (Tickner, 2019; Swaine 2019). When the focus of conflicts and wars shifted after the end of the Cold War from inter-state conflicts to intra-state conflicts or inter-communal violence, the nature of conflicts fundamentally shifted too. In states which were on the brink of collapsing or were already classified as 'failed' states, the loss of state monopoly on violence resulted in the proliferation of non-state actors taking up arms. These non-state

actors were driven by diverse aims such as political, economic, ethnic, or religious causes (Willett, 2010).

2.3.2 Feminist security

Security as a concept has been theorised and debated extensively, and there are several different schools of thought, such as the Copenhagen School, which are also focused on issues of security beyond a state-centric narrative (Sylvester, 2007). However, in relation to the purposes of this thesis, this section will examine how security takes the human aspect into account and it will specifically examine security from the point of view of feminist security studies. Feminist security studies where the focus is on the security of the individual, rather than state centred security, differs from other similar approaches, such as critical security studies, by its methodological commitments (Wibben, 2011a). Feminist security focuses on women's experiences and understands gender as a "matrix of power" which intersects with other identities, such as class, age and race (ibid), as will be discussed in this thesis. As Wibben (ibid) argues, feminist security researchers "can counter the prevalence of bodiless data in security studies by highlighting personal stories" (p.592). Although, as Wibben (2011a) has argued, there is not one single feminist position, there are certain principles that are not negotiable when conducting feminist research. Most importantly, feminism is a project dedicated to emancipation and broader social justice, and it also needs to develop feminist curiosity and ask feminist questions (ibid). In understanding feminist security, one needs to question the "natural", as Enloe (2015) has argued, as so many power structures in our societies, international affairs and in households "are dependent on our continuing lack of curiosity" (p.3) What Enloe wants to highlight with this, is the need to engage with those "who take any power structure as unproblematic" (p.3).

This thesis advances the understanding of feminist security as an emancipatory project, with the comprehension that international politics are gender hierarchical and unjust. This thesis is based on the feminist notion that is interested on women's experiences but also how gender

intersects with other identities, such as ethnicity, class and sexual orientation (Wibben, 2011a). This thesis adds geographical location as another important identity marker in addition to those mentioned before.

Basu (2011) has linked security to human emancipation and has defined security more broadly than the traditional focus on emergencies and immediate threats. She argues how this provides a broader analysis of global security by looking at not only who merits security and who provides it. By using gender as a transformative category, Basu (ibid) argues how we should stop thinking about security from the point of view of two actors: one who makes a threat to another's security and the other who is made insecure by the threat. As a starting point of her analysis, Basu takes Ken Booth's 1991 journal article 'Security and Emancipation', which argues that emancipation brings true security. Security as emancipation also takes individuals as the centre of the analysis. Security should not be defined by the interests of one community or state, which "is inherently based on inclusions and exclusions" (Basu, 2011, p.100). Traditionally, as discussed earlier in this chapter, security is considered as state security where the state aims to protect its citizens. However, as examples around the world, and the two country examples of this study show, the state is not able to always provide security. Security in the way it is traditionally understood, aims to return to the status quo after a threat has been recognised, or in a position of "relative strength in relation to the enemy" (ibid, p.101). This approach does not aim to address the structures and practices that enabled these threats to emerge in the first place. As this study will go on to discuss, it often these structures and practises of the state that have caused insecurity to women. Emancipation aims to strengthen the agency of the individual, and move them from the position of powerlessness to one that is free from these conditions that were created in the first place and become the agents of their own security (Basu, 2011). As Basu (ibid) argues, the notion of security as emancipation is useful as it focus on the marginalised when security politics have often been driven by the

powerful, and secondly it ties security with the historical process of aiming for a more secure world.

In similar vein, Henry (2007) has argued how comprehensive security systems cannot be achieved until gender relations founded on domination and subordination are eliminated. She also highlights how a more "gender-sensitive concept of human security must link women's everyday experiences with broader regional and global political processes and structures" (ibid., p. 66). For example, as Hudson (2005) points out, the security and needs of women in the West are different to those of women in the developing world and so any understanding of human security in Africa needs to take this into account. As Hudson (ibid., p. 157) states, "human security as a universalist tool of global governance must acknowledge differences in the degree to which the state leads or participates in the process of the protection and empowerment of individuals". A gender lens is required for three reasons: at a conceptual level, it enables us to understand global politics; at an empirical level, it will reveal realities and enable understanding of causes; and normatively, it will allow the promotion of positive change (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2011).

Blanchard (2003) details how feminist scholars have critiqued the mainstream IR discipline which focuses on war, peace, and securing the nation-state. As Tickner (1992) has illustrated, the way national security is constructed out of masculinised discourse only shows a partial view of reality, but that view is often taken to offer a universal account of security. Blanchard (2003) argues that, in a rapidly changing security environment, the international system must pay attention to feminist voices in order to achieve more comprehensive security for the world. Feminist perspectives, with a focus on marginalised people, non-state actors, and new conceptualisations of power, can bring new insights and fresh thinking to global politics, especially following the shift in security politics that emerged in the aftermath of 9/11 (True, 2005). When the focus is on theorising the everyday experiences of gendered subjects, this can provide a different security narrative that is usually seen in the field of IR (Wibben, 2011a).

This thesis advances this argument made by Wibben, by questioning and listening to the research participants accounts of the everyday experiences of women in South Africa and Palestine and how these are linked to how (in)secure women feel. As Basu (2011) observes, defining security in this way is part of the wider effort to remove the limits that are in place when security is defined from the state's perspective. Understanding the views and experiences of gendered subjects and aiming to remove gender and power hierarchical relations is an important step towards emancipation.

From a feminist point of view, security is about much more than just the absence of violence. Security is highlighted as a multilevel and multidimensional phenomenon which can be understood as the "diminution of all forms of violence, including physical, structural and ecological" (Tickner, 2001, p. 62). Security from this perspective is defined as the absence of economic, sexual, and military violence. As Tickner (1992) argues, all these types of violence are interrelated, and it is not until hierarchical social relations are acknowledged that it is possible to start to construct a national security language that speaks to the different experiences of men and women.

It is essential to expand thinking beyond the mindset which envisages men going to war and women staying at home to look after the house and children. Security and peace are both gendered concepts: security is often associated with militarisation/militarism and masculinities and peace with femininity, with women being seen only as victims who need protection (Tickner, 2019). Tickner (1992) claims that we are socialised to believe that politics and war are activities that only men can participate in, and henceforth the traditional Western discipline of war and realpolitik only privilege issues that have been identified through men's experiences. The voices of women are often considered irrelevant as their roles are assumed to exist within the confines of the household and reproduction (Tickner, 1992). This results not only in women being excluded from this field but in the persistence of overwhelmingly male foreign policy and international relations domains where assumptions and decisions are based

on male experiences and problems. When one thinks back to the adoption of the Resolution 1325 in 2000, this was the first time when gender was discussed in Security Council level at the UN – therefore contributing to this notion that gendered experiences were not really taken into account at the highest levels of global politics before this. However, as Davis and True (2019) have argued, the WPS Agenda is expected to transform gendered power relations but at the same time engage with patriarchal normative frameworks which political institutions are known to be. This makes the implementation of the Agenda challenging in itself.

The focus of feminist security perspectives has always been on how world politics contributes to the broader insecurity of individuals, especially populations which are marginalised or disadvantaged, whereas the more traditional realist school of international relations has analysed security from a more structural viewpoint, focusing on the level of the state and its decision-makers (Tickner, 2001). Feminist concepts of security do not only see war and violence as security threats but also include factors such as rape, poverty, domestic violence, and gender subordination (Sjoberg, 2010). As women are often a disadvantaged or marginalised group, the feminist security lens is focused more on the individual level of security than on the state level. A gendered understanding of security accepts that security affects both personal and interpersonal realms and understands that insecurities are experienced not only within intimate lives and relationships but also within political and public spaces and systems (Swaine, 2019).

Scholarship within feminist international relations defines security as a broad and multidimensional concept that includes not only the security of states but also the security of individuals, which includes their physical, environmental, and economic security (Tickner, 2019). Tickner (2019) briefly discusses the socioeconomic differences that affect the status of women depending on their class, nationality, race, or geographic region; she concludes that women have always been disproportionately located at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale in almost every society, and she demonstrates that gendered structures of inequality have

effects on women's economic, physical, and environmental insecurities. Although she acknowledges that differences in women's identities affect their socioeconomic status, she does not delve into a deeper discussion about how different intersectional identities affect women's security from a feminist perspective. Understanding the different visions and experiences of differently situated women is a crucial notion of this thesis. Without proper comprehension on this, how the different identities and situations of women effect their lives, "feminism becomes part of the problem, rather than the solution" (Wibben, 2011, p.14).

Shepherd (2008) describes security from the point of view of the nation state and suggests that it is problematic to contain human existence within its boundaries and to promote the idea that the state has ultimate authority and power over its people. Looking at the example of the peace camps established in Greenham Common in the UK in the 1980s, Shepherd (ibid.) notes that feminist IR scholars have challenged the notion that identity and experience are confined by the state. The Greenham protesters used their bodies to express their view that nuclear security did not actually make them feel secure. Shepherd (ibid.) calls for the relationship between individuals and the state to be examined, as these sort of acts challenge what everyday security means for individuals, as well as the ways that national security is defined. However, as Tickner (2019) argues, protesters who used maternalism and focused on radical feminist principles which privileged and celebrated women's roles as nurtures and caregivers have been criticised for celebrating women's maternal and peaceful roles, a move that feminists believe denies women's agency.

Blanchard (2003) argues that feminist security theory scholars have problematised the nature of security for the past two decades and that feminist theory scholarship has expanded the notion of security by contributing at least four key theoretical insights. The first contribution, Blanchard claims, involved establishing the nonexistence of women in international security politics and pointing out that gender is disregarded completely in international relations theory. Secondly, feminist security theory scholars questioned the kind of protection and security

women can actually expect from the state during times of war. For example, Peterson (1992, p. 46) argued that the state is implicated when women become "the objects of masculinist social control not only through direct violence (murder, rape, battering, incest) but also through ideological constructs, such as 'women's work' […] that justify structural violence – inadequate health care, sexual harassment, and sex-segregated wages, rights and resources". Thirdly, feminist scholarship has refuted the idea that women are naturally interlinked with peace or that they are more peaceful than men and has instead asserted how important it is to recognise that women also participate in and support war. Lastly, scholars have questioned the assumption that gendered security practices should only take women into account, arguing that we need to consider men and masculinities as well when discussing gendered security (Blanchard, 2003).

Tickner (2001) stresses the importance of the individual to feminist points of view about security, which try to understand how the security of groups and individuals is compromised by physical and structural violence at all levels of society. As Tickner (ibid.) highlights, the feminist view of security also emphasises how unequal structures in a society, such as gender hierarchies, can negatively impact the security of groups and individuals. Drawing on this insight, a feminist security perspective aims to better understand the relationships between all forms of violence and the extent to which asymmetric power relationships and social relations (such as gender inequality) can contribute to insecurity (ibid.). As Tickner (1992) highlights, feminists claim, utilising a gendered lens, that true security cannot be achieved unless power structures such as gender, race, and class are eliminated. Gendering security means refocusing the concept to enable understanding of how gender norms structure people's lives and, in this case, especially women's lives (Swaine, 2019). The feminist understanding of security attempts to redefine the idea of security so that is no longer indebted to a militaristic approach and centres on understanding the systems of power that disadvantage others (Swaine, 2019). This idea of feminist understanding of security which aims to move away from the militaristic

approach is closely linked to the critique of the WPS Agenda's militaristic view of security mentioned earlier. The WPS Agenda has been criticised of focusing on increasing women's participation within frames of war rather than looking at how to prevent war in the first place (Otto, 2016).

Reflecting on this notion of feminist security, which takes full account of physical and structural violence at all levels of a society, the next section focuses on how security is understood in situations of conflict and asks when does conflict end and peace start?

2.3.3 How security is defined – when does conflict end and peace start?

This thesis focuses on how feminist scholarship has defined security and how gender is taken into account in that definition, as discussed above. This section will focus on how this definition of security can be applied to conflict situations. A conflict does not necessarily come to an end just because fighting has ended, and the distinction between conflict and non-conflict societies is a myth that no longer holds true in the conflicts of our time. As the findings of this thesis demonstrate, the WPS Agenda should be applied to a variety of contexts, not just in post-conflict countries, as violence happens on a continuum and causes insecurity that women face in their everyday lives beyond situations that can be characterised as armed conflict or the aftermath of conflict (Cockburn, 2004).

The shift in the nature of conflicts has directly impacted women in a completely new way. In the "new" conflicts (Kaldor, 2012) of the 21st century, there are rarely clear endings and, while ceasefires may exist, violence still continues. As Tickner (2019) states, feminists have rightly argued that just because fighting has stopped it does not mean that the war has ended. The aftermath of war produces many insecurities women have to face, and the "new conflicts" of the 21st century brought a whole new array of issues into consideration. Inequality with regards to the distribution of power and resources has become more prominent. This, together with structural inequalities within and between states, has led to regional conflicts and to the

escalation of international armed conflicts. When we think of some of the recent conflicts around the world, they are largely intra-state conflicts. Moving from conflict to post-conflict reality is complex and multi-faceted and cannot be considered to be just a simple "departure from a negative situation (i.e. conflict) to a positive one (i.e. peace)" (Sharoni, 1998, p. 1061). It is difficult to define when conflict ends and peace begins, as this is often a fluid situation that does not have clear transition points. In some cases, the violence continues for years and becomes the status quo, as is the case of Palestine, which many would argue to be a protracted conflict.

The world 'conflict' is often associated with armed conflict or war. But conflict is not restricted to an outbreak of violence. As Johan Galtung (1996, p. viii) stated, "conflict is much more than what meets the naked eye as 'trouble,' direct violence. There is also the violence frozen into structures, and the culture that legitimises violence". For example, in the case of Israel-Palestine, Palestinian women face violence in different forms in their everyday lives due to the direct effects of uneven power relationships and the asymmetry of power at state level. This approach, which is informed by peace research and Galtung's (ibid.) work on positive and negative peace, demonstrates that the absence of violence does not necessarily produce peaceful societies. As Galtung (ibid.) writes, negative peace refers to the immediate cessation of violence, whereas positive peace reconstruction measures aim to build a peaceful society. This is also a notion that feminist approach has taken, by aiming for positive peace by eradicating violence and committing to social and economic justice (Wibben, 2011). Confortini (2006) suggests that Galtung's theory of violence can be further enriched if feminist notions are taken into account in four different ways. Confortini (ibid.) suggests that gender should be acknowledged as a social construct but also as a power relation, firstly because gendered language defines how different visions are pursued in the society and, secondly because violence can be constituted through language. Confortini suggests, thirdly, that violence produces and also defines gender identities and, lastly, that dichotomous categories

structure our understanding of the world, and they are always gendered. These principles are key to understanding the production and reproduction of violence, and Confortini (ibid., p. 333) argues that acceptance of these insights would have important repercussions for peace studies because only if gender is taken seriously as a "category of analysis can prescriptions for a violence-free society be more than temporary solutions to deeply ingrained attitudes to accept violence as 'natural'".

When Tickner and Enloe started suggesting a more feminist way of thinking about international security in the early 1990s, it was at a time when the international security sphere and the realist paradigm started receiving more scrutiny generally. The focus of conflicts and wars shifted from inter-state conflicts to intra-state conflicts or inter-communal violence – in fact, the nature of conflicts had fundamentally shifted. In states which were on the brink of collapsing or were already classified as 'failed' states, the loss of a state monopoly on violence resulted in the proliferation of non-state actors taking up arms. These non-state actors were driven by diverse aims such as political, economic, ethnic, or religious causes (Willett, 2010). Unsurprisingly, this shift in the nature of conflicts directly impacted women in completely new ways. In these new conflicts, there are rarely clear endings and, while ceasefires may exist, violence still continues.

It is important that careful attention be paid to understanding which violent incidents in conflict are accounted for, because, as True (2015) argues, violence is usually measured by using state-recorded violent deaths. She argues that this issue arises because IR literature has traditionally taken the state as the object of study and therefore has treated the state as the source for any legitimate counts of violent deaths. This sort of measurement focuses on interstate war deaths and so misses violence that happens within and between states (ibid.). It completely disregards interpersonal violence and effectively denies its relevance to international security (ibid.). Measuring violent incidents this way does not account the everyday lived experiences of women, and ignores the many facets and incidents of insecurity that women experience, such

as domestic violence. Domestic violence, as in violence perpetrated by ones spouse or partner, is argued to be actually one of the most common form of sexual and gender based violence occurring during conflict (see for example Swaine, 2018a and Gray, 2019). However, as domestic violence is considered to be an act happening within the private sphere, it is therefore not counted as part of war (True, 2015; Gray, 2019). Although it can be argued that some limitations are necessary when accounting for deaths in the situation of conflict, this division as argue by True (2015) above means that, the violence that both Palestinian and South African women face at home would be disregarded. Therefore as Gray (ibid) has argued, this division "closes down space for recognising how war is also enacted within private spaces" (p. 189).

Liz Kelly (1988) argued how one should not in a feminist analysis, hierarchise different forms of violence based on their seriousness, but rather to treat it as a notion where the range and extent of sexual violence, such as sexual harassment, rape and murder acts as a continuum. For example, she argues that most common forms of violence, such as sexual harassment, are often experienced by women and considered as an acceptable form of behaviour by men; however, all these occasions are linked to one another and contribute to all kinds of gender-based violence (ibid.). Therefore, as Kelly (ibid) argues, it would be inappropriate to categorise sexual harassment as unimportant, when in fact this kind of harassment can lead to other types of gender-based violence. Similarly, when considering the question about when conflicts can be said to end and peace begin, Cynthia Cockburn's (2004) *Continuum of Violence* is a useful entry point, because it assesses the relationship between acts of violence which occur at different times. Cockburn (ibid., p. 43) argues that there can be connections between different occasions and types of violence and that they can move in flow from one occasion to the next, "as if they were a continuum". Cockburn (Cockburn & Enloe, 2012) describes realising that violence exists as a continuum when she met feminist activists in Okinawa who lived right next to the US military base there and regularly saw armoured vehicles driving in their peace-time streets. She describes how these women were supporting women who were not only survivors

of rape by soldiers and military prostitution but also survivors of ordinary domestic violence and trafficking. These instances of violence are connected across different moments (peace – war – post-war); across different places, such as home and battlefield; and also, across different types of violence, such as rape or domestic violence (ibid.). This argument by Cockburn of how violence spans from not only through different places, but also different types of violence is a significant starting point for this thesis. The findings of this thesis highlight, especially in the case of South Africa demonstrate how women may experience extreme harms even if one is considered to be living in a peaceful society. Gray (2019, p.190) has developed her argument based on this critique how creating a "hierarchy of harms" between different forms of sexual and gender based violence makes it actually difficult to see everyday forms of violence, such a domestic violence, which are prevalent in many settings but also during conflict. However, Gray (ibid.) argues how the limitations of the vision of preventing sexual violence policy[9] is based on the distinction of what acts of SGBV is considered part of war and those that are not.

Moser (2001, p. 31) agrees with Cockburn's argument that there is a "gendered continuum of conflict and violence" and suggests that it is a direct result of how gender is embedded into power relations or powerlessness. Gender links these occasions together, connecting violence from different arenas, from personal to international and from home to state, for example (Cockburn, 2004). Cockburn talks about culture and the continuity between relations and events and how gender analysis suggests that it is pointless to make a clear distinction between peace and war, or pre-war and post-war, because gender phenomena persist from one of these states to the next: "gender is manifest in the violence that flows through all of them and in the peace processes that may be present at all moments too" (ibid., p. 43).

Cockburn (2004) suggests that there are three phases in the continuum of war. In the first phase, war readiness, societies move from spending on social issues to spending on armed

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[9] Gray (2019) was specifically examining the British Government's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative which is based on the broader WPS Agenda

forces/defence, and this produces an increase in patriarchal authority and ideology. In the second phase, armed conflict, extreme violence, and combat training take the fore and shape masculinity. Armed conflict often produces significant cases of sexual assault on women. Lastly, wars move towards the cessation of conflict and the building of peace and security. However, what does security mean in this third phase? If peace is about more than just the ending of violence, then security needs to satisfy all human needs and guarantee security for women as well (Cockburn, 2014). Lastly, Cockburn argues that the continuum of violence runs through all aspects of a society, including its social, economic, political, and gender relations, but that gender relations contributes to unequal power dynamics right across society:

> The power imbalance of gender relations in most (if not all) societies generates cultures of masculinity prone to violence. These gender relations are like a linking thread, a kind of fuse, along which violence runs. They run through every field (home, city, nation-state, international relations) and every moment (protest, law enforcement, militarization), adding to the explosive charge of violence in them. If most, if not all, violence has a gender component, violence reduction calls for a feminist gendered strategy. (Cockburn, 2004, p. 44).

However, the critique specifically regards to presenting sexual violence in a continuum, has highlighted that although it is important to consider the aspects of violence in a continuum, nevertheless from a policy perspective, indicators and definitions of what is considered as sexual and gender based violence in a conflict are almost always necessary in order to be able to hold perpetrators accountable (Boesten, 2017). In similar vein, Urban Walker (2009) has critiqued continuum theory by highlighting how it does not take into account the extraordinary harms of sexual violence. For example, Urban Walker (2009, p.29) argues how presenting violence in a continuum does not necessarily "correspond to victims' shocking and traumatising experiences of violence in conflict and repression situations", such as mass rape or sexual mutilation. Swaine's (2018a) take on the continuum theory has argued how conflict

related sexual violence might be experienced as something distinctive and particular, rather than fitting in the praxis of continuum. However, even though understanding this critique, this study demonstrates how the findings of this thesis support the notion of understanding violence as a continuum spanning from the public to private sphere, and how understaning violence in this way would make the WPS Agenda a more applicable framework to a broader range of contexts.

The distinction between conflict and peace is a divide that no longer exists in the conflicts of the 21st century, as Cockburn's insights into the continuum of violence and views from the field of feminist security studies make clear. The state of global politics has changed since the end of Cold War and, as part of this change process, the ways we examine conflicts or non-conflicts must also reflect this development. Although international relations has never been just about relationships between states, its focus today cannot be restricted to states. Instead, as Tickner (2001) argues, we must look at the relationships between international organisations, non-state actors, social movements, and other groups including transnational corporations if we want to truly understand global politics.

The next section will focus to look at how peace and security are understood and defined within the WPS Agenda. As the data of this study will highlight, this definition is important as directly impacts on how the Agenda is implemented and understood in national level.

2.3.4 To which conflicts is the WPS Agenda applicable?

To understand the background and context to the aims and objectives of this research, it is important to first examine to which contexts the WPS framework can be applied according to the literature. One of the main arguments raised in this thesis is that the WPS framework's application and focus is mainly on internationally recognised conflicts, and specifically armed conflicts, when actually restricting the implementation of the Agenda to these conflict

situations hinders its potential. The next section of this chapter examines the existing literature on which countries, contexts, and situations are covered by the WPS Agenda.

As Otto (2016) argues, the UN Charter often couples peace with security rather than with the development of human rights, at least in the majority of the 45 instances where it mentions peace. This is why it is not a surprise that Resolution 1325 continues the tradition of interlinking peace with security (ibid.). When Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000, it was primarily designed to be used and implemented in post-conflict situations (McLeod, 2011). However the scope of the WPS Agenda is not entirely clear in terms of where it should be applied, what it means by 'peace' and 'conflict', and what kinds of conflicts are covered by the WPS framework (see, for example, McLeod, 2011; Ní Aoláin, 2016; Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019). As Cockburn (2014) states, in the years following the adoption of Resolution 1325, it became increasingly apparent that the focus of the resolution was limited to the effects of the war rather than examining the causes of wars or how to end them.

Ní Aoláin (2016) argues that the WPS Agenda has focused on implementation of the framework either in interstate armed conflicts covered by the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 or in internal armed conflicts that meet the threshold of Protocol II, additional to the Geneva Convention of 1977. The application of the framework relies on countries or situations which are globally recognised as conflict or post-conflict states (Aroussi, 2017). This implies that the WPS framework does not need to be implemented in countries that have not experienced armed conflict (ibid.). As Ní Aoláin (2016, p. 276) observes, this definition has excluded many locations which have been affected by conflict, and other contexts where women "have been shut out from conflict resolution and where the harms they experience are rendered almost invisible to the WPS Agenda".

The Resolution talks about "DDRR", "armed conflict", "post-conflict reconstruction", and "peace agreements" (UNSCR 1325, 2000), placing emphasis on language that stresses the aspect of armed conflict. However, this is problematic in itself, as McLeod (2011) argues, since

the lines between 'post-conflict' and 'conflict' can be blurry in themselves, and the term 'post-conflict' is a "discourse with contested temporal and spatial aspects" (ibid., p. 595). Ní Aoláin and Valji (2019) argue that Resolution 1325 made no distinctions about the contexts to which the norms it produced would apply. Consideration must be paid to an overall understanding of how a wide range of actors think about, perceive, or relate to conflict and post-conflict situations (McLeod, 2011).

McLeod (2011) highlights interesting examples from Serbia in relation to how UNSCR 1325 has been implemented in different situations and to different visions of gendered security. As she points out, these different visions of security are valuable as they make us ask "how and why do different visions of 'gender security' in relation to UNSRC 1325 exist?" (ibid., p. 607). The resolution can (and in most cases) should be politically translated to serve and fit national and local agendas in the best possible way (ibid.). This brings the debate back to the importance of localising National Action Plans to fit their specific contexts.

CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 30 makes specific reference to the WPS resolutions and recognises the crossover between the CEDAW convention and the resolutions' provisions. Recommendation No. 30 also makes specific reference to NAPs when it states that the Committee recommends that states parties "ensure that national action plans and strategies to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions are compliant with the Convention, and that adequate budgets are allocated for implementation" (CEDAW, 2013, p. 7). Swaine (2017) points out that this move represents a significant step towards advancing accountability for the WPS framework. CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 has also expanded the notion of how conflicts are defined and has added, for example, internal disturbances and ethnic and communal violence as situations to which the WPS Agenda can be applied (Basu, 2016). The adoption of General Recommendation No. 30 reinforces the idea that states should use joined-up approaches to implement their commitments to human rights

and the WPS, and the CEDAW Committee monitors the states' implementation of the WPS Agenda and NAPs.

The focus of the WPS Agenda is also on extraordinary instances of violence, and this has taken attention away from a focus on the everyday violent instances that women experience in conflict and post-conflict societies, such as daily experiences of intimate partner violence (Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019). The WPS Agenda does not engage with these types of violent occurrence, nor does it deal with the relationships between exceptional and ordinary instances of violence (ibid.). As Ní Aoláin and Valji (ibid.) argue, the experience of violence continues for women even after the signing of peace agreements and therefore the use of terms such as 'war' and 'peace' renders women's experiences of conflict and post-conflict invisible.

There are many reasons why a narrow definition of conflict is problematic in relation to the implementation process of the WPS Agenda. The first problem arises if the member state's government does not recognise the situation within its own borders as armed conflict/conflict and hence does not think it is appropriate to implement the WPS Agenda. As Ní Aoláin and Valji (2019, p. 57) state, technically the Agenda should be applicable to any country or region in the world given that one of its key pillars is prevention: "It may apply beyond the scope of armed conflict and countries specifically slated by the Security Council and member states". However, in practice, its application has been highly selective and, for example, as Ní Aoláin and Valji (ibid) note, there is often a willingness to apply the framework elsewhere but not to conflicts at home. One of the most notable cases of this is the UK's unwillingness to recognise the application of the framework to the Northern Ireland conflict within its own borders (Hoewer, 2013). Likewise, in India, despite the situation in Kashmir and tension with Pakistan, the state insists that the WPS Agenda does not have domestic relevance (Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019).

A similar situation applies with regards to the Israel-Palestine question. As the occupying power, Israel has a duty to apply the WPS framework within its own context, which in this case includes the occupied territory of the West Bank; however, Israel does not have a NAP for the implementation of the WPS framework. Chazan (2020) notes that an Action Plan, led by civil society organisations was formulated in 2013. It was very much a grassroots-level effort, and the authors of the document failed to agree on the different aspects of conflict, or even to use the term 'occupation'. The document focused purely on domestic matters within Israel and on improving social and economic equality for women. However, it was never signed by many of the key Israeli women's organisations due to its failure to address the conflict (ibid.).

The discussion of occupation and whether the Agenda fits within the parameters of a country under occupation is missing from the debate around the WPS Agenda. As Ní Aoláin (2020, p. 337) highlights in her recent work, when discussing the experiences of women in armed conflict situations, "women, and the relevance of gender analysis to understanding the limits of the law and experience of living under occupation have been marginalised or entirely absent". She argues that the WPS Agenda "does little to fundamentally engage with the overarching gender and power dynamics of occupation" (ibid., p. 338). Although, the WPS Agenda was not necessarily designed to cater for, and does not explicitly define, occupation as a status where the framework should be implemented, the Palestinian situation is a protracted conflict. The lives of Palestinian women are affected in oppressive and intersectional ways, and the absence of security sector reform, the absence of legal and cultural sanctions against domestic violence, and the lack of a functional Palestinian Authority all have their effects, even without taking into account the day-to-day settler violence that is recognised as an issue by both Palestinian and Israeli human rights organisations (ibid.). The occupying power, Israel, is often the perpetrator of violence that affects the lives of Palestinian women, but the different effects, such as checkpoints, house demolitions and restriction of movement, produced by the

occupation cause insecurity for Palestinian women. These causes of insecurity and violence will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

An emphasis on armed conflict also disregards the everyday violent realities women face. Just because fighting ends, it does not mean that a conflict is over, and as Ní Aoláin and Valji (2019, p. 57) argue, "The lack of attention to continuums of violence reinforces the very inequalities feminists seek to address". Although Ní Aoláin and Valji (ibid.) suggest that the enormity of the task involved in arriving at a definition of violence is not the sole responsibility of the WPS Agenda, its existing narrow definition of conflict and violence has influenced how women's experience of conflict is understood. For example, the WPS Agenda does not address the relationship between private and public violence in conflict settings; the gendered nature of the conditions that are conducive to violence; or structural violence including gendered poverty and socioeconomic exclusion (ibid.). Considering the high expectation set out for the WPS Agenda in its outset to address gendered exlusiongs, as discussed in Chapter 1, Ní Aoláin and Valji (ibid.) highlight an important point how the Agenda's definition of conflict is really a hindrance. As Hamilton et al. (2020, p. 12) note, when peace and conflict are defined solely as the absence of armed conflict, the WPS Agenda "overlooks the ways in which security is tied to identity in a given a populace". There are other forms of violence that are not linked to situations of armed conflict and which therefore are not recognised by the formal WPS Agenda or by NAPs (ibid.).

As this section has shown, from the feminist security perspective, the traditional way of thinking of security in terms of armed conflict does not suffice and we need to develop an understanding of security that incorporates bottom-up, individual, and group approaches. How peace and security are understood and defined within the WPS Agenda is important as this directly impacts on how the Agenda is implemented and understood in national level. This thesis will go on to critically analyse and examine how an expanded view of security can be applied to the context of the WPS Agenda and its implementation in South Africa and Palestine.

The next section will focus on examining the other theoretical field of this thesis, by critically reviewing the literature on intersectionality and how intersectionality is viewed within the WPS Agenda.

2.4.Intersectionality and the WPS Agenda

The concept of intersectionality arose from a political movement led by Black and other feminists and social scientists who wanted to "deconstruct the categories of both 'women' and 'Blacks' and to develop an analysis of intersectionality of various social divisions" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 193). Intersectionality as a concept gained a foothold in theoretical discussions in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially in the legal field, as part of efforts to showcase the problems encountered in law, especially with regards to the intersection of race and gender (Nash, 2008). The title that Hull et al. (1982) chose for their work – "All the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave" – describes the then-contemporary academic field well. It has been suggested that intersectionality has become the "golden standard multidisciplinary approach for analysing subjects' experiences of both identity and oppression" (Nash, 2008, p. 2) and a "buzzword" in feminist scholarship (Davis, 2008, p. 67), and McCall (2005, p. 1771) argues that "intersectionality is the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far".

Intersectionality as a term was first created by Kimberly Crenshaw (1989, p. 139), a legal scholar who centred Black women in her analysis in order "to contrast the multidimensionality of Black women's experience with single-axis analysis that distorts these experiences". Although Crenshaw made the term widely known, it was not particularly original to discuss how the experiences of Black women had been marginalised in feminist discourse or to consider that these experiences needed to be understood in terms of how they were shaped by both race and gender (Davis, 2008). Critiques of how the experiences of women of colour had been discarded from feminist discourse had already been expressed by feminist scholars such as Davis (1981), Smith et al. (1983), and Hull et al. (1982).

As Crenshaw (1989) states, focusing on the most privileged members of a group marginalises those who experience multiple burdens. A focus on the experiences of privileged group members distorts the analysis of racism and sexism because these concepts become grounded in experiences that actually represent the views and experiences of only a very few. When intersectionality is centred, those individuals who are experiencing multiple burdens, due to their sex, race, class, sexual preference, age, and/or physical ability, can be seen to be in disadvantaged positions compared to those in positions of privilege (ibid.). Intersectionality is not just about this multiple marginalisation; it also draws attention to how these categories of difference affect people's lives, institutional arrangements, and social practices and what the outcomes of these interactions are in terms of power and power relations (Davis, 2008). Hence, the WPS Agenda and its ability to advance women's security should always be analysed in ways that consider intersectionality, as these categorisations of people's lives can affect the ways they are able to access or utilise the WPS Agenda. For example, as the data developed for this thesis will show, a white, educated women living in Johannesburg and a Black woman living in a rural community have different chances of affecting how the WPS Agenda should be shaped to fit the South African context. They will also have different views on how they experience and understand security.

When Crenshaw (1989) initially wrote about intersectionality, much of the discussion was focused on the intersection of race and gender. However, as she later pointed out, Crenshaw (1991, pp. 1244-1245) notes that, although she focuses in her work on the intersection of race and gender, the concept of intersectionality "can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age and colour". Nash (2008), among others, has criticised Crenshaw's analysis, which takes Black women and the intersection of race and gender as the centre of the analysis without paying adequate attention to, for example, class, sexuality, or ethnicity.

In research debates, intersectionality has come to signify a number of things, such as the importance of including and listening to the perspectives of multiply marginalised groups, problematising the power relationships that exist between categories such as whiteness and masculinity, and realising that inequalities are actually intertwined and multiply determined rather than existing as one central institutional framework (Choo & Ferree, 2010). As Lepinard (2014) notes, attention to intersectionality in research can challenge the universal. It allows us to use a "process of discovery" (Davis, 2008, p. 79) to understand that the world is complicated and contradictory.

Intersectionality enables us to understand that different identities not only affect our lives but also reflect power relations and how different social interactions are experienced. For example, as Lepinard (2014) suggests, intersectionality leans on the idea that in the intersection of two aspects of domination (e.g., gender and race), there is a specific experience of social life because of the social category these identities form together. Lepinard (ibid., p. 878) also highlights a key concept in relation to intersectionality, which is that oppression does not occur in segmented ways because social relations are interconnected rather than just "simply added one top of the other". Intersectionality allows us to listen to the voices of those who have been discriminated against (Matsuda, 1987). As Matsuda (1990, p. 1198) suggests, intersectionality, as a way to examine the different interconnections of subordinations, allows people to ask new and nuanced questions: "When I see something that looks racist, I ask, 'Where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, 'Where is the heterosexism in this?' When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, 'Where are the class interests in this?'" As Matsuda demonstrates, looking at both the obvious and non-obvious relationships of privilege and domination highlights the fact that no form of subordination ever stands alone. This point is reinforced by Nash (2008), who argues that intersectionality provides a way to listen to the experiences of the subjects whose voices have been ignored in the past, both by feminist and anti-racist scholars (Crenshaw 1989).

Some critiques of the concept of intersectionality have arisen in relation to whether or not it makes a theoretical contribution. Other critiques have focused on confusion about what intersectionality actually is, with questions being asked about whether it represents a fresh theoretical contribution, a concept, or a strategy for conducting feminist analysis, for example (Davis, 2008). Davis (2008) notes that there is controversy around whether scholarship should conceptualise intersectionality as a crossroads, as Crenshaw (1991) suggested; as axes of difference, following Yuval-Davis (2006); or as a dynamic process (Staunæs, 2003). Further, it is unclear if intersectionality should solely focus on understanding individual experiences and interactions or should instead consider them as part of wider social structures and cultural discourses (Davis, 2008). Hancock (2007) positions intersectionality both as a theoretical argument and also as an approach to conducting empirical research with the aim of examining the interaction of categories of differences which are not limited only to gender, race, class, or sexual orientation.

Crenshaw (1989, p. 139) highlights the fact that in discussions of intersectionality there is "a tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis". Lepinard (2014) further argues that analysis of intersectional inclusion is often conducted in binarised terms – either the interests of minority women are included, or they are not. She argues that more focus should be paid to how different intersectional identities and interests are perceived and defined in practice, and in her own research she does this by focusing on women's organisations (ibid.). Crenshaw (1989) argues that feminists often overlook race issues when describing women's experiences of patriarchy or sexuality, which leads them to ignore how their own race functions and privileges them, and this consequently contributes to their domination of other women. However, feminist researchers have been very aware of how narrowing down and limiting a social category to gender alone hinders research (McCall, 2005).

Intersectionality is used by many as a basis of analysis, but it has also become a theoretical "buzzword" (Davis, 2008, p.67) in feminist research that academics feel obliged to use without ever actually describing what intersectional analysis means (Choo & Ferree, 2010). This has led to critique of its nonspecific nature as a theoretical approach, which means that, as an open-ended concept, it can be filled with many meanings which may or may not be useful (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Davis 2008). Intersectionality is considered to be a theoretical advance arising from the field of Black feminism but, as Nash (2008) argues, it continues the thinking of Black feminism with the addition of a new name that takes into account the concepts of identity. She argues that a more explicit engagement with the distinctiveness of its theoretical contribution is therefore needed. However, as Davis (2008, p. 77) notes, Nash's critique demonstrates exactly why intersectionality could seen to be such a successful theory because its ambiguity and open-endedness "has enabled it to be drawn upon in nearly any context of inquiry". Davis (ibid.) argues that its relevance to a range of contexts is actually why intersectionality has succeeded; she notes that, in order for a theory to become successful, it needs: 1) to speak to a primary concern of its audience; 2) to be recognised as key to understanding something the primary audience considers important; and also 3) to address a problem which is important for this particular audience.[10] Davis (ibid.) argues that in these terms intersectionality is a successful concept because it addresses a key theoretical issue within feminist scholarship by facilitating understanding and acknowledgement of the differences amongst women. Intersectionality provides a way to understand women's everyday lived experiences and the structural power relations that shape those experiences. The vagueness of intersectionality, which has led to critiques of the concept, can be argued to be one of its greatest strengths because it allows exploration of different intersections one might not had considered before, and it is not limited to research on just a few selected intersectional identities, such as race or

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[10] Davis is basing this argument on the work of Murray S. Davis (1971, 1986) who explored what enables social theories to capture the interest of a broad range of academics.

class. Utilising the vagueness of the concept of intersectionality, as Davis (ibid.) suggests, also allows this thesis to draw on multiple different intersections, most notably on the geographical location, specifically the urban/rural divide, which is not often taken into consideration in the literature on intersectionality.

Intersectionality provides a useful lens for examining the way the WPS Agenda takes into account the different needs of women in situations of conflict. It also allows consideration of how different privileges and social positions affect how women are able to access services such as healthcare, education, or political office. As Romero (2017) highlights, the origins of intersectionality lie in social justice struggle and research, and this informs its focus on social inequality. She notes that intersectionality can be used as a tool for social activism and "provides analytical tools for framing social justice issues in such way as to expose how social exclusion or privilege occurs differently in various social positions, and it does this by focusing on interaction of multiple systems of oppressions" (ibid., p. 8). This is highlighted also by Lepinard (2014) who argues that intersectionality is a tool for critical analysis of social and political practices but especially feminist practice. Intersectionality shows how differences which are rooted in social relations and marked by levels of oppression have led to the marginalisation of women's voices. Using intersectionality as a tool for analysis in this thesis allows consideration of the ways in which ethnicity, race, religion, or class affect women's security and equality, and it also enable insights into how rural/urban divisions affect the ways the WPS Agenda is used in South Africa and Palestine.

Lepinard's (ibid.) research shows the relevance of intersectionality as a concept for research into both social movements and gender. By examining the different repertoires used by women's organisations in Canada and France that utilise intersectionality in their work, Lepinard has shown that social actors' interpretation of intersectionality can differ from the academic definition. Lepinard (ibid., p. 899) argues that it is crucial to further develop feminist research that looks at intersectionality in a "grounded way" in order both to understand how

different individuals understand social differences and to establish what kinds of politics might arise from these different notions and understandings of intersectionality. Without this knowledge, understanding of how feminist activists address challenges with regards to intersectionality will remain vague (ibid.).

Lepinard (2014) examined the different ways in which feminist/women's organisations encounter the challenges involved in including women who are subject to multiple types of oppression. She argues that intersectionality is one of the repertoires that such organisations can use to address these challenges but not the only one. Lepinard (ibid.) developed a typology of four repertoires to account for how feminist organisations talk about differences other than gender and differences amongst women. She characterises the four repertoires these organisations use in terms of their focus on 1) intersectional recognition; 2) a gender-first approach; 3) individual recognition; and 4) intersectional solidarity. The first repertoire, intersectional recognition, recognises that women with various intersectional identities have specific needs and that they are therefore better represented by organisations and people who share a similar identity and position in society with them. The gender-first approach assumes that any women can represent the interests of all women because organisations in this category assume that the people they represent are discriminated against on grounds of their gender. In this repertoire, the basis for marginalisation is always understood as gender oppression rather than any other subcategory of oppression. The third repertoire recognises a person's need to respect everyone's own individual needs, desires, and choices and hence places emphasis on the individual. The last repertoire, intersectional solidarity, recognises that structural power relations affect women differently within their respective societies and tries to take this into account, specifically with regards to women who belong to minorities. The idea of this repertoire is that it translates "political claims specific to minority women into a more recognisable mainstream feminist vocabulary" (ibid., p. 898); it also realises the need for mainstream women's organisations to include the voices of minority women and to improve

the representation of these women within women's movements and mainstream political arenas. This research reflects on Lepinard's (ibid.) typology framework on intersectionality to understand how women's organisations in South Africa and Palestine understand intersectionality.

As this thesis argues, the United Nations resolutions on women, peace and security do not conceptualise or define 'women' but instead broadly discuss 'women and girls', and this problematises efforts to understand what is actually meant when the resolutions talk about women. Therefore, the question needs to be asked, who are the universal women on whom the Agenda focuses? As Crenshaw (1989) argued, this notion that there is just one group of women risks reinforcing the idea that particular types of women, often white, can speak for all women. Crenshaw suggested that the value of feminist theory to Black women is inconsequential as it has arisen from a white racial context; this makes it incredibly problematic as women of colour have not only been overlooked but also silenced when white women have been encouraged to speak "for and as women" (ibid., p. 154). Nash (2008) has made a similar point that the concept of 'woman' in itself is contested terrain and that the experiences of women are always constituted by the different interests and experiences that a particular woman has had. Therefore, when localised National Action Plans for implementing the WPS Agenda are being discussed and consultations are being held with local women and civil society organisations, one must ask who these local women are and who they are speaking for. This problematisation of 'local' was discussed earlier in this chapter.

This thesis uses the concept of intersectionality to include the perspectives of people who belong to multiply marginalised groups to analyse the transformational potential of implementing the WPS Agenda in South Africa and Palestine. It follows Davis' (2008) thinking on intersectionality, which suggests that the concept's flexibility is also its strength. This approach allows and "encourages each feminist scholar to engage critically with her own assumptions in the interests of reflexive, critical, and accountable feminist inquiry" (ibid., p.

79). In these terms, the concept's flexibility allows us to understand the different intersecting identities that women in South Africa and Palestine have, and how they should be taken into account when implementing the WPS Agenda. Its flexibility also enables consideration of how intersectionality should affect implementation of the WPS Agenda from the point of view of policymaking. Hancock (2007, p. 66) argues that intersectionality is able to examine the limitations of policy-making which is in fact designed to address and target people who should, theoretically, benefit from policies that target a particular race or gender when she asks, "who has the authority to define public policy goals that are in the interests of race or gender groups?" This begs the question about how policies can be designed in order to ensure that all members of marginalised groups are enabled to empower themselves. This will be discussed further in the later chapters, as it will be question which women the civil society organisation represent when they lobby for the implementation and localisation of the NAPs.

This section has introduced the concept of intersectionality and shown that it can be used as a lens for analysis to enable better understanding of whether the WPS Agenda can be a transformational framework for all women in South Africa and Palestine or just for a select few. This thesis will also discuss who the women are who work on the WPS Agenda within these contexts and which women they are representing. The next section will assess how intersectionality is discussed with reference to the WPS Agenda.

2.4.1 The WPS Agenda and women – which women are we talking about?

A significant challenge and critique of the WPS Agenda is how women, gender, and intersectionality are discussed within the WPS Framework. Resolution 1325 and the subsequent WPS resolutions talk broadly about women and girls – the Agenda is constructed upon the assumption that all women and girls are the same and act in the same ways in conflict situations or post-conflict peacebuilding processes. The WPS framework does not explicitly pay any attention to intersectionality. Instead, it makes the presumption of classifying 'women' as a homogenous group without highlighting the differences that class, race, ethnicity, social

status, age, sexuality, or location might have. In effect, Resolution 1325 privileges gender above any other significant power relation, such as race, class, or sexual identity, in its understanding of women's experiences in conflict (Pratt, 2013).

This chapter's next section will focus on examining how gender and other intersectional identities are discussed within the WPS framework and the academic literature around it. The literature on this topic is still limited and focuses on a few specific areas, such as criticism about how the framework endorses patriarchal and racist ideals (Pratt, 2013; Aroussi, 2017; Almagro, 2018), the role of masculinities in the WPS agenda (H. Wright, 2020; Myrttinen, 2019), the WPS Agenda and LGTBQI+ rights (Hagen, 2016; Davis & Stern, 2019; Haastrup & Hagen, 2020; Hagen, 2019), the WPS Agenda and disability (Stienstra, 2019) and how gender is defined and discussed in the Agenda (Hagen, 2016; Davis & Stern, 2019, Jansson & Eduards, 2016). As Section 2.2.3 showed, it can be argued that in order to address intersectionality, the focus should be turned towards the localisation of National Action Plans as this is where the member states could address issues specific to their countries and conflicts, such as LGBTQI+ rights, and race and ethnicity. When exploring this topic, Davies and True (2019) suggest that a conversation about 'which women' and 'what agendas' the WPS Agenda relates to is currently being shelved by states and represents the next discussion which academics and women's rights activists should have. Although it is important to localise the NAPs and perhaps through this strategy to address any country-specific issues with regards to intersectionality, it should be equally important to address these issues within the WPS Agenda itself. In order for this commitment to be taken seriously, it should be addressed within the text of the WPS resolutions themselves, as many of the member states look to the UN when they are seeking to understand what they should implement.

This section will demonstrate that there is a gap in the literature in relation to how stakeholders at national level and civil society organisations understand the WPS framework and intersectionality. This section will discuss the limited literature on the topic and the fact that

any existing literature focuses largely on policy recommendations and reports regarding intersectionality rather than deriving insights into the topic based on empirical evidence.

Criticism around the WPS agenda with regards to how it portrays women has largely taken the form of a postcolonial critique of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak, 1988, p. 92). Many have argued (Pratt, 2013; Aroussi, 2017; Almagro, 2018) that the WPS framework is part of and enforces a liberal peacebuilding framework that is Western-centric, racist, and patriarchal. However, it should be noted that Resolution 1325 does change these dynamics because it does not perceive women just as victims. Instead, the WPS framework sees women as active agents of change and so challenges the notion in international security whereby women are expected to stay in the domestic sphere (Pratt, 2013). This is one of the elements of the Agenda that is commendable, as has been discussed in previous sections, and moving away from the notion that women are simply victims of conflict is an important step forward.

In its current state, the WPS Agenda completely fails to address different intersectional identities and what they mean. There is an exclusive focus on discussing women and girls in the text of its resolutions, and while there are sometimes brief mentions of gender or men and boys, these are only with reference to them as victims of sexual violence. Although the most recent Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (Coomaraswamy, 2015) notes that gender is only one axis of difference and one which intersects with many other forms of experiences and identities, this argument has not subsequently gained much attention. The study noted, for example, that nationality, political or religious affiliation, marital status, disability, and sex preference are all factors that affect the way women's lives are affected by conflict. The report also mentioned that it is important to explore how these intersectional identities can be utilised as a resource to provide different perspectives on how to maintain and establish peace and security in a diverse global community (ibid.).

When the frameworks which preceded and have supported the WPS Agenda are examined to see how they address intersectionality, it is clear that they actually gave intersectionality much more prominence. For example, the platform that paved the way for the adoption of Resolution 1325, the Beijing Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995, p. 2), recognised the diversity of women and their "roles and responsibilities". According to the London School of Economics (LSE Pro Bono, 2015) in its pro bono review of legal policy frameworks, the Beijing Platform for Action adds value to the legal framework and goes beyond the language of Resolution 1325 by taking a more comprehensive view of women's rights in conflict and providing a more intersectional perspective on violence against women, therefore providing more potential for transformative effects (ibid.). CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations makes a separate point of addressing the need to understand the intersecting forms of discrimination women face. It also notes the importance of taking into account the particular needs of internally displaced and refugee women, such as indigenous women, pregnant women, and older women amongst others, who are subjected to intersecting forms of discrimination (CEDAW, 2013). The fact that these other supporting frameworks, which preceded the WPS Agenda, recognise the importance of intersectionality gives credence to the importance of recognising and taking into account intersectionality when implementing frameworks designed to support women's rights, peace, and security.

H. Wright (2020) argues that the WPS Agenda could be seen as politically useful in situations where advocates have sought to link its principles to issues it does not cover, such as LGBTQI+ rights and climate change. However, I would argue that LGBTQI+ is an important issue directly linked to intersectionality and this needs to be taken into account in the Agenda itself rather than as another add-on. As Hagen (2016, p. 314) states, "of the utmost importance to recognising gendered vulnerabilities is understanding how an individual's multiple social identities compound the risk of violence against them". A full, intersectional, context-specific

analysis of the individuals who are most vulnerable in conflict situations is required in order for the WPS Agenda to be fully inclusive and impactful in the societies in which it is being implemented and, as Hagen (ibid., p. 317) states, this analysis should account for ethnic, religious, social, and political drivers of violence in order to better understand whose interests are heard when categories like 'women' or 'women and girls' are listed in policy documents. For example, an intersectional awareness of the type of woman who gets to sit at the table during peace negotiations will provide a better understanding of what the person's race and class background bring to her lived experience in addition to her gender (ibid.). Interlinked with this, it is also important to understand which women are driving the WPS Agenda forward at national level, as one of the criticisms that I will present later on in this thesis is that it is often the elite women in a society who are taking part in the development of NAPs as the cases of Palestine and South Africa make clear. In deeply divided societies where a multitude of inequalities are at play, it is important to consider who these elite women represent when they are talking on behalf of other women.

The WPS Agenda talks broadly about women without focusing adequately on how conflict affects women differently, depending, for example, on their ethnicity, race, location, or sexual orientation. Importantly, as discussed previously in this chapter, geographical location, and specifically the urban/rural divide, is often forgotten or ignored when intersectionality is being considered, even when these other factors are taken into account. To clarify, in this thesis the term "geographical location" is used to describe the broader geographical context of the countries in question. For example, this term is specifically used when discussing about the different administrative areas of Palestine and how their geographical location can be both including and excluding to people. However, this thesis uses the division of urban/rural to examine specifically how the location either in urban environments (such as capital/administrative cities) or in rural countryside (in locations which are considered rural

and often also located geographically far away from large cities) can have an effect on how women are able to be politically and socially engaged in decision making processes.

An examination of the 10 resolution documents shows that the majority of them do not mention identifying characteristics beyond "women", "girls" or "gender". At best, they might refer to "other vulnerable groups", as in UNSCR 2106 (2013). Resolution 2242 (2015) mentions the empowerment of women, youth, and religious and cultural leaders, and Resolution 2467 (2019) recognises that men and boys can also be targets of sexual violence. The only specific mention of rural areas can be found in Resolution 1960 (2010), which mentions the need for socio-economic reintegration services for victims of sexual violence, in particular in rural areas; this resolution also takes into account the specific needs of people with disabilities.

Also important is the extent to which the WPS Agenda interprets gender as a heteronormative and binary concept, a strategy which makes it an outdated framework (Davis & Stern, 2019). None of the WPS resolutions refer to sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics (Trithart, 2020). As Trithart (ibid.) writes, LGBTQI+ people are affected by armed conflict, semantic distinctions matter, and narrowly constructed and gendered language can exclude LGBTQI+ people and make their experiences of conflict invisible. Currently, people who are vulnerable to insecurity and violence because of their gender identity or sexual orientation are being largely ignored by the international community (Hagen, 2016). The evidence demonstrates that LGBTQI+ people have been targeted in conflicts through sexual assault, homophobic ideologies, and exploitation, and they are targeted not only because of their gender but also because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, which adds further to their vulnerabilities (Trithart, 2020).[11] However, LGBTQI+ survivors of gender-based violence are often left out from the discussion altogether (Davis & Stern, 2019). In addition, the support networks within communities that are normally available during times of conflict

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[11] See, for example, Daigle & Myrttinen (2018) "Bringing diverse sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) into peacebuilding policy and practice", https://core.ac.uk/reader/185507650.

are usually not accessible to LGBTQI+ people who may have been rejected by their families and/or communities. In times of war, any dissent is usually discouraged and this can make it harder for LGBTQI+ human rights defenders to act (ibid.). The disproportionate effect that sexual and gender-based violence has on women and LGBTQI+ people requires a carefully thought-out approach to conflict through the WPS Agenda (ibid.). These issues could be addressed if the WPS Agenda applied a queer lens to the policy (Hagen, 2016). Currently it seems contradictory that an Agenda that reaffirms women's role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts completely ignores the LGBTQI+ community and other intersectional groups.

Some efforts have been made to include LGBTQI+ people in the WPS Agenda, but these efforts are still few and far between. The Secretary General's 2019 report on WPS included more references to LGBTQI+ people than before, requested that UN peace operations should continue to improve their monitoring and evaluation of threats and violence against activists, and asked for disaggregation of data by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability (Report of the Secretary General, 2019). Also, even while the WPS resolutions still lack appropriate language, civil society organisations have been active in lobbying for change. In 2018, Outright Action International, an LGBTIQ human rights organisation, joined the NGO Working Group for WPS, making it the first organisation focusing specifically on LGBTQI+ issues to join the group. During the Colombian Peace Process, the negotiations had a gender subcommittee that included organisations focusing on LGBTQI+ issues, and the final peace agreement also made several references to LGBTQI+ populations (Hagen, 2019). Several National Action Plans, namely those from Argentina, Albania, Japan, Sweden, the UK, and the US, also made specific commitments to consider the needs of the LGBTQI+ populations (ibid.).

When we ask the question about 'which women' the WPS agenda applies to, we also have to consider other factors such as class and urban/rural status. Geographical location, meaning

location within the country or whether the person lives in an urban city environment or in rural countryside, is often omitted from the discussion, although it has a huge impact on women's lives. This is especially evident both in South Africa and Palestine. As Chapters 4 and 5 will demonstrate, your opportunities as a woman are not only affected by your race or ethnicity but also by where you were born. For example, opportunities for women are very different in South Africa depending on whether you are born as a Black woman in a rural community or a white Afrikaans woman who lives in Cape Town or Johannesburg. In Palestine, your whole life will be determined depending on the geographical location and administrative area into which you are born. Living in Area C will hinder your opportunities access employment, education, and healthcare. Women who live in Area C, because of the ID document they carry, are not allowed to enter East Jerusalem and have to travel long backroads in order to travel to Ramallah from the south of the West Bank. This thesis goes on to argue that not only the geographical location, for example whether one lives with Area A, B or C within Palestine, but also the rural/urban divide merit an important discussion that must be taken into account within the WPS Agenda itself.

Over and above the rural/urban divide, Almagro's (2018) research highlights the need to discuss class in relation to women who have roles in relation to the WPS agenda. She discusses three different types of women participants and how they are presented, one of them being the woman activist who represents the local experiences of the conflict and whose views are used as evidence in international reports. Almagro (ibid., p. 410) claims that often the mediator is the 'local' and the woman activist takes on a more international role. This is an elite position and the activist most commonly speaks English in addition to other languages, as well as having a particular type of socio-economic status and background. Almagro's (ibid., p. 410) research showed that these competent activists are "selected and produced by international NGOs to work on advocacy on international level". Through meetings facilitated by international organisations at which they select women activists, NGOs help to create a cadre of elite,

transnational, women activists. This factor should be carefully considered when discussing which civil society organisations are represented and involved in WPS work and who represents them, as has been discussed in section 2.2.3.1 of this chapter.

The WPS framework assumes that women can act as representatives of other women because they have common traits and interests and constitute a cohesive group (Jansson & Eduards, 2016). As Jansson and Eduards (ibid.) argue, the WPS resolutions neglect the differences between women and treat the relations between them as non-hierarchical. To address this critique, it is especially important to take into account the localised context in which the resolution is being implemented. In countries that are suffering from the effects of conflict, it is crucial not only to understand the effects it has on women but to ask the question as to 'which women; it affects. Women are not one homogenous group, and a conflict might have different effects on different women, for example because of their ethnicity or class status. Even when women represent local armed forces in peacekeeping missions, their function involves representing women more generally in some way (ibid.):

> the presence of women peacekeepers may encourage local women to participate in national armed and security forces, thereby helping to build a security sector that is accessible and responsive to all, especially women. (UNSCR 1888, 2009a)

The conversation around intersectionality and the WPS Agenda is still mostly conducted through policy papers and NGOs' reports rather than being based on empirical academic research. NGOs and civil society organisations have recognised the need for an intersectional analysis of the WPS Agenda. Although the discussion above highlights some of the debates that form the focus of existing scholarly literature, much of the work focuses either on specific marginalised groups (e.g. disabled or LGTBQI+ groups) or broader suggestions and recommendations about how intersectionality should be taken into account if the aim is to create a transformational Agenda.

As Davis and Stern (2019) emphasise, broadening the understanding of gender in the WPS Agenda should be in everyone's interests, however the progress on taking intersectionality into account has been slow and the literature and debates on this has only started to increase in the past few years. There has been some movement (Davis & Stern, 2019; Haastrup, 2020; Rees, 2020) towards broadening this understanding and referring to the Agenda's remit in terms of 'gender, peace and security' rather than 'women, peace and security'. As Davis and Stern (2019, p. 657) suggest,

> a broader interpretation of gender builds coalitions across the women's and LGBTQ+ movements, which amount to a larger movement committed to ending violence against individuals for defying traditionally ascribed gender roles. This broader understanding within the WPS framework also helps to strengthen the concept of gender equality and underscores the need to address long-standing gender-based violence and discrimination in transitional justice and peace-building processes.

Broadening the agenda to include intersectionality would allow a much wider scope, not only for the agenda, but for the countries wanting to implement it. As Haastrup in her interview with IPI Global Observatory (Jaghab, 2020) highlights, the issues generated around ethnicities in certain regions of the world are dominant in the conflicts some countries face. Gender is about much more than just women because it also accounts for social relations, masculinities, femininities and how they relate to one another (ibid.). Although efforts to broaden the Agenda to become about 'gender, peace and security' are certainly relevant, it is nevertheless imperative to consider how the Agenda can be transformed to include intersectionality without diluting the original message or changing it to an Agenda that is for everyone and everything. This issue will be reflected on further in Chapter 6.

2.5. Conclusion

Considerable progress has been made with Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda with regards to efforts to implement it in various places around the world. However, the gap between policy-level commitments to the WPS framework and the actual reality of national and regional-level implementation of Resolution 1325 remains significant. For a framework which is debated annually at the highest level of the United Nations, and which has gained significant credibility over the years, it remains obvious that a lot still needs to be done. The latest Global Study of the Implementation of Resolution 1325 states that there are still too many first steps waiting to be completed with regard to the implementation of the framework (Coomaraswamy, 2015).

This chapter has introduced the framework in which this research is placed by critically reviewing the literature around feminist security theory and explained why definitions of security matter in the implementation process of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. It has also analysed and discussed intersectionality as a theory and concept, explaining why this is a relevant framework for analysing the implementation process of the WPS Agenda in South Africa and Palestine. This literature review has highlighted gaps in existing knowledge in relation to the way that the implementation of the WPS Agenda is seen from the point of view of conflict and intersectionality. The literature shows that the discussion about the implementation of the framework is still centred around the idea that it is meant for post-conflict countries or countries which are dealing with armed conflict. The literature review has also demonstrated that intersectionality is still being discussed at an abstract level, without generating any knowledge based on how these issues are seen in the countries where the framework is being implemented.

The next chapter will discuss the methodology and methods used in the research for this thesis and subsequent chapters will introduce my data findings and analysis.

3. Methodology

This chapter will present the methodologies and methods which have been used to conduct this research. The chapter will start by discussing the philosophical stance that underpins this research before moving on to explain the research design, including data collection and analysis. Lastly, it will reflect on the research journey undertaken and outline the challenges and limitations of this research.

3.1. Research philosophy: ontology, epistemology, and methodology

This thesis is based on qualitative research which aims to understand to what extent the UN's WPS Agenda is an effective and suitable framework for improving women's security in South Africa and Palestine, two places which, although different, share many similarities in terms of their histories and issues. Qualitative researchers focus on "study[ing] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Bell et al. (2019, p. 369) argue that qualitative research focuses on social life in "terms of process", and in doing so they illustrate that qualitative research often emphasises the ways events and patterns unfold over time.

Qualitative research focuses on understanding participants' points of view on things, aiming to develop a contextual understanding of a certain topic; theory emerges from the data, and data collection is often more unstructured than in quantitative research, but the data that emerges is rich, detailed, and deep (Bell et al., 2019). Some of the critique of qualitative research is based on the difficulty of replicating or generalising its results and its subjectivity, when its findings rely on researchers' views about what is considered relevant or important (ibid.). Although these issues will all be taken into consideration when this study's data is analysed, qualitative methods were chosen because they provide the best possible insights into the gender and development context of South Africa and Palestine.

How qualitative researchers see the world and act in it is shaped by beliefs based on ontology, which explores the nature of reality; epistemology (the relationship between the inquirer and the known); and methodology (how we acquire the knowledge) as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) observed. These factors, often referred to as paradigms, are defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105) as the "basic belief system or worldview that guides the investor, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways".

Research paradigms are basic beliefs in the sense that they must be accepted just as they are and are simply based on faith as, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994), there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness. Kuhn (1962) suggests that scientific disciplines rely upon these paradigms which define what to study and why and how to study the phenomena in question. Even though paradigms might change over time because of scientific revolutions, it is important to realise that a crucial element of a paradigm is that "it is accepted by the whole community of scientists active in a certain discipline" (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 20).

Methodology is an important part of any research project and can be argued to be reliant on the specific research paradigm in which the researcher situates herself/himself. Quantitative and qualitative research have traditionally been considered to be situated in different research paradigms due the sense that distinctive belief systems carry with them different philosophical assumptions (Robson, 2011). However, Guba and Lincoln (1994) believe that both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used within any research paradigm. According to them, methods are actually secondary to the questions raised by the paradigm itself. Methodology refers to "a process where the design of the research and choice of particular methods, and their justification in relation to the research project, are made evident" (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 6), and, even though methodology can be separated from ontological and epistemological questions, all three tend to be linked.

The research philosophy of this thesis will be based on a constructivist view. A constructivist approach emphasises "the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by people acting in social situations" (Robson, 2011, p. 24). Social constructivists usually focus on an individual rather than a large group, or concentrate on small-scale groups; for example, they might focus on looking at a school rather than a whole education policy. Social constructivists are interested in understanding how people construct and make sense of the world they live in, and in their work they aim to understand the different social constructions of meaning and knowledge. Therefore, a researcher who looks at things through this lens will tend to use research methods that make use of interviews and observations, as these methods allow them to acquire multiple perspectives (ibid.).

This research is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with different stakeholder groups from non-governmental organisations to individual experts. The study takes a constructivist philosophical approach, as I am interested in understanding the different constructions of meaning that stakeholders in South Africa and Palestine create in relation to the UN's women, peace and security framework, and whether or not they find it a useful framework in the context of these two places.

This research takes a feminist approach. When feminist research emerged, it posed a challenge to positivism beyond that posed by interpretivism. It challenged the patriarchal nature of research methods, as well as the domination of quantitative methods, which were often male-focused. Feminist research started as a critique of social science and research in general, as they were always largely focused on male dominance and ignorance of women's situations. Mies (1983) wrote about why feminist research tends to be more often qualitative than quantitative. As quantitative research focuses on numbers, the critique of it is that it often ignores the voices of women and turns them into objects, and this risks turning them into value-neutral subjects of study whose experiences as women are not taken into account (ibid.). Qualitative research allows the voices of women to be heard, recorded, and analysed in a

different way than quantitative research. In qualitative research, the aim is to study the social world through the eyes and perspectives of the people who are being studied (Bell et al., 2019). In this research project, semi-structured interviews enabled the use of follow-up questions in interview situations, and this enabled the development of a comprehensive understanding of the situation in both places.

The way in which this research engaged with the topic in the field and generated knowledge in both Palestine and South Africa involved consideration of the history and current political and societal context in both places. Prevalent issues of class, ethnicity, race, and gender, and the identities and cultural backgrounds of the researcher and the participants, the ethics of the researcher, power dynamics, and methodology all affected this engagement. Crawford et al. (2017) suggest that there is a three-dimensional relationship between power, identity, and ethics, and they argue that, from this perspective, research and fieldwork and the data they produce should be seen as "embedded in social situations and social relations" (Crawford et al., 2017, p. 5). They recognise that, when a researcher is conducting fieldwork in the global development context, they are not a detached and impartial expert but take a relational perspective to the topic, and this insight is derived from the social constructivist view which puts emphasis on the socially constructed nature of the world and our knowledge of it. Crawford et al. (2017, p. 5) argue that this means research should be based on an "interactionist ontology that acknowledges the importance of how researchers engage with and learn from people". As global development research is largely focused on fieldwork, this generally means that the researcher will engage with people and the situations they are in and try to immerse themselves in the field they are studying (ibid.).

The positionality and identity of the researcher are very important to an understanding of bias and the validity of research. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that all research is interpretive and guided by the researcher's own set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how the

topic should be understood. These issues will be discussed in section 4.4.1 of this chapter where research challenges and research ethics are addressed.

3.2 Research design

The following section of this chapter will discuss the research design of this thesis. Research methods refer to the ways in which the researcher acquires the knowledge they present. As Della Porta and Keating (2008) state, research methods are independent from ontological and epistemological questions, but in practice they are often linked. Qualitative research puts stronger emphasis on human experience and it seeks to understand the social world, "recognising this world for its richness in context, detail and experience (Stewart-Withers et al., 2014, p. 59). This kind of data collection in natural settings produces in-depth information which potentially facilitates understanding of the complexities of social life (ibid.) Qualitative research is about "generating and building up theory as opposed to being hypothesis-driven, [and] it works in an inductive manner (from specific to the general) rather than deductive (moving down from the general to the particular)" (ibid. p. 59).

3.2.1 Data collection

This research is based on qualitative, semi-structured research interviews. In line with Stewart-Withers et al. (2014), the aim was to understand the complexities of real social life and if the WPS Agenda can be an effective framework for improving women's equality and security in South Africa and Palestine. The aim in conducting interviews was to understand how people in these two countries who work on issues of gender and peace understand the current WPS framework as it stands and whether or not they find it a useful tool in their situations. The fieldwork for this thesis started with research conducted in South Africa, and this research informed the fieldwork stage in Palestine in 2020. Due to the challenges involved in reaching and recruiting research participants in South Africa from different research participant groups, a further data collection stage took place in Palestine in 2020 in order to satisfy the requirements of this study.

The two different contexts of Palestine and South Africa were chosen because of their relationships to the overall aim of this study and its theoretical framework. As discussed in previous chapters, Palestine and South Africa share similarities with regards to inequalities and the challenges that face women's security, and their different political statuses have the potential to offer new perspectives. These two countries were also selected because they were considered as good contexts in which to examine the WPS Agenda from the point of view of intersectionality, as both countries have experiences of ethnic, religious, and political cleavages. This study was not aiming to provide a comparison between these two contexts; instead, the aim was to understand the challenges and conceptual understanding of the WPS Agenda at the national level through these two examples.

This chapter's next section outlines how data collection was organised, what type of qualitative methods were used, how interview participants were selected, and how the fieldwork was organised.

3.2.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews, which were this study's main research method, were conducted with civil society organisations and individual experts in South Africa and Palestine. These semi-structured interviews were based on an interview guide which served as a checklist to help the researcher track topics which should be covered during the interview. However, the wording and order of the questions were modified based on the flow of each interview, and this also allowed the interviewer to ask unplanned questions in response to what the interviewees said, therefore making it a more flexible method (Bell et al., 2019; Robson, 2011). Semi-structured interviews are most commonly used when the research design is flexible and/or multi-strategy. The participants were invited to participate in interviews in which the interviewer used open-ended questions (See Appendix 2), and this allowed them to reflect openly and broadly on the WPS framework and its implementation in South Africa and Palestine. The interview guide served as guidance for topics/questions to discuss, however it

was emphasised to the participants that even though the terminology used was focused on the Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda, the participants were asked to reflect how they understand and use or do not use these terms within their own work. This was done specifically in relation to the first question which asked the participants to explain in their own words how they understand the WPS Agenda, which aimed to give them the space to reflect their own views on the framework.

King and Horrocks (2010), describe the nature of qualitative interviews where the emphasis is on open-ended and non-leading questions and the focus is on the research participants' personal experience. They state that the following three issues are the defining characteristics of a generic qualitative interview: "1) It is flexible and open-ended in style; 2) it tends to focus on people's actual experiences more than general beliefs and opinions; and 3) the relationship between interviewer and the interviewee is crucial to the method" (ibid., p. 3). As Bell et al. (2019, p. 436) note, "rambling or going off tangents [in interviews] is often encouraged", as this gives an opportunity for the interviewee to emphasise or talk about issues that they might see as relevant. This kind of open-endedness allowed me to keep the interviews informal and, if necessary, let the interviewee point out other important issues which I might not have otherwise asked about.

In total, 20 interviews were conducted, 14 in Palestine (10 civil society and 4 individual experts) and 6 in South Africa (4 civil society organisations and 2 individual experts). The interviews were audio recorded and each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

3.2.1.2 Participant selection

The research plan was to interview people operating at three different levels in each setting: civil society, governmental bodies, and international experts. The first group consisted of civil society organisations/NGOs in South Africa and Palestine who work around gender equality issues or in the broader peace and security area. Civil society organisations in this context are understood to be either non-governmental or non-profit organisations that have a presence in

public life, express the interests and values of their members and others, and are "based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations" (World Bank, n.d.).

The original research design planned for additional interviews with individuals from governmental bodies/ministries who are directly involved with the development of the 'Women, Peace and Security' framework. It was expected that the construction of this group would be varied – this means that the interviews would have been conducted with people in all ranks of the ministries, ranging from junior-level advisors to senior officials involved in the planning or implementation of the WPS Agenda.

The third group of interviewees was to be a small elite group of international experts who are involved with the WPS framework and its implementation/policy-level decision-making in South Africa and Palestine. As this was expected to be a small elite group of research participants, it was anticipated that this element of the research would involve around 10 interviews. The third group would have consisted of stakeholders, such as individuals from international organisations, or independent consultants or diplomats working on gender equality issues more broadly in these two countries.

However, due to difficulties in reaching research participants from the top two groups of government officials and the elite group (specifically in South Africa), the research focused mainly on interviewing different civil society organisations in South African and Palestine. A small number of interviews were conducted with individual experts, who were people working for international organisations, independent consultants on the WPS Agenda, or government agencies.

The two different interview groups, civil society organisations and individual experts, were selected as part of the research design. The groups represented different levels of society, both nationally and internationally in South Africa and Palestine, and they therefore allowed me to

develop a better understanding and analysis of whether and how the WPS Agenda is understood and applied in these two contexts.

This research relied on two different methods of sampling: snowball sampling and purposeful recruitment. The recruitment of research participants for this research was purposeful as the focus was on research participants who fitted certain categories: they had to be part of one of the groups I was planning to interview, as well as work on gender equality or peace and security issues in some capacity in South Africa or Palestine. As Bell et al. (2019) observe, this sort of sampling is conducted with the goals of the research in mind. The units/people/groups are selected because they fit the criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered (ibid.). It should be noted that the plan was to include a variety of organisations with different viewpoints as part of the research. Therefore the first aim in identifying the research participants was to source different civil society organisations and governmental organisations that were involved either with the 'Women, Peace and Security' Agenda or in a broader peacebuilding framework where the focus was not necessarily on women as such but on a broader peace and security agenda. I was interested to hear from organisations that worked in a deliberate way to include women, as well as organisations that might not necessarily have seen the WPS Agenda as something they aspire to utilise in their own work. Due to the purposeful recruitment strategy, the initial focus was on women's organisations in order to find key stakeholders to interview. Then, at a later stage as part of the snowball sampling, the focus was on a slightly broader group of organisations, although it should be noted that the combination of these two sampling methods meant that all organisations and people interviewed had some prior knowledge of the WPS Agenda.

Secondly, this research relied on the snowball sampling technique, which is a useful method to employ with a variety of research populations (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Snowball sampling refers to the process whereby gatekeepers or research participants refer people to the researcher, meaning that when one participant is interviewed, he/she can give the researcher

the name of another person to interview, who then in turns names another research participant, and so on. Through this process, the group of research participants grows like a rolling snowball. Snowball sampling is often used when a researcher is trying to access hidden or hard to reach populations or where the researcher expects to encounter difficulties in creating a representative sample (Valdez & Kaplan, 1999). The central limitation of snowball sampling, which is also known as 'convenience sampling', is representation, and so it cannot be considered random or representative. Due to the nature of this research, these issues were offset because I was in any case going to be interviewing a very small and specific group of people who had some knowledge of the WPS Agenda. The snowball sampling technique was also going to be complemented by the purposeful recruitment of interview participants.

Snowball sampling was a crucial sampling method for this research as it allowed me to reach people through recommendations and referrals. This was especially important in South Africa because I was an outsider without previous contacts at the time the fieldwork was conducted, and South Africa did not yet have a NAP or a presence on websites which would have given any inclination as to which organisations were working on the Agenda. The challenges I faced during the data collection process will be further discussed in section 3.3.

Purposeful and snowball sampling allowed access to several civil society group members, but it proved hard to recruit participants from the other groups. I attribute this difficulty to several different factors. Firstly, what became apparent, specifically in South Africa, from the interviews with the civil society organisations there, was that at the time there were not that many stakeholders at the governmental level working on the WPS Agenda. The process for developing a NAP in South Africa was a long one: while it began in 2009, the actual NAP was only launched in 2020 (South African NAP 2020-2025, 2020). This might in part explain why it was hard to reach research participants as, at the time when research was being carried out in 2018, there were not many activities happening with regards to the WPS Agenda as outlined by the NAP (ibid.). It was also a volatile time in Spring 2018, as the political situation in South

Africa was going through a change following the election of the new president, and this also meant that government departments were undergoing changes and new appointments. The political priorities were different than they had been before, and this will be further reflected in the following chapters. Similarly in Palestine, there were few ministries that had dedicated people working on the Agenda. Again, the data would indicate that much of the lobbying for the implementation of the Agenda arises from the civil society level, and this will be discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5.

Secondly, people working on these issues in different government ministries are very much a 'hidden group'. Unless a direct name is provided by someone, it is fairly difficult to find any contact details for people working on the WPS Agenda in ministries, as their details are rarely listed on websites. Research participants at governmental level who were referred to me via snowball sampling were contacted both by email and phone; however, no answers were received. A small number of interviews were conducted with government officials, members of the international organisation community, and individual experts, but this number was smaller than originally planned.

The sampling techniques used in this study provided an interesting analysis point in themselves because they helped to highlight which people and organisations work on the WPS Agenda in Palestine and South Africa. As I will argue in the data analysis chapters (4 and 5), the sampling of participants demonstrated that the development and promotion of the WPS Agenda in these countries is in the hands of a small, elite group of civil society organisations. Hence this sort of sampling in this case also demonstrated who does and does not belong to this elite group, and whose members have the rights and ability to work on and develop a WPS Agenda that aims to improve women's position in these countries.

3.2.1.3 Pilot study

Interviews, whether they are structured or unstructured, are probably the most commonly used method of data collection. However, as King and Horrocks (2010) point out, this sort of familiarity with data collection brings its own risks as well. One pitfall might arise if an interview is too superficial and does not generate enough critical and in-depth data (ibid.). To mitigate these risks, my plan was to conduct an initial pilot study in South Africa in Spring 2018, as this would allow me, as the researcher, to better understand if the interview questions were appropriate and also to familiarise myself with the research context.

Conducting a pilot phase for the research might be useful in situations where the researcher is not familiar with the field she/he is about to investigate. Sampson (2004) talks about the usefulness of pilot research and how it can also assist the researcher in developing research instruments or better framing the research questions. Due to these considerations, this research included a pilot phase in South Africa.

Due to my positionality as an 'outsider' researcher conducting my fieldwork in an unfamiliar setting in South Africa, the fieldwork structure allowed space for reflection on the fieldwork settings in South Africa and time to conduct necessary changes and edits to my research design if needed prior to embarking on the second phase. As Sampson (2014) argues, there are advantages to conducting fieldwork in an unfamiliar setting, because it can be easier to be objective and distant, but, at the same time, this might mean that the researcher understands the conditions in the field in a superficial way.

During the pilot phase, I aimed to organise interviews with the research participants and familiarise myself with the conditions in the field. The interviews were set up with the participants I had already identified during the preliminary stages of planning my fieldwork. Further interviews were scheduled as the snowball sampling method unfolded. The pilot phase allowed me not only to familiarise myself with the research environment but also to reflect on

the research process and my positionality as a researcher. For an outsider conducting fieldwork in an unfamiliar environment, the process of reflexivity is especially important, and collecting the data in two stages allowed me to reflect on the research process and make any necessary changes to the research design before starting the second phase of the data collection. This was important for my research because, as this chapter has noted, the pilot phase was in fact the only fieldwork I conducted in South Africa due to the difficulty of accessing research participants. I encountered issues in recruiting research participants in South Africa because, even though several organisations were contacted, they were either unwilling to participate or did not reply at all. Therefore the sample size in South Africa remained small.

Although the pilot phase was the only fieldwork conducted in South Africa, it informed the research and fieldwork conducted in Palestine. In particular, the findings from South Africa indicated interesting possibilities with regards to concepts of security and intersectionality which were further examined within the context of Palestine. The pilot phase demonstrated that the initial draft questions were fit for purpose and did not need modifications. However, these interviews also showed that the question in which participants were asked to reflect on the intersectionality element of the WPS Agenda usually required further explanation or prompting in order for the interviewees to consider different identities including not only race but also class, location, age, and so forth. These insights from the fieldwork phase in South Africa were used to inform the continuation of this research in Palestine. It is usual for academics to encounter challenges during fieldwork that prompt modification, but, at the same time and especially for PhD-level researchers, there is often unspoken pressure to make the fieldwork perfect (Mac Ginty et al., 2021). As Mac Ginty et al. (ibid., p. 1) point out, "there are multiple pressures, many of them unspoken, to engage in perfect fieldwork and produce perfect fieldwork results". As they write, these practical and ethical difficulties are not often discussed in journal articles, and often readers are given the impression that everything went well and no problems were encountered. However, conducting fieldwork in the real world is often messy

and things do go wrong (ibid., 2020). It is important to reflect on these things, including how our own positionality as researchers affects fieldwork. These issues will be discussed further in section 3.3.

3.2.1.4 Fieldwork

Fieldwork and data collection were planned for both research sites. As the researcher, I was combining research with full-time work and had to pay attention in the planning phase to the time constraints that this would cause as it was not going to be possible to spend extended periods of time in the field. Limited time and conflicting demands on it represent some of the many challenges that researchers experience when they are planning their fieldwork (Mac Ginty et al., 2020) There is often pressure to carry out fieldwork when conducting research in international relations and, although it definitely has advantages, Routley and Wright (2020, p. 87) "seek to problematize what the pressure to do fieldwork does" and argue that one's ability to conduct fieldwork is affected by gender, race, class, sexuality, health, and ability.

To mitigate the risks that limited time posed in relation to this study, fieldwork was planned in two different phases, and site visits were supplemented by interviews conducted via Skype/Zoom. Interviews via Zoom/Skype also became a necessity later on in the research phase because of COVID-19 travel restrictions.

1) Fieldtrip to South Africa, February to April 2018

As detailed in the previous section, the fieldtrip to South Africa in 2018 was intended to form the pilot phase of a larger study to be conducted in South Africa later that year. However, through both the purposeful and snowball sampling processes used to recruit research participants in South Africa, it became evident that there were several obstacles in place when it came to recruiting participants for this study, as will be discussed in the next sections.

2) Fieldtrip to the West Bank, February to March 2020

The fieldtrip to the West Bank was conducted over a period of three weeks between February and March 2020. As was discussed earlier, the aim in recruiting research participants was to conduct the fieldwork in two phases, the second phase of which was planned for April 2020. However, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent travel restrictions, the second fieldtrip did not take place and the remaining interviews were conducted over Skype/Zoom.

3.2.1.4.1 Research site and data collection - South Africa

This section will expand on the fieldwork in South Africa by explaining in more detail the composition of the interview groups, what type of civil society organisations were interviewed, and where in South Africa interviews took place.

For this research, interviews were conducted with employees of four civil society organisations located in South Africa and two individual experts. The civil society organisations that were contacted had been identified through referral mechanisms (snowball methodology) and purposeful sampling, which involved general desk research into organisations working on women's issues in South Africa. The snowball method of sampling produced many referrals for other potential participants; however, even though these participants were contacted via email and phone, they either did not reply or declined to participate in the study (at least one follow-up phone call and email was made to each of these organisations). In section 3.3.2, I outline some of the reasons why I think it was challenging to recruit research participants. The majority of the interviews were conducted in person, and two interviews were conducted via Skype.

Some of the organisations interviewed were members of the working group which was made up of NGOs working on the implementation of the WPS Agenda in South Africa. This study is not intended to offer a full account of all NGOs working on women's issues/gender equality

in South Africa but rather to discuss perceptions about the WPS agenda and its implementation in South Africa among the organisations that are working closely on the implementation of the Agenda. It should also be noted that I interviewed individuals from different organisations, and their views might not represent the views of these organisations as a whole. Using snowball method meant that interviews were stopped when the saturation point was reached and people kept referring to the same organisations/people that I had already contacted or interviewed. The majority of the organisations/individual experts were located in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Due to the small sample size, organisations that were located outside of these cities will not be specified to protect their anonymity.

3.2.1.4.2 Research site and data collection – Palestine

This section will expand on the composition of the interview groups, what type of civil society organisations and individuals were interviewed, and where in Palestine they were based. Data collection in Palestine was conducted in different phases. The main fieldwork trip took place in February 2020. An additional trip to the West Bank was planned for later in spring 2020; however, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the rest of the research participants were invited to take part in Skype/WhatsApp video interviews. The civil society organisations that were contacted had been identified via referral (snowball methodology) and through general desk research on organisations working on women's issues in Palestine.

In Palestine, I worked with a Palestinian research assistant, and this helped to ensure a more inclusive way of contacting different civil society organisations. She contacted the research participants initially, which ensured they were able to correspondent in Arabic if necessary. However, after the initial discussion with the research participants, the majority of the participants were happy to conduct the interviews in English. Two interviews were conducted in Arabic with the help of a translator. The research assistant made an introductory phone call to talk to the participants and briefly described my research. If the research participants were

happy, they were asked to provide their email address, to which I sent the participant information sheet that included the full details of my PhD research.

The aim of the data collection process was to interview a diverse set of organisations and people from the different areas within the occupied Palestinian territory. I also contacted Arab women's organisations in Israel that were working with Palestinian women. Due to the Israeli occupation, circumstances can differ widely depending on where an organisation is located. Therefore, one of the core aims was to reach out to organisations in different areas, including those Palestinian organisations working within Israel. The majority of the well-known and established women's organisations working in the Palestinian context are based in Ramallah. However, many of them also have field operations/field offices around the West Bank and Gaza. These organisations also had people working in several different cities such as Gaza city, Jenin, Hebron, Tulkarem, Halhul, Nablus, Jericho, and Bethlehem. Out of the civil society interviews, nine interviews were conducted in person in the organisations' offices. One interview was conducted over Skype. In two interviews, two people who shared the responsibilities of 1325 programming within their organisation participated in the interview. Five interviews were conducted with organisations based in Ramallah, two in East Jerusalem, and two in Bethlehem. The rest of the locations are not specified due to small sample size and to protect the anonymity of these participants.

I was not able to reach and interview civil society organisations from Gaza or Area C of the West Bank, although one of the individual experts interviewed was located in Gaza. However, as mentioned above, the organisations I interviewed worked nationally and had field offices in Area C and/or Gaza. During the interviews, I asked them to reflect in their answers on the situation more broadly around the West Bank and Gaza to ensure I was able to develop a comprehensive picture around the occupied territory. Nevertheless, the data analysis in this thesis takes into account the issue, discussed further in Chapter 6, that, when an organisation

based in Ramallah talks about women in Gaza, certain problematic power dynamics are brought into play.

The individual experts interviewed had been actively involved in the development of the NAP in Palestine in some capacity. Three of the interviews with the individual experts were conducted via Teams/Zoom due to the location of the research participants. Although the sample size of these expert interviews is small, all of the interviewees have been part of the development of the NAP for Palestine and therefore I considered it important to include their views in the analysis as well.

In order to protect the identities and names of the people and organisations I talked to, only broad descriptions of the areas they work in are included. Due to the small data sample, I will not specify the number of organisations in relation to their work or the membership of the High National Committee, as otherwise one would be able to identify the organisations. However, for the purpose of analysing the data, it is important to recognise that some of the organisations I interviewed are part of the Higher National Committee for the Implementation of Resolution 1325.

The majority of the organisations interviewed identified themselves as women's organisations, and many of them had a feminist belief system at the heart of their operations. A few of the organisations operated more broadly to promote democracy and peacebuilding in the Palestinian context but had specific programmes that were addressing the issues women face in their everyday lives, such as women's sexual and reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence and women's participation in political decision-making. The way they address these issues is through policy dialogues, advocacy, training, and capacity-building. People interviewed for this research ranged from heads of the organisations to programme coordinators. A large number of organisations identified themselves as politically independent, and non-governmental. However, it should be recognised that interviews were also conducted

with civil society organisations that had political affiliations with the major political parties in Palestine. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5 as the political affiliation of the organisations should be taken into consideration when discussing who implements the WPS Agenda and how in Palestine.

3.3. Data collection challenges and research limitations

Every research project will have its own challenges and limitations, and it is an important part of the research process to recognise these beforehand. I had identified two key challenges for my research: firstly my positionality as the researcher, which I argue was directly linked to the second challenge of recruiting research participants (specifically in South Africa). Secondly, there were logistical, political, and environmental challenges that were encountered during the research, which will be discussed further in the sections that follow.

3.3.1 Reflecting on the positionality of the researcher

It is important to reflect on one's positionality as a researcher whilst conducting fieldwork in different environments and, as in this case, in divided societies. As Mac Ginty et al. (2020, p. 3) argue, "what we are able to do in the field does not only depend upon who we are, and who we know, but how others sees us, and what they think we might be able to offer in return". Elements of our identity, such as gender, nationality, skin colour, and age, can have unanticipated consequences for our research because these factors have an impact on how others will treat us, both negatively and positively (ibid., 2020).

Due to my ethnicity as a white European and my nationality as a Finn, I was an outsider researcher both in South Africa and Palestine. This inevitably had an effect on the fieldwork, and it served both as a challenge and an opportunity. My positionality as a researcher affected the interviews I conducted and the recruitment of research participants and this is also reflected in my data analysis. Working as an outsider is not necessarily a negative issue, as sometimes being an outsider in a divided society can work to one's advantage. South Africa and Palestine

are both interesting countries to work in as a researcher because of the intersectionality of the population in both countries and the multiple identities I myself hold as a researcher. I believe the usual debate about 'insider vs outsider' will not provide a sufficient framework for this context, because careful attention should be paid to the intersectional identities of both the researcher and research participants as well. It should be noted also that, although in both places I was an outsider researcher, I had significantly more experience of conducting research in Palestine and hence already had existing networks in place in the West Bank, which I think had an effect on the fieldwork, and this will be discussed further later. First, I will look into the debate about 'insider vs outsider' issues and also explore some of the advantages and disadvantages of conducting research as an outsider.

Approaching the research problem and participants as an outsider offers several advantages. For example, because the researcher is an outsider and hence has no insider information on the topic, it puts the research participant into an expert position, which could be argued to be an empowering experience (Berger, 2015). If the study focuses on marginalised or disadvantaged groups, this is particularly important. It should also be stated that, if the researcher is unfamiliar with the specific setting or the field they are going to, they may approach the topic from a fresh or new point of view which may lead to fresh discoveries. Conversely, an insider's position and familiarity with the research topic might risk blurring boundaries or lead to the researcher projecting their own biases onto the topic and research participants (Drake, 2010). Furthermore, if the researcher is, for example, a member of the same community as the participants, their status as an 'insider' means there can be a danger of research participants withholding certain information which they assume the researcher will already know (Berger, 2015).

However, being an outsider also produces a range other issues which might either complicate the research and data collection processes or affect them directly. For example, if a researcher is going into an unfamiliar situation/setting, he/she might not fully comprehend what it is like to be in certain situation when they have no personal experience (Berger, 2015). The other

challenge which Berger (ibid.) highlights, is the conceptualisation of research questions in a way that ensures they are relevant to the participants' experience. When a researcher embarks on fieldwork in a setting which is unfamiliar, there might also be issues with identifying the more subtle expressions of themes, as each culture has its own language and associations (Berger, 2015). Some of the challenges I experienced as an outsider researcher in South Africa were specifically related to the difficulty involved in recruiting research participants.

The importance of reflexivity is especially critical when studying 'others' (Berger, 2015). Berger (ibid.) suggests three measures in order to maintain the necessary balance between a researcher's own experience and that of the research participants, and these measures involve the use of a log, repeated review, and seeking peer consultation. Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman (2016, p.378) discuss the positionality of a researcher when multiple identities are involved, and they suggest that a researcher should ask, "why and how did people talk to me?", to help them think about their own positionality. This process will be described in the next section in terms of the 'layers of access' which I suggest had an effect on why people decided to talk to me and participate in the research.

A lot of research is conducted in international settings every day. In these situations, the research participants and researchers often come from different countries and language groups and have different cultural norms. It has become almost the 'norm' to conduct research in a different setting from your own background, and therefore it is even more crucial to recognise the effects it might have when the culture within which research is conducted and the cultural origins of the researcher can affect the data collection process.

In addition to the classical debate about the status of 'insiders vs outsiders', Maxwell et al. (2016) suggest that the subject of intersectionality should also be extended beyond research participants to consider how intersectional identities influence the conduct of qualitative research, especially in international settings. The different identities of the researcher can affect

the conduct of qualitative interviews, as some research environments are more welcoming of certain identities than others (Maxwell et al., 2016). As Maxwell et al (ibid.) have pointed out, the researcher's multiple identities can affect not only what is being communicated, but how it is communicated and interpreted as well. A researcher's different social identities, stemming from factors such as sexuality, nationality, and gender, each carry different implications and rarely operate in isolation from each other (Maxwell et al., 2016). Maxwell et al. (2016) suggest in their research that an intersectional approach may better capture the 'in-between' and nuanced experiences of researchers than the usual 'insider vs outsider' approach. For example, in this case, even though I was a PhD student from a British university, I am Finnish and therefore English is not my native language, a factor I shared in common with many research participants. This fact often seemed to put the interviewees at ease, especially in Palestine, if they were, for example, apologetic about their English language skills at the beginning of an interview. I also think my positionality as a Finn did have an impact in some cases as Finland has been active in addressing gender equality issues, so many interviewees were actually very familiar with Finland's policies in relation to the WPS Agenda. These connections often created more camaraderie between myself and the interviewee than would have otherwise been the case.

In order to generate unbiased data, researchers are aiming to look at issues objectively, as far as possible. However, in reality, it is almost impossible to act completely objectively when our multiple identities are part of who we are and will inevitably affect how we conduct our research. Maxwell et al. (ibid.) suggest that being self-aware is the most important step a researcher can take into account when considering the impact of identity-related research biases. It is important for researchers to recognise their positionality and to self-reference and examine before, during, and after the data collection phase.

This process of reflexivity is "commonly viewed as the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and

explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome" (Berger, 2015, p. 220). Reflexivity takes into account exactly what Maxwell et al. (2016) were highlighting, and so reaffirms the importance of self-appraisal when conducting and collecting data. One of the goals of reflexivity is to monitor and therefore enhance the research and the credibility of the findings, ensuring that the researcher's own values, beliefs, biases, and knowledge are accounted for (Berger, 2015). Reflexivity is important in feminist research and methodologies, as Enloe (2016) has written, "being reflexive makes us more accountable, keeps us engaged and makes our work more reliable" (p.259). During fieldwork, I aimed continuously to reflect on how my positionality affected the different elements of the research. Reflecting on my research journey became especially important when comparing the different fieldwork experiences in Palestine and South Africa.

Next, I will focus on discussing how my gender, ethnicity and the research topic itself had an effect on the fieldwork. All research participants whom I interviewed, expect one, identified themselves as women. Therefore the data of this thesis on WPS Agenda was given by women to a woman. I would argue that this made the interpersonal interactions between myself and the research participants slightly easier as gender was the common denominator between myself and the research participants, especially taking into account the research topic that was focused on women's rights and participation. One research participants for example told in the beginning of the interview how she was always happy to be interviewed by women researchers because she wants them "to grow and to be in an important position" (Civil society, 2, Palestine). This indicates that she was particularly happy to participate to the research because I was a female researcher. However, I would argue that although I was a woman, interviewing woman participants and therefore these interpersonal connection might have been slightly easier, I would claim that whiteness and Western-ness was more salient issue than gender during the fieldwork. I was the only Westerner in the room, coming from a European country and university and therefore I would argue that this had more effect on the fieldwork than my

gender. As will be reflected in the next section, in South Africa I was an outsider and being also a Westerner and white, this might have had an effect how I was perceived by the participants, especially considering South Africa's history of apartheid and the racial divide the country is still experiencing.

All the participants interviewed for this study had a good knowledge of the WPS Agenda and a majority of the participants were experts in working with the Agenda, or had a role which meant they were responsible for coordinating WPS Agenda related programmes. Due to the familiarity with the topic, I believe that the participants felt confident and comfortable talking to me as they were considered as "experts" of the topic. However, as outlined in the Chapter 1, limited research has been conducted on the WPS Agenda and its implementation in these two countries. Therefore this research also enabled the research participants to voice their opinions and thoughts on a matter they had not necessarily been interviewed before on. This is especially poignant in the case of South Africa. Previous research in this topic has focused heavily on South Africa's role in peacekeeping and the WPS Agenda and the voices of the civil society have often gone unrepresented in this field. In both countries, policy elites already have opportunities to get their voices heard, therefore it was especially important to reach out to the civil society whom work with a broad range of people to understand if the WPS Agenda can be a useful framework to improve women's security. As will be discussed next, based on my previous experience of conducting research in Palestine, I would claim that in Palestine people are generally fairly willing to speak to international researchers as they would consider it their duty to speak out about the Palestinian situation and the occupation. However, most importantly this kind of research has not been conducted in either places before so bringing the voices of unrepresented people to contribute to this research is major empirical contribution of this thesis.

The fieldwork for this research was conducted in South Africa and Palestine, and, as Stewart-Withers et al. (2014) state, fieldwork in such contexts, involving development agendas and

marginalised people, can produce a variety of ethical issues for consideration, especially in relation to the power relationship between the researcher and researched. Other issues such as knowledge generation, exploitation, and ownership must also be taken into consideration. Therefore the reflexive process which was discussed in depth earlier in this chapter is a crucial practice if the researcher is to be aware of these issues in relation to positionality and power relationships.

3.3.2. Challenges on recruiting research participants

As has been noted, gaining access to research participants is more crucial in qualitative than quantitative studies, as in qualitative research the contact the researcher is seeking with the participants is a lot closer and more intense than it would be in quantitative research (Flick, 2014). As a researcher who was approaching this topic from an 'outsider' point of view, I expected to encounter some challenges in recruiting research participants. I did not have an extensive pre-existing network in South Africa but rather have created and continued to develop these networks throughout my research.

During the fieldwork, I analysed and reflected on my positionality and how this affected my ability to recruit research participants. Recruitment was an easier process in the context of Palestine, where I had more experience of the context as well as networks in the area due to the research I had done in Palestine before. Figure 3.1 demonstrates the issues involved in accessing research participants in these two countries, and it also shows how the political context affected how I was able to access participants in these different contexts.

Figure 3.1. Layers of access

The first layer of access reflects my positionality and knowledge of the context in each situation. In South Africa, as discussed previously in this chapter, my positionality was that of an outsider researcher who had no existing networks in the country and lacked the significant amount of knowledge about context which comes from spending extended period of times in a country beforehand. As noted in the previous section, the position of an outsider has both positive and negative effects. However, from the perspective of trying to recruit research participants, it meant that my knowledge of where to start the process or how to contact people was very limited.

In the case of Palestine, the first layer of access was very different. I had been involved in a research project with marginalised communities in South Hebron Hills in Palestine which had been ongoing since 2017, and this meant that, by 2020 when the fieldwork in Palestine for this study took place, I had already gained significant knowledge of relevant political and societal contexts. I understood the culture and how to conduct research in Palestine, and I had developed a network of connections there. I understood the inner workings of the society and knew how

to travel safely within the West Bank. Over the years, I had made several trips to the West Bank and spent time in different parts of the area. Although I cannot call myself an insider, I had formed connections and links to the area which made the research experience very different to the one in South Africa.

The second layer describes the people who facilitated the research and who can be understood as gatekeepers. In Palestine, I had several people, colleagues and friends, who were able to introduce me to people working on relevant issues. This enabled me to begin conducting snowball sampling. I also hired a research assistant who spoke English and Arabic and was able to contact potential research participants over the phone to organise interviews. Most participants were happy to talk to me in English, but I think this first step of having a research assistant contact them in Arabic helped to facilitate these interviews, as it lowered the threshold of difficulty involved in participation when interviewees were able to have that initial contact in their mother tongue. It was also very important that the participants had a choice about whether to conduct their interviews in English or Arabic as I wanted to ensure inclusivity.

With the help of these connections, I was able to start both snowball sampling and purposeful recruitment quickly, which meant that I was able to carry out several interviews during the fairly limited time I had in the West Bank. In South Africa, as mentioned before, where I had no pre-existing networks, and while I tried to build connections with the help of colleagues, I did not have the same type of support and assistance from gatekeepers as in Palestine.

The last layer is what I have called the 'societal' level. With this term, I refer to the sense of duty people have to speak out because of their political situations. Based on my experience of conducting research in Palestine over the past three years, I would conclude that in Palestine people are fairly willing to speak to international researchers as there is, broadly speaking, a society-wide level of commitment to speaking out. Many people consider themselves to have a duty to speak out about the Palestinian situation and the occupation with the hope that their

words will then be communicated more widely in the international arena as well. Due to the decades-long occupation and activism in the country, I generally found that everyone working in the civil society sector was very happy to talk to me, and people were not afraid to express their opinions about politics, the occupation, or the state of the country. I found that my interview participants in Palestine were very open with me, sometimes telling me about their difficult pasts. For example, one of the participants explained that they had been arrested several times over the years by the Israeli security forces (Palestine civil society, 2). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, participants considered these sorts of activities, including talking about the situation to an outsider like myself, as acts of *sumud*, resistance (to the occupation). It could be argued that this would distract the discussion from the topic in hand; however, in this case, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, the findings indicated how closely linked the WPS Agenda was to the occupation in the eyes of the interviewees. This act of everyday resistance or *sumud* is particular to the Palestinian context and widely researched. In South Africa, the majority of the research participants (South Africa civil society 1, 4, 5) who belonged to civil society organisations mentioned politics and a lack of political willingness as reasons why interest in the WPS Agenda in South Africa has been so low, and there was not the same kind of need to talk about the domestic situation internationally as there was in Palestine. Therefore it could be argued that there was no need or motivation for people to take the time to participate in this research.

3.3.3. Environmental challenges

Lastly, as this research has been conducted part-time over six years, it is natural that environmental challenges have arisen, such as people issues and geo-political and historical changes in context, which have been beyond my control. Firstly, in Spring 2018 when fieldwork in South Africa was conducted, Cyril Ramaphosa had just been elected as the president of South Africa. This meant that there was movement and restructuring within the government, which meant that the WPS Agenda was not necessarily a political priority at the

time. This also meant that people had been moving between roles, and hence it was difficult to find interviewees at government level for this research.

Secondly, my research was affected, as was that of all current researchers, by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 and the travel restrictions that impacted this research meant that I was unable to conduct my second planned fieldtrip to Palestine in Spring 2020. Therefore, I conducted more interviews remotely using digital technologies. Because of my previous knowledge of conducting research in Palestine and having developed knowledge of the in-country context, I did not see this as problematic for my research. However, because of the impact COVID-19 had for everyone, I did not manage to reach some participants I had been referred to in April-May 2020, and this might be because they were furloughed or for other reasons related to the pandemic.

3.3.4. Limitations of the research

This research, like the majority of research that is conducted, has its limitations. It is important to identify, acknowledge, and mitigate these limitations at an early stage in order to set the findings within a realistic framework. It is also important to bear these limitations in mind to avoid overgeneralising the conclusions of the study.

A significant limitation for this research was the sample size for the data, specifically from South Africa, and this also affected the generalisability of the findings from South Africa. One of the difficulties of qualitative research is that it can be difficult to determine at the outset how many people should be interviewed to reach theoretical saturation (Bell et al., 2019). Criteria for when theoretical saturation has been achieved, or whether or not it can be achieved, are rarely described in detail, and this makes an adequate sample size even harder to determine (Guest et al. 2006). The sample size is also dependent on the purpose and topic of the research. As Bell et al. (2019) argue, rather than rely on other people's rules about sample size, it is important to justify any sample size yourself.

As has been discussed earlier in this section, I encountered issues in recruiting research participants in South Africa. This was because, even though I contacted several organisations, they were either unwilling to participate or did not reply at all, and so the number of interviews conducted in South Africa is relatively small. However, what became apparent both in Palestine and South Africa, especially when using snowball sampling, was that the group of civil society organisations working actively on the WPS Agenda in these countries is also relatively small in number. In South Africa, the civil society steering group working on WPS consisted of 20 organisations in 2018, while in Palestine 30 organisations are part of the Higher National Committee. These facts represent an interesting reflection of the status of the WPS Agenda in these countries, and this matter will be discussed in depth in the following data analysis chapters. Therefore, although the sample size for this study is relatively small, I argue that this represents a finding in itself because it reflects the actual reality of interest in the WPS Agenda in these countries, which is something to consider more broadly when discussing the overall results.

Lastly, it is important to consider who was interviewed for this research and whose voices they were representing. As I discussed at the beginning of this section, I do not try to claim that the voices represented in this thesis are those of people speaking on behalf of all women in Palestine and South Africa. As argued and theorised in this thesis, it is important to acknowledge who we are talking about when discussing the local people. For this study, I interviewed members of civil society organisations and also individual experts who were employees of international organisations working in these places, representatives of government bodies, and independent activists and consultants. I mainly interviewed people who were located in the main, urban cities in South Africa and Palestine. For example, the majority of the civil society organisations interviewed were already involved actively in the development of the WPS Agenda at national level and would be represented by what I would call elite women activists who were engaged, able to participate in politics, fluent English

speakers, and networked with the international community and its organisations. Therefore, one could argue that they were already actively involved in this work and probably represented different views than those of a woman from a small, grassroots organisation located in the rural areas of the West Bank, who would have minimal opportunities to actively engage in the same work.

Although I would argue it is important to acknowledge whose voices are represented in this thesis and why, what the snowball sampling revealed is that the circles of people involved in implementing the WPS Agenda are very small, as I kept being referred back to the same organisations and same people after a while. What this told me was that the development of the work around National Action Plans in these countries is in the hands of a small group of actively involved and engaged elite organisations. This is an important research finding which needs to be taken into account when reflecting on, analysing, and generalising about the data from this thesis.

3.4. Data analysis

Qualitative research, as has been discussed in this chapter, generates rich data that seeks to understand the human experience and the social world. Qualitative data has been described by Miles (1979, p.590) as an "attractive nuisance" as, although the richness of the data is exactly what qualitative researchers are looking for, it can also be difficult to find and analyse data that is so rich. Qualitative data analysis is defined by Flick (2014, p. 370) as the interpretation of material that aims to "make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning making in the material and what is represented in it". The aim of the analysis is to be able to make statements from the data that can be generalised by comparing the various materials that were collected (ibid.). This also highlights the importance of the several different levels of data analysis involved in qualitative research. The researcher is not only looking at the explicit meanings of the data but also aiming to analyse its more indirect meanings through

interpretation. Through interpretation, the researcher is linking the study data with the research aims, as well as theoretical concepts and literature (Bell et al., 2010), although this does mean that every researcher interprets data differently, based on their own views and positionalities and what they consider to be important for the research (ibid.).

In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data, which is one of the most common approaches to analysing qualitative data (Bell et al., 2010). All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the research participants in order to capture their views and opinions accurately. In addition to this, I made field notes during the data collection process in order to practise reflexivity in my research process.

Thematic analysis does not rely on a set of distinctive techniques that have to be used in order to analyse the data (Bell et al., 2010). However, Ryan and Bernard (2003) recommend that when the researcher is searching for themes they should, for example, look for issues/topics that recur over and over again, as well as similarities and differences in how the interviewees might discuss different topics, or missing data, which is understood in terms of what the interviewees might not have discussed in their answers. A theme is a category that is identified through the analysis of data and which relates to the research focus and aims. It also builds on the codes identified from the interviews and provides the researcher with the basis for understanding the theory (Bell et al., 2010).

I listened to the interviews several times to familiarise myself with the data and started coding them as soon as possible, an approach which is consistent with the suggestions of Bell et al. (2010), and this sharpened my understanding of the data. I then went through the interviews again and started making observations and remarks about the data, identifying key words, and initiating the coding process. The coding process followed what Bell et al. (ibid.) describe as a multi-level process. The first-ordered coding was based on extracting and summarising what the interviewee had said and coding this. The second stage consisted of grouping the codes and

consolidating them by making linkages between the different codes. This was a manual process. As there were only 20 interviews, I felt that I was able to familiarise myself better with the data by coding them manually. Lastly, I developed themes based on the analysis and interpretation of these codes that related to the research aims. Themes were developed by looking at recurring themes from the interviews but also by analysing any similarities or differences the interviewees had in relation to the topic.

3.5. Ethical considerations

This research project was conducted according to the ethical guidelines of Coventry University. A full ethical application outlining the research, its aims and objectives, research methods, and safety and ethical considerations with regards to participant interviews had been prepared and reviewed by the ethics committee of the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University.

The basic principle of research ethics requires that "researchers avoid harming participants involved in the process by respecting and taking into account their needs and interests" (Flick, 2014, p. 50). Ryen (2011) writes about informed consent that one should always have, for example, when interviewing or recording an interview with a research participant. This means that the research participants should have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be dutifully informed about the type of research they are involved in, and the right to withdraw from the research at any point in the process before the research results are published (ibid).

To abide by the standards of the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations' own code of conduct, all research participants were asked for informed consent. In South Africa, this was achieved through use of an informed consent form which was approved by the ethics committee. I also sent out information packs about the research to the participants beforehand so that they were able to familiarise themselves with the research and make an informed

decision about taking part in it. It is important to note that in Palestine, informed consent was secured verbally from the participants. Due to my travels through various checkpoints in the West Bank, it was deemed unsafe and risky to carry physical informed consent forms with me, as my belongings could have been searched. Therefore, all participants were asked for verbal consent, which was recorded, and all recordings were backed up on a Coventry University, password-protected laptop in a coded folder to protect the identities of interview participants should I have been asked to open my laptop at one of the checkpoints.

In this research, the identities of the research participants and organisations were anonymised. As the aim was to conduct interviews with people at three different levels, from international experts to government/ministry civil servants and civil society actors, it was important for the purposes of the research to identify to which level the participants belonged. Therefore, measures were taken to ensure that the participants' names/identities remained anonymised and cannot be identified; however, for the purposes of the research, the thesis will mention the sectors to which they belonged. There is a possibility that, even though identifying elements have been removed from the data, people who are well aware of the topic in South African and Palestinian contexts might recognise these actors. This risk was emphasised to participants at the beginning of each interview.

3.5.1 Safety

Even though the main emphasis of research ethics is generally on accounting for the safety of the research participants, it is also important to consider the safety of the researcher, especially when collecting data in the field. Robson (2011) highlights that paying attention to researchers' safety is especially important when the focus is on sensitive topics or the project involves working in difficult environments. However, researcher safety is not only limited to these situations; one must also pay special attention to researcher safety if the plan is to work alone or to conduct participant interviews alone.

A detailed plan for my own safety (risk analysis) during the fieldwork phase was written and submitted as part of the ethics application. The health and safety assessments included consideration for lone working, interviewing the participants, travelling within the destination countries, and accommodation. I was working alone while I was engaged in fieldwork and therefore carefully considered the best ways to mitigate any of the risks that can arise from lone working. All interviews were scheduled to take part in office environments or in public spaces. None of the interviews were conducted at the participant's home or a location where I was left alone with the participant. This protected both the researcher and the research participant. In cases where the NGO/CSO offices in South Africa were located in townships or other potentially unsafe areas, I asked to meet participants in an area of the town that was deemed safe and public. I shared my interview schedule (including details of places and times where the interviews would happen) with my supervisory team.

Coventry University's travel safety measures had changed by the time I was ready to travel to collect data in Palestine. Before this, I had participated in a two-day HEAT training course, targeted at researchers who conduct research in conflict settings. The course went through different protocols and strategies with regards to scenarios that might arise during fieldwork. Coventry University also has a contract with a travel safety company, and I had their app on my mobile phone, which allowed me to check in every day and send an SOS signal if needed. Whilst in Palestine, I did daily check-ins via the app, and I also shared my interview schedule with a local colleague.

The security situation in the West Bank can change rapidly, and Israel can close checkpoints and limit access to anyone coming from the West Bank within a matter of few minutes. Therefore it was important to have back-up plans should this happen whilst, for example, I was in Ramallah. For security reasons, I stayed in Jerusalem for the duration of my fieldwork in a guesthouse where I had stayed before and knew that the security was good. In addition to complying with all security protocols set out by Coventry University, I had also logged my trip

with the Finnish Foreign Ministry's travel registry, and this meant that I received regular updates directly to my phone if there were any security concerns relevant to the area. As a Finnish citizen, I would also have been able to contact the Finnish embassy and receive assistance if the security situation had deteriorated.

One potential and significant security risk, both for myself and my research participants in Palestine, was data protection whilst in the field. To mitigate the risk of being searched in checkpoints and the airport, I ensured that all of the data I had collected was in electronic and coded form, so that it would have been protected even if the security forces had asked me to open my laptop. All consents were audio recorded, and so there would have been no paper trace of them if my belongings had been searched at the checkpoints. Before going through each checkpoint (and I mainly used the Qalandia checkpoint from Ramallah to Jerusalem), I emptied my audio recorder of all interview data and stored it on my laptop. To protect my Palestinian contacts, I also coded any local phone numbers in my phone under different names and deleted WhatsApp conversations between my research assistant and myself before passing through checkpoints and airport security. My social media profiles are also under a different name than my passport.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the research design, data collection, and analysis phases of this thesis, which is in line with the social constructivist research. The methodology was designed to answer the research aim of this thesis. Qualitative research was chosen due to the gender focus of this project, which aims to give voice to women in these two countries and to hear their thoughts and feelings on the subject of this thesis. Qualitative research supports the goals of emancipatory feminism and allows research into the views and feelings of women without trying to control them through the researcher's intentions, which often happens in quantitative research.

This chapter has outlined the data collection methods used in this thesis and it has also discussed why the two contexts of South Africa and Palestine were chosen and the challenges encountered when conducting this research. The next two chapters will discuss this study's findings about how the WPS Agenda is understood in these countries and whether or not it can be an effective framework for improving the conditions and security of women in Palestine and South Africa.

4. Data analysis: South Africa

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will contextualise the ability of the WPS Agenda to enhance women's security in post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter will start by briefly discussing the historical context in South Africa before moving to analyse the research findings thematically. The connection between these findings and theory on the WPS Agenda will be explored in Chapter 6. The chapter will examine the challenges for women's security in South Africa, before moving on to discuss the conceptual understanding of the WPS Agenda. It will look at how the civil society organisations have engaged with the Agenda so far and examine intersectionality within the WPS Agenda to understand if the different stakeholders see it as a useful framework to improve women's security in South Africa.. Lastly, this chapter will show how the South African study informed the research in Palestine.

My approach has analysed and presented the findings from six, in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with civil society organisation members and individual experts on the WPS Agenda within the South African context. I will present and analyse the data thematically, as discussed in Chapter 3, to provide data that helps to fulfil the overall aim of this thesis, which is to understand whether and to what extent the UN WPS Agenda is a transformational and suitable framework for improving women's security in South Africa. This chapter will directly contribute to the aim and objectives of this thesis, which were presented in Chapter 1.

4.2 The history of women's mobilisation and activism in South Africa

Women in South Africa have always been politically active and have been mobilised throughout the history of the country (Hassim, 2006). Lemon (2001) notes that while the South African women's movement has a long history of struggle against apartheid, the struggle against national liberation has overshadowed the struggle against sexual inequalities. The opposition's politics in the 1980s were dominated by the need to mobilise women for the

national liberation struggle rather than to ensure women's liberation (Hassim, 1991). To understand the current context of women's security and rights in South Africa, it is important to understand the background and history of women's activism and mobilisation in the country. The current high incidence of gender-based violence in the country is clearly linked to the patriarchal system, violence, and oppression of the apartheid period (Britton, 2006). This point, which it is important to acknowledge, is linked to the discussion started in Chapter 1 about the gendered impact of conflict and to the insight that insecurity and violence appear on a continuum.

Violence against women has become one of the most visible insecurities women in South Africa face, and this violence is rooted in colonial history and the apartheid period when rape was "used as a weapon to ensure control, obedience and interracial conformity" (Britton, 2006, p. 145). As Britton (ibid.) argues, these patterns of violence continued in the apartheid system which ensured white minority rule, and the vision of racial superiority established first by colonial settlers and later maintained by apartheid era rulers also shaped gender hierarchies and ideologies. White women of European descent were privileged in most aspects of life in South Africa, and this stripped other women, and especially Black women, of any of the power they had held culturally or otherwise (ibid.). As Albertyn (2011) writes, Black women were subjected by law to racial and sexual boundaries during apartheid. Gender ideologies during the colonial and apartheid eras celebrated the roles of women as mothers of the nation and disregarded the identities of those African women who were cleaners and carers for members of white society (Britton, 2006).

Men were primarily the leaders of the anti-apartheid movement, although women were participants in and leaders of some of the major opposition groups, such as the ANC, the United Democratic Front (UDF), and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Due to women's active role in the struggle against apartheid, they risked torture, imprisonment, exile, and harassment (Britton, 2006). It is important to note that women, and especially Black women,

were subjected to rape by the South African Defence Forces, although violence was not solely targeted at women. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings highlighted that men were also often victims of sexual violation, including electric shocks to their genitals as a means of torture (Britton, 2006).

The question as to whether or how South Africa's transition to democracy could fulfil hopes for greater political inclusion, especially on the part of women, is a critical one. Waylen (2007) argues that in most cases transitions from non-democratic regimes to democratic ones have been disappointing in gender terms: in only a few cases have there been positive gender outcomes in their immediate aftermath. However, South Africa is one of these exceptions where women's descriptive and substantive representation was improved during the aftermath of the transition. This was achieved through the adoption of a new constitution which had gender equality as an integral principle, the establishment of women's machineries at state level, and relatively high numbers of women represented in the government and parliament (ibid.). In May 1990, the National Executive Committee of the ANC issued a "Statement on the Emancipation of Women in South Africa" which resulted from lobbying by activists within the ANC. The statement recognised that women "must take the lead in creating a non-sexist South Africa" (Hassim, 1991, p. 66).

South Africa was also one of the cases in which organised women's movements, such as the Women's National Coalition (WNC), had input into the negotiations that established a new political system as part of the transition to democracy (Waylen, 2007). The establishment of the WNC is seen as an important symbol for South Africa's women's movement as it was the first nationally organised form of women's movement (Lemon, 2001). The Women's National Coalition drafted a set of formal demands which were presented to the multiparty negotiations, and the WNC consequently won an agreement on a larger package which secured mechanisms and institutions to advance gender equality (Hassim & Gouws, 1998). For many of the

participants, the Coalition represented "a peak in the expression of women's collective power" (ibid., p. 53).

In 1998, only a few years after the end of the apartheid regime, South Africa was ranked 7th in the world in terms of women's governmental representation, with women making up 25% of national-level representatives. South Africa was third in the world when ranked among other developing countries (Borer, 2009). The country's independent Constitutional Court has handed down judgements in support of women's rights and the parliament passed laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender and race, although questions remained as to how and whether elements of the government's actions designed to promote a human rights culture were actually being translated into South African culture in the form of beliefs and attitudes (ibid.).

On International Human Rights Day in 1996, President Nelson Mandela signed the final draft of the South African Constitution which granted women in South Africa a comprehensive set of rights. The Constitution states that:

> The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996)

The Constitution also called for the establishment of the Commission for Gender Equality, which had a vision to create a society that would be free from any kind of gender oppression and all forms of inequality (Commission for Gender Equality, n.d.). Seidman (2001, p. 220) argues that it "is an explicitly feminist institution" which is designed to monitor the state, ensuring that in the post-apartheid period, South Africa would not accidentally reinforce the gender inequalities that already ran through the rainbow nation. However, the commission has been criticised because of its actions, its poor organisation, funding, financial scandals, and

limited capacity (Butler, 2009). The South African shadow report on CEDAW (2011) emphasised the commission's importance but also said that it must be strengthened in order to be effective in monitoring the implementation of CEDAW.

South Africa signed and ratified CEDAW in 1995 (South Africa shadow report on the implementation of CEDAW, 2011). The country has made great strides in improving gender equality since then, as is evidenced, for example, in the rise in the number of women holding political office. However, notwithstanding the progress made and despite South Africa's progressive legislation, even after 20 years massive inequalities still exist. From the 1990s onwards, it became clear that South Africa's legislative and policy gains have had a more limited impact on the everyday lives of women than had been expected (Saferworld, 2016).

The next section will move on to discuss issues that are pertinent in relation to women's security and equality in South Africa.

4.3. The United Nations WPS Agenda – reflections from civil society organisations and individual experts from South Africa

This section discusses the main themes that arose from the interviews and data analysis. One of the main research findings from the interviews is that, in its current state, the WPS Agenda does not fit easily within the context of South Africa, although it was agreed by the research participants that it should be relevant for South Africans and it is very much needed (Civil society 4, 5 and Individual expert 3, 6). The interviewees (Civil society 2, 4 and Individual expert 6) highlighted that, although South Africa is not traditionally defined as a post-conflict country and therefore might not neatly fit into the scope of the WPS Agenda, South Africa can be understood to be in a conflict with itself given the levels of violence women experience in their everyday lives in forms including sexual and gender-based violence (see, for example, UNFPA, 2014). The violence inherited from the apartheid era still affects women's lives today. The findings also indicate how important it is to take intersectionality into account and to

consider not only those intersectional identities that are usually considered, such as class, race, and ethnicity, but also geographical location, especially the rural/urban divide, as this has a major impact on women's lives in South Africa. The urban/rural division is used to examine specifically how the location either in urban environments, such as capital/administrative cities, or in rural countryside, specifically locations which are often located geographically far away from large cities, have an effect on how women are able to participate to political processes.

The chapter will start by discussing the challenges that affect women's security and gender equality as outlined by the research participants before moving on to discuss some of the issues around the conceptual understanding of the WPS Agenda.

4.3.1 Challenges for women's security and gender equality in South Africa

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020, which measures women's economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, ranked South Africa 17th in the world, and in second place after Rwanda among all African countries.[12] Today, South Africa has a strong legislative and enabling policy environment which is aligned with international conventions that aim to protect and empower women and girls, but the country is still facing serious issues with regards to gender equality and women's security. To understand if the WPS Agenda can be useful to the South African context and if research participants considered it to be a useful framework for improving women's security, the interviewees were asked to reflect on what they considered to be the challenges for women's security and gender equality more broadly in South Africa.

The complexity of the situation for women's security and the multiple challenges that face gender equality in South Africa were evident from the interviews with the research participants. Although the interviewees emphasised that South Africa has a progressive constitution, as well as policies that in principle should guarantee equal treatment under the law, the reality on the

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[12] The report does not include data for Palestine.

ground is that women deal with multiple inequalities in their everyday lives (Civil society 1, 2, 4 and Individual expert 3, 6).

The South African Constitution guarantees the rights of all people and promotes freedom from discrimination, for example on the basis of sex, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or race (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, as Mubangizi (2015, p. 158) points out, the Constitution also allows rights to culture and traditional cultural practices, and some of these cultural practices violate "human rights norms including the sexual and reproductive rights of women". As Albertyn (2011) writes, in the post-apartheid period South Africa has adopted an extensive number of legal frameworks to address the inequalities of the apartheid period. These include for example, South Africa's Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, the Employment Equity Act of 1998, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act of 2007, and the Domestic Violence Act of 1998 (ibid.). However, as South Africa's shadow report to CEDAW (2011, p. 7) notes, although a host of laws and policies prohibit discrimination and promote equality, "there is a systematic failure to effectively translate these laws into meaningful change in women's lives". Closely linked to this issue is the lack of implementation of the National Gender Machinery, which in the South African context means the "integrated package of structures located in various levels of state, civil society and within statutory bodies" (South African NAP, 2020, p. 33). Despite all of these indicators, the situation is deeply unequal, as one of the individual experts interviewed highlighted: "Despite the history and constitution, it's a deeply patriarchal society…. It spans the social, racial and economic spheres" (Individual expert, 3).

Many of the interviewees (Civil society 4, Individual expert 3, 6) noted especially that it does not matter how progressive South Africa's constitution and policies are on paper if they are not actually implemented:

> South Africa has a fantastic legislative and policy framework…. One of the biggest

failings to women's security and equality is the implementation. Implementation is just a huge problem. (Individual expert, 3)

One of the interviewees pointed out the difficulty arising from the fact that there is not enough political space to implement the different frameworks in South Africa. She argued that "The leadership should ensure that all the frameworks are implemented adequately. And to provide a platform in order to implement such frameworks" (Individual expert, 6).

Women's political participation in South Africa is close to gender parity, meaning that the numbers of men and women in parliamentary and governmental positions are almost equal. Amongst senior ministerial positions, 48% are held by women and, according to the Global Gender Gap report in 2020, 46% of parliamentarians were women. The political empowerment sub-index of the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap report (2020) placed South Africa in 10th position and as the second country in Africa (after Rwanda). Neverthless, the interviewees mentioned the lack of political willingness or resources to follow up on the implementation of different processes (Civil society 2, 4 and Individual expert 6).

However, this does not mean that women in the parliament will necessarily advocate for women's rights as one of the interviewees mentioned (Civil society, 1). Goezt (1998) argues that there is a difference between an increase in the number of women representatives in the parliament and representation of women's interests in decision-making at government level – one does not necessarily lead to the other. Not all women politicians can be assumed to care about gender equality, but, as Goezt (ibid.) points out, there can also be resistance at an institutional level to gender equality within government apparatuses. Importantly, Goezt (ibid.) also contests the assumption that women share certain interests just because of their gender, and she points out that women's interests, just like those of men, vary depending on their own life circumstances and identities, which are shaped by ethnicity, race, and class, for example.

In the South African case, it appears – based on the views of the interviewees in this study –

that the number of women members of parliament does not necessarily correlate with them wanting to advance gender equality for South African women. It should be noted, however, that the interviewees' own positionalities, as well as those of the women MPs and possible clashes among them, might affect their views on how effective the actions of their own representatives are. For example, a Black South African living in an informal settlement might think that an African woman MP living in an urban area might not adequately represent her views.

One of the major issues affecting women's security in South Africa, is gender-based violence. As many of the research participants (Civil society 1, 4, 5, Individual expert 6) I interviewed commented, for a country that is supposedly not in a conflict situation, rates of gender-based violence are extremely high. Violence inherited from apartheid is still strongly present in today's South Africa, which is dominated by deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes towards women and their role in the society, and this makes gender-based violence almost an accepted social phenomenon (CSVR, 2016). According to CEDAW's 2021 report, rates of domestic violence, including femicide, have become alarmingly high in South Africa. One of the interviewees mentioned: "You cannot say women's security is a localised problem, violence is very high [in South Africa]" (Civil society, 4).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the series of lockdowns it prompted have also increased rates of reported GBV incidents. According to Amnesty International's (2021) report, by mid-June in 2020, four months after the national lockdown was instated, 21 women and children has been killed by intimate partners. The pandemic and measures to tackle it, such as national lockdowns, have clearly made women's position in South African society even more precarious.

Sexual and gender-based violence has become endemic, and the South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa, has declared it to be a national crisis (South African NAP, 2020). South Africa is

a patriarchal society where, from an early age, children learn about binarised roles for men and women. Sons are sent to schools to become men, and girls, specifically in rural areas, undergo virginity testing and get married at a young age, never completing their education. As the CEDAW report notes, "in a patriarchal society where women are considered the property of their husbands, domestic violence is socially accepted" (CEDAW, 2021, p. 5).

One of the interviewees referred to the situation as a war on women's bodies. She recognised that there are similar situations around the world but argued that in South Africa it is even worse (Civil society, 5). Especially in rural areas and more informal settlements, violence against women is an accepted social phenomenon (OHCHR, 2016). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) data showed that more than half of the women murdered in South Africa in 2009 (58%) were killed by their intimate partner, and, overall, between 19-33% of women had experienced physical partner violence during their lifetime (UNFPA, 2014). However, a note of caution is in order. The issue with the data on gender-based violence is its unreliability, as these figures should be interpreted in the light of extreme under-reporting of this crime (Butler, 2009). Statistics South Africa has no dedicated survey on domestic violence, and so statistics on gender-based violence incidents rely mainly on administrative data collected by the police, data received from the Thuthuzela Care Centres,[13] and some academic research. The police statistics capture only reported cases, so all unreported cases are missing (CEDAW, 2021). This is an even more prevalent issue in the informal settlements where most cases go unreported, as rape is considered a family matter in these communities and the police are not able to intervene because of issues including difficulties in entering the settlements and lack of staff (OHCHR, 2016).

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[13] Thuthuzela Care Centres are aiming to provide 'one-stop facilities' with a view to reducing secondary victimisation and building cases for prosecution. The care centres are a critical part of South Africa's anti-rape strategy (South African Government, n.d.).

Even though South Africa has ratified several international treaties that address GBV, such as CEDAW and has implemented national legislation in forms such as the Domestic Violence Act (No.116 of 1998) and the Criminal Law on Sexual Offences and Related Matters, the lack of implementation of these laws still acts as a hindrance to gender equality in South Africa (CSVR, 2016). Despite South Africa's expenditure on resourcing institutions which aim to eliminate gender-based violence and promote gender equality overall, these steps have not had any effect on gender-based violent activities (Sideris, 2007). The most recent CEDAW report (2021) noted that South Africa has failed to comply with its obligations to prosecute and punish cases of domestic violence and to provide systematic and effective capacity for law enforcement and judiciary bodies.

The National Council on Gender-Based Violence was established in 2012 to monitor the progress of government programmes towards eliminating GBV and also to focus on the implementation of these programmes. In April 2020, South Africa adopted the National Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Strategic Plan (NSP), a joint, multi-sectoral, strategic effort by the government and civil society to eradicate gender-based violence in South Africa. The NSP recognises violence against all women and takes into account intersectionality, recognising the different intersecting identities that arise from location, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age, and how they affect women differently (Republic of South Africa, 2020). This is especially important, as the OHCHR report (2016) highlights, for example, how women and children with disabilities are at heightened risk of experiencing sexual or gender-based violence because of their low status in communities, their dependence on others, and their lack of knowledge about their rights. Lesbian women and other sexual minorities are also at risk of extreme forms of violence. Although discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited in the Constitution, they are at risk of extreme violence purportedly carried out in the name of "correcting" their bodies. This type of violence includes "so-called 'corrective rape'" which is often accompanied by murder (OHCHR, 2016, p. 9).

Women in South Africa still encounter a multitude of issues that negatively affect their lives, and the complexity of the issues that affect women's lives in South Africa was reflected in the interview data. Whereas the data findings in Palestine show the interviewees almost exclusively in agreement that the two biggest challenges for Palestinian women are the occupation and patriarchy, in South Africa the issues reported seemed to be much more varied. The South African Human Rights Commission (2017) report has noted, how there are still several challenges that affect gender equality in the country, such as harmful patriarchal attitudes towards women, structural gender divisions of unpaid and paid labour, poverty, high levels of gender-based violence, and serious violations of the rights to life and dignity of the LQBTQ+ community in South Africa. In addition to these issues, women also bear the primary responsibility for household maintenance and rural physical labour. Gender equality is also hindered by the numerous traditions, cultures, and religions which systematise and legitimise the exploitation of women (Butler, 2009), including, for example, female genital mutilation, virginity testing, polygamy, and child marriages (Mubangizi, 2015). For instance, the OHCHR report from 2016 highlights concern about the persistence of these traditional cultural practices, which include *ukuthwala* and witchcraft (OHCHR, 2016). [14] The OHCHR report (2016) highlights that people still face stigma based on their perceived or real sexual and gender orientation and gender identity and can be subject to physical and sexual harassment and discrimination. In the light of this, what is needed is a critical debate which, as Lemon suggested in 2001, should focus on the complex interrelationships of race, class, and gender in South Africa.

Therefore, when asked to name three challenges for gender equality and women's security in South Africa, the majority of the interviewees gave different answers. This was an interesting finding in itself, as I think it highlights how many challenges women in South Africa face in

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[14] Marriage by abduction.

their everyday lives.

In addition to the challenges discussed above, the interviewees also mentioned issues such as economic inequality (Civil society 2, Individual expert 6), the judiciary system (Civil society 4), education (Individual expert 6), and unemployment (Civil society 5) as challenges for gender equality. The unhealed trauma from the legacy of apartheid and colonialism was also mentioned as one of the core issues for which women in South Africa carry the consequences (Civil society 2). The violence that South Africa has inherited from the apartheid era still affects the society today and can be seen in the persistence of patriarchal norms and attitudes towards women (Individual expert 3). South Africa is still divided by race, class, employment status, location, and gender, and, in some cases, inequality is only deepening (Butler, 2009). This is especially the case in intra-group inequality among the Coloured and African racial groups and Black women in particular continue to suffer from higher unemployment rates and lower incomes (Albertyn, 2011). However, it is the rural women who remain in the poorest category (ibid). As the report by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (OHCHR, 2016, p. 3) notes, "South Africa is still a young democracy deeply influenced by its historical violent past characterised by race, class and gender divides".

Economic inequality is linked to many of the broader issues mentioned earlier, such as unemployment, but it is also reinforced by cultural norms and practices that shape who has control over household finances, for example:

> You see that there are those women from different religious backgrounds whom are educated and employed but don't have access to their own bank accounts. The money goes straight to the husband. (Individual expert, 6)

Unemployment is a significant issue for South African women, and it is closely linked with other inequality issues women are facing, as one of the interviewees argued emphatically: "Unemployment. We cannot talk about equality or empowerment without unemployment"

(Civil society, 5). In practice, matters of employment and unemployment also demonstrate that the principles of equality in the South African constitution are not being implemented. The constitution is supposed to protect people from discrimination, but, in practice, women are less likely to access occupations that have higher pay, such as managerial positions, and are also less likely to be paid the same salary as men for performing the same job (Espi et al., 2019). For example, the OHCHR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights report (2018) notes South Africa's persistent gender pay gap which stands at 27%. Of course, unfortunately, the gender pay gap is a global problem and not just an issue that South African women face, but, as an interviewee from one of the civil society organisations highlighted, it still represents a key area of inequality: "Our constitution say that there should not be discrimination. But if you look at organisations, men still earn more than women even if they do the same work" (Civil society, 4).

At the time when the interviews were conducted in 2018, South Africa did not have a National Action Plan for the WPS Agenda. Due to the range of different issues that South African women face, one of the interviewees reflected on the challenges involved in agreeing on the core issues or challenges on which the NAP should focus (Individual expert 3). The South African National Action Plan 2020-2025 (2020) does include actions to address some of the issues highlighted by this study's interviewees. For example, section 1.1.4 of the NAP aims to operationalise WPS strategies and policies and specifically looks to "coordinate and implement laws, policies and strategies to address GBV through the GBV council in line with the National Strategic Plan on GBV and femicide" (South Africa NAP, 2020, pp. 65-66). However, as the interviewees (Individual expert 3 & 6) have highlighted, it is not enough to have these laws, policies, and strategies in place unless there is sufficient budget and political willingness to actually implement them. The second pillar of the South African NAP (2020), which focuses on prevention, sets out to create a peaceful and safe society in South Africa and includes actions which aim to tackle some of these challenges. For example, the second pillar includes an

objective on cultivating peace, and this includes activities such as creating a peace charter that would be included in school curricula. It also includes an objective on instituting a safer society for women and gender non-conforming persons. The indicators for this objective include the eradication of harmful cultural practices, as well as more accountable policing. One of the very concrete action points the NAP includes refers to the creation of safer public transport for women and it is to be delivered through the introduction of a number of safety measures at taxi ranks, bus stops, and train stations, and within trains (South Africa NAP, 2020). Although the NAP includes some practical action points that commit to creating a safer and more inclusive society for women, it remains to be seen how these will be implemented in practice. A large number of objectives focus on creating more strategies and policies, when it was clear from the interviewees (for example Individual expert 3 & 6) that, as discussed earlier, what is needed is practical implementation of existing strategies at local level in order to address key challenges. One problematic issue, which will be discussed further later on, is that the South African NAP is not attached to any dedicated budget, and this makes it challenging to implement any of the activities it outlines (South African NAP, 2020). However, as was discussed in in Chapter 2 and the following chapters, the lack of budget for implementation is a common problem across the NAPs.

This section has highlighted what the research participants understood to be the main challenges for gender equality in South Africa. Although the data highlighted that there were a multitude of different issues that the participants saw as challenges, depending on their views and the organisations they worked for, there were a few issues that were repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees. First was the clear disconnection between existing laws and their practical implementation. The interviewees highlighted (for example Individual expert 3 & 6) that South Africa has excellent laws and policy frameworks which have been developed in the post-apartheid period to guarantee equality for everyone in the eyes of the law, but in practice they are not implemented and there is a lack of political willingness to follow through on these

issues. This has clear practical implications for women in South Africa and possibly for the implementation of the WPS Agenda. If there are no clear measures or processes in place to ensure that these laws and policies are implemented effectively, it does not matter how progressive they are. This also means that the laws, if not properly implemented, are not able to protect women or change reality on the ground. Boesten (2017) for example has highlighted the necessity of including clear indicators what is considered SGBV in conflict in his critique against the continuum of violence theory. However, for example, even though South Africa has adopted a National Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Strategic Plan (NSP) to tackle gender-based violence, if these policy frameworks, no matter how clearly they include indicators for SGBV, are not properly implemented this means that perpetrators of these crimes are still prosecuted. In fact, the existence of unimplemented laws can further increase women's insecurity if, for example, women rely on the law and report gender-based violence (GBV) cases, which can lead to repercussions for them. For example, as will be discussed later, one interviewee mentioned that often even if a woman goes to the police to report rape, the police often come up with an excuse to justify why it happened (Civil society, 4).

A second major challenge for South African women revolves around the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence cases in the country (South Africa's response to the request by Special Rapporteur on violence against women, 2020), which have only been exacerbated due to COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns (Amnesty International, 2021). The numbers are likely to be even higher, as cases often go unreported as was discussed in previous chapter. The interviewees directly compared South Africa's high rates of GBV, femicide, and murder to those of countries in conflict and suggested that South Africa is at war with itself (Civil society 4, Individual expert 6). This has implications for the discussion about whether or not the WPS Agenda is a relevant framework for South Africans, an issue which will be discussed later on in this chapter.

The interviewees also drew attention to economic inequality, the judiciary system, education,

and unemployment, among other issues, as additional challenges for South African women. The next section of this chapter will move on to discuss the conceptual understanding of the WPS Agenda and its relevance to the South African context.

4.3.2 Conceptual understanding of the WPS Agenda

To examine how the WPS Agenda is understood by civil society organisations and individual experts, the research participants were asked to reflect on their understanding of what the WPS Agenda actually aims to achieve. It should be noted that, although the WPS Agenda consists of ten different resolutions, the majority of the interviewees focused in their discussions on talking about Resolution 1325 (Civil society 1, 5 and Individual expert 3, 6). Although the Agenda has since broadened, it seems that Resolution 1325 is still the most commonly used and known resolution. As discussed in Chapter 3, although the interviewees were asked specifically about the Resolution 1325 and the WPS Agenda, it was emphasised in the beginning of the interview and especially in the first question, that I was interested to hear their views and notions around women, peace and security and how they understand it. However, a note of caution is in order that because Resolution 1325 was specified in the questions, this might have affected the participant's views and responses and why they focused so strongly on talking only about Resolution 1325 in their responses.

The focus on Resolution 1325 is unsurprising considering that this is a historic resolution and the one that initiated a focus on women, peace and security at a global level. A majority of the interviewees had an understanding of what the WPS Agenda consists of, as they were working on it directly in some capacity (Civil society 2, 4 and Individual expert 3, 6). One of the interviewees commented that "It's about inclusion of women within the decision-making structures in the situations of conflict" (Individual expert, 6), and interestingly, she was not the only one who reflected on it being an Agenda that is meant for countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. This implies that, in some cases, actors who make use of the Agenda are

still taking it at its headline level and recognising it for its broad applicability rather than picking through all the resolutions that form the Agenda. The notion that the WPS Agenda is actually relevant to the South African context when the country is not considered to be in conflict will be discussed further later in this chapter.

A few of the interviewees also noted that the WPS Agenda is still mainly being discussed at NGO level (Civil society 2, Individual expert 6). One of the interviewees reflected on this and mentioned that in their organisation they have aimed to break Resolution 1325 down into smaller parts in order to take it to community level and make it easier to understand (Civil society 5). However, even though there was a common understanding among the interviewees that the original aim of Resolution 1325 was to encourage more women into decision-making positions and to become part of peace processes, the participants thought that there was still a lack of understanding as to whom and where the WPS Agenda is relevant, even though Resolution 1325 was already 18 years old at the time when the fieldwork was being conducted:

> We always assume that everyone understand what Resolution 1325 is talking about…. We are now busy coming up with a national strategy for 1325. There is really a lack of understanding on that. There is still a lot of education and sensitisation that needs to happen. (Individual expert, 6)

A significant finding from the data was drawn from the interviewees' conceptual understanding of the WPS Agenda and specifically the country contexts to which it is applicable. As discussed in Chapter 2, the foundational WPS resolution, Resolution 1325, was designed to be implemented in conflict and post-conflict countries (see for example, McLeod, 2011; Ní Aoláin, 2016). The language, as well as the practical implementation of the resolution in the years that followed, seemed to firmly categorise it as an agenda that can be applied only to certain situations and contexts (Aroussi, 2017; Ní Aoláin, 2016). The interviewees emphasised that there seem to be disparities in terms of the different situations to which the WPS Agenda

is deemed to be applicable. When asked if they thought the Agenda was applicable to them, the research participants raised the issue that South Africa is often not considered to be a conflict or post-conflict country (Civil society 2, 4, 5 and Individual expert 3, 6). The majority of them argued that, although South Africa is not a country in armed conflict or even a post-conflict country in terms of the definition discussed in Chapter 2, it is a country where women experience systematic violence in their everyday lives (Civil society 4, 5, Individual expert 6). They argued that the WPS Agenda is therefore relevant to the South African context and that it would be a mistake to consider it as a resolution which would only be relevant in wartime (Individual expert, 6). As one of the participants said, South Africa's situation and legacy as a post-apartheid country is effectively a post-conflict situation (Civil society, 2).

Understanding the WPS Agenda as only being relevant to post-conflict countries makes the Agenda itself a conceptually flawed framework, as has been argued in the previous chapters. The Agenda's definition of security and peace is too narrow and the focus on implementation only in conflict and post-conflict societies hinders its transformational potential. As is discussed throughout this thesis, the violence and insecurity women experience, in this case in South Africa, should be understood through the framework of feminist security (see, for example, Tickner, 1992; Sjoberg, 2010). Violence and insecurity mean much more than just armed conflict as one interviewee observed:

> It is a mistake, especially for us as South Africans, that it is just in the involvement during war situations, or where there is conflict [referring to 1325] …. Yes, we are not at war. Even though we are at war. We are in war within our private space. It is almost civil war within our own spaces. Because of high-level femicide. High level of gender-based violence happening. (Individual expert, 6)

Here the interviewee compared the situation in South Africa directly to situations in countries in conflict because high levels of femicide and gender-based violence are also often the indirect

and direct consequences of conflict. Even though South Africa has not experienced conflict per se, it has experienced, and is still experiencing, forms of repression and structural violence in the post-apartheid era, and women, as has been shown, are on the receiving end. As the interviewees pointed out, the insecurities women face due to having to deal with, among other issues, harassment, domestic violence, and sexual violence is serious (Civil society 1, 2, 4 and Individual expert 6). Furthermore, incidents of gender-based violence are often not reported (Civil society 1).

The violence and insecurities women in South Africa experience should be understood to occur on a continuum (Cockburn, 2004). The way that gender-based violence incidents are talked about can also be an issue. For example, many sexual violence incidents are not defined as crimes under the law and therefore official statistics have to rely on recording sexual violence cases which are classified as crimes (Kelly, 1988). It is important to understand that Kelly's continuum of sexual violence can be seen in the context of South Africa as well. South African women experience different forms of violence from sexual harassment (which is not recorded as crime) to other incidents, and all of them contribute to women's insecurity. As one interviewee noted, incidents, such as domestic violence, cause greater insecurity for women than, for example, war (Civil society, 2). This is a poignant point by the participant, and resonates with the argument made by Gray (2019) how dividing SGBV in conflict to either categories of war or not war, does not recognise how war is also enacted in private spaces. As Gray (ibid, p. 190) points out "private is, itself, a space in which war (also) takes place". This also further advances Enloe's (1990) theorising of security, whom highlighted that security is not matter of just high-level global politics, but also arises in the ordinary incidents of everyday life.

Examining violence against women in South Africa through Cockburn's (2004) model of a continuum of violence, suggests that individual's lives are not necessarily affected by armed conflict or rape as a weapon of war but through forms of everyday violence that occur regularly

and everywhere, both in public and private spaces. This was discussed by one of the interviewees:

> When you look at the statistics of South Africa, women who are being killed as compared to the countries at war, South Africa is very high in numbers, than those countries. But we are still saying that we are not in war. (Individual expert, 6)

The research participants interviewed for this study thought that the Agenda was very relevant to South Africa but criticised its distinctions between conflict-affected and non-conflict-affected countries (Civil society 4, 5, Individual expert 6). The interviewees' statements, cited above, demonstrate that the division of countries along the lines of 'conflict vs post-conflict' countries is arbitrary. The absence of war does not always mean that peace prevails and as one interviewee mentioned: "it is relevant [WPS Agenda] because no country has achieved positive peace" (Civil society, 4). As one of the interviewees asked, how can one say that women are secure in South Africa when, for example, the murder and gender-based violence rates are extremely high (Individual expert 6)? These findings advances the notion of thinking security through feminist lens, where security should be defined in terms of elimination of physical, structural and ecological violence, where peace is defined more broadly than absence of war and to consider violence beyond the physical forms (Tickner, 1992).

However, a couple of the participants also did point out that the Agenda has expanded since the adoption of Resolution 1325 and is now broader in scope, which should be taken into consideration (Individual expert 3 and 6). One of the individual experts observed that the WPS Agenda now looks at security as a continuum:

> I think the WPS has broadened a lot and narrowed. It has broadened to include women's security as a whole. Not just in conflict situations but on the continuum. Before conflict, through conflict, and post-conflict situations. (Individual expert, 3)

As I noted earlier, it was interesting how many of the interviewees focused on discussing only

Resolution 1325. One research participant pointed out how problematic it was that the focus was still so much on the founding resolution rather than the whole Agenda because it makes it harder to understand the situations that the ten different resolutions really cover:

> I do not want to generalise, but most people confine themselves on what was the initial principles of 1325 when it was established in 2000. So, beyond that they do not see what the subsequent resolutions are talking about, sexual violence against women and children and those issues that are articulated under those provisions there. (Individual expert, 6)

South Africa has been experiencing, and is still experiencing, many economic, political, and social problems and their consequences that can be associated with a country in conflict. For example, women's access to health services is poor, women are subjected to continuous sexual violence and harassment, and they have poor access to justice as has been discussed throughout this chapter. What is evident from the data is that the flaw in the WPS Agenda, represented by its exclusive focus on conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, has hindered its progress in South Africa. According to many of the interviewees, especially those from civil society organisations, the government did not see it as a relevant Agenda because it did not consider South Africa to be a country in a state of war or conflict (Civil society 4, 5, Individual expert 6). This was the opinion at the time when I conducted the interviews in 2018, and it was also mentioned as an issue in the South African National Action Plan (2020). As one interviewee explained, the government did not consider South Africa to be a country at war, and was only looking at the WPS Agenda from a peacekeeping perspective (Individual expert, 6). It took many years for South Africa to develop its own National Action Plan, perhaps due partly to the hesitancy that arose around considering whether or not the Agenda was really relevant when South Africa is not a post-conflict country. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, this narrow understanding of the Agenda hinders its potential to be applied to other countries whom have similar context to South Africa – a country that is seemingly considered to be peaceful, but in

reality women face high levels of insecurity in their daily lives.

The process for developing the South African NAP originally started in 2009, and it was only in 2020, when South Africa served as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, that the NAP was adopted. South Africa's NAP is both external- and internal-facing, but it does link state security closely to human security. It recognises the need to focus on human security, especially as gender-based violence has become a national crisis, and it also notes the need to create a peaceful society both internally and externally. The NAP and its contents will be further discussed in section 4.3.5.

4.3.3 Engaging with the WPS Agenda at the level of civil society

The WPS Agenda was broadly seen by the civil society interviewees as a useful framework for enhancing women's security in South Africa (Civil society 2, 4, 5). Although there are several challenges involved in formally implementing the resolution through a more institutionalised National Action Plan, many of the civil society organisations at the time already adhered to and utilised the principles of the resolutions in their own work (Civil society 2, 4 and 5). This demonstrates the value of the resolutions at the civil society level, as all of the organisations interviewed work with marginalised communities in South Africa. As Shepherd (2021) has written, the way the WPS Agenda is shaped and retold across different contexts allows the various imaginings of what the Agenda is and could be. The civil society organisations do not necessarily need a NAP to shape the Agenda to fit within in their work. However, as will be discussed later on, implementing the WPS Agenda without a formalised NAP does have it difficulties.

The level of engagement with the resolution and its aims differed within the organisations. As discussed previously, due to differences in their aims and ethos, the activities they were involved in also varied. A few of the organisations were focused solely on gender issues, whereas the rest had a broader overall focus on peacebuilding, with specific programmes that

were aimed at women. For some of the organisations, the WPS Agenda and Resolution 1325 are merely things that they try to incorporate into their overall strategies, as one of the interviewees mentioned (Civil society 4). Many of the organisations had conducted some kind of training activity within the broad principles of the WPS Agenda. One respondent highlighted how important it was to organise these kind of training sessions and stressed significantly that one should not assume that women automatically know about gender issues just because they are women (Civil society 4)..

The organisations interviewed were largely based in urban locations, mainly Cape Town and Johannesburg.[15] Yet, although civil society organisations in South Africa are actively implementing the goals and aims of the Agenda, it remains a struggle to get through to rural and hard-to-reach communities, and this problem was reflected by one of the interviewees who highlighted how difficult it is to take African Union, UN, and local development goals to rural women as there have never been instruments available to enable this (Civil society, 2). This response highlights the difficulty of geographical location, specifically in relation to the urban/rural divide and how it affects women's opportunities to participate in political and economic life. It is a challenge to include women from these communities in WPS Agenda activities, and this highlights the geographical imbalance that affects who has the ability to impact and lobby for the WSP Agenda. Just the geography of a country the size of South Africa where distances are long, means that in practice it can be physically difficult to reach more rural communities but also without a proper budget to implement these activities, this can become an impossible task. This issue will be discussed further in section 4.3.6, which will highlight the fact that intersectionality should be taken into consideration when the implementation of the WPS Agenda is being discussed at a national level. It should also be noted that different organisations work differently and do not necessarily have the same aims

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[15] Due to small sample size, the specific locations of the remaining organisations will not be given as it would be easy to identify them on this basis.

or means to conduct their work, as one interviewee highlighted: "It is very different how NGOs deal in South Africa. They interview the local people but do not implement to the local level" (Civil society, 4).

This section has demonstrated that, although South Africa had not adopted or formalised a NAP for the implementation of the WPS Agenda by the time of the fieldwork in 2018, in practice, some of the country's civil society organisations were already working to implement the principles of the Agenda. This finding also contributes to the notion that formalised NAPs do not necessarily represent the only way to implement the Agenda. In practice, civil society organisations have been and are already doing similar work in line with the guiding principles of the WPS Agenda, even without a formal action plan. One could argue that civil society can be more effective in implementing the WPS Agenda than the government, as then the implementation happens from the bottom-up and grassroots perspective, which could be argued to be more sustainable model, as was highlighted by one of the interviewees (Civil society, 2). In some cases, civil society can have a better access than the government, as will be discussed in the next Chapter. Because of the political situation in Gaza, it was seen that civil society can implement the activities better than the government (Palestine, Individual expert 1). However, relying on civil society implementing the Agenda have its limitations, as one interviewee discussed, as according to her, implementing the Resolution 1325 needs to be part of a broader national strategy in order for it to be beneficial for the whole country (Individual expert, 6). Another interviewee discussed how the Resolution 1325 brings different levels of the society together (Civil society 7), therefore one could argue that a NAP that brings together the different levels of society from the local, to regional and national, would have the potential to be the most effective. This finding supports what has been argued by Jacevic (2019) how NAPs allow governments to collaborate together with civil society organisations in order to improve women's security in more local level. From sustainability perspective, I would argue that it is most beneficial to have a NAP that has the whole society involved. This ensures that the

division of work can be divided between the different stakeholders, and also have continuity and check and balances system between the different organisations and governmental bodies. For example, if the implementation would solely rely on civil society, this can be problematic as for example few of the interviewees (Civil society 4, Individual expert 3) highlighted how the space for civil society has shrunken and funding has diminished. This makes it harder for the civil society to implement WPS Agenda activities without the government support. Although a genuine commitment from the governments to implementing the WPS Agenda would also mean allocating a specific budget for the activities within the NAP, which admittedly has been a well-known challenge for implementation as discussed in Chapter 2. If the NAP would include a budget, it would mean that the for example the civil society organisations would have a real opportunity to work on these issues. Therefore even though the South African case has shown how civil society has implemented principles of the WPS Agenda outside of a formal NAP, as the following section will discuss, adopting a NAP would provide a formal framework for the civil societies to operate within.

4.3.4. The relevance of the WPS Agenda to the context of South Africa

As the first section of this chapter highlighted, there was clear dissatisfaction amongst the interview participants about the gaps that existed between policy development and their actual implementation or lack thereof (Civil society 1, 2, 4 and Individual expert 3, 6). Although the relevance of the WPS Agenda within the South African context was not really questioned by the interviewees, as has been shown, there was scepticism about whether another framework is really something that the country needs. These responses implied that there was dissatisfaction about the fact that previous policies and strategies had not been adequately implemented either: "Another framework is not what we need in South Africa…. We need to start implementing the frameworks we already have" (Civil society, 4).

According to the interviewees, the challenges facing implementation could be attributed to a

lack of accountability within ministries, and a lack of governmental and political willingness (Individual expert 6). The interviewees thought that gender issues were simply not considered to be on the priority list (Individual expert 3). In 2018 when the interviews were being conducted in South Africa, according to the accounts of research participants (Civil society 2, Individual expert 6) , there were also relatively few people working on the implementation of 1325 on the ministry and governmental side, although, according to the formal NAP document (2020), the National Steering Committee had been formed in 2017 which consisted of 11 key departments as well as civil society organisations (5 civil society organisations were listed as being part of this group).

The same issues arise in relation to the development of National Action Plans. Although, as True (2016) has observed, they do not represent an end in themselves, they do indicate a nation's commitment to addressing WPS issues and provide concrete targets linked to a country meeting its commitments. If a NAP becomes just another document that is not properly implemented and monitored, it becomes another empty political promise. Moreover, sometimes these NAPs are developed as a way for countries to look more progressive and to demonstrate their modern status in global politics (Aroussi, 2017). One of the individual experts used the following analogy: "the window dressing has been maintained…. the actual substantive gender equality agenda has fallen in a heap" (Individual expert, 3). Another interviewee alluded to the same issue by saying: "South Africa does not want to be left out, so we needed to do something" (Civil society, 4). Therefore, developing a NAP is by no means a catch-all solution. Even though a country has adopted one, this does not mean that it will necessarily be appropriately implemented or be useful for the women in that country. Of course, the South African National Action Plan was only adopted in 2020, and therefore conclusions about its actual implementation cannot yet be made.

Interviewees also discussed how often South Africa shows engagement at the international level in the realm of gender politics without taking actual concrete action to improve women's

security at the domestic level. It was inferred that the aim of this international visibility was to show other countries how committed to gender equality South Africa is:

> I think South Africa engages in all right levels, in regional and international bodies. They like to quote numbers…. to sort of prove how gender equitable South Africa is. How far we are compared to the rest of the continent. But I do not think they are any further in implementing the Maputo protocol than any other African country. They like to pay lip service. (Individual expert, 3)

However, even though there was general agreement that there has been a lack of implementation of South Africa's different policy documents, the majority of the participants still thought that the WPS Agenda was relevant to the South African context and that it should be implemented (Civil society 2, 4, 5 and Individual expert 6). Reflecting on the wider discussion about how to make it relevant to the South African context, it was emphasised that it really needs to be tailored to the situations and needs of South Africans. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that the Agenda would definitely need to be implemented but careful consideration should be given to how that could be achieved because South Africa has not overcome its issues around race (Civil society, 5). This feeds into the wider discussion on the localisation of NAP and how to make it relevant to specific needs and country contexts (George & Shepherd, 2016)

What came out strongly within the interviews was the willingness and eagerness of participants to implement the framework in South Africa. One interviewee suggested that it is relevant because it helps to justify their own work on gender (Civil society, 4). Another interviewee explained that the broad nature of the Agenda actually allows any country to fit within its broad terms:

> In theory yes. The WPS Agenda is broad enough to incorporate the South African context. It has a good global buy-in. The usefulness is the structure of it. I think South

Africa falls underneath the broader framework… but they need to step up to it. (Individual expert, 3)

It was emphasised, however, that it will be crucial to tailor the Agenda to the South African context and situation. This is when the conversation moves towards the development of the National Action Plan for South Africa.

4.3.5. A National Action Plan as a tool to implement the WPS Agenda

National Action Plans, as discussed in Chapter 2, represent one of the most common ways to implement the WPS Agenda, but not necessarily the only way. National Action Plans are deemed to be the primary way to implement the Agenda appropriately, but it could be questioned whether or not it is necessary to have another plan like this if the country already has existing policies, laws, and strategies that cover many of the relevant issues, although a NAP is often seen as a way to formalise the process and to make an official commitment to advancing women's security (Swaine, 2017). The majority of the civil society organisations interviewed (Civil society 2, 4, 5) have aimed to include the principles of the WPS framework within their work, regardless of whether or not a National Action Plan was in place, as was discussed in previous sections. Although the implementation of the NAP activities is considered to be the responsibility of government bodies, civil society often takes responsibility for implementing some of them. This is the case with the NAP South Africa has adopted, where civil society is listed in many objectives as the implementing partner (South African NAP, 2020). This is similar to Palestine, and part of a broader issue of civil society's role in the implementation process (Björkdahl & Mannergren Selimovic, 2019) which will be discussed in the next chapter. However, a majority of the participants agreed that having a formalised NAP would be useful for them, as long as it is suitable to the context of South Africa: "Government and civil society have to work together to come up with a tool that makes sense in a South African context" (Individual expert, 3).

There was general agreement that a National Action Plan is needed in South Africa as it would help civil society organisations as well as the government, guiding their planning around what more needs to be done to improve women's security and sharing lessons that have been learnt already. One participant suggested that:

> It is a useful tool, and it provides a good framework for South Africa's external role, for example peace operations and peace negotiations role. And also, for its domestic context, in terms levels of violence and women security more generally. They need to domesticate it [and not have it just as something that happens during peace operations]. (Individual expert, 3)

A NAP has the potential to formalise a process which is already happening at the civil society level, as was made evident in the interviews, and a good NAP would make this process more coherent according to some of the interviewees (Individual expert 3). South Africa's efforts and contributions towards mainstreaming gender within the military structures of the country are particularly notable (Hendricks, 2017; Alchin et al., 2018). South Africa has quota systems in place for the number of women in peacekeeping missions (Alchin et al, 2018) and this has been ongoing without a formalised WPS NAP in place Yet, as has been discussed, this reflects the idea that South Africa only sees the WPS Agenda as relevant to conflict situations and has therefore focused mostly on external-facing implementation and deploying women to peacekeeping missions. As one research participant observed:

> The only department at the moment who implements 1325 is defence. 1325 is about deploying women. They take it literally that it is about inclusion of women to war situations. They are not thinking beyond of that. (Individual expert, 6)

The implementation process for the WPS Agenda in South Africa was ongoing for years (South African NAP, 2020). Governments are the implementing bodies for the WPS Agenda, but one of the weaknesses is that there is no mechanism at the international level to ensure that a NAP

is really being implemented (Swaine, 2017). National governments can decide for themselves if implementing the Agenda is something they want to do as it is completely voluntary to do so. It was apparent from the interviews that the general opinion seems to be that the government does not see the implementation of the Agenda as a priority in South Africa (Civil society 4 and Individual expert 3, 6). For the past number of years, there have been ongoing consultations, both at inter-agency level and within different ministries, but also with civil society. The civil society organisations have been able to input their views to the government based on their own consultations which were held around the country, as was discussed by some of the interviewees (Civil society 2). However, being consulted about the implementation of another framework is not seen as helpful by civil society organisations. As a few of the interviewees discussed, another international framework is not what is needed because it does not translate into action at the grassroots level (Civil society 1, 4). One interviewee said that she had decided to remove herself from all the United Nations instruments because, at the end of the day, they do not mean anything to her (Civil society, 1).

There was generally some scepticism about whether a NAP focused on women, peace and security would actually bring any meaningful change for women in South Africa, or if it would be better to target resources directly to organisations, as one interviewee reflected: "I rather see real women getting funding rather than it being spent again on these different processes [referring to the development of a NAP]" (Individual expert, 3). Furthermore, it was emphasised by many of the participants that, if the government was to go ahead with developing a NAP, it needed to have proper mechanisms in place in order for it to be effective (Civil society 4, Individual expert 3, 6). The NAP would need to include a dedicated budget as well as appropriate monitoring and evaluating indicators to keep the different stakeholders accountable (ibid.)

The South African NAP 2020-2025 (2020) was formally adopted in 2020, during South Africa's time as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The NAP

is both internal- and external-facing, and it aims to operationalise the WPS Agenda within South Africa but also to implement agreed WPS frameworks at international and regional levels. The development process for the NAP was supported by the UN Women country office in South Africa. At the governmental level, a multi-departmental national task team was set up to coordinate the process, and this was led by the Department of Defence, the Department of Women, and the Department for International Relations and Cooperation (South African NAP, 2020). The National Steering Committee consisted of 11 key departments and 5 civil society organisations (ibid).

The South African National Action Plan states, as one of its core principles, that human security and state security are linked "meaning, there can never be human security without peaceful states, and there cannot be durable peace for states without the safety of their citizens" (South African NAP, 2020, p. 4). This statement aligns the definition of security closely to the principles of a feminist approach to security, which is multidimensional and means the reduction of all forms of violence, including structural, ecological, and physical (Tickner, 1992). The NAP is framed around the four pillars of Resolution 1325: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery, with each of the pillars containing seven priority areas attached to specified activities and key actors responsible for their implementation (South African NAP, 2020).

The NAP includes reference to several activities, all of which have been assigned a key actor, and these actors are often either government departments or civil society/private sector organisations (South Africa NAP, 2020). Most often responsibility falls to a combination of these actors, with civil society having an important role in the oversight of the NAP. The NAP includes a few different objectives through which it aims to ensure the effective participation of civil society in the implementation of the NAP, but it also gives civil society responsibility for having oversight of the WPS Agenda. The NAP outlines several different activities under each pillar, with international; national; and local, community-level focus. For example, with

regards to the NAP being external-facing, it details several activities that outline South Africa's role as an international actor, and these include activities such as deploying women in African Union, UN, and South African Development Community peace and security structures and appointing women as ambassadors and heads of delegations in South African missions (South African NAP, 2020). The NAP also outlines plans to increase the number of women and their representation in national peace and security structures and promises training programmes to equip women for deployment in peace missions, for example as peacekeepers (ibid).

At the national level, the plan identifies several nationwide activities, such as developing a media campaign to promote the South African NAP through national media, appointing women into senior positions in the government, establishing a National Peace Centre, and cultivating a culture of peace by developing a Peace Charter and asking all citizens to pledge to abide by the charter quarterly in addition to teaching it in schools. At a more local, community level, the NAP includes reference to several very detailed activities, which include providing educational campaigns related to family support and family planning, ensuring safe public transport for women, creating safe houses for women (including migrant women), and reviewing how the police force records violence against women at station level (South African NAP, 2020).

The South African National Action Plan has been ambitiously developed and includes in total 88 activities to be delivered over a 5-year period, with activities consisting of policy reviews at national and local level; training; baseline research; and service delivery at community level, as well as large nationwide campaigns and activities such as establishing the Peace Charter. All of these activities will have to be delivered without a dedicated budget from the government, because the economy of South Africa is "not doing well" (South Africa NAP, 2020, p. 85) and any additional funds will need to come from existing departmental budgets (ibid). Many of the NAP's activities, such as the implementation and review of existing policies, highlight the gap between existing laws and their actual implementation, and this issue was highlighted as a particular problem by the interviewees (Civil society 2,4, Individual expert

6). In many ways, the South African NAP is inspirational because it aims to address many of the issues discussed in this thesis, from tackling sexual violence and increasing the participation of women at different levels of government, to taking the needs of different women and gender non-conforming people into account by focusing on these needs intersectionally. However, at the same time, a lot of these activities have already been happening in South Africa for years and relevant laws and policies are already in place. A good example of this is the quota system to ensure women's representation in South Africa's parliament (Goezt, 1998). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is not enough just to increase the number of women within different levels and systems of the government, as this does not always necessarily correlate with those women trying to advance gender equality. In many ways, the NAP is looking to create new systems or policies which are ambitious, but, in fact, South Africa, at least according to the interviewees involved in this research, does not have the best record of implementing policies that have already been in place for years (Civil society 1, 2, 4 and Individual expert 3, 6)..

The NAP adopted in 2020 stated that South Africa would have a dedicated steering committee to ensure the successful implementation of the NAP (South Africa NAP, 2020). The steering committee was to consist of governmental bodies and also representatives of civil society organisations. The NAP also includes a section on a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, although it seems unclear from the document when this will be created, as the text only refers to an M&E plan which will accompany the NAP document. The NAP also states that the government will "welcome technical, funding and advisory assistance from development partners to ensure success of the programme" (ibid., p. 85), meaning that funding for the activities will either have to come from departmental budgets, as mentioned above, or from development assistance. This in itself is problematic and represents one of the challenges for meaningful implementation of the WPS Agenda. One of the criticisms of NAPs is that they do not usually include a specific budget for the implementation of the activities (see, for example, Swaine, 2017). If budgets are already constrained, how can it be guaranteed that any funds will

be targeted specifically towards the NAP's activities? At the moment, the implementation of the NAP relies solely on existing budgets or receipt of donor funding from development organisations. Without a dedicated budget, as the case of Palestine demonstrates, South Africa's NAP is in danger of becoming another empty promise, as one of the interviewees observed:

> Political will is one of the controversial issues. For the respective government departments to view this as a critical issue that needs to be one of the main agendas within their work. (Individual expert, 6)

Several challenges were identified by the interviewees in relation to implementing the WPS Agenda in South Africa. Some of the issues were linked to the development of the NAP itself, which South Africa has now adopted. However, many of the issues were broader and not necessarily linked to an existing NAP. One of the relevant issues was posed by the financial constraints which were discussed above and the fact that a significant budget is needed to implement the NAP. One of the research participants mentioned that there should be a budget included from the government, because without money one cannot implement the Agenda (Civil society, 5). Lack of dedicated budget to implement NAPs is a common denominator not only for South Africa and Palestine, but to other countries as well. Out of the 98 NAPs that have been adopted, only 36 of these include a budget for implementation (PeaceWomen, 2021).

The issue of lack of clear monitoring and evaluation for the WPS Agenda is another known issue, effecting the implementation of the framework (see for example Jacevic, 2019). It has been recognised as an issue, for example in the Global Study on the Implementation of the Resolution 1325 (2015) and in Resolution 1889 (2009) which calls for the development of indicators to measure the implementation. The need for a strong monitoring and evaluation strategy was a core issue mentioned by the interviewees as well (Civil society 4, Individual expert 3). Without this existing to ensure implementation, the NAP risks becoming just another

document, as it will not be possible to hold the government accountable to agreed targets. When asked if a NAP could be useful for South Africa, one participant said, "It needs to be properly monitored and evaluated as mentioned, so that it does not become just a 'checkbox exercise'" (Individual expert, 3).

4.3.6 Which women? Intersectionality and the WPS Agenda in South Africa

In the context of South Africa – a post-apartheid country which is still deeply divided – a careful focus on unequal power relations, not just from a gender perspective but also from the perspective of race and gender, needs to be considered. Although South Africa has achieved major progress since 1994, it is still struggling with persistent inequalities related to race, class, and gender. With regards to the reality of being a woman in South Africa, access to opportunities, services, and resources are still defined by race, class, and location as has been discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. However, South African identity is constituted from many forms of social difference which are bound not only to class and race but also to sexuality, religion, geography, region, and language (Hino et al., 2018). As was highlighted by South Africa's shadow report to CEDAW (2011), women in South Africa are not a homogenous group, but the South African government's report makes little mention, and shows little recognition, of the experiences of women with multiple vulnerabilities. Oxfam's Income Inequality report from South Africa paints a bleak picture, showing that despite the free market, the structural system that governs how wealth and income is divided in South Africa looks like a caste system "where one's social status is determined at birth and is based [more] on race, class and gender than a system of free association among people of equal value" (Oxfam South Africa, 2020, p. 12).

The WPS Agenda privileges gender above any other significant power relation, such as race, class, or sexual identity in understanding women's experiences in conflict (Pratt, 2013). The research participants were asked whether they think the WPS Agenda adequately deals with

these different intersectional identities and how well it reflects the situation in South Africa. The question seemed to divide the opinions of the research participants. Some thought that the Agenda itself is broad enough to take into account not just gender but also, for example, factors that shape identity, such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Civil society 5, Individual expert 6). Another interviewee, reflecting on the Agenda's promises, felt that they did provide adequate support for intersectionality: "I think they do. If there is any shortfall on them, our constitution is one of the good constitutions that covers the rest" (Individual expert, 6). This optimism may be misplaced however, considering the fact that, as was discussed earlier, the constitution does not guarantee equal rights for everyone as it has not been implemented in practice, and so this approach to covering any shortfalls from the Agenda would not necessarily be adequate.

Certainly, many participants thought that the WPS Agenda definitely did not address these inequalities sufficiently (Civil society 2, 4 Individual expert 3). As one interviewee reflected, South Africa has some of the highest levels of inequality in the world and change needs to come from the people themselves, rather than relying on a framework to change this (Civil society, 2). The challenge for any future implementation of the WPS Agenda in South Africa is exactly these inequalities, as people start from very different places in their lives (Civil society, 2). One of the interviewees criticised the fact that South African women are still mostly seen as victims rather than as active participants in the peacebuilding process when they asked, "Are we looking them as victims or as agents of change? There is only one woman, the victim that needs to be lifted" (Civil society, 4). However, here the interviewee seems to challenge the notion of intersectionality and say that the differences between women's identities/locations do not matter because women are only seen as victims rather than anything else. A tension clearly exists between, on the one hand, an emphasis on women as a one singular category and, on the other, recognition of women's different identities and locations.

Although some of the participants did not think the Agenda itself deals adequately with

intersectionality, they thought that it would be hard to achieve this at a global level, and hence this should be taken into account when developing and adjusting a plan to fit a localised context (Individual expert 3). When asked whether the WPS Agenda deals sufficiently with intersectionality, one research participant answered:

> No, the short answer is that it does not adequately deal with all those intersectionalities. But I think the caveat is that it cannot deal with them on global framework level. I think it would have to happen more in country context level in terms of developing NAPs. In dealing with the contextual factors in-country. For example, what UK and Sweden have to deal with intersectionalities would be different what Rwanda and Pakistan have to deal with. It would have to be unpacked in country level. (Individual expert, 3)

Although I agree with the interviewee about intersectionality issues varying in different country contexts, Chapter 6 will discuss whether or not it is necessarily the right tactic to leave it to the country level to decide which intersectionalities they want to take into account in the NAP. This approach could be especially problematic, for example, in cases where the country's legislature does not recognise the rights of the LGBTQI+ community.

Research participants emphasised that, when developing the NAP, it is crucial to hear a range of different voices (Civil society 2, 4, 5). This reflects back to the issues around who develops and has the power to have an effect on the context of the NAP. As will be argued in the next chapter, in Palestine, the process for NAP development is largely within the hands of established, elite, civil society organisations that represent the so-called 'local' women. However, the danger with this approach is that women are once again treated as one common group and the most marginalised, hard-to-reach communities are not heard. This highlights the importance of taking into account the geographical location, especially the rural/urban divide when discussing about the different intersectional identities. For example, almost half of the women of South Africa, 47% in total, live in non-urban or rural areas (Kehler, 2001). Rural

women remain the most vulnerable group according to South Africa's shadow report to CEDAW (2011). However, this vulnerability affects different population groups differently when 57% of African women live in rural areas, compared to 17% of Coloured women and 8% of white women (Kehler, 2001).[16] The majority of Black women in South Africa continue to live in rural areas which often lack any socio-economic development opportunities and infrastructure. In addition to this, women in rural areas have more limited access to education or skills development opportunities which contributes to maintaining the ongoing poverty that affects their lives. Rural women are often more dependent on government support and basic services, as was mentioned above; however, these services are less available and accessible in poor rural areas (South Africa Shadow report for CEDAW, 2011). Women in rural areas are also more often subject to cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and virginity testing, in addition to being subject to customary law which means they have inequitable access to land and property (ibid.) Of those living below the national poverty line, 50.9% were Black South Africans and of Coloured backgrounds and 60.2% were single parents (South African shadow report to CEDAW, 2011). When these conditions are understood, it becomes clear that geographical location, especially whether one lives in rural or urban setting, as well as class and race status, affects women's lives differently. As one interviewee so aptly described it:

> There is so many aspects to being a woman in South Africa. A woman living in a rural community in Kwazulu Natal in her 60s will have a very different opinion what NAP should have than a feminist academic living in an urban environment. Especially around the cultural practice side of things. (Individual expert, 3)

As in the Palestinian case, the organisations that were part of the National Committee on developing the South African NAP were largely based in urban centres and consisted of well-established civil society organisations. Although some of the organisations work more broadly

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[16] Official terminology used in official South African statistics.

across the whole country, this geographical focus should be taken into consideration when discussing who gets to be at the table when NAPs are being developed and how well-equipped those people are to represent the women of the whole country.

One clear, positive development is that South Africa has aimed to discuss and include these issues in its National Action Plan. First of all, the NAP starts by laying out its vision by stating its commitment to "sustainable peace, security and equality for women, girls and gender non-conforming persons" (South Africa NAP, 2020, p. 60). It also specifically outlines the need to listen and respond to the needs of women, girls, and gender non-conforming persons with an intersectional lens. The South African NAP has also paid special attention in its action plan to decreasing violent attacks against the LGBTQI+ communities. There is an objective which commits to the development of measures and awareness programmes to address the violent expressions of homophobia that happen in South Africa, as well as to the creation of psychosocial programmes dedicated to the LGBTQI+ community (South Africa NAP, 2020). This can be seen as a positive development, as although South Africa was the first country in the world to protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation and the fifth country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage, the statistics show that lived reality in the country is very different. For example, one survey reported that 72% of the respondents felt that same-sex activity is wrong, although 51% of the respondents thought that gay people should have the same human rights as everyone else (The Other Foundation, 2016). A subsequent study reported that 44% of the LGBTQI+ community said that they had experienced discrimination, either verbal, physical, or sexual, because of their sexual orientation (World Economic Forum, 2018).

The NAP has also taken into account how to leverage technology to provide basic protective measures that the elderly and children are able to use. The NAP includes activities designed to create special measures to protect people living with disabilities, as well as people with albinism. The NAP also includes clear reference to gender non-conforming persons. It is

impressive that South Africa has developed a NAP which tries to focus, not only on women, but also on people with disabilities, elderly people, and the LGBTQI+ community and has also taken into account gender non-conforming people. However, often when intersectionality is discussed, the rural/urban divide is not taken into account. South Africa's NAP does not discuss how urban/rural disparities are taken into account, and although it discusses communities and community peacebuilding in general terms, it does not address what this means for different types of community. For example, as it has been discussed in this chapter women living in more rural areas are more often subjected to harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (South Africa Shadow report for CEDAW, 2011).

4.3.7 Pushing the WPS Agenda forward

Based on the interviews conducted for this study, it appears that civil society organisations have been active agents for pushing the WPS Agenda in South Africa forward (this was later noted in the official South African NAP as well, South Africa NAP, 2020). It became clear during the interviews that civil society organisations are particularly strong advocates for the implementation of the WPS Agenda in South Africa and think it is a relevant framework for their work and for the country as a whole (Civil society 2, 4, 5).

The research participants recognised it as being a useful framework for South Africa if it is rooted firmly in the principles of a bottom-up approach and tailored to the needs of South African women in order to ensure the development and improvement of women's security (Civil society 2, 4, 5, Individual expert 3). Over 20 years have now passed since the initial WPS resolution was passed by the UN Security Council. Although the WPS Agenda has been criticised widely for not making enough impact at local level, the research participants expressed their ongoing dedication to the values and principles of the initial Resolution 1325 and their strong commitment to delivering on them (Civil society 2, 4, 5, Individual expert 6). As one participant stated, women are the agents of their own development (Civil society, 2).

While this is cause for optimism, some of the participants struck a note of caution by drawing attention to the narrowing sphere of influence for women's organisations (Civil society 4, Individual expert 3). Women in South Africa have always been politically active and have been mobilised throughout the history of the country (Hassim, 2006). As Goezt (1998) has written, women's organisations were central to the struggle for democracy in South Africa. In South Africa women's descriptive and substantive representation was improved in the aftermath of the transition (Waylen, 2007). This was achieved through the adoption of a new constitution, in which gender equality played an integral part; the establishment of women's machineries at state level; and high levels of women achieving representation in the government and parliament (ibid.). As one of the interviewees reflected, this approach gave influence to a powerful group of women: "The women in the ANC who fought for liberation, they were such a strong group of women" (Individual expert, 3).

Yet, as one of the interviewees noted, South Africa does not have a strong women's sector or networks any more. This prevents organisations from working together as the necessary resources and funding are generally lacking (Civil society, 1). Some of the smaller organisations and individual experts agreed that there is a lack of organised women's networks at the moment in South Africa (Civil society 1, Individual expert 3), while one of the interviewees noted another issue which is that the majority of the country's civil society actors are from the ANC generation: *"Our civil society is relatively old, there is no new blood coming or new ideas"* (Civil society, 4). However, the role of civil society is not often clear-cut and as the reflections here demonstrate, economic and political changes can cause the shrinking of the space the civil society can operate within (Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2019). One of the individual experts discussed the fact that the women's movement simply disintegrated after the political transition:

> Since the advent of democracy, if you look at in the political sphere how the women's movement has just disintegrated. Once liberation of happened, it was just paralysed.

All the structures and institution whom were supposed to advance women's rights became paralysed. (Individual expert, 3)

This is an interesting research finding that could help to explain why it took so long to develop the NAP for South Africa (South African NAP, 2020), and this finding could also have implications for the NAP's implementation process, especially when civil society is expected to implement some of the activities. Although the sample size for this study was too small to allow generalisations about the state of the women's movement in general in South Africa, this is an interesting point to reflect on because, as one of the interviewees pointed out, "I think the women's sector in South Africa is really fatigued" (Individual expert, 3).

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the research findings from the interviews conducted with civil society organisations and individual experts in South Africa. It started by discussing the challenges that affect women's security and gender equality in the South African context, and, interestingly, this generated quite a few different answers from the participants. The chapter then moved on to highlight how the WPS Agenda's definition of security along the axis of conflict versus non-conflict countries endangers its applicability to countries that do not strictly fall within those parameters. It was evident from the interviews that, although South Africa has not experienced armed conflict, the country is experiencing a war within itself because of the high levels of violence which specifically target women, and therefore the WPS Agenda is extremely relevant to the context of South Africa. The chapter has also highlighted the difficulty arising from the fact that, while South Africa has adopted national and international strategies, they have usually gone without implementation and hence research participants had some natural scepticism about how transformational yet another international framework can be in the local context. Lastly, the chapter discussed whether the WPS Agenda can deal adequately with the range of identities arising from the intersection of gender with factors such

as race, class, age, and sexual orientation in the case of South Africa. The findings on this issue were mixed, as some of the respondents thought that the WPS Agenda contains adequate measures to take these issues into account (Civil society 5, Individual expert 6), whereas the others did not believe that it deals appropriately with the range of inequalities that women face in South Africa (Civil society 2,4, Individual expert 3). As has been highlighted, these issues can be raised in a country's individual NAP, and South Africa has taken this into account through, for example, its references to the LGBTQI+ community, gender non-conforming persons, elderly people, and people with disabilities. However, there is still a lot to be desired in terms of taking into account inequalities that arise along the geographical location, especially urban/rural spectrum.

As discussed in Chapter 3, this thesis was originally going to use South Africa as its sole case study. However, due to the small sample size available, the decision was made to include another country context. The South African study informed the research conducted in Palestine, and Palestine was chosen for analysis because it is a country under occupation and therefore provided another useful setting in which to look at the issue of security, the WPS Agenda, and how it can fit within a specific country context. These two countries were also selected as they were considered to be good settings in which to examine the WPS Agenda from the point of view of intersectionality, as both countries have experiences of ethnic, religious, and political cleavages. The findings from South Africa provided an interesting starting point for this research, and the opportunity to add the Palestinian case allowed me to broaden the scope of enquiry to see if similar issues could be discovered in Palestine. The next chapter will focus on a thematic analysis of the research findings from Palestine.

5. Data analysis: Palestine

5.1. Introduction

Palestine has been under Israeli occupation since 1967 when the Six Day War occurred, during which Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's policy of building settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory and displacing the local population is against the rules of international humanitarian law (Amnesty International, n.d.). Mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, a representative of the people of Palestine, culminated in the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. The agreement resulted in a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank and the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The Oslo Accords also meant the establishment of an administration in the areas which are ruled the Palestinians (United Nations, Question of Palestine, n.d.). The Oslo Accords divided the occupied Palestinian territory into three administrative areas: Area A (under full civil and military control of the Palestinian authority); Area B (under Palestinian civil control, with joint military control by Israel-Palestine) and Area C (under the full civil and military control of Israel). Over 60% of the West Bank falls under Area C. Israeli civil law is also applied in East Jerusalem, although it is recognised as Palestinian territory which has been occupied by Israel since 1967 (United Nations, Question of Palestine, n.d.). Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip in 2005; however, it still controls its borders, airspace, and access to resources, including water and electricity. The occupation in Palestine is one of the core issues that affects the everyday lives of Palestinians.

Palestine was granted non-member observer status in the UN in November 2012 (United Nations, Question of Palestine, n.d.). As a State Party to the UN, Palestine has a legal obligation to respect international human rights treaties (ESCWA, 2018). Palestine has also made significant efforts to try to strengthen its position in the international arena having acceded to over 55 international treaties and agreements since its UN observer status was granted.

This chapter will analyse and present the findings from 14 in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with civil society organisation members and individual experts on the WPS Agenda within the Palestinian context. It will address the data thematically, as discussed in Chapter 3. In doing so, the chapter will provide data findings that speak to the overall aim of this thesis, helping us to understand whether and to what extent the UN WPS Agenda is a transformational and suitable framework for improve women's security in Palestine. This chapter will directly contribute to objectives of this thesis, which were presented in Chapter 1.

This chapter will thematically analyse how the WPS Agenda is understood and engaged with by civil society organisations and individual experts in Palestine. In order to understand the current context, the chapter will first briefly look at the historical context of the women's movement in Palestine, before moving on to discuss of what the research participants saw as challenges for women's security in Palestine. The chapter will then present an analysis of the different elements of the WPS Agenda within the Palestinian context.

5.2. The history of women's mobilisation and activism in Palestine

The Palestinian women's movement, which has been well researched and documented in written histories, has relied both on collective, formal activism and more informal ways of struggling against the occupation (Richter-Devroe, 2018). For example, activities range from political activism (demonstrations and women's committees) to less conventional ways of resisting, such as establishing an alternative schooling system during the first intifada or sneaking past the occupation forces to sell fruit and vegetables in the market in Jerusalem (ibid.). Richter-Devroe (2018) has shown that these everyday, informal politics actually often go unrecognised in the scholarly literature, as often these situations are deemed unimportant. However, she argues it is precisely the largely hidden and covert nature of these examples of women's everyday resistance that makes them significant. The occupation policies dominate every single aspect of Palestinian's lives, and therefore the daily efforts of individuals in coping with the occupation's intrusion into their lives should not be separated from the broader

political dynamics (ibid.). The next section will examine the different ways in which the women's political movement and activism have developed in Palestine since the 1970s. The Palestinian women's movement has evolved throughout its history, depending on the nature of the ongoing national struggle at different times, in order to express people's aspirations, as well as responses to national needs (Kuttab, 2008).

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a real democratic movement which involved significant effort to promote women's consciousness around national and women's issues (Kuttab, 2008). This started in the 1970s when the Palestinian leadership initiated a process to democratise the national movement to mobilise people from different social categories to face Israel's occupation policies and to fight back against the destruction of the cultural and socio-economic infrastructure of Palestine. Farr (2011) notes that this period saw women's increased involvement in different forms of resistance but also in service provision. As Kuttab (2008) writes, the national movement to mobilise people enabled the creation of a new women's movement which was represented by decentralised outreach committees involving women who really mobilised and supported small grassroots organisations and acted as representatives of Palestinian women more generally. This democratic activism and its aftermath paved the way for the first intifada (Kuttab, 2008), which marked a turning point for women's mobilisation in Palestine and was "the major catalyst behind the change in the magnitude and visibility of women's activism both in Israel and in the West Bank and Gaza" (Sharoni, 1995, p. 1).

This women's mobilisation really provided the backbone of the resistance during the first intifada because women's organisations acted as local authorities during this time and offered their support to local communities. This allowed women's organisations to bring women's issues to the forefront of the discussion. For example, the committees defined and promoted issues such as women's rights to work, be educated, and have political representation, as well as to be represented equally in political decision-making (Kuttab, 2008). Women were an integral part of the resistance during the first intifada, which saw women from all social classes

and backgrounds taking part in demonstrations. Women built networks during this period and, having been empowered by their important roles as part of the uprising, started contesting leadership roles in political parties when the men were imprisoned (Jad, 2018). The success of these women's committees, Jad (2009) says, lies in the fact they were focusing on organising and mobilising the masses and building relationships with people. She believes the committees' success was also due to their faith in the political cause which they had to defend and because the committees had such strong confidence in the political formations to which they belonged (ibid.). The impacts of the first intifada also paved the way for the establishment of the Higher Women's Committee, which had the primary goal of addressing gender equality alongside the national liberation process (Farr, 2011).

As Sharoni (1998) highlights, women's mobilisation during the first years of the intifada was seen as a necessary and valuable contribution to the Palestinian national struggle. The changing roles of men, with them being largely absent from households, meant that women had a legitimate excuse to get involved with the political struggle, and in fact their involvement was seen as an act of loyalty to their men but also as a contribution to the larger collectivity (Sharoni, 1998).

In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established, and this was followed by the formation of the General Union of Palestinian Women in 1965. The General Union is the women's faction of the PLO and is actually one of the core organisations leading the work of the Higher National Committee which is responsible for implementing WPS resolutions in Palestine (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017). The general aim of the Union was to mobilise Palestinian women towards the goal of ending the occupation and securing an independent Palestine. The organisations provided women with the opportunity to participate in the national struggle together with Palestinian men. Some argue that the establishment of the PLO was the real start for women's political activism in Palestine (ibid.). Jad (2018) agrees with this view, and highlights that the formation of the Palestinian Authority, after the Oslo Agreement was

signed, led to new approaches to gender policies to suit this new era. The women's movement was considered to be the most organised social movement within Palestine, and it was also the first one to shift its discourse and reorganise itself in the post-Oslo era. Women's organisations started lobbying for greater representation for women in order to become involved and win representation in key decision-making processes (Jamal, 2001). During this time, power in the Palestinian women's movement was given to new feminist elites working at the civil society level under the umbrella of the PA, and this led to what Jad (2018, p. 2) calls the emergence of "femocrats". This term refers to "women who are employed within state bureaucratic positions to work on advancing the position of women in the wider society through the development of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination strategies of change" (Jad, 2018, p. 2). However, Jad (2018) also argues that Palestinian women's activism by no means constitutes a movement that represents all women's interests; instead, it is a site of different power relations and interests.

The Oslo Accords created a new age, which on one hand allowed a new mode of thinking around liberation and independence, and on the other caused a deep rift in the national movement that had been so united against occupation. There was a rise in the number of feminist NGOs being established in the early 1990s which went on to play a prominent role in sustaining the women's movement in Palestine. These NGOs have specialised in intervening in national and international policy processes, and they are quite distinct from the historic women's groups of the 1970s and 1980s (Kuttab, 2008). According to Kuttab (ibid.), these specialised women's NGOs wanted to use the opportunity to impact national policies through their focused work. They were also enabled to become more prominent as they received international donor funding for their work and activities (ibid.).

Although there was general optimism in the air for women's political participation in the post-Oslo peace process, this has diminished as the Palestinian Authority has not made significant strides in incorporating women into the peace process or political decision-making processes (Samaroo, 2018). The rise of women's NGOs and their prominent role as part of the elite

movement within the Palestinian women's struggle can also be seen in the findings which demonstrate that the WPS Agenda and its promotion at the national level is led by elite NGOs that operate from Ramallah. This issue will be discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7.

According to the Palestinian National Action Plan (2017), the advancement of the women's rights agenda can be seen in the establishment of national instruments such as the Ministry of Palestinian Women's Affairs, a national tool with responsibility for developing local policies for Palestinian women and girls. The increase in international donor funding for Palestinian women's organisations has also enabled them to grow their programmes and activities with regards to women's empowerment and participation at all policy levels (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017). Although Palestinian women are facing a double burden due to the occupation and a patriarchal system, women's increased participation and the growing women's movement have challenged the system through strategies including education, for example, and especially providing civic education on issues like violence in the family (Farr, 2011).

Against the backdrop of the historical development of the Palestinian women's movement, it is important to highlight what Jad (2009, p. 34) calls the "NGOisation" of civil society organisations. In the absence of a state able to provide these services, the burden is often carried by civil society organisations. This is what Jad (2009, p.34) calls the "NGOisation" process. She argues that, because women's organisations are fully occupied providing these everyday services, they actually have little or no time left for political engagement and participation. Darweish and Rigby (2015) write about this politicisation of aid and argue that when international donors direct funds through the office of Mahmoud Abbas, the leader of Fatah, they actually directly contribute to the fragmentation of Palestinian society and reinforce the occupation. They observe that providing services and maintaining the welfare of Palestinians is the responsibility of Israel as the occupying power according to international humanitarian law. Therefore, Darweish and Rigby (ibid.) argue, foreign funding which provides the means

to maintain basic services for Palestinians actually reinforces the occupation as it provides services which should be the responsibility of Israel. With regards to the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Palestine through the NAP, responsibility for most of its activities and service provisions has fallen to NGOs, as government departments have not been allocated a budget to fund these activities (Civil society, 1).

Nationalism has played an important role in shaping the identities of Palestinians, and as Sharoni (1995) argued, many of them see their lives as inseparable from the daily politics of the region. The conflict in Israel-Palestine "has served both as a catalyst and the touchstone for the consolidation of particular notions of national 'imagined community' for Palestinians and for Israeli-Jews respectively" (Sharoni, 1995, p. 32). For Palestinians, this imagined community means a Palestinian sovereign state and territorial sovereignty, and national liberation has emerged as one of the most important focuses of their collective identity (ibid.). However, as Jamal (2001) highlights, the Palestinian women's movement has grown within the confines of the national movement. The national movement against occupation has affected the way in which women have been involved in the political struggle. As she argues, "the primacy of the nationalist discourse has rendered women's rights secondary" (Jamal, 2001, p. 258). As Sharoni (1995) highlights, the emphasis on national liberation has meant that other problems, such as economic or social issues within Palestinian communities, have been considered to be less important until the conflict is resolved. However, it is important to note that the different definitions as to who and what constitutes the imagined community that Sharoni (1995) discusses depend on differences in power, social location, and experience. In most cases, it has been men who have set up nationalist projects and women often do not have the power to influence what those projects should look like. In the Palestinian national movement, women were portrayed as mothers of the nation during the intifada, as this role combined both the steadfastness associated with Palestinian liberation and the abilities of warmth and care which are culturally associated with women (ibid.). At the same time, as Enloe

(2014) notes, the popular image of the Palestinian nation was that of a young man with his checkered scarf. It was the men who became the images of the nation whilst the women stood in the shadows as those who needed to be protected. However, as Enloe highlights, Palestinian women started holding their own marches and demonstrations and the leadership committee, the Unified National Command of the Intifada, started addressing women's concerns as well (Enloe, 2014). Jad (2018) similarly argues that while, on the one hand women were confined to the private spaces of the home to prove their nation's authenticity, on the other hand they were seen as the modernisers of the nationalist project which enabled women's movements to develop and become visible in the first place. Women's advancement in the society was also enabled because the way the Israeli military police operated forced Palestinians to come up with new ways of organising, and this led to greater reliance on small committees within local neighbourhoods. As more and more men were jailed after visible confrontations with the Israeli police, the women were able to mobilise, and they became political actors through the neighbourhood committees (Enloe, 2014).

Lastly, an important way for Palestinian women to resist the occupation is found in what Richter-Devroe (2018) calls the micro-level politics that are unspectacular in their own way and happen on an everyday basis, as was discussed at the beginning of this chapter. These sorts of politics are often not noticed by others, but they are incredibly important to the way we talk about the women's movement in Palestine. Linked to this idea of micro-politics is the concept of *sumud*. Ryan (2015) discusses Palestinian women's practice of *sumud*, a concept that refers to different actions that aim to maintain Palestinians' presence on their land and express resistance against Israeli oppression. *Sumud*, in Arabic, means resilience and steadfastness, and the concept's origins date back to the 1970s and 1980s. In the early years, it was very much a coping mechanism against the occupation, as people tried to maintain normality and stay on their land despite the hardship of the occupation. *Sumud* often refers to "more covert, often individual and non-organised struggle" (Richter-Devroe, 2018, p. 99), and the term is used to

describe different activities from material-based survival strategies (such as continuing to harvest occupied agricultural land), to cultural resistance (upholding cultural traditions) and social resistance (maintaining a sense of normality) (ibid.). Palestinian women especially talk about *sumud*, as it allows them to maintain honour and dignity but still resist the occupation in a way that helps them to cope with their everyday lives (Ryan, 2015).

5.3. The United Nations WPS Agenda – reflections from civil society organisations and individual experts from Palestine

The following sections will discuss the different themes that arose from the interviews, starting with the conceptual understanding of the resolution and concluding with challenges faced. It should be noted that, although the focus of this thesis is not on the Israel-Palestine conflict, the occupation is the central framework of analysis for political, social, and economic elements of life in Palestine. The chapter will start by reflecting on what the interviewees considered as some of the key challenges for women's security and gender equality in Palestine, before moving on to discuss the themes identified from the findings.

5.3.1. Challenges for women's security and gender equality in Palestine

The Palestinian Authority has made advancements for gender equality within its governmental structure. The 2003 Amended Basic Law assures equality and non-discrimination for all, although the legal system in Palestine is complicated because Palestine still has laws from the times when it was ruled by Jordan and Egypt. The creation of the Ministry for Women's Affairs in 2003 created a further 22 gender units in different ministries across government. The PA also adopted the "Cross-sectoral National Gender Strategy: Promoting Gender Equality and Equity" in 2017 (Swaine, 2018). However, as this thesis shows, although Palestine has made commitments at the international level to the promotion of gender equality, these have not led to action at the local and national level. The "International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) – Middle East and North Africa" (2018), found that there is strong agreement between men and women that gender equality has not been achieved in Palestine. According

to the study, three quarters of men and 87% of women agreed with the statement that "we as Palestinians need to do more work to promote the equality of women and men" (IMAGES, 2018, p. 20).

Women in Palestine face a double burden due to the combination of Palestinian society's patriarchal attitudes and the occupation (Civil society 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9). The Israeli occupation affects all Palestinians, regardless of their gender, class, ethnicity, or religion, although the effects of the occupation hit women who live in Gaza or Area C of the West Bank especially hard, as will be discussed later in this chapter. The impact of the occupation on women is particularly harsh due to Israel's use of discriminatory legislation and institutions, as well as the perpetuation of "intra-societal and intra-family discrimination and violence against women" (OHCHR, 2017, p. 2). The CEDAW report (2018) notes that the Israeli occupation poses several challenges that affect Palestine's ability to fully implement the obligations of the CEDAW Convention, as women and girls are subjected to restrictions on movement, displacement, settler violence, and the use of force and abuse by the Israeli security forces.

To understand if the WPS Agenda can be a useful framework for Palestinian women, the interviewees were asked to reflect on what they considered to be the challenges for women's security and gender equality more broadly. The analysis of the data identified three main challenges: the double burden of Israeli occupation and patriarchy, women's political participation, and the legal system.

A majority of the interviewees (civil society 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) regarded the double burden that the occupation and patriarchy place on Palestinian women as a key challenge for gender equality. It is impossible to discuss the Palestinian situation without taking into account the effect occupation has on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians, and, therefore, it is in this analytical framework that the situation of the WPS Agenda in the Palestinian context and its suitability to that context must be considered. The occupation has adverse effects on everyone,

but it has a different impact on women both in their private and public lives. As one of the interviewees from a women's civil society organisation said:

> As women we face multilayer… different kind of oppression due to the fact that we live under patriarchal structures, norms and discourse and at the same time we are under Israeli occupation. (Civil society, 8)

The patriarchal attitudes women face in Palestine represent an issue that has an effect on the everyday lives of women around the country, for example as one interviewee noted:

> When you are talking about equality, you are challenging the rights men have. It takes a lot of power to challenge the power men have in the society…. You are threatening the power men have in their hands. (Civil society, 6)

As noted in the IMAGE (2018) survey, these inequitable gender attitudes are common in Palestine where, for example, 80% of men and 60% of women agreed in 2018 that being a homemaker is a woman's most important role. Therefore it can be said it is difficult, for women's organisations to work on women's issues when they are facing opposition, not only from the society they operate in, but also from the context of the occupying power. For example, the effects of patriarchal attitudes are further compounded by the discriminatory legal system (which will discussed further later), which means that women suffer differently, as one of the interviewees mentioned (Civil society, 8). It also impacts on the rights women are able to have:

> So, women suffer differently. Impact of Israeli violation face Palestinian women differently because of this multi-layered oppression. It prevents women for accessing their full rights. (Civil society, 8)

These comments highlight how insecurity is not only about physical violence, but about unjust hierarchical gender norms, patriarchal attitudes and structural violence the society operates in.

These findings advance the notion of feminist security, which aims to understand the extent to which asymmetric power relationships can contribute to insecurity (Tickner, 2001). According to feminist view, true security cannot be achieves unless these power structures related to for example, gender, race and class are eliminated (Ticknet, 1992). Understanding these personal stories and narratives is a key part of feminist research (Wibben, 2011).

The Israeli occupation has serious effects on the lives of Palestinians. Restrictions on movement, including checkpoints, the separation wall, closures, and sieges, affect all levels of Palestinian lives and create issues with access to health services, education, and work. A restrictive system permeated by physical and administrative barriers, as well travel permit requirements, allows the Israeli occupation to complicate freedom of movement for Palestinians. East Jerusalem, once a hub for Palestinian commercial and political life, is completely cut off from the West Bank and Gaza by Israeli policies (ESCWA, 2018). As of January 2017, the West Bank has 98 checkpoints, of which 59 are permanent checkpoints, and 39 checkpoints monitor entry to Israel (B'tselem, 2017). Israel also controls roads, and there is a division between roads that can only be used by the Israeli settlers in the West Bank and those roads that are permitted for use by Palestinians.

The physical and administrative barriers that permeate every sphere of Palestinian's lives, as well as an Israeli occupation regime that requires travel permits, mean that freedom of movement for Palestinians remains constrained within a complicated and restrictive system. The continuous crimes and violations committed by the occupying force have affected tens of thousands of Palestinian women and girls. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, over 750,000 Palestinians, including 100,000 women, have been arrested by the occupying forces since 1967 (IMAGES, 2018).

Many respondents to the IMAGES survey (2018) reported having experienced one or more specific forms of occupation-related violence within the past five years. 65% of men and 55%

of women had experienced some sort of violence in relation to the occupation. Men were more likely than women to report having lost land or having been either harassed by soldiers or settlers, detained, injured, or having lost work or other opportunities. Of the women respondents, 19% reported that they had been harassed by Israeli security forces, including settlers, and 23% of women said that someone in their household had been detained for at least a day by Israeli security forces.

Many of the interviewees reflected (Civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and Individual experts 1, 4) on how, in particular, the occupation affects the lives of girls and women in Palestine, with effects ranging from families not wanting to have their daughters work because they would have to travel through several checkpoints, to arrests and demolitions of houses. In another example of how occupation affects their lives, one of the interviewees highlighted that women in Area C (see Figure 5.1) are not protected from domestic violence, among other problems. The Palestinian Authority does not have jurisdiction in Area C, and therefore women would be required to go and talk to the Israeli police first if domestic violence happened to them. However, they are unlikely to do this, primarily because of the effect an allegation would have on their reputation in a patriarchal society, but also because they have been abused by the Israeli police in the past and are sceptical about the likelihood of receiving support (Civil society, 2).

Figure 5.1. Map of Palestine

Source: Welcome to Palestine, 2017.

The patriarchal system combined with the oppression resulting from the occupation means that conflict in the area produces different problems for women than men: "There is violence against women directly from the occupation beating, killing, checkpoint, taking the land…" (Civil society, 1).

Violence against women and girls continues to be a significant issue in Palestine according to a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UNFPA Palestine, 2018). Palestinian women face the so-called "double burden" of violence – violence from the occupation and violence from within their communities. Women are vulnerable to different forms of violence both in their private and public lives (UNFPA Palestine, 2018). The report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (OHCHR, 2017) noted that women are

not only suffering because of the violence caused by the Israeli occupation but also because of a system of violence caused by culture and tradition which is embedded in patriarchal social norms and Palestine's outdated legal framework. In their communities, women are at risk of domestic violence, honour killings, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, forced marriages, and denial of resources. According to UNFPA Palestine (2018), violence against women is often perpetrated by men close to them, such as intimate partners and family members. This is highly concerning as the CEDAW report (2018) notes that the definition of rape under the Penal Code of 1960 which is applicable in West Bank does not include marital rape.

The IMAGES (2018) survey asked both men and women about gender-based violence, though it should be noted that these issues are more widely reported by women than men and few surveys in Palestine have interviewed men on this topic. According to the survey, 40% of men admitted to using emotional violence against their wives. Almost 17% of men said they had used physical intimate partner violence against their female partners, but 21% of women said they had experienced partner violence. When these statistics are being considered, it should be noted that any survey that measures violence against women needs to be treated with caution, as definitions of what constitutes violence can carry different meanings for different people (DeKeserdy & Schwartz, 2001). It is also worth asking how many people would easily admit to violence against their partner when directly asked.

The second issue that predominated in discussions with interviewees was women's political participation or the lack of it ranging from local-level to national participation. Currently, in line with Palestinian Electoral Law, women have secured 20% quota representation in local councils and the Legislative Council (Samaroo, 2018). As of June 2018, women held only three of the ministerial positions out of 19 in the Palestinian government (ESCWA, 2019). As one of the interviewees said: "Every time we meet… we need to raise the quota for women's participation. Is it not sad, that we have to fight for the quota. We are not even asking what I think should be the minimum 50%. But I guess it is the first step" (Civil society, 4).

According to the ESCWA (2019) report, Palestinian law mostly conforms with international standards with regards to women's political participation. Women have political rights and are allowed to vote and stand for election according to the General Elections Law. This legislation also introduced a quota system which was considered to mark a significant step towards increasing women's political representation, as this stipulates that at least 30% of candidates standing for an election must be women. In local level elections, the quota stands at 20% (CEDAW, 2018). However, as the CEDAW (2018) report notes, even though advancements have been made, women are still underrepresented at decision-making levels, such as the foreign service, judiciary, local government, and trade unions. Palestine's shadow report to CEDAW (2017) notes that, despite the active participation of women in the Palestinian national struggle, women's political participation remains low because of restrictions on electoral participation.

Women's participation, especially in the peace and reconciliation process, would be crucial, but in practice it is very limited, as was reflected in comments made by one of the research participants:

> Regarding reconciliation, actually there is not representation of women. Not in any committees. It is the reality that women's agenda is not on the table. It is not in the political agenda… There is demand to enhance women's participation in the reconciliation process but it is not taken seriously. (Civil society, 5)

Attitudinal changes take a long time to occur, and the recent IMAGES (2018) survey noted some mixed answers with regards to women's participation in public and leadership roles. While 59% of women agreed that women should be better represented in political leadership positions, only 42 % of men agreed with this statement. According to the survey (2018, p.34), quotas were supported by 80% of the women and 60% of men. Meanwhile, 59% of men also

agreed with the statement that "women should leave politics to men", as did 41% of the study's women participants.

The third issue highlighted was the complicated and, in many ways, outdated legal system that is still prevalent in Palestine. All the different areas of the occupied Palestinian territory operate under different types of judicial system. This especially impacts women as the laws related to women's rights are different depending on whether you live in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or the Gaza Strip. For example, domestic violence is not criminalized in Gaza or the West Bank, and several Palestinian women's rights groups have continued to push for a comprehensive domestic violence law (Amnesty International, 2019).

Many of the interviewees reflected on everyday examples of attitudes expressed by men and women, or implicit in the legal system, which illustrate the extent to which Palestine remains a patriarchal society (Civil society 2, 3, 4, 8) . For example, one interviewee recalled that, even though the law allows a woman to inherit from her father, in reality, societal expectations mean that the woman will be pressured to give her part of the inheritance to her brothers or male members of the family (Civil society, 4). Another of the interviewees reflected on the complexity of living under a legal system that treats people differently:

> We strive to shape a set of progressive laws and regulations which support the role of women in society. We strive for a civil society that values social justice for women. As a Palestinian society, we live in the West Bank under Jordanian law. In Gaza we inherited the Egyptian – and before that the Ottoman – family laws. In Jerusalem we have the Israeli laws. So, you have three different sets of laws and so our struggle is to create a Palestinian law that strives towards a just and equal Palestinian society that condemns violence. (Civil society, 2)

Another example that relates to the legal system, provided by the same interviewee, demonstrates the ways in which laws fail to protect women:

We are striving to have updated laws. For example, with reference to the penal law, in the situation where a women finds her husband committing adultery and if she were to murder him, she would be given a life sentence, whereas, if the opposite was the case, the man would be given a year or so in prison in the name of defending his 'honour'. The law justifies his reaction and so grants him a lesser sentence whereas it does not do the same for women. This year alone, 22 women were murdered in the name of 'honour killings'. Because there is a deficiency in laws which punish such acts, more acts of violence are committed against women. (Civil society, 2)

In many cases, the silence over violence against women is supported by Palestine's legal system which fails to criminalise domestic violence. The Palestinian Authority's Ministry for Women's Affairs is working on adopting a Family Protection Bill, which, if ratified, would provide measures to combat and prevent violence, and it would also ensure reparations, due protection, and the empowerment of survivors of violence, as well as holding perpetrators accountable for their acts (UNFPA Palestine, 2018). The UN Women Special Representative for Palestine, Maryse Guimond, has described the Family Protection Bill as instrumental to the collective efforts to protect women from violence and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions (United Nations Question of Palestine, 2020). The endorsement of the bill would be critical for Palestinian women, although it has been receiving a lot of critique from Palestinian Islamic scholars who have expressed their view that it contradicts the values of Palestinian society and Islamic Sharia laws (*The Jerusalem Post*, 2020). However, although ratification of the bill would be an important first step, real success will only be seen if it is properly implemented and its commitments are delivered through policing and services (UNFPA Palestine, 2018).

According to the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) (2017) pre-session report to CEDAW, femicide cases are prevalent in Palestine. Although there are no government agencies monitoring or reporting these deaths, in 2016 WCLAC observed 23 cases

which involved the killing of Palestinian women and girls, and their shelter house protected 25 others. Often cases like these are based on honour, which still has an important role in Palestinian society according to the WCLAC report. The OHCHR (2017) report concurs that family honour still has a fundamental role within Palestinian society, and it notes that violent crimes committed against women are often explained on the grounds that women have supposedly tarnished the honour of their family. Transgressions against social norms which require women to behave in accordance with patriarchal values are considered to be violations of honour and therefore women are discouraged from reporting such cases because they fear for their reputations (OHCHR, 2017).

The latest driver of inequality for women in Palestine has been the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's adverse impact on Palestinian women has been exacerbated by the fact that, due to the occupation, the PA has limited capacity to address the problems it has caused. The pandemic has reinforced inequalities such as GBV and discrimination in Palestine (GAPS, 2021), while lockdowns and school closures have increased the amount of unpaid care work that many women undertake (United Nations, 2020). There has also been an increase in incidences of domestic and gender-based violence being reported since the pandemic began; however, in reality the numbers are probably higher due to the difficulties women have faced in accessing appropriate services during lockdown (United Nations, 2020, GAPS, 2021). The COVID-19 crisis has also made it increasingly difficult for marginalised groups residing in Gaza or Area C to access healthcare. This has become life-threatening as Gazans have been unable to obtain critical medical care outside of Gaza during the pandemic (GAPS, 2021).

In the light of these responses, the next section focuses on discussing the relevance of the WPS framework for Palestinian women and reflecting on the challenges women face in their everyday lives.

5.3.2. Conceptualisation of the WPS resolutions – what does 'peace and security' mean?

The previous chapter analysed how the WPS resolutions are perceived in South Africa and how the resolutions have conceptualised security and peace. The findings from the interviews conducted in South Africa demonstrated how the WPS Agenda's focus on conflict and post-conflict situations (see for example Ní Aoláin 2016, Aroussi 2017) hinders its potential to be effectively implemented in areas and countries that do not neatly fit into this categorisation. . It is within this problematic and normative conceptual framework that the situation in Palestine should be considered.

The Palestinian context is unique in the sense that it involves a country under an occupation that has now lasted for decades. The key flaw of the WPS Agenda lies in the fact that it is not clear with regards to what kinds of conflicts it covers (McLeod, 2011; Ní Aoláin, 2016; Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019). This issue was reflected in the answers the research participants made when they were asked if they thought the WPS Agenda is relevant to the Palestinian context. For example, one interviewee noted that the occupation also affects the practical implementation of the WPS Agenda:

> If we are speaking about protection – there is no protection at all – the Authority cannot take any action related to protection, because they are not the one controlling the area. That is why we need to focus more on the Israeli side of protection. Especially in Area C. (Civil society, 1)

The interviewees suggested that it was difficult to understand and harmonise the resolution in the Palestinian context when the focus has largely been on its implementation in post-conflict countries (Civil society, 1, 4, 5). These problems are also complicated by the fact that recognising the status of occupation is also a political matter and holding Israel accountable as the occupying power is a matter of global power politics. The occupation affects every part of

Palestinian lives, and one of the interviewees described the issue in terms of a need to give the resolution 'hands and legs' in order for it to be useful to Palestinians:

> We have to give this resolution hands and legs to be useful for Palestinians. It is speaking about conflict areas… For us, we are very careful about this, because we say we are under occupation. It is not a conflict area. And this is a big difference to us. (Civil society, 3)

This statement reflects the debate around the conceptual flaws in the Agenda's own definition of security. As can be understood from the data, this makes it increasingly difficult for stakeholders at the national level to understand how security should be defined when they are implementing the Agenda. The interviewees regarded being able to apply the WPS Agenda in different contexts as an important factor in terms of its relevance to them and women in Palestine:

> For us in Palestine, when you say it's a conflict area… I always feel like in Palestine it's a complete different context. Conflict area is usually an area where there is war that is actually not the situation in Palestine. We have been in crisis since 1948. (Civil society, 4)

The flaw within the Agenda itself, as Ní Aoláin (2020) argues, is that it does not engage with occupation and the overarching gender and power dynamics that come with it. As one of the interviewees said:

> The problem about this resolution because it does not mention occupation it only mentions women under conflict. And we are not living in conflict with Israel. It is occupation. So that's why it was very specific for us to implement this resolution, but in the Palestinian context. (Individual expert, 1)

The needs of women and girls are varied depending on their situations, and this is important to recognise, especially in the Palestinian context where the conflict or occupation has been ongoing since 1948 and where there is a clear power asymmetry between the occupiers and the occupied. As one of the interviewees noted: "UN 1325 would be different in different areas. We are in protracted conflict… It's the Palestinian situation" (Civil society, 4). Another commented that

> There are certain aspects which are more relevant to us. We are in a specific situation; we are under occupation. We have been trained and we have then trained others regarding the documentation of the Israeli violations under occupation. CEDAW and 1325 supports documentation and presenting your case at the International Court of Justice. (Civil society, 2)

One of the interviewees highlighted well why the complex situation in Palestine makes it hard for them to deal with Resolution 1325 and therefore why the localisation of the NAP is very important:

> Especially 1325, it talks a lot about security issues and peace. It's complicated…. I do not think it's easy for me as Palestinian to deal with 1325 in our context as any other woman in London for example that is not part of the minority. (Civil society, 9)

However, the majority of interviewees agreed that, even though the terminology and conceptualisation of the Agenda might not be accurate, it is nevertheless relevant to the Palestinian context (Civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, Individual expert 4. Due to the occupation, Palestine is a country which is in a form of conflict. Palestinians are experiencing forms of repression and structural violence, and women are often on the receiving end. I argue that the Palestinian situation, like the South African one, can be examined through Cockburn's (2004) model of the "continuum of violence", where individuals' lives are impacted by forms of everyday violence that occur regularly and everywhere and "may be more prevalent in

inequitable and unstable societal environments" (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016, p. 380). As one of the interviewees said, she saw peace as multidimensional and more comprehensive than just ending the occupation. For her it was important to achieve peace that means equal rights for all people: "For us peace doesn't need to mean to end the war and occupation. Peace means we achieve all the humanitarian rights for people" (Civil society, 8). This highlights how the participants see peace and security from a feminist perspective, which is aiming to make social change, and calls for emancipation of the people (see for example Sjoberg and Tickner 2011, Wibben 2011).

As one of the interviewees highlighted, it is important to recognise the unique situation in Palestine: "The terminology is fine for Palestine, because there is conflict. It is just different to other areas in the world" (Civil society, 4).

The next section discusses the different activities that civil society organisations have used to engage with the WPS Agenda and gender equality, and it also discusses practical examples of the work being conducted at local level to advance women's security.

5.3.3. Civil society engagement with the WPS Agenda

Because the sampling method for interviews focused on snowball and purposeful sampling, this meant that people interviewed for this research were all familiar with the WPS Agenda and had either utilised it in some way or drawn on the principles of Resolution 1325 or the broader WPS Agenda in their work.

In line with my research aims, I was interested in hearing about how civil society organisations had used or taken advantage of the WPS Agenda within their own work and what sort of activities focused on the WPS Agenda had been carried out. The activities organisations conducted that were related to the WPS Agenda fell into three main categories: training, advancing women's political participation, and documenting human rights violations that arose specifically in relation to the occupation.

Training and capacity-building on issues related to the WPS Agenda were common activities within the organisations:

> Our focus is to empower women both in the private and public sphere – through different interventions, independence, economic area, empower women to participate to political structures and decision-making processes. We have to challenge the law and political process. We try to build the capacity of women… to educate them… to understand their rights and also to advocate their rights. (Civil society, 8)

One interviewee highlighted awareness-raising activities they had conducted with the support of an international organisation:

> They supported us with a project for three years in which we were tasked to train all our staff and leadership in other organisations. We trained and transferred this knowledge to other organisations to raise awareness around 1325. (Civil society, 2)

Documenting human rights violations and holding Israel accountable were some of the other activities fostered by most of the organisations (Civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9). Strategic objective number 2 of the Palestinian National Action Plan 2016-2019 is to "hold the Israeli occupation accountable nationally and internationally for its violations against Palestinian women and girls" (Palestinian National Action Plan, 2015, p. 30). The Palestinian NAP's focus on holding the Israeli occupation accountable highlights the uniqueness of the situation, because NAPs are usually focused on internal and external objectives which relate to a country's domestic situation. This element in the NAP also has implications with regards to funding, as will be discussed later on, and Palestine did not receive international funding for the activities of its NAP (Individual expert 1). According to the NAP, the civil society sector is responsible for implementing several of the activities under the umbrella of strategic objective number 2, which include collecting testimonies, putting cases before the national court, and submitting

reports at all levels describing the violations of the occupation against Palestinian women and girls (ibid.). One of the interviewees described the activities they carry out as follows:

> In order to support the Palestinian Authority to implement the National Action Plan we carry out capacity-building for human rights defenders and women activists, in order not only to increase their knowledge and awareness on the UN resolution but also to provide them or equip them with the skills in order to monitor and document the violations and carry out initiatives to promote women, peace and security. (Civil society, 10)

Another interviewee emphasised the work they do predominantly in Area C, which is under the full civil and military control of Israel and one of the areas where women are especially vulnerable due to the ongoing occupation:

> We work with women based in locations where they are in direct confrontation with the occupation such as in Susya, Rashaydeh, Jebt Al Deyr, Fara,' and other villages surrounded by settlements. We train these women to document the violations they face through various methods such as photography, writing, recording, video recording – in order to accumulate enough material to present it to the UN as a report so that we can then take Israel to the International Court of Justice in Hague. (Civil society, 2)

These examples demonstrate that organisations in Palestine have paid attention to how they can make the WPS National Action Plan relevant to the Palestinian context by, for example, specifically focusing on holding Israel accountable for human rights violations.

Many of the organisations (Civil society 4, 5, 6, 8) interviewed, work on increasing women's political participation, which is in line with strategic objective number 3 of the NAP (Palestine National Action Plan, 2015). The main aim of this objective is to "develop and increase the representation of Palestinian women at the leadership level in governmental and non-

governmental institutions and support their participation in global institutions" (ibid, pp. 44). As one of the interviewees reported:

> Regards 1325, women's political participation has been an ongoing programme in our organisation since 2003. It was to get women involved in national and local elections. The main areas we work on to enhance political participation – policy and legal framework of elections, other pathway is training and capacity-building. This means town hall meetings and awareness sessions on the importance of women's participation and is conducted by the field coordinators. (Civil society, 5)

There were also a few interviewees who had themselves participated in different training courses related to 1325 in order to improve their knowledge, as one of the interviewees reflected:

> I enrolled in a two-year course to enable me to professionally produce a media report to address issues around 1325. They told me "You're 56 years old and you want to come study?" I told them that I want to document issues around 1325 in a professional way so that I can deliver my message. Through media I can make a change. (Civil society, 2)

One of the other participants discussed how the training she received was very beneficial not least because she is able to pass on the skills she learnt to other people in Palestinian communities (Civil society, 6). This demonstrates that training members of and activists in civil society organisations can increase the impact of efforts to advance the skills of women outside these groups, because they can pass relevant skills on to those who need them. As one interviewee noted: "The training I received empowered me, when I write the proposal, when I talk to donors. And now I pass it on to the trainers in the field" (Civil society, 6).

A few of the interviewees who represented civil society organisations that were not part of the Higher National Committee said that they had run projects related to Resolution 1325, such as

training women on its broad principles (Civil society 4, 6). These activities were often funded by international donors, such as individual countries or other development organisations, and had a specific focus on the resolution (Civil society 6). Others had provided training that was informed by the overall principles of 1325 but was not necessarily directly linked to the resolution:

> When we would have training, we would address topics that are under 1325 but not necessarily within those terms [referring to the specific terminology used in the resolution's texts] – so, for example, women's political participation. (Civil society, 4)

As became evident from the interviews, a majority of the civil society organisations in Palestine receive foreign donor funding which allows them to design their own programmes and activities. The foreign donor funding comes from a variety of different sources, but commonly civil societies receive donor funding directly from individual countries, specifically from European countries or through large international development programmes and organisations such as the UN, the European Union, and other country-led programmes (Civil society 4, 5, 6, 8)[17].

When discussing the different activities they undertook, it is important to differentiate between the organisations depending on whether or not they have membership of the Higher National Committee. While the activities of non-member organisations do not vary too much from the purposes or aims of the National Action Plan, they are not necessarily linked directly to it. The civil society organisations that are part of the Higher National Committee are actually directly implementing the aims of the National Action Plan and are engaging with it through their programmes. However, the reliance for implementation on civil society organisations was a source of dissatisfaction for interviewees (Civil society 1, 5, 8).

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[17] For broader discussion on Palestinian NGOs receiving foreign funding, please see Darweish & Rigby, 2015

Civil society is often delegated to implement the different activities and programmes of the NAP together with international and national organisations and the state (Björkdahl & Mannegren Selimovic, 2019). For example, Björkdahl and Mannegren Selimovic (ibid) highlight several instances, where civil society organisations have engaged with efforts to end direct violence. Resolution 2242 (2015) urges cooperation with civil society on the implementation of the Agenda. According to analysis by PeaceWomen (2021) many of the National Action Plans allocate a specific duty or a role to civil society organisations in relation to implementation - 69 out of the 92 NAPs (75%) follow this pattern. Although the National Action Plans are for governments to implement, it was clear from the discussions with the research participants that actually the majority of the activities have been implemented by civil society organisations with limited funding from either international donors or governmental budgets (Civil society 1, 4, 5, 8). The data reflects the fact that the civil society organisations are expected to implement these activities but do not receive any additional funding from the government to do so. It should also be noted, although this was not directly discussed by the participants, that because Palestine's NAP's objectives include holding the Israeli occupation accountable, not necessarily all international donors are willing to fund activities/programmes that will directly address the occupying power and try to hold it accountable (Individual expert 1).

The political situation within Palestine is an important factor too. As one of the individual experts I interviewed observed, civil society organisations are able to implement activities better in Gaza than the government because of the political situation in the area (Individual expert, 1). The National Action Plan states that the implementation of the plan will be the responsibility of governmental and non-governmental institutions (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017), but

> When they start to prepare the report to highlight the implementation of 1325 it is clear
> that the civil society is responsible for the implementation of the NAP. This is one of

the gaps we have tried highlight and take into consideration when the 2nd generation NAP is being developed. (Civil society, 5)

The next section looks at the broader framework of the WPS Agenda and the different themes that arose from the interviews, from the relevance of its resolutions to its implementation and challenges.

6.3.4. The WPS Agenda as a tool to progress women's rights in Palestine

Palestine launched its first UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan to cover the period from 2017 to 2019. It was developed as a national effort, led by the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs, which acted as the head of the Higher National Committee for Implementation of UNSCR1325 (Peace Women, n.d.). The Higher National Committee for Implementation of Resolution 1325 consists of government ministries and women's organisations in Palestine. The group started as a small cohort of organisations and ministries and has since expanded to include approximately 30 organisations working in the West Bank and Gaza.[18]

The Minister for Women's Affairs, Haifa Fahmi Al-Agha, outlined the NAP's ethos in the foreword of the National Action Plan:

> Palestinian policymakers believe that peace, security and stability will only be achieved by ending the Israeli occupation and creating the independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and within the borders of June 4, 1967. This must be done according to international legitimacy, not through the use of brute force, settlement expansion, collective punishment, and house demolitions, but through the adoption of practical measures and procedures that provide protection and prevention for Palestinian women and uphold peace and security. UN resolutions, chiefly United

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[18] This is an estimate of the number of organisations involved. An exact number cannot be confirmed as none of the interviewees were able to recall the number of organisations involved in the committee, and no English language websites provide up-to-date information on the figure.

Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, must be implemented. (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017, p. 4)

The key focus areas of the 2017-2019 National Action Plan were the protection of Palestinian women from the violations of the Israeli occupation, the development of protection mechanisms to counter these violations, and increasing the participation of women in peace-making process at all levels, holding Israel internationally accountable, addressing the impact of conflict on women, and integrating women's points of view in all peace and reconciliation agreements (Palestine National Action Plan 2017-2019, 2017). The National Action Plan outlines three strategic objectives: 1) to enhance the protection of Palestinian women and girls, especially from the violations of Israeli occupation; 2) to hold Israeli occupation accountable; and 3) to enhance the participation of Palestinian women in local and international decision-making processes (ibid.). Hence, the Palestinian NAP is unique in the sense that its primary objective is to address the occupation (Swaine, 2018). However, one could argue that nationalist efforts to fight the occupation have overtaken the focus on gender once again. Rather than necessarily focusing on improving the lives of women and girls more broadly, the NAP prioritises the nationalist cause of fighting the Israeli occupation. Then again, as Nusseibeh (2020) writes, it is hard to see how Palestinian women could be directly connected with anything to do with 1325 when the occupation and threat of annexation are ongoing. This was looked at in the brief section which examined the history of the Palestinian national movement earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 6.

At the time the fieldwork, the State of Palestine was in the process of revising the above-mentioned National Action Plan and developing the "2nd generation plan" (Civil society, 5). It was clear that the aim of this new process was not to develop a completely new plan but to make sure that any defaults found during the implementation of the first plan were addressed (Civil society, 5). Palestine also acceded to the CEDAW agreement in April 2014 without any reservations or declarations. Palestine was the only country in the Middle East and North Africa

to do so. However, it should be noted that the Palestinian Authority has not ratified the optional CEDAW protocol, which operates as an accountability mechanism (Joint submission to the CEDAW Committee on the State of Palestine, 2018).

Although Palestine has ratified CEDAW and also developed a NAP for the implementation of the WPS Agenda, Israel would be obligated to implement the WPS Agenda within the occupied Palestinian territory as well as CEDAW, due to its position as the occupying power (ESCWA, 2019). The CEDAW report (Joint submission to the CEDAW Committee on the State of Palestine 2018, p. 3) also notes that Israel as the occupying power "is not absolved of its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It notes that the Convention is applicable in the entire territory of the State party and that the State party should implement it in all parts of its territory".

As of June 2022, Israel does not have a National Action Plan for the implementation of the WPS Agenda (PeaceWomen, 2021). Israel has refuted these international frameworks and their application to the situation, as it believes the conventions are territorially bound and hence do not apply to areas that are outside of Israel's national territory (ESCWA, 2018). There is very limited discussion on the laws of occupation and the structural limits it poses, as Ní Aoláin (2020) has pointed out, and gendered analysis which seeks to understand the limits of the law and the experience of living under occupation has been entirely absent from the literature.

The next section discusses the usefulness of the WPS Agenda to the Palestinian context, before moving on to examine whether the WPS Agenda can work for all Palestinian women or just for a few select groups.

5.3.4 Relevance of the framework in Palestine

In discussions about the relevance of the WPS framework for Palestinian women, all respondents agreed it is a useful instrument (Civil society 1-10); however, it comes with its own challenges, which are all discussed in the next sections of this chapter. Protecting

Palestinian women from violations arising from the Israeli occupation and holding Israel accountable internationally is one of the key strategic objectives of the Palestinian National Action Plan. Of the three main strategic objectives of the National Action Plan, two of them are directly linked to the Israeli occupation: 1) ensuring the protection of Palestinian women and girls, especially from the Israeli occupation and 2) holding Israeli occupation accountable (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017).

Whereas research participants in South Africa saw the Agenda as a useful framework for dealing with issues that affect South African women, such as gender-based violence and other forms of violence within their society, the Palestinian research participants emphasised the potential of the Agenda to act as a global advocacy tool. A majority of interviewees emphasised that they see the resolution as a tool for international advocacy against the occupation (Civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, Individual expert 1). International advocacy for them means that they can shed light in the international arena on Israeli human rights violations. The resolution gives them legitimacy to talk about these issues both at national and international levels, as was highlighted by one of the interviewees:

> This resolution is a political tool that can support women… and an advocacy tool as well. We see it as a tool of international advocacy…. We try to develop manuals on the implementation of 1325, documentation tools about human rights violations. Women refugees, women living in marginalised areas, in prisons, near the settlements, in Gaza. (Civil society, 5)

While it is important to be able to raise these issues in official conversations at an international level, as one of the interviewees noted, the fact that the Agenda has been adopted by the Palestinian Authority gives legitimacy for those discussions at the national level as well (Civil society 6). It also shows that the government is committed to the Agenda:

Yes, it can be useful to our work. Because what makes us powerful, is that Palestinian Authority signed these. We are all the time referring to Palestinian declaration of Independence. We are not saying something from the sky, they signed on these legislations. We are not doing something strange. We have the right to advocate these. (Civil society, 6)

Another of the interviewees highlighted that she thought the Agenda is a useful tool for Palestine because, as an international framework, it has legitimacy and it is also connected to other international agreements. Therefore, this gives her more power to speak up:

It is very relevant and very important. First of all, it is a UN Security Council resolution, and it is legally binding...[19] It takes on a strong international perspective involving the Security Council and so we are pushing for this resolution to be mainstream and adopted. It is also tied to several international agreements associated with CEDAW, human right laws, the World Health Organization – it is bound to international agreements that are in our favour as Palestinian women. This gives me a position of strength when I approach the UN with a report showing what we have done on the basis of 1325. We use it to advocate for our rights. It is a channel for us as Palestinians who live under occupation to convey our message international. (Civil society, 2)

It was interesting that the interviewees also emphasised how important it is to be part of a bigger movement, to be in solidarity with other women around the world, and fight together for the same cause:

Yes, this is exactly the statement we have made in our vision [referring to 1325 used as a tool to shed light on Palestinian issues at an international level]. We know that this will not lead to Palestine's freedom, yet we have agreed that we would use it as a tool

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[19] The discussion about whether the WPS Agenda resolutions are legally binding has been an issue of constant disagreement. Please refer to Chapter 2 Section 2.2. for a full discussion of the matter.

to shed light on women rights issues in Palestine. We also use it to join other Arab and Palestinian women to fight the same cause. (Civil society, 3)

It's good that it brings together Palestinian women with other women movement around the world. (Civil society, 5)

One of the interviewees raised an important and interesting point when she observed that the resolution is focused on women but driven by politics (Civil society 3). The politics of the Palestinian NAP respond to the occupation, but this has implications in terms of international support, given the support Israel receives globally. While some states recognise the State of Palestine, some organisations have refused to fund the Palestinian NAP because one of its objectives is to hold the Israeli occupation accountable (Civil society 5, Individual expert 1). The issues raised by the next interviewee accurately reflect the fact that, while the resolution itself cannot liberate Palestinian women, it can help to raise awareness:

The Palestinian case with its power asymmetry and the external support Israel receives makes the case more complicated. It is a political issue. It is a women-focused resolution that is politically driven. Women's role in liberation is important, they have a role in liberation process, however as a resolution it will not liberate Palestine. We can use it though to raise awareness and strengthen the role of women and in shedding light on occupation violence. For example, we raised the case with women ambassadors in some Nordic countries like Sweden, Norway and Denmark – the counsels of these countries are women. Norway and Sweden for example have recognised Palestine. However, when it came to this resolution adopted by CSW which addresses women living in occupation accessing resources, they abstained from voting. Every year it was the same, I then spoke to them. This year they voted yes. So, this is a small achievement. When we meet with these women, we ask that they recognise Palestine. This is a contribution they can make towards the liberation process. (Civil society, 3)

Several interviewees (Civil society 2, 3, 6) highlighted the fact that they raise issues specifically through the UN instruments in order to make their voices heard:

> We always conduct visits to the UN offices here to present reports. Sometimes we even lead demonstrations in front of the UN offices and sometimes we send them statements. We are in contact with the Human Rights Council. As members of the coalition, we work with a number of Palestinian organisations that work on consultancy and have a role in the Human Rights Council. They raise issues on human rights and working women rights. These have a strong connection to international human rights organisations. (Civil society, 3)

Representatives of civil society organisations mentioned specific examples which illustrate the kinds of situations in which they can use the Agenda as an international advocacy tool:

> If my house is demolished, if there is a restriction of movement, if there are health issues that are raised – I can document this and raise it to international organisations and the UN and make a case. (Civil society, 2)

The following examples were given by one of the participants, from a civil society organisation, who explained how the organisation uses Resolution 1325 to record and campaign against human rights violations:

> For example, we have more than 250 Palestinian men and women who are killed and nobody knows where they are or whether they have been kept in Israeli morgues or if they are buried, nobody knows what has happened to those people and this is a human rights violation. Using 1325 in accordance with violations against human right laws, I can argue for such a case. Even if those people are now dead, it is still a crime that needs to be brought to justice. Another example is political prisoners that are in need of healthcare. One of them needs intensive care from suffering from burn wounds. This is a crime. We used 1325 to campaign on their behalf. This type of violence can be

addressed through CEDAW and 1325. There are different forms of violence. There is violence within our society and the violence of the occupation. So many pregnant women have had miscarriages or been shot at checkpoints. (Civil society, 2)

The civil society organisations that were not part of the Higher National Committee raised particular issues which were specific to the implementation of the resolution and its suitability to the Palestinian context. The issue of suitability was not necessarily raised in relation to the context of Palestine but rather to criticise the lack of implementation. As one of the interviewees noted, it is disappointing that there are no accountability measures in place at international level (Civil society 10) although it should be noted here that CEDAW Recommendation No. 30 was supposed to address this gap (see Chapter 2). States are not legally bound to implement the resolution or to evaluate and monitor its implementation at an international level:

It is useful in terms of defining the pillars we can work on. However, the resolution is not legally binding… there are no obligations on the duty bearers. Either the Palestinian Authority or Israel. The UN should introduce some articles in order to make it more as an obligation…. Until now there are no measures in place to evaluate the implementation. (Civil society, 10)

Another interviewee reflected on an issue that was also raised in the interviews with the South African research participants about how the resolutions usually end up being just pieces of paper without any real impact at the national level:

Resolutions on paper… to me, it is paper. If we mean as a country, I mean all aspects, ministries, CSOs, local communities, the resolution in itself is fine. There is also CEDAW. There's also hundred other resolutions. It all goes back to international human rights. (Civil society, 4)

In their criticisms, interviewees mentioned the frustration that arises because, while they always hear about these UN resolutions, they do not see them making a difference at the grassroots level (Civil society, 6). There were discussions about the lack of accountability that exists generally for UN resolutions, and interviewees who expressed this sentiment referred to the fact that governments are not held accountable, whether or not they implement these international frameworks (Civil society 8). Similarly as in the South African case, the data from Palestine demonstrates the issues that persist with regards to the implementation of WPS Agenda and contributes to the broader discussion on this (see, for example, Willet, 2010; Basu et al.2020). The lack of accountability was especially raised by a number of the representatives of the smaller organisations that I interviewed (Civil society 6, 8). They highlighted that the people they train in local communities are generally sceptical towards international resolutions or agendas:

> In general women do not trust the international instruments. In their daily life they see there is a delay of accountability all the time. All these international instruments 1325, SDGs.… They do not trust them because there is not Israeli accountability. This is why we push for these instruments and hold the UN accountable for these instruments. That is why we participate all these international forums. (Civil society, 8)

In the case of Palestine, it is even more understandable why there is generally a lack of trust in UN resolutions. People do not think that in reality these resolutions can make changes in their lives. It is understandable that there is no trust, as UN resolutions have proved to be futile for Palestinians during the ongoing occupation. For example, two well-known UN resolutions have not made a difference. Resolution 2334 (2016) concerns the Israeli settlements and how they are against international law and demands that Israel stops settlement activity immediately. Resolution 242 (1967) calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the Palestinian territory which were occupied in 1967, although it does not specify the extent of the withdrawal. As one interviewee highlighted:

Always we hear about UN resolutions, but the reality in the ground is different… people lost their trust in UN resolutions. It is like a foreign mechanism we are using. You are NGO-funded by foreign money, you are practising foreign agenda in Palestine.... Sometimes we are accused that we are advocating foreign agenda. (Civil society, 6)

This section has focused on discussing whether or not the research participants see the WPS Agenda to be a useful framework for the Palestinian situation. The following segment will focus on analysing if the Agenda can work for every woman in Palestine or just a select few.

5.3.5 Intersectional identities of women in Palestine – can the WPS Agenda work for all Palestinian women?

One of the criticisms of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda has been the language it uses to describe women and their agency. Although the subsequent resolutions have tried to progress the conversation from simply describing women as either victims or peacebuilders, as was the case in Resolution 1325, women are still represented purely in gendered terms in documents.. Recently, Davies and True (2019) have highlighted this same issue and suggest that, while conversation around 'which women' and 'what agendas' is currently being shelved by states, it should be the focus of discussions engaged in by academics and women's rights activists. As one of the interviewees from Palestine said:

What you see in Area C is radically different what you see in Area B, Area A, or Jerusalem or Gaza. There is no one Palestinian women…. This could be the critique of the whole WPS Agenda. It does not address women in plural… there is no one monolithic Palestinian woman. (Individual expert, 3)

As discussed in the earlier chapters where I suggest adding the notion of geographical location to discussions on intersectionality, this is especially significant in the Palestinian case, where the geographical location affects not only on living conditions but also one's ability to travel and live in different areas within Palestine. Palestinian women's everyday lives vary depending

on which area they live in, as living conditions and access to services and education will depend on their location. Area C comprises more than 60% of the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority's ability to enforce any laws or provide public services to women and girls in this area is hindered by its geopolitical situation. The government of Israel does not provide these services, even though it is required to do so under international law (ESCWA, 2018). Girls and women are especially vulnerable in Area C due to the occupation and Israel's control of the area. For example, Israel's planning and zoning policies have made it impossible for Palestinians who live in East Jerusalem and Area C to secure building permits for schools, clinics, or homes. These policies are a direct violation of international human rights law and humanitarian law and the number one reason for the forced displacement of Palestinians (ESCWA, 2018). According to an ESCWA (2018) report, the Bedouin and herding communities in Area C, as well as Palestinians who live in East Jerusalem, are the most vulnerable. Over 10,000 people who live in the 63 communities of Area C are at risk of forcible transfer. Forced displacement and demolition of property especially affects women and their rights not only to adequate housing but also to a good quality of life (CEDAW, 2018). These policies have a disproportionate impact on women's rights because of women's cultural roles as primary caregivers and managers of their households (ESCWA, 2018). Occupation also affects girls' ability to attend school, with many unable to travel to school because of restrictions on movement in the form of checkpoints or interrogation by Israeli soldiers at checkpoints. This is an especially relevant issue in Area C, where one third of the communities do not have a primary school and girls are forced to travel long distances to access education, often having to go through checkpoints (ESCWA, 2018).

The interviewees were asked if they considered the resolution to be a good tool for advocating for the rights of all women in Palestine, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, political affiliations, marital status, or location. They were asked to reflect on this widely, not just focusing on a particular social category but considering diverse scenarios, as well as if

circumstances would be different depending on which Area (A, B or C) the women lived in. There was no considerable difference between the responses from organisations interviewed in Bethlehem, Ramallah, and East Jerusalem, and neither did the answers given reflect whether or not the interviewees were members of the Higher National Committee for the implementation of the National Action Plan. Most of the interviewees agreed that the resolution is suitable for women across various backgrounds:

> 100% yes, and for all women across various backgrounds. Here for example, we do not differentiate between Muslims and Christians. For example, we pressured the Palestinian Authority to eliminate identifying one's religion on the ID card. This divides society. Now our IDs do not specify religion. If it is included in the ID, it will lead to discrimination. Another example: on the local level, we have political splits and women are usually the first victims as their husbands are imprisoned, killed, have become amputees, or have been heavily wounded – so all women are also affected. This puts a heavy burden on women in the home. (Civil society, 2)

One of the interviewees expressed her opinion that, because it does not specify any particular women, the Agenda is therefore applicable to all women and people who identify as women:

> When you are saying women. You are not specifying. Coloured or white. We are talking all women. Whoever identifies as women. This is the way I would take it. (Civil society, 4)

In a similar vein to some of the interviewees in South Africa, participants emphasised how important it is to localise the Agenda to fit the Palestinian context and specifically the situations women face in different local areas. So, even if the Agenda itself does not take intersectionality into account, the localised National Action Plans could do this:

> Well actually when we developed the National Action Plan and tried to localise it to the Palestinian context. We tried to make it work for all context. In all different areas

Jerusalem, Gaza, West Bank and Areas A, B and C. Different social, educational and economic backgrounds. (Civil society, 10)

However, it is important to remember that the women who were interviewed were all based in urban areas and large cities – either in Ramallah, Bethlehem, or East Jerusalem. They were working in established civil society organisations and, although they will undoubtedly have a vast knowledge of the situation women face across Palestine, there can be big cultural differences between women working in Ramallah or East Jerusalem and those living in the tiniest villages in the South Hebron Hills in Area C. For example, one of the interviewees from East Jerusalem recalled how they prefer to operate with the ideology of "locals providing for the locals" (Civil society, 4). She emphasised that they take different approaches depending on the area, and she proceeded to offer as an example the fact that she is considered as a "Westerner" in some parts of the West Bank if she goes to more remote areas in her official capacity as a Jerusalemite with her hair out (Civil society, 4).

Most interviewees recognised local differences, including, for example, that women living in Area C are affected differently to those living in Ramallah (which is in Area A) (Civil society 1, 4, 5, 6, 10, Individual expert 1, 3). The occupation has a gendered impact on the lives of women and girls, in the form of threats of forced evictions and house demolitions, settlement activity, and overall security (ESCWA, 2019). Depending on where one lives, the opportunities to access services and opportunities such as healthcare, employment, and education are different. The legal system and judicial system between the PA and Israeli authorities is also different depending where one lives. Therefore, it is important to recognise areas' differences, as a couple of the interviewees explained:

People in Bethlehem, in the city are different to people in Area C, in Hebron. So harsh, the living situation in the Area C in the unpaved roads, they just have elementary school,

no health services, the next school is 30 min away. Even the language you use is different (Civil society, 4)

Palestinians living in Jerusalem they are vulnerable because they are not considered full citizens. (Civil society, 10)

The geographical location matters in Palestine. East Jerusalem has been occupied by Israel since 1967, and in 1980 it was officially annexed when Israel passed its "Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel", in violation of international law. Israel also applies it civil law in East Jerusalem, even though the area remains an occupied territory under international law. Palestinians from the West Bank require a special permit from Israel in order to visit the city, and these are increasingly difficult to obtain (ESCWA, 2018).

The situation in the Gaza Strip is dire, especially for women and girls. The UN Country team in Palestine estimated that, at the current rate, Gaza would be "unliveable" by 2020 (ESCWA, 2018), and the poverty rate in Gaza was 53% in 2017. The series of Israeli military offensives in Gaza has led to catastrophic living conditions, high unemployment rates, extreme poverty, electricity cuts, and a poor situation with regards to sanitation and fresh water. This has particularly affected women and girls. In 2018, the unemployment rate for women was 78.3%. Healthcare in Gaza is seriously affected by the blockade and there is a constant shortage of medical equipment and essentials. Israel denies Palestinians the right to leave Gaza unless they are experiencing a serious emergency (ESCWA, 2018). Over 40,000 pregnant women were unable to receive basic reproductive health care during the 2014 war on Gaza (OHCHR, 2017),

Reflecting on these statistics and figures, rather than just recognising and limiting intersectional identities to categories such as race, class, age, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity, it is very important to recognise the urban/rural divide as a key factor in women's experience. Palestinian women's lives can be very different depending if one lives in one of the administrative cities, or in a more rural location, further away from cities such as Ramallah or Bethlehem. As has been discussed before, in the Palestinian case, because of the occupation

enforced restriction of movements, it might mean that in order to travel from A to B, one has to take long, back roads because the main roads are controlled by Israel. This is for example the case if on needs to travel from South of West Bank to Ramallah. As one of the interviewees highlighted, for example, job opportunities are very different for girls depending on where they live:

> This is the issue, what really is happening in the ground. These girls in the vulnerable communities do not have job opportunities. There is opportunities to work in Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem, but not elsewhere in the West Bank. (Civil society, 6)

Even though women in Palestine are generally well educated, many up to university level, female unemployment rates remain high. Women's labour force participation in Palestine remains one of the lowest in the world; in the first quarter of 2018, 81.1% of women remained out of employment.

One of the interviewees noted that women in these more marginalised areas lack opportunities to participate in decision-making processes:

> In these marginalised areas, it is the same. Women do not have the chance to be decision-makers. You might meet some activists, but they do not have the chance to make decisions. (Civil society, 6)

As discussed earlier, the effects of the occupation are different depending on where you live as well. This is particularly the case in Area C, which is under full Israeli civil and military control. Women in Area C are particularly vulnerable as they are not able to access protection services, as one interviewee observed:

> If we speak about protection for women… if its somewhere in Area C – Palestinian authorities are not able to go there, they have to talk to the Israeli military first. We cannot protect women in Area C this is the most difficult issue for us as a women's

organisation…. Women cannot go to the Israeli police – most of the time they have been abused by the Israeli police, also because of the reputation. (Civil society, 1)

As one of the interviewees highlighted, when differences between areas are recognised, it can become an opportunity in the sense that there can be a specific focus on targeting appropriate support:

Resolution 1325 as we understand it is focused on peacebuilding, so we focused on working with security forces like the Palestinian police – specifically their gender units. We led workshops that were focused on human rights issues and how to deal with women who are victims of violence. This is part of their responsibilities as they have programs related to family protection. These places are sometimes conservative areas and the police might treat victims of domestic violence as though she was the one being accused, and that is why very few women will go to the police in situations of domestic violence. (Civil society, 3)

An interesting question, raised by one of the research participants, asks whether it is necessary for all Palestinian women to know about the WPS Agenda or if it is in fact enough that leaders are aware of it and can advocate for it on behalf of all women in Palestine (Civil society, 3). This was an interesting point of view, as otherwise the majority of the interviewees, both in Palestine and South Africa, aimed to make the WPS Agenda known countrywide. According to this participant:

This is my opinion. We struggled before this resolution and we will continue our struggle against the occupation, during and after the resolution – should they ever cancel it. So, we do not need the resolution to carry on with this struggle. It is our duty to struggle. So, I do not believe that every Palestinian woman should know about this resolution. We want leaders – high and middle level, and also those at the local level to know about it because sometimes they will meet foreigners and they will go to UN

agencies and they might go to a workshop there – so it is good to know something about 1325. Every Palestinian should know about 242 and 194, but they do not need to know enough details to make a public opinion about 1325 – yet they should know enough to link such international tools to Palestinian women issues. It needs to be addressed in the Palestinian discourse. (Civil society, 3)

However, I would argue that there are dangers if members of the elite alone know about and advocate for the WPS Agenda because that approach will lead advocates to lose touch with what is actually needed at the most grassroots level. The implementation activities and development of the NAP for Palestine have already been largely within the hands of the local elite, both at governmental and civil society level, as was mentioned by one of the interviewees: "One thing, one critique that always comes up, is that the people at the table that are taking part of these discussions are elite women…" (Individual expert, 3).

The membership of the Higher National Committee is dominated by civil society organisations based in Ramallah, which are generally larger and more established organisations with access to international donor funding. Critiques of the implementation of the WPS Agenda highlight the fact that the process is in the hands of the elite, as is the Palestinian peace process which uses language and processes to which grassroot activists do not have access (Farr, 2011; Parke et al., 2019). In relation to the Israel-Palestine peace process, Farr (2011) argues that UNSCR 1325 is not something that ordinary women can effectively use to describe their peacebuilding work. She also thinks that it does not enhance their capacities to use the sophisticated language and political procedures that are necessary for participation in high-level negotiations. Hence, one of the main criticisms presented by academics (Farr, 2011; Richter-Devroe, 2012) is that UNSCR 1325 has made little difference to women's lives on the ground, and the gap between grassroots activism and women's participation in the peace process remains high (Farr, 2011). This criticism was highlighted in a speech by Randa Siniora (Head of WLAC), which was delivered as part of the UN Security Council Open Debate in October 2018. She talked about

the fact that, although women have been at the forefront of the Palestinian liberation movement, very few have been represented in the peace talks. (Siniora R., UN Security Council Open Debate, 2018).

However, progress with Resolution 1325 and its implementation over the years in Palestine represents a positive development. In a study conducted by Farr (2011) nearly 10 years ago, her main critique was how unknown 1325 was beyond a small number of feminist activists in Palestine who understood and were able to make use of it. Now, however, Resolution 1325 and the wider WPS Agenda, is widely known by women's organisations and other NGOs operating at the higher levels of Palestinian society. Of course, one could argue that this progress can be accredited to advancement and promotion of the WPS framework from the Global North. As this study's data indicates, the majority of the women's organisations in Palestine have received international donor funding to carry out activities related to Resolution 1325.

How can it be ensured that the needs and wants of, for example, young women in rural communities in Area C are represented in the policies that are driven by leaders in Ramallah? In order for the WPS Agenda to be useful, there needs to be a balance between the elite driving and developing the implementation of it and staying loyal to the needs of those who most urgently need the processes that are enabled by international frameworks such as the WPS Agenda.

The last two sections of this chapter will examine how the National Action Plan was developed and has been implemented in Palestine and the challenges it faces. Due to the differences between Palestine and South Africa and the stages they were at in developing/implementing their NAPs, the South African case study does not include a detailed data analysis section relating to the implementation of the National Action Plan. This is due to the NAP being still in development when I conducted my fieldwork in 2018. The discussion with participants in

South Africa was therefore different to the one conducted with the Palestinian organisations, which had already been part of the implementation process of a NAP for 2 years.

5.3.6 Implementing the National Action Plan in Palestine

The responsibility for implementing the National Action Plan in Palestine lies with the Higher National Committee, which was established in 2012 by decision of the Palestinian Cabinet. The committee's membership consists of a variety of ministerial entities and civil society organisations (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017). According to the NAP, the responsibility for implementation lies with both the governmental and non-governmental institutions in Palestine (ibid.). Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation are the responsibilities of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, together with the Committee. The first National Action Plan was developed as a consultative process led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. It was supported by a range of international organisations, including UNFPA, ESCWA, UN Women, and the European Union (ESCWA, 2019). This process was built on the Strategic National Framework for Implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 and was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in June 2015.

Palestine was the second Arab country after Iraq to develop a National Action Plan, which is a noteworthy achievement in itself as one of the interviewees highlighted (Civil society, 5). It should also be emphasised that, under the Israeli occupation and especially given Israel's role as the occupier, Israel has the duty to implement international frameworks within its geographical area and so would also have the duty and obligation to implement the WPS Agenda in the occupied Palestinian territories (Individual expert, 3).

According to opinions voiced in my interviews with civil society organisations, it was lobbying by the women's organisations in Palestine that resulted in the development of the first NAP (Civil society 3, 5, 8). In 2009, a civil society coalition was formed following a call from the General Union of Palestinian Women which brought together various different women's and

human rights organisations.[20] This coalition comprised 10 women-led organisations in the West Bank and has since then expanded to include four organisations from Gaza (Civil society, 3).

In 2012, the Higher National Committee for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 was formed. As was highlighted by the interviewees, these are like two bodies because implementing 1325 "is not the responsibility of the civil society, it is responsibility of the government" (Civil society, 8). The Higher National Committee consists both of governmental entities and civil society organisations (Civil society, 5).

The National Action Plan was developed through consultations with the civil society organisations and ministries as a joint operation (Civil society, 3). The process was supported by the UN Women, ESCWAS, and the European Union (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017). The implementation of the NAP in Palestine has several political divisions to overcome. For example, even though UN Women were supporting the development of the NAP, the organisation was not able to fund its implementation because the UN would be criticised for supporting that sort of activity for Palestinians (Civil society, 5). According to another interviewee, the UN was not able to fund the implementation of the plan because Palestinians insisted on having a pillar about holding the Israeli occupation accountable (Individual expert, 1).

According to Palestine's official National Action Plan, the process for development was described as follows:

> Realize this goal, a joint team was formed out of civil society, governmental and women's organizations to develop a National Action Plan. National consultations, workshops and meetings were held in order to identify the activities, outcomes,

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[20] The General Union of Palestinian Women is the official representative of Palestinian women within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

indicators, and responsibilities for the strategic objectives established by the Council of Minister's decision. A timeframe was identified and the consultative process has consolidated the will to work together in advancing peace and security in Palestine by enhancing the active participation of women. (Palestine National Action Plan, 2017).

According to the civil society interviewees, the process and initiative were really driven by their coalition:

> This is how we use it. We pushed the Palestinian government to develop a plan of action for the implementation of 1325. It is not the duty of civil society, it is the duty of government…. It was lobbied by the civil society to implement it…. They took our plan, re-developed together with the civil society…. Of course, there is still debate why we have to be with the government in the same commission because our role is to oversee, not to implement it. I think we will develop this debate very soon. (Civil society, 8)

When asked why they found it important to develop a National Action Plan to implement Resolution 1325, two of the interviewees replied:

> We feel it is part of how to engage with Palestinian women in international level. It is part of how to engage women with the realities on the ground in Palestine. (Civil society, 5)

> As a practitioner, I appreciate NAPs very much because they are the accountability framework that is there for the country and can be monitored and can be implemented. (Individual expert, 4)

Resolution 1325 focuses on the four pillars of protection, prevention, participation, and relief and recovery. However, Palestine emphasises accountability as the fourth pillar for its National Action Plan:

The Palestinian vision as you know is rooted in participation, protection, accountability and prevention. We are the only ones to include accountability. All other Arab countries address only the '3Ps' – except for Palestine which includes accountability. (Civil society, 3)

This point highlights how the WPS Agenda as a regulative norm, establishes standards (Aharoni, 2014) to work with, but countries are able to localise the NAPs to fit to the political, social and economic context of the country. It shows that multiple interpretations of the WPS Agenda are possible (Björkdahl & Mannergren Selimovic, 2019) and understanding the localised experiences needs to be part of the WPS narrative (Basu, 2016).

Even though the next section will highlight all the challenges that affect the implementation of the NAP, the following statement is noteworthy: "First NAP was an achievement for Palestine. First country who did the NAP in Arab region was Iraq and we were the second, so it was an achievement" (Civil society, 5),

Although it has been argued in the literature that sometimes a National Action Plan is only adopted with a view to a country showing its status as a modern defender of gender equality, [21] it still represents a commitment from the State of Palestine to demonstrating the political willingness needed to develop a NAP in the first place.

5.3.7. Challenges for the implementation of the WPS framework in Palestine

This next section focuses on the challenges that affect the implementation of the WPS framework in Palestine as emphasised by the interview participants. Overall, three core themes emerged from the discussions: 1) lack of implementation mechanisms for the resolution; 2) funding and budgeting; 3) internal and external politics.

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[21] See Section 2.2.4 for further discussion.

As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the first challenge recognised by the interviewees was the lack of a mechanism in place to enforce the implementation of the WPS Agenda. This is part of a wider issue discussed in the literature which is effecting the implementation of the Agenda (see for example, Swaine 2017). There is nothing in place to enforce its implementation by national governments:

> It is a problem for me. It is not just our NAP – the big problem is 1325 itself. It has no mechanism to force the government to implement. It is voluntary. This is the problem. If you do not have mechanism in how to implement, it is nothing. This is the big problem. (Civil society, 1)

Having no accountability measures to track the implementation of the Agenda puts it in danger of becoming yet another empty resolution that does not fulfil its promises. Although accountability measures for UN resolutions generally are unlikely to change in the coming years, due to the debate about the UN system and it acting as a global government in itself, even a light-touch monitoring and evaluating mechanism would improve the impact the Agenda could potentially have. One of the interviewees summarised this problem well when they observed that "The decisions taken are not strong. In Arabic there is a saying – it is a like a person without teeth, so if it bites it will not hurt" (Civil society, 3).

There are limited mechanisms in place which would encourage the monitoring of the process within national governments themselves. Although reporting could be directed to CEDAW under its General Recommendation No. 30 (O'Rourke & Swaine, 2019), some of the interviewees reported feeling like they do not have power to change things without international oversight helping to drive change:

> There needs to be international monitoring. Yes, we do raise reports yet every once in a while, they need to come and see what is happening. Especially for us, as we do not have the power – we need international allies that can monitor and evaluate its

implementation on the ground because we are under occupation as Palestinians. In each document we need to highlight the occupation and the violations they inflict on civilians in the occupied territories. (Civil society, 2)

Some of the interviewees also thought CEDAW should be implemented before Resolution 1325 (Civil society, 6).

One way of ensuring accountability is to make the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators part of the NAP itself. It should be a requirement for a NAP to have an M&E system in place; however, unfortunately, this is often not the case: "We can include more indicators to the implementation of NAP – to hold the government accountable" (Civil society, 5).

The second issue identified by interviewees revolved around the funding and budgeting of activities involved in implementing the resolution. The biggest issue was that there was no budget allocated to the implementation of the NAP in Palestine (Civil society, 1). The budget for the implementation phase relied on departmental fiscal policies and any international donor funding the civil society organisations would receive: "There is no budget for implementing 1325 and national plan. They are relying on the NGOs' action and budgets" (Civil society, 1).

A lack of funding also means that the majority of the activities that civil society has been required to implement have been funded through their existing donor funding: "40% NAP was done by the civil society organisation and was mainly funded through the civil society activities and donor funding" (Civil society, 5).

When the government relies on civil society organisations and their budgets to implement the Agenda, this will become an issue, especially in the case of Palestine. First of all, the organisations that are expected to shoulder the burden of implementation already have limited budgets, and in Palestine most of these funds go towards service provision. With reference to WPS Agenda, it has been argued that states outsource service provision to civil society as part of the implementation process and therefore avoid planning long-term strategies to avoid

addressing gaps within gender justice. This for example, has also been the case in Rwanda's and Bosnia's NAP (Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2019). This strategy of civil society implementing the activities of the NAP also relies on the assumption that these organisations will keep receiving foreign funding in order to continue their work. In the post-Oslo "peace supermarket" as Richter-Devroe (2018, p. 29) describes it, women's peacebuilding, grounded in the WPS Agenda, has become one of the main products that is being funded by international donors; however, as the data indicates, funding to implement Palestine's NAP activities has actually proven complicated because the fourth pillar of the NAP holds the Israeli occupation accountable. It also bears asking, if women's peacebuilding has been a popular funding target for many international organisations, what will happen if global priorities shift? Changes in priorities also mean that the funding provided for organisations can abruptly come to a halt.

As has been highlighted in other sections of this chapter, civil society organisations have carried out a large majority of the activities outlined by the Palestinian NAP:

> When they start to prepare the report to highlight the implementation of 1325 it is clear that the civil society is responsible for the implementation of the NAP. This is one of the gaps we have tried highlight and take into consideration when the 2nd-generation NAP is being developed. (Civil society, 5)

Allocating a dedicated budget for implementation was one of the core issues many of the organisations said they wanted to focus on when developing the 2nd-generation NAP (Civil society 1, 5, 8). There is also an issue about which department the process of implementation should fall under. As one of the interviewees noted, responsibility for the implementation process should not belong to gender-focused units, as they are not powerful enough. Instead, implementation should be the responsibility of a planning and budget group in order for it to be properly taken into account when departmental budgets are drafted (Civil society, 5).

Lastly, the third theme emerging from the discussion focused on the different internal and external political matters which produce challenges for implementation. With regards to politics and political affiliations, the civil society committee was established and led by the General Union of Palestinian Women, which is the women's faction of the PLO. This has caused some challenges within the coalition with regards to political priorities:

> To tell you the truth we have problems with this coalition. It is led by General Union of Palestinian Women. In theory they are a NGO but in practice it is a government organisation. They get their salaries from the government, so they do not challenge the PA [Palestinian Authority]. (Civil society, 7)

Even though the majority of the organisations involved in implementation are working towards very similar goals, one should not assume that they all share the same opinions and priorities. As one participant noted: "We have a problem with the women's organisation, even though we were all women's organisation, we had different opinions. Some argued we should take sharia law (modern)" (Civil society, 7).

A significant part of the conversation regarding the challenges involved in implementation focused on the political willingness of the Palestinian Authority. There seemed to be a consensus that implementing the WPS Agenda has not been a priority for the government, and this lack of prioritisation was showcased in various examples shared by the interviewees (Civil society 4, 5, 7). Firstly, the lack of funding provided for implementation is understood to show a lack of enthusiasm for dedicating resources towards achieving the resolution: "[The] Weakness was in the funding of the implementation. It needs funding from the government" (Civil society, 5).

Commitment to implementation is also absent from the mandates of various relevant ministries. According to the National Action Plan (2017), several governmental bodies should be actively engaged in the different implementation activities but, according to civil society organisations,

this does not seem to be the case: "It should be part of the mandate of several different ministries but it is only in the agenda of the Foreign Ministry" (Civil society, 5). Further to this, if civil society organisations become the "subsidiary implementers of state politics", as it has been the case in Palestine, this can undermine the watchdog function of civil society and they might find it hard to criticise the state (Björkdahl & Mannergren Selimovic, 2019).

The lack of political will was another key issue. Many interviewees (Civil society 6, 7) implied that the Palestinian Authority was eager to develop a NAP to showcase its willingness to promote gender issues in the international arena, but at the domestic level the PA did not have any actual interest in following through and implementing these international frameworks:

> They are not seriously taking these issues. It is not just 1325, it is the same with CEDAW. They signed CEDAW without reservations. But until now none of the legislations we have was developed according to CEDAW guidelines. (Civil society, 7)

As observed earlier, countries use the WPS Agenda and the development of NAPs to highlight their status to Global North countries. One of the interviewees felt that this was true in the Palestinian case:

> The president of the Authority signed on this because it is a political issue. They wanted to enter the membership of the UN. They did not really mean they wanted equality to women. (Civil society, 6)

Criticisms from other interviewees reflect the sense that the WPS agenda can be used as window dressing rather than a promise of concrete action: "They wanted to join to show they are equal and secular to the world" (Civil society, 6). The same interviewee complained: "It is only to how the PA is getting funding from European countries, to show we are democratic. It is not really translated on the ground to legislations. It is only in paper" (Civil society, 6). This contributes to the literature on critique of the NAPs, specifically on the issues Aroussi (2017)

has highlighted, how some countries may want to adopt NAPs just to demonstrate the supposedly modern status of the country and in order to cement their status as a well-governed state, without actually considering the appropriate implementation methods.

Lastly, we come to the issue of political priorities. Are gender issues taking front stage in the government's political discussions? Is this something that the PA is willing to invest money in, or will the Authority continue to sign papers without following through with actions? Discussions with civil society organisations, suggest that positive change is not likely. Rather than being used to advance the gender agenda, Palestine's NAP has been utilised as another way to fight the occupation. The NAP highlights the fight for occupation as a priority and puts domestic gender issues on a less important footing.

Despite advancements in the international recognition of the State of Palestine and the continuation of the Israel-Palestine peace process, hopes for a peaceful two-state solution and the end of occupation have significantly decreased over recent years. When I was conducting interviews in February 2020 in the West Bank, President Donald Trump had just recently announced his so-called peace plan, the "Deal of the Century", and this looked set to become the focus of politics for the foreseeable future: "Because of Trump's 'Deal of the Century' all the political priorities have shifted" (Civil society, 8). Another interviewee commented, "I am not optimistic. Because with all the things is going around, they are not taking these decisions seriously. Lack of political willingness" (Civil society, 7).

By May 2020, Netanyahu had taken office as the leader of the Israeli Unity Government with plans to annex the West Bank (*The Guardian*, May 2020). The annexation plans were supposed to start on 1st July 2020 and to involve the annexation of approximately 30% of the West Bank. A statement issued by the UN Human Rights Commissioner Office said:

> What would be left of the West Bank would be a Palestinian Bantustan, islands of
> disconnected land completely surrounded by Israel and with no territorial connection

to the outside world. […] Thus, the morning after annexation would be the crystallisation of an already unjust reality: two peoples living in the same space, ruled by the same state, but with profoundly unequal rights. This is a vision of a 21st century apartheid. (United Nations Human Rights, Office of the Commissioner, June 2020)

Since that time, Netanyahu has been pushed aside and, in June 2021, Naftali Bennet and the leader of the opposition formed a coalition to oust the incumbent from office. Bennet, who assumed office as the new Prime Minister of Israel, has described himself as more right-wing than Netanyahu, is outspoken in his support for Israel as a Jewish nation state, and has championed the right of Israeli settlements in the West Bank (BBC News, June 2021).

In October 2020, to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325, Palestine adopted the second iteration of its NAP. The development of the second NAP was supported by the government of Norway and it will further support the implementation, financing, and monitoring of current initiatives on women's participation in peace and security during the 2020-2023 period (United Nations, 2020). The NAP was launched at a high-level conference where the participants also evaluated the challenges and successes arising from the first NAP. The efforts by the Higher National Committee on UNSCR 1325 and the National Civil Society Coalition on UNSCR 1325 led by the General Union of Palestinian Women were highlighted (ibid.). During the high-level conference, the participants were also asked to make recommendations on how to meaningfully implement the second NAP. Some of these recommendations included conducting annual monitoring and evaluation of the NAP's activities, establishing a system for monitoring and evaluation, and setting up a multi-stakeholder financing mechanism for its implementation. Having a dedicated budget for the implementation of any NAP is crucial, and the fact that the first NAP lacked a dedicated budget was also noted by CEDAW, which monitors the implementation of NAPs (CEDAW, 2018).

Palestine has been suffering, along with other countries, the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. In May 2021, Palestinians saw some of the worst violence in years, both in Gaza and East Jerusalem, when violence escalated between Palestinians and Israelis due to a court case relating to the eviction of Palestinian families from the Sheik Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. Palestine will face massive challenges in the near future, and they will affect how women's issues are considered in the future as well. This section has highlighted several challenges that face the implementation of the WPS Agenda within the Palestinian context, including lack of monitoring mechanisms and budgeting issues. Although Palestine has been active in developing a NAP, actual political willingness to engage in its implementation seems to be lacking based on the data findings of this research. Considering the competing challenges Palestine is going through, from the global pandemic to a change in power with the new Israeli prime minister and the ongoing fight against the occupation, I am sceptical about how much priority will be given to advance the women's agenda within the country.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings from 14 in-depth interviews conducted with Palestinian civil society organisations and individual experts. Similarly, to Chapter 4, this chapter started by discussing the challenges for women's security and equality in Palestine as reflected by the research participants. In contrast with the findings from South Africa, the research participants recognised two main challenges for women's equality in Palestine, which were the occupation and patriarchal structures and attitudes. The chapter then moved on to discuss how the WPS Agenda defines the concept of security and how problematic its definition is in the case of Palestine, which is under Israeli occupation. The participants highlighted that the Agenda does not take into account the uniqueness of the occupation, and therefore the specific implementation of the Agenda within the Palestinian context requires careful consideration.

The chapter also discussed the relevance of the Agenda within the Palestinian context, and although there was some scepticism about whether another international UN Resolution could

be transformative, most of the interviewees saw the Agenda as a useful advocacy tool which can help to highlight the issues involved in life under occupation and hold Israel accountable for its actions at an international level. The chapter has also highlighted how intersectionality is considered within the context of the WPS Agenda and Palestine, and although the majority of the participants agreed that the Agenda is relevant to all women, in the Palestinian case it is evident that the lives of women can differ massively depending on which area of the country they live in. The divide, for example, between a woman living in Ramallah in Area A and a woman living in Hebron in Area C is significant. This also raised a discussion about who should know about and be involved in developing the NAP in Palestine, an issue that will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

Lastly, the chapter focused on the implementation process for the NAP, as well as the challenges involved in implementing the WPS agenda in Palestine. Three main challenges were identified from the data. The first issue relates to the lack of implementation mechanisms and adequate evaluation and monitoring systems to measure implementation progress. The second issue is represented by the difficulty of funding the activities required to implement the NAP, both at governmental and international donor level; interviewees linked this problem to the NAP's focus on holding the Israeli occupation accountable, a political stance which was thought to make international donors reluctant to provide support. The third challenge is posed by internal and external politics. While the adoption of the NAP in Palestine was an achievement in itself, unfortunately, actual political willingness to implement its activities has been inadequate.

This chapter has supported this study's findings from South Africa, where participants highlighted several issues that suggest that the WPS agenda is conceptually flawed with regards to its views on and definition of security. The importance of taking into consideration the rural/urban divide when considering the intersectional identities of women has been highlighted. The chapter has also identified how vulnerable the implementation of the WPS

Agenda is to other factors, both internal and external, such as global power politics and dynamics. The next chapter will discuss and interpret these research findings, evaluating how they fit within existing literature and what new insights they can contribute to the debate about WPS. It will bring the two case studies into a conversation with one another to understand the extent to which the WPS Agenda is a suitable and transformative framework for advancing women's security.

6. Discussion

6.1. Introduction

This research set out to analyse the extent to which the UN WPS Agenda is a transformational and suitable framework for improving women's security, and it has drawn on the examples of South Africa and Palestine. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of civil society organisations and individual experts to shed light on how the WPS framework is applied and also how it is perceived by people working in different settings (civil society, government bodies, and international organisations) in these country contexts where racial, political, and ethnic divisions are prevalent. Finally, the research findings were analysed and interpreted with reference to theories about feminist security and intersectionality to understand the linkages between these two theories and how the relate to the implementation of the WPS Agenda.

The research findings of this thesis suggest that several challenges remain if the Agenda is to be an effective and suitable framework for improving women's security. The findings make two succinct theoretical contributions to the existing literature and debate on the WPS Agenda. Firstly, this study finds that the ways peace and security are articulated and defined within the Agenda is flawed, as the Agenda still understands these terms within the narrow confines of armed conflict and does not take into account a comprehensive, feminist view of security. As was discussed in Chapter 2, this conceptual flaw means that it is not entirely clear to which contexts and conflicts the WPS Agenda is applicable and what peace and conflict mean in its terms (see, for example, McLeod, 2011; Ní Aoláin, 2016; Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019; Aroussi, 2017). The possibility that South Africa could currently be deemed a country to which the WPS agenda is not applicable demonstrates how far-reaching the consequences may be if the notion of security and peace within the Agenda itself is not broadened to include a more

comprehensive outlook based on a feminist concept of security. As Tickner (2001) observed and the South African case study has proved, security is a multidimensional and multilevel concept, and the Agenda needs to be made adequate to this complexity.

Secondly, this thesis contributes to knowledge by providing new empirical data and analysis about the relationship between the WPS Agenda and intersectionality. This valuable data will provide insights into how people perceive the Agenda at national level, especially in these two different places, but also how they understand intersectionality within the context of the Agenda and its application; to date, very little empirical evidence has been produced that casts light on this question.[22] As the research findings indicate, the WPS Agenda does not sufficiently take intersectionality into account when considering women's role in conflict and peace processes, and therefore it effectively fails to consider the varied gendered experiences women have in different conflicts. This thesis argues that it will be especially crucial to take into account geographical location, and in particular the urban/rural divide, when considering different women's experiences, as these factors have a significant effect not only on how women experience insecurity but also on their opportunities to participate in political processes including, for example, the development of NAPs at the domestic level. In addition to exploring these issues, this chapter will examine some of the complex objectives and challenges, including funding issues and lack of accountability measures, that affect the implementation of the WPS Agenda.

The chapter will begin by discussing this study's research findings and how they fit within existing literature and theory. It will also examine the new insights this research contributes to critical debates, and it will provide an analytical assessment of the key findings of this thesis.

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[22] As was discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, literature on this topic is still limited and focuses on a few specific areas, such as criticism of how the framework endorses patriarchal and racist ideals (Pratt, 2013; Aroussi, 2017; Almagro, 2018), the role of masculinities in the WPS agenda (Wright, 2019; Myrttinen ,2019), the WPS Agenda and LGTBQ+ rights (Hagen, 2016; Davis & Stern, 2019; Haastrup & Hagen 2020; Hagen, 2019), WPS and disability (Stienstra, 2019) and how gender is defined and discussed in the Agenda (Hagen, 2016; Stern & Davis 2019; Jansson & Eduards, 2016).

The chapter will achieve these aims by bringing the findings from South Africa and Palestine into conversation with each other. Although the two places have, to some extent, different political and social contexts, this study has demonstrated that common themes and issues can be identified across both case studies. Palestine was chosen as a subject of analysis as it is a country under occupation. It therefore provides a useful context in which to consider security-based issues more broadly in relation to the WPS Agenda, and to assess how the Agenda relates to a complex country context like that in Palestine. These two countries were also selected as both have experiences of ethnic, racial, religious, and political cleavages, and this permitted an examination of the WPS Agenda from the point of view of intersectionality.

The Palestinian situation is unique in the sense that Palestine is a state under occupation, and, although South Africa has not experienced armed conflict, the country's violent history of apartheid, as well as its current socio-political context, mean that it too is facing several challenges that concern women's rights and security. This study found that, even though South Africa is not usually defined as a conflict or post-conflict country, the research participants interviewed saw this as an oversight, due to the violence South African women experience in their everyday lives and the violence that has been inherited from the apartheid era (Civil society 4, 5, Individual expert 6). This thesis has not aimed to provide a comparative study of these two places; instead, its purpose has been to examine the challenges and conceptual understanding of the WPS framework at the national level from the point of view of civil society and individual experts, through the two examples of South Africa and Palestine. One of the interesting findings of this thesis is that, although the political, social, and economic contexts of these two places are different, the central themes that have emerged from their engagement with the WPS Agenda and the challenges that have arisen in terms of its usefulness remain similar.

This discussion chapter will start by examining the research findings through the lens of feminist security theory in order to understand whether and to what extent the WPS Agenda can be an effective and suitable framework for improving women's security.

6.2. The WPS Agenda – is it a suitable framework for improving women's security?

The events of the past 18 months, which have included the COVID-19 pandemic, the escalation of violence in Palestine, and the election of a new Israeli prime minister, have shown the situation for women to be as challenging as ever. These events have demonstrated that women are affected not only by conflict but also by its cumulative side effects. For example, the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic has increased the incidence of domestic and gender-based violence (United Nations, 2020a; GAPS et al., 2021). According to a recent briefing by Mustasilta (2021), the long-term socioeconomic repercussions of the pandemic pose a grave threat to peace, and its fallout may "induce conflict by undermining the social contract and social cohesion, particularly in the contexts with conflict legacies, deep inequalities and high external economic dependencies" (ibid., p. 2). I would argue that the WPS Agenda has not lost its relevance over the past 20 years, and, within the current global context, it is actually needed more than ever. Recent events have also demonstrated that peace is not just the absence of war, as Galtung (1996) noted, and different events and circumstances, over and above armed conflict, can and will have an impact on people's security. The security of women cannot be understood just from the point of view of violent conflict, but should, as studies of feminist security have shown, be agreed to depend on a much more intricate and nuanced understanding of how women experience insecurity.

In Chapter 2, this thesis defined and analysed the background and historical context that led to the adoption of Resolution 1325. After the end of the Cold War, "new conflicts" (Kaldor, 2012), characterised by fighting between state and non-state actors, showed that violence against civilians is exacerbated during war and conflict and that women suffer a disproportionate amount of this violence, as they are often subjected in these new wars to

gender-based violence and rape (Chinkin, 2019). In this global context, the adoption of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was timely. Now, 20 years later, frameworks such as the WPS Agenda could have more purpose than ever, as has been highlighted throughout this thesis, if the principles of these frameworks could be effectively translated into action at national and local levels.

When the interviewees were asked whether or not they thought the WPS Agenda is a relevant framework for women in South Africa and Palestine, a majority of them (South Africa civil society 4,5 and individual expert 3; Palestine civil society 2,3,5,6,10) answered with an unequivocal yes. Given that in 2018 the WPS Agenda in South Africa had still not yet gained much attention at the national level,[23] and South Africa did not necessarily fit into the traditional remit of the Agenda as a conflict or post-conflict country, it was therefore perhaps a surprising finding that, especially in South Africa, it was seen as a useful framework by the interviewees. However, taking into consideration the violent legacy of apartheid and the current situation for women in South Africa, it can be argued to that South Africa is a post-conflict country to which the WPS is highly applicable, as this chapter will go on to suggest. In both Palestine and South Africa, interviews with civil society organisations revealed that they have actively tried to pursue these efforts and lobby their respective governments to adopt NAPs for the implementation of 1325 (South Africa civil society 2, 4, 5; Palestine civil society 3, 5, 8)..

Although it has been argued in this section that, in principle, the Agenda can be a useful framework for improving women's security, several conceptual challenges remain that hinder its potential. Without taking these challenges into account, the scope of the Agenda and its ability to achieve impact will remain limited. This chapter will now move on to discuss these challenges, looking first at conceptual flaws in the Agenda that exist due to the way it defines peace and security.

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[23] The South African National Action Plan was adopted in 2020.

6.2.1. A conceptually challenged Agenda – what do security and peace mean in the context of the WPS Agenda?

As Chapter 2 highlighted, if the transformational potential of the Agenda is to be realised, it will be critical to address how security and peace are understood in its terms and to explore the implications that these definitions have for the effectiveness of the framework. In reviewing the literature in Chapter 2 it was evident that only a limited amount of empirical research has been carried out to understand how the narrow definition of conflict and security in the WPS Agenda affects its impact at national and local levels. The following section of this chapter will explain why applying a broader, feminist understanding of security is essential if the WPS Agenda is to be a successful and transformative framework for women.

As a starting point for this discussion, it is essential to understand that there is not just one gendered experience of conflict, as women experience gender in different ways (Sjoberg, 2009). When claiming that the WPS Agenda should understand security from a feminist point of view, it needs to be acknowledged that there are as many gendered experiences of global politics and international security as there are people, because each person lives and forms gender within different identities and cultures, as well as their own body (ibid.). This notion that there are different gendered experiences of security is closely linked to intersectionality, the other theoretical field explored in this thesis. Aroussi (2017) has highlighted how feminist studies have looked at the intersectionality of women's different experiences of violence and insecurity, for example from the point of view of women from ethnic, religious and indigenous minorities. However, I would argue that the conversations on security and intersectionality still often happen in silos, next to each other, rather than being intertwined and in discussion with each other. This is especially the case when intersectionality is discussed from the perspective of the WPS Agenda. The intersectional identities of individuals determine how they feel about and understand security, and therefore, it would be important to bring intersectionality into the heart of the discussion when analysing a feminist approach to security and what is meant by it.

As Wibben (2020, p. 118) writes, "it is high time that not just gender analysis, but intersectional analysis that pays attention also to race, class, and other such dynamics that fundamentally shape our understandings of the world, be included in security studies also". The findings of this thesis have effectively brought these fields into conversation with one another by highlighting how the different intersectional identities of women affect the ways they experience insecurity, and also how their positionalities affect their opportunities to participate in processes like the implementation of the WPS Agenda.

The different intersectional identities arising from factors such as class, gender, race, ethnicity, educational background, and geographical location affect women's experiences of conflict and violence differently. The hierarchised power relations that affect women due to their intersectional identities influence how they experience insecurity. Tickner (2019) briefly discusses this and acknowledges that the gendered structures of inequality have effects on women's economic, physical, and environmental insecurities. However, she does not discuss in depth how class, ethnicity, or race, for example, would have an impact on women's security from a feminist perspective. As Wibben (2020, p. 117) highlights, taking not only gender into account but also social status and geographical location (urban or rural) "provides greater insight into everyday (in)securities and the need to account for these in interventions by the international community". For example, as the findings of this thesis have highlighted, levels of sexual and gender-based violence are extremely high in informal settlements in South Africa, even when many cases go unreported, and violence is considered almost the norm. A Black South African woman living in an informal settlement with limited economic potential is therefore likely to have a different experience of security and violence than, for example, a white South African woman who has the economic and social opportunities to live in a gated community in a secure area. Similarly in Palestine, the interviewees highlighted the fact that women experience different kinds of insecurities depending on where they live, the kinds of background they come from (rural, tribal areas or cities, for example), and the types of political,

social, and economic opportunities they are able to access (Palestine, Civil society 1, 3, 4, 6, 10 & Individual expert 3). As the interviewees discussed, families are afraid to send their daughters to school or to work, as this means they will have to pass through Israeli checkpoints where the women and girls often have to go through extensive security checks and might be harassed (Palestine, Civil society 2, 7).

As has been discussed earlier, although the WPS Agenda has expanded to include 10 resolutions, the founding resolution, 1325, was primarily designed to be implemented in post-conflict situations (see, for example McLeod, 2011) and conventional armed conflicts (see, for example, Ní Aoláin, 2016). As the findings from this study indicate, this narrow idea of conflict and the idea that the WPS Agenda would only be suitable for post-conflict countries was not deemed appropriate by the interviewees (for example South Africa civil society 2, 4, 5 and Individual expert 3, 6). As the findings highlight, understanding conflict within the narrow confines of armed escalations of violence undermines women's experiences of the everyday violence that happens on a continuum across both public and private spaces. As both Kelly (1988) and later Cockburn (2004) theorised, violence happens on a continuum without a clear starting or end point. Kelly (1988) argued that sexual violence happens on a continuum and that sexual violence incidents should not be classified based on a hierarchy of seriousness, as all forms of violence are serious. South Africa can also be examined through Cockburn's (2004) model of continuum of violence, which means that individuals lives are not only affected by armed conflict or rape as a weapon of war but through forms of everyday violence that occur regularly and everywhere both in public and private spaces. Although Boesten (2017) has critiqued the continuum theory arguing how this definition makes it harder to keep perpetrators accountable because there are no clear definitions what is considered as sexual violence in conflict, I argue that in the case implementing the WPS Agenda this critique is not relevant. As has been discussed in earlier chapters, the legal basis for the WPS Agenda is

contested[24], and therefore prosecuting perpetrators is probably more realistic through other means, such as domestic legal frameworks. In addition as Jacevic (2019), has highlighted how NAPs are most effective when complemented by other tools, policies and frameworks.

The findings of this research demonstrate that, although the research participants thought of the Agenda as a relevant framework for women in both South Africa and Palestine, it was important to take local security, as well as social, political, and economic, issues, into account when assessing whether it can be a truly transformational framework in their contexts.

On the question of how security and conflict are understood, the research found that differences in how international organisations, national governments, and local NGOs understand peace and security represent key challenges. This can hinder the effectiveness and impact the WPS Agenda can have in contexts that might not fit neatly to the conflict/post conflict demarcation. In the case of South Africa, this clash between different stakeholders, such as civil society and government, on the question of understanding security and conflict was particularly evident. As was discussed in Chapter 4, in South Africa, the civil society interviewees thought there was unwillingness at government level to adopt and use the WPS Agenda (South Africa, civil society 4 and Individual expert 3, 6)., as it was not seen as relevant to the South African context because it is not a country in conflict; however, civil society organisations continued to lobby for the development of a South African NAP as they regarded it as very relevant to the violent context in South Africa (South Africa civil society 2, 4, 5). A note of caution should be struck here, however, as these findings are mainly based on interviews with civil society organisations and therefore present only one version of the story, as I was not able to secure interviews with any people who work at the government level. It is notable, though, that, the issue about whether or not a NAP was needed in South Africa was debated as part of the formation of the country's NAP (South Africa, Individual expert 6).

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[24] See Chapter 2 for full discussion on this

This study's findings indicate how important political willingness is with regards to defining a country context, and a key issue is always whether or not decision-makers are willing to admit that issues around insecurity and violence exist within their own borders. The majority of the research participants in South Africa addressed these issues directly and discussed how important it was for them that South Africa should understand it is dealing with a conflict situation within its own borders (South Africa civil society 4, 5, Individual expert 6).. These findings complement the research of Ní Aoláin and Valji (2019), who argue that, technically, the Agenda should be applicable to any country or region in the world given that one of the key pillars is prevention. Their view is that the WPS Agenda "may apply beyond the scope of armed conflict and countries specifically slated by the Security Council and member states" (Ní Aoláin & Valji, 2019, p. 57). From the interviews conducted in South Africa, it was evident that, at an individual level, women feel insecure due to the level of violence that exists within the country. For example, if one looks at indicators of conflict, such as statistics on sexual and gender-based violence, femicide, and murder, South African women are experiencing the effects of conflict in their everyday lives (South Africa civil society 1, 2, 4 and Individual expert 6).. Even if South Africa's situation is examined purely on the basis of numbers, the country's rates of sexual violence far exceed those in some war contexts (du Toit, 2014).

In the South African case, it is also important to consider how the legacy of colonialist and apartheid times affects the lives of women today. As was discussed in Chapter 4, the country's high levels of gender-based violence are closely linked to the violence, oppression, and patriarchal system of the apartheid period (Britton, 2006). During apartheid, rape was "used as a weapon to ensure control, obedience and interracial conformity" (ibid., p. 145). Women, and especially Black women, were also raped by the soldiers who belonged to the South African Defence Forces, and police forces regularly harassed women. Swaine (2018a) has argued how in the aftermath of conflict, gendered violence can emerge in new ways, and might not be connected to the dynamics of the conflict. Swaine (ibid) also questions whether violence

"actually becomes worse in form as a result of the violence that appeared during conflict" (p.170).[25] However, in South Africa gender relations were deeply influenced by apartheid, and the effects can be still seen in South African society today. The apartheid period involved racism and sexism in the form of systematic, institutionalised violence which devalued and demeaned a whole group of people and deeply humiliated them. Snodgrass (2015) suggests that this history might offer an explanation for the current extreme levels of sexual and gender-based violence, which often involve particularly violent incidents, in South Africa. As Snodgrass (2015) observes, "black men, emasculated and humiliated under apartheid, resisted race oppression which also involved defending their masculinity. Violence and masculinity are linked" and much of the violence in South Africa is perpetrated by Black men.[26] This point is echoed by du Toit (2014) who discusses the past-perpetrator trauma interpretation of rape which emerged as a response to the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence after the political transition from apartheid to democracy. Wood (2005) suggested that one broad argument for high levels of sexual violence is that, in South Africa, working-class men were historically disadvantaged and disenfranchised by the unequal migrant labour system that dominated the colonial and apartheid economies. In this context, the family became the private domain in which these men could assert their masculinity (by force if necessary). As Snodgrass (2015) argues, violence in South Africa clearly has roots in social, historical, and psychological factors, and therefore, as she goes on to point out, men's anger and aggression towards women emanates from the need to re-assert masculinity, power, and status.

Considering this context and the legacy of the violent period of apartheid, it can be argued not only that South Africa could be considered to be a post-conflict country but that the country is actually experiencing an ongoing conflict within itself due to the high levels of violence

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[25] Swaine (2018a) highlights that there is little quantitative or qualitative evidence in global level that this would necessarily be the case

[26] Snodgrass emphasises that gender-based violence globally has nothing to do with race per se, but refers, with this observation, specifically to the South African context and its historical and political roots.

targeted especially towards women. The South African case also illustrates the consequences of war and how it shapes gender. As Cockburn (2013) argues, if the country wants to move away from war, it will need to address gender and the shaping of masculinities as one cause of that war. She argues that gender relations and war shape one another, and just as war produces different notions of ethnic and national identities, so it also produces differentiations between feminine and masculine identities. Unless these issues and gender relations are purposely transformed and the social construction of gender is actively challenged and changed in the aftermath of war, there is a risk that the gender relations which emerge from war will disturb the peace with ongoing violence (Cockburn, 2013). This can be seen clearly in the South African case where the legacy and trauma from apartheid still affect gender relations within South African society today and where violence against women is still considered to be the norm and accepted in many instances. These findings contribute to the feminist notion that true security is achieved through emancipation and would lead to broader social justice (Wibben, 2011). As argued by Basu (2011), emancipation strengthens the agency of the individual and therefore they can become agents of their own security. The intersectional identities generated by race, gender, ethnicity, and age also need to be considered as fundamental to any thinking about the political and societal context of South Africa. As the findings have indicated, women in particular are experiencing forms of repression and structural violence. As has been argued by feminist scholars such as Tickner (1992), true security cannot be achieved unless unequal power relations structured around gender, class, and race are either eliminated or diminished. It is from this point of view that one must look at the situation in South Africa and understand that in order for women to feel secure, one must take seriously the legacy of the apartheid and the gender relations that are still pervasive today in the South African society.

Sjoberg (2009, p. 184) wrote that the "theory and practice of international security remain a man's world", but this thesis argues that, in order for the WPS Agenda to be a transformational tool for women, it must begin to understand security from a feminist point of view. The focus

of feminist views of security has always been on how world politics can contribute to the broader insecurity of individuals and especially populations that are marginalised or disadvantaged (Tickner, 2001). To bring about this change, it would be essential for the WPS Agenda to adopt a more humanist way of thinking about security, one which looks at security from bottom-up, individual and, group perspectives. The need for this change is supported by this study's findings and the views of the interviewees set out in this thesis, which have highlighted that the WPS Agenda needs to understand the security of individuals in a much more nuanced and holistic way, rather than just relying on an arbitrary demarcation between conflict and post-conflict situations. This is why this study argues for a feminist approach to security which defines threats in terms that include not only armed conflicts and international violence but also rape, poverty, domestic violence, and gender subordination (Sjoberg, 2009). As Blanchard (2013) highlights, feminist work on security aims to interrogate gendered insecurity and argues for alternative visions of what constitutes security that would include the eradication of structural, patriarchal violence. This study's findings from South Africa and Palestine indicate that insecurity arises from patriarchal structures within both of these countries. For example, many Palestinians still have deeply patriarchal attitudes, as one of the interviewees highlighted when she recalled that, while the law allows her to claim an inheritance from her father, in reality societal expectations mean that women are pressured to give part of their inheritance to their brothers or other male members of the family (Civil society, 4).

A post-conflict situation is usually defined as one in which combatants are no longer engaging in direct war and apparent violence should have ceased. However, as Tickner (2019) states, feminists have rightly observed that, just because fighting has stopped, this does not mean the war has ended. Conflict is not just an outbreak of violence. As Johan Galtung (1996) pointed out, conflict is more than just direct violence, it is also violence within the structures of the society and culture that allows it. Both South Africa and Palestine reflect the truth of Galtung's

theorisation of violence, as women in both contexts experience direct violence (in forms such as sexual violence, murder, and domestic violence), as well as structural violence (through legal and political systems that hinder women's equal participation) and a culture that legitimises violence (generated through concepts such as family honour or factors such as the legacy of violence from apartheid which normalises violence).

On the question of Palestine, this study found that its context is highly exceptional because of the occupation. The Israeli occupation has continued since 1948, and Palestinians have experienced everyday forms of violence because of this ongoing situation. In the Palestinian case, this study found that it was the effects of power asymmetry and its consequences that most affected women's security. The UN's resolutions on women, peace and security were seen as very important tools for Palestinians and Palestinian organisations working to resist the occupation. However, it was also emphasised that, because of the occupation, the violence experienced in Palestine is different to that elsewhere and is often experienced directly from the occupying power (Palestine civil society 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9). Therefore, it is important to treat Palestine as a distinct case rather than to describe it as a conflict or post-conflict country. As was discussed in Chapter 5, the Palestinian NGOs in particular advocate for the use of the WPS framework as an advocacy tool to shed light on the illegal activities carried out by the occupation forces and bring them to attention in the international arena (Palestine civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, Individual expert 1).

These findings may help to us to understand how the definitions and norms discussed and agreed internationally with regard to women's security actually affect how the scope of the Agenda is understood at national and local level. As Ní Aoláin (2016) has discussed, the narrow scope of the definition of conflict in the WPS Agenda, which relies on conventional distinctions between armed conflict and non-conflict contexts, has excluded a number of different countries and regions in conflict-afflicted locations where women have been pushed out of the conflict resolution process. The results of this study, especially with regards to South Africa, support

Ní Aoláin's (2016) view that the harms women experience are blatantly ignored and made invisible to the WPS Agenda if the scope of the Agenda is understood to be applicable only to conflict and post-conflict countries. This understanding of the WPS Agenda minimises its reach (ibid.) and ability to be implemented into different contexts and situations. The original aim of the Resolution 1325 was to include women at all levels of efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, and so surely – especially in the current global situation which seems as bleak as ever for women – the aim should be to have an Agenda which has the scope to be utilised in different contexts, not just in situations of armed conflict.

The foundational resolution of the WPS Agenda, 1325, is still very strongly recognised as something that can be implemented only in post-conflict countries, but this study's findings raise questions about what room this leaves for a state to either recognise or challenge this status. In some cases, this issue could be argued to be hindering the process of advancing women's rights if implementing 1325 means that you are indirectly recognising your country as either a conflict or post-conflict country. The exclusions on which the WPS Agenda is founded prevent the framework from delivering an inclusive 'women, peace and security' policy for a post-conflict region. As Wibben (2020) has written, security is also about power relations. Hierarchies constructed through race, class, and gender have been argued by feminist scholars to determine which issues and which people are taken seriously (ibid.). Often women's issues are sidelined in political discussions and more pressing political issues are used to justify different priorities.

In a world where conflicts are ever-changing, constantly evolving, and restructuring, it is dangerous to define a post-conflict situation as simply one that involves the absence of conflict. The case of South Africa makes this clear, and therefore it seems short-sighted to argue that the implementation of a resolution that is otherwise fit and adaptable to the situation is invalid just because South Africa does not fit the classical description of a post-conflict country. Language matters, and it is important to notice that Resolution 1325 has been disregarded by

some policymakers and members of civil society organisations because it is not seen as applicable to the situation in South Africa (South Africa, Individual expert 6). As has been discussed throughout this section, binarised distinctions between conflict and non-conflict situations create a myth that no longer holds true in the conflicts of our time. As Cockburn (2004) argues in making the case for the idea that violence exists on a continuum, gender analysis suggests that it is pointless to make clear distinctions between peace and war and between pre-war and post-war, as gendered phenomena persist from one to the next. Although the understanding as violence in continuum has been criticised by for example Boesten (2017) on how it makes it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable if there are no clear indicators what is considered sexual and gender based violence in conflict, the findings of this thesis highlight how from a policy perspective, it is important that the WPS Agenda takes a broad outlook on security. Although recognising this critique on the continuum theory, I argue that understanding violence as a continuum and having clear indicators what is considered SGBV in conflict should not be excluding each other. As was discussed in the introduction chapter, the WPS Agenda can be argued to be a broad global policy and the findings demonstrate that it provides a framework and certain parameters for the country to operate within. The WPS Agenda resolutions focused on sexual violence in conflict recognise that sexual violence occurs in a continuum and urges member states to help strengthen criminal law to hold victims accountable (Resolution 2467, 2019). This broad outlook of violence as a continuum should be taken into consideration when thinking about the applicability of the Agenda to specific country contexts.

The WPS Agenda's failure to focus on the root causes and prevention of conflict should be considered when its understanding of security and peace is being assessed. Some scholars have argued that it is disappointing from the point of view of security. For example, Cockburn (2013) points out that the focus of Resolution 1325 is limited to the effects of war and it does not try to address any causes of war or ways of actually ending them. Similarly, Taylor and Baldwin

(2019) note that some components of the WPS Agenda have been prioritised for implementation over others. For example, the priority has been to focus on women's participation in peace processes rather than aiming to increase women's participation in conflict prevention in the first place. The Agenda is not focused on stopping war or conflict, as is clear in the case of Palestine, for instance, and instead it focuses on mitigation efforts when conflict has already occurred. As Sjoberg (2009, p. 200) suggests, if there was a shift to a feminist approach to security – one which is interested in remedying gender subordination and examines security from the perspective of individual women's lives – "it would change not only what security is, but how it is conceptualised, operationalised and acted on".

Although the security context in Palestine and South Africa is slightly different, their cases highlight the importance of ensuring that the local security situation is taken into account when considering the suitability of the WPS Agenda to a certain context. The findings of this thesis are also comparable to other contexts, and this is especially important given that there are many countries in the world where the security situation for women is challenging but the country is not defined as being in conflict. If one applies these findings to a broader context, it becomes evident that the WPS Agenda should look at violence against women as a set of phenomenona that occur on a continuum which runs through private and public spaces. As the findings have highlighted, there is a wide variety of insecurities women face ranging from domestic violence to economic inequality and abuse, harmful cultural practices to confiscating land. Therefore limiting policies such as the WPS Agenda to strict confines which does not take into account the everyday space of women or the private sphere "will only grasp a limited slice of the social spaces in which war is enacted" (Gray, 2019, p.191) and as a consequence has limited transformational potential. For example, women in countries such as Turkey experience high rates of physical and sexual violence (UNFPA Turkey, 2020). In March 2021, Turkey left the legally binding Istanbul Convention on Violence Against Women (a Council of Europe Treaty), causing an uproar amongst women's activists in a country where women are killed

every day (BBC News, 26th March 2021). Women are also affected by the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the state violence perpetrated by Turkey against Kurdish women (openDemocracy, 2019). Should the WPS Agenda not be applicable to this kind of situation just because Turkey is not classified as a country in conflict? This study makes the argument that it is in contexts like Turkey for example, that an Agenda such as the Women, Peace and Security could be utilised should the idea of peace and security be broader within the framework.

These findings support the argument made by Ní Aoláin and Valji (2019), who argue that, whilst the enormity of the task involved in defining violence is not the sole responsibility of the WPS Agenda, its narrow definitions of conflict and violence have influenced how women's experience of conflict is understood. This thesis contributes new knowledge to this debate, as it actually provides empirical evidence from people at national level who work directly with women who could benefit from the WPS Agenda. This empirical data supports the arguments of feminist security theory, which sees violence against women in terms of a continuum and understands that women experience insecurity in ways over and above the direct results of conflict. The results of this study indicate that definitions of conflict and security within the WPS Agenda have an impact on the effectiveness and suitability of the framework at national and local levels.

6.2.2 Intersectionality – Can the WPS Agenda be a useful framework for all women?

This thesis has used the concept and theoretical underpinning of intersectionality to analyse and understand the effectiveness and transformational potential of the WPS Agenda in South Africa and Palestine.[27] As academic critics have noted, the Agenda focuses broadly on talking about women, without actually specifying which women it is talking about (see, for example, Davis & Stern, 2019; Haastrup, 2020; Hagen, 2019; Pratt, 2013), but there has been limited

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[27] Some of the critiques of intersectionality relate to its theoretical contribution and overall confusion around whether it is a theoretical contribution, a concept, or a strategy for conducting feminist analysis (Davis, 2008). For a full discussion of this debate, please refer to Chapter 2.

empirical research conducted on how national stakeholders and civil society organisations view the lack of intersectionality within the WPS Agenda. This thesis argues that one of the conceptual failings of the WPS Agenda is that it does not address the intersectionality of gender with other markers of social location or identity, such as race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, or rural/urban differences. As Peterson (2004) observes, gender affects and structures divisions of power and influences who has the authority to determine whose voices, experiences, and interests will be dominant culturally. Ignoring this, the Agenda fails to understand not only how gender intersects and affects these identities, but also how this directly relates to the insecurities women experience in their lives. Similarly, intersectionality affects which women have the power to determine whose voices and interests will be heard. In addition, this thesis highlights the importance of considering geographical location, and particularly the rural/urban divide, which is often not included in the broader discussion around intersectionality.

As was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the research participants expressed some differing opinions with regards to the treatment of intersectionality within the WPS Agenda. On the one hand, some participants agreed that the Agenda itself is broad enough to cover all women and thought that any failings on the Agenda's part in addressing this issue could be highlighted in individual NAPs (South Africa civil society 5, Individual expert 6; Palestine civil society 2,4). On the other hand, some of the participants argued that the Agenda does not sufficiently address different intersectionalities (South Africa civil society 2, 4 Individual expert 3; Palestine Individual expert 3). However, it is important to note that the organisations interviewed were all, broadly speaking, women's organisations or focused more generally on peacebuilding activities, and therefore none of them were focused on one particular intersectional concern/community, such as LGBTQI+ rights for example. Looking at Lepinard's (2014) typology which sets out the four repertoires feminist organisations use to talk about differences amongst women, the organisations included in this study generally match the typology which

is associated with a gender-first approach and international solidarity. It was evident that some of the organisations took a gender-first approach because, in their opinion, the people they support are discriminated against because of their gender rather than any other specific need intersecting with gender. The participants I interviewed discussed their view that gender was one of the main drivers of inequality in both countries because of the patriarchal attitudes and structures that exist in both Palestine and South Africa (South Africa civil society 1, 2, 4 and Individual expert 3, 6; Palestine civil society 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9).. This was particularly the case in Palestine. This assumption informed their views that the WPS Agenda is adequate because it is talking about women, and they agreed that it can be applied to all women. However, I would argue that, considering the complex political and social situations in both places, while gender is one of the drivers for inequality, it is not the only one. For example, both places are deeply divided, and in South Africa the intersection between gender and race is also a significant driver for inequality.

Linked to this is the discussion about how the positionality of the research participants' identities and locations affects the discussion around intersectionality. The participants' social identities, as leaders of organisations that value themselves as feminist, probably makes it easier for them to identify with Lepinard's gender-first approach. For example, it might be easier for a white woman to identify with feminism before any other category of activism, as she would not have any idea of what it would feel like to be marginalised because of your race, class, or ethnicity. Although, for example in South Africa, the research participants included both Black and white South Africans, all of them were highly educated, networked, and held positions of power within their organisations. I do not want to claim that they would not have experienced marginalisation at all because of the identities they hold, but from the point of view of intersectionality it could be argued that it is perhaps easier for a woman who works for a feminist, women's organisation to take the gender-first approach in their work than it would

be for someone who has been multiply disadvantaged by gender and the social location or place within the racialised political system that has been imposed on her.

Lastly, as Lepinard's (2014) typology of international solidarity recognises, it is important to note that structural power relations affect women differently within the same societies. Lepinard (2014) tries to take this into account, specifically with regards to minority women, in order to translate their political aspirations into more mainstream feminist vocabulary. The repertoire realises the need for mainstream women's organisations to include the voices of minority women and to improve their representation within women's movements and the mainstream political arena. This fourth repertoire reflects more broadly on the discussion about who participates in the development of the NAPs from civil society and who gets to be represented. It was interesting that one of the research participants in Palestine reflected that, in her opinion, not every woman needs to know about 1325 and that it is, instead, the responsibility of middle- and high-level leaders to know about it and also lobby on behalf of all women (Palestine civil society, 3). This attitude raises the bigger question about how intersectionality should affect the application of the WPS Agenda from a policymaking point of view. As Hancock (2017) has argued, policies should be designed to ensure that all members of marginalised groups are enabled to empower themselves, and this raises issues about who gets to define public policies that are in the interests of particular groups. This topic will be discussed further in the next section of this chapter which looks at the question of who gets to design an individual country's NAP.

When discussing the need for intersectional analysis and reflecting on the research participants' interviews, it is also important to consider the positionalities of the interviewees and how this might have an impact on their views of the WPS Agenda. Drawing on Richter-Devroe's (2018) work on the everyday informal politics of Palestinian women and Ryan's (2015) discussion of *sumud*, one must reflect that actually, in the Palestinian case, it is often occupation and the struggle against occupation that takes precedence in everyday life rather than gender rights. In

Palestine, the participants highlighted the fact that gender is one of the main drivers of inequality in the country, but actually they were talking specifically about gender as it is experienced under occupation (Palestine civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and Individual experts 1, 4). When discussing intersectionality with the research participants, it was impossible not to take occupation into account as this manifests itself in the everyday lives of Palestinian women (Palestine civil society 1, 4, 5, 6, 10, Individual expert 1, 3).. As Richter-Devroe (2018) has argued, the occupation's policies dominate every single aspect of Palestinians' lives, and therefore the daily efforts of individuals to cope with the occupation's intrusions should not be separated from broader political dynamics. The national struggle dominates the Palestinian political environment, as was evident from the research findings as well, and the WPS Agenda is used as a tool to advance the national struggle against occupation by holding Israel accountable. Therefore, in the Palestinian case, it should be questioned if it matters that the WPS Agenda does not take into account intersectionality and the needs of all Palestinian women, when the real priority is liberation for all through this national struggle. As Sharoni (1995) observed, national liberation has become one of the most important focuses of the collective identity of Palestinians, and it is hard for them to separate their everyday lives from the struggle for national liberation because they are interconnected and intertwined. Women's rights are secondary to the cause of national liberation (Jamal, 2001), and so one could theorise from the research findings that actually the primary aim is freedom for every Palestinian regardless of their gender, class, ethnicity, or religion. In this situation, gender security and intersectionality become less important priorities than national identity.

Geographical location, specifically the urban/rural divide, is often not discussed when intersectional analysis is being conducted. Intersectional research, as was discussed in Chapter 2, usually takes as its starting point analysis of the intersections of race and gender, following Kimberly Crenshaw's (1989) approach. Of course, intersectionality is not only limited to race, and Crenshaw (1991) noted that, although her own work focused on the intersection of race

and gender, intersectionality should be expanded to include other factors such as class, age, sexual orientation, and colour. However, geographical location and the issue of how women are differently affected depending on whether they live in urban cities or rural locations are rarely taken into account in discussions of intersectionality. I argue that omitting geographical location from the discussion is an oversight, as it can have a huge impact on marginalising women, as is evident from the research findings (South Africa Individual expert 3; Palestine civil society 4,10 and Individual expert 3). Especially in the case of Palestine, women's experiences can be completely different, depending on whether they live in Gaza, Ramallah, or Area C of the West Bank. For example, in the South Hebron Hills, women and girls have to travel for hours to attend higher education classes, and their homes are constantly at risk of demolition by the Israeli security forces. Meanwhile, their children need to be accompanied to school because of the danger they face of harassment from people living in nearby Israeli settlements. Often families are afraid to allow their daughters to work in bigger nearby cities because of the checkpoints they will have to cross on their daily commutes. These are just some of the factors that contribute to the insecurities women in Palestine face in their everyday lives as has been discussed already in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Even though one of the criticisms of intersectionality relates to its supposed ambiguity, the nonspecific nature of its theoretical approach also means that it is an open-ended concept that can be filled with many meanings (Choo & Ferree, 2010). The strength of the theory, as Davis (2008) writes, is indeed in its vagueness, as it allows researchers to explore different intersections one might not have considered before, and it is not limited to use when conducting research only on race or class, for example. In this case, the flexibility within the theory allowed me to explore and better understand the importance of geographical location in relation to the WPS Agenda, as it was one of the points raised most often in the interviews, especially in Palestine ((South Africa Individual expert 3; Palestine civil society 4,10 and Individual expert 3).

On the basis of the findings of this thesis, I would argue that, although intersectionality's open-ended nature allows researchers to investigate a range of different intersectionalities that have not been considered before, it would be particularly important to raise discussion about the impact of geographical location as one of the factors in women's intersecting identities that affects the transformational potential of the WPS Agenda.

Although the findings of this thesis indicate that many interviewees thought the Agenda itself was broad enough, even though it does not directly address intersectionality, it could be taken into account in localised National Action Plans (South Africa individual expert 3, 6; Palestine civil society 10). As Chapter 4 discussed, this is the case in the recently developed South African NAP which addresses the different insecurities faced by groups such as people with disabilities or the LGBTQI+ community (South African NAP, 2020). The findings show that the majority of the participants thought that intersectionality should be taken into consideration when planning the localised Action Plans, and this was seen to be important in Palestine due to the huge inequalities women face depending on the authority areas in which they live (for example Palestine civil society 3, 4, 10). However, as argued already in Chapter 4, leaving it to individual member states to decide whether or not intersectionality should be included in their NAP is arguably inadequate for a global UN framework. Although detailed decisions and policy directions linked to intersectionality could be decided on at the national level, it would be crucial to address the wider policy direction of intersectionality within the Agenda itself. Member states look to the UN for direction in order to understand what they should implement and, without clear guidance, any promises they make to take intersectionality into account could remain vague if they are not enforced in some way at international as well as national level. As discussed in Chapter 4, leaving it to the member states to decide if they want to include intersectionality within their NAPs can be especially problematic in countries that, for example do not recognise LGBTQI+ rights.

However, most importantly, the inclusion of intersectionality as part of the core WPS Agenda would modernise it and make it more suitable for the current day. As Davis and Stern (2019) argued, the Agenda's interpretation of gender as a heteronormative and binary concept makes it an outdated framework. An Agenda which was designed to be transformational for women but does not take into account, for example, LGBTQI+ rights, ethnicity, or disabilities does not reflect 21st century society. Although the Agenda should not be watered down too much by making it an Agenda about everything and everyone, adding intersectionality into it would simply make it the inclusive Agenda it should have been in the first place. Introducing intersectionality into the WPS Agenda in this way would allow it to stay firmly rooted in the project to advance gender security, but it would also ensure the inclusion of everyone, even the most marginalised people.

6.2.3 Who gets a say in how the WPS Agenda is formulated, designed, and used?

Several challenges remain for the implementation of the WPS framework, as Shepherd (2016) and Basu et al. (2020) among others have noted, and this issue was discussed further in Chapter 2. Previous studies evaluating the implementation of the WPS framework have focused on whether countries should be adopting National Action Plans (Swaine, 2017; Aroussi, 2017), and localisation of the NAPs (Basu, 2016; George & Shepherd, 2016), and Swaine (2017) has written about the growing industry involved in the development of National Action Plans. However, there is very little discussion in the literature on the question of interaction between international, national, and local levels in terms of who designs and funds the implementation of the WPS Agenda at national level. With respect to the second research objective posed in this thesis, the findings show that the process of designing and developing NAPs involves numerous different actors, from international and national to local-level stakeholders. The next section will examine how the relationships between these different stakeholders affect the development of NAPs, and it poses a key question by asking who gets to be involved in the design of how the WPS Agenda is used in individual countries.

The data from this thesis contributes to a clearer understanding of who is involved in the development of the National Action Plans in Palestine and South Africa. This is important to understand, as, while there is often discussion about how important it is to localise NAPs in order for them to be effective, there is little discussion about who gets to be involved in the development of NAPs and which stakeholders decide on the issues to be included on behalf of the so-called 'local people'. This thesis has shown that a series of stakeholders are involved, ranging from international organisations and national governments to local civil society organisations, including NGOs that are part of the so-called 'elite' and those organisations that operate at the margins. By civil society organisations that operate at the margins I mean smaller, usually less established organisations that do not necessarily have the same political clout domestically as is enjoyed by the elite organisations. The data suggests that the international organisations, which include, for example, the UN and EU, provide funding, resources, and guidance to national governments to assist them in developing their own NAPs. The process also includes the national governments themselves, as it is their responsibility to adopt the NAP (Aroussi, 2017). Lastly, it involves local, civil society organisations, both elite organisations and those that operate at the margins of the society, who organise consultations for the national actors and in some cases are also responsible for the implementation of some aspects of the NAP.

The cases of South Africa and Palestine demonstrate well how the WPS Agenda has been localised to fit into specific contexts. In the South African case, the research participants emphasised that both clear commitment and implementation were needed to improve women's security within the domestic context, rather than just external commitments implemented through peacekeeping operations (which was the primary way that South Africa in particular had engaged with the process of implementing the WPS Agenda at the time when the interviews were conducted) (South Africa Individual expert 3, 6). The South African NAP has both an internal and external focus. This represents a rather different approach to the one

Palestine has used in designing its NAP. On the one hand, the Palestinian NAP is designed almost as an advocacy tool to keep the Israeli occupation accountable and, on the other, it is used as a tool for Palestinians to continue their national struggle against the occupation. As was discussed in Chapter 5, many of the research participants in Palestine described the WPS Agenda as a tool they could use to bring the Palestinian case forward in the international arena and to document Israeli human rights violations (Palestine civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9). Both countries have localised how they use the Agenda and, rather than opting for a 'one-size-fits-all' solution, they have instead recognised the need to reflect their localised contexts (George & Shepherd, 2016). However, the extent to which each NAP is tailored to a particular context can become a politically sensitive issue (ibid.). Although it is seen as a good practice to localise NAPs, the process can become entrenched in local politics, as is, for example, the case in Palestine which experienced challenges with regards to funding because its NAP includes a section on holding Israel accountable for human rights violations (Palestine civil society, 5). Then again, it should also be questioned how much an Agenda should be tailored to the local context – does tailoring the Palestinian NAP to the local context by focusing almost explicitly to the occupation and holding Israel accountable take away the focus from improving women's security and equality at the Palestinian level? As argued before in this chapter, does the national struggle take priority once again over women's rights, or are these two causes so interlinked that it is impossible to address improving women's rights without focusing on the occupation? If one looks at the challenges for gender equality highlighted in Chapter 5, it is evident that some of these issues are directly linked to the occupation. However, there are also aspects of patriarchal structures and outdated legal systems which could be targeted in a domestic level by the Palestinian Authority in some cases. Therefore, the whole localisation process of NAPs can bring its own challenges and dilemmas.

However, at the same time the Palestinian case is an excellent example of the importance of the localisation process and, as Achiellos-Sarll and Chilmeran (2020) have argued, localisation

should not just be about adopting and localising an international framework but should also be about shaping and contesting the agenda in order to create new ways to support women's participation. The authors challenge what is actually meant by 'local' and argue that in order for the Agenda to make an impact it is important not just to understand but to also locate "the local from a distinctly feminist, transnational, and postcolonial perspective" in order to move the Agenda beyond UN buildings (Achiellos-Sarll & Chilmeran, 2020, p. 597). Localisation has become accepted as the ideal way to try to implement the Agenda, however Achiellos-Sarll and Chilmeran (ibid.) remind us that localisations should be about facilitating local engagement with the Agenda and also about challenging its norms to ensure that the Agenda can be used in a way that is most appropriate to its different contexts. What is meant by local and who gets to be part of the local sphere of influence will be discussed later on in this section.

As the findings demonstrate, each of these stakeholders have their own motivations for lobbying for the implementation of the WPS Agenda. This means that their commitment to its implementation and priorities can depend on their political interests and motivations at the time, as was shown, for example, by the case of South Africa discussed previously. This study has also found this to be the case with Palestine. Although Palestine has a NAP in place, the data shows that the research participants blamed the frustrating lack of implementation on political unwillingness and a lack of motivation within the national government (Palestine civil society 4, 5, 7). The data also demonstrated how global politics can affect national efforts to design NAPs (Palestine civil society 7, 8).

An important argument to note in relation to the different relationships between the international, national, and local level stakeholders is funding. It is natural that there will be shifting political priorities nationally and globally. However, as long as the funding for the development of a National Action Plan and the implementation of the framework comes, for example, from international organisations, the strategy is being driven yet again by stakeholders from the Global North who decide which countries and issues they want to direct

funding towards. Although, in the Palestinian case, there was a real drive from civil society organisations to develop a NAP, the funding for the process and implementation (through activities/programmes conducted by the civil society) came from international organisations rather than from the national government (Palestine civil society 1, 8). This finding further supports Basu's (2016) view that legitimacy and local ownership at national level can be weaker if funding is provided from external sources, as the real drive has not come from the national level. These results also add to the findings of other research conducted by Basu (2016), Aroussi (2017), and Swaine (2017), who have argued that the WPS Agenda is another tool that Global North countries can use to advance their liberal peace agendas and keep the Global North as the Agenda's material, conceptual, and institutional home.

On the question of how the international, national, and local levels interact in the implementation process of the WPS framework, it was evident that there are many dependencies between the different actors with regards to the successful implementation of the framework. When you follow the lifecycle of the implementation of the WPS framework from the top-level of international United Nations policy all the way to national and local levels, one will notice that, before the effects of the framework are seen at an individual level, the aims and objectives of the Agenda are weighed and filtered by a range of different and powerful stakeholders. For example, in the case of Palestine, majority of organisations interviewed rely on international donor funding from organisations such as UN agencies and individual countries to continue their work (for example Palestine civil society 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9). Hence, the data would suggest that the work that organisations can conduct at national level largely depends on funding awarded by international organisations and their strategies and policy priorities. This funding commonly comes with certain requirements that encourage focus on interests that the international organisation would like to pursue. For example, one of the research participants explained that they were given funding to implement a programme about Resolution 1325's priorities but were told by the funder which areas they should work on and

how (Palestine civil society, 6). The NGO receiving this funding thought the programme should have been delivered elsewhere, in an area where its staff felt there was more need for these sorts of activities (ibid). Therefore, one could argue that, rather than being an inclusive Agenda which takes into account the localised needs of each context, some of the work carried out in the name of the WPS agenda is directed by the values and needs of the Global North. The other point that needs to be made here is that the dependency on international, Western aid and funding has actually further fragmented Palestinian society and contributed to the ongoing occupation as argued by Darweish and Rigby (2015), as according to international humanitarian law, providing these basic services is the duty of the occupier, Israel.

This study's results indicate how the actions driven by different policy priorities and funding affect the implementation process. As the data from interviews with research participants has shown, especially in the case of South Africa, political priorities and a lack of willingness within government were understood to be the reason for the slow implementation and adoption of a National Action Plan, especially as, during the period when the interviews were being conducted, the political landscape in South Africa was focused on the presidential elections rather than advancing women's security (South Africa individual experts 3, 6). When Palestine adopted its first NAP (2017-2019), it was only the second country in the region to develop a National Action Plan and this was an achievement itself. However, as became evident from the data, the government had not actually allocated any budget for the plan's implementation (Palestine civil society 1, 5, 8).

It is interesting to note that, in both places, the implementation of the NAP and the WPS framework is really pushed forward by women's organisations and NGOs at the local level. The findings suggest that there are differences in terms of the ability of the different civil society organisations to affect the consultations and development of NAPs. The division between elite civil society organisations and civil society organisations on the margins is clear. The position of the NGO in the society, both politically, economically and location wise, effects

the way they are able to participate to political processes, in this case participating and influencing to the development of the NAP. As Cohn et al. (2004, p. 132) have observed, Resolution 1325 "means very little to women in conflict zones unless they know about it and have the security, resources and political space to organise and access decision-makers." A note of caution is due here since the dataset in this thesis is small, and so one cannot draw broad conclusions about the relationships between these two different groups; however, some general observations on their relationship can be made.

The implementation of the WPS Agenda in both case study countries is driven by special national committees, which consist of several civil society organisations working broadly on women's issues, as well as governmental bodies and ministries (Palestine NAP 2017; South Africa NAP, 2020). In reality, although it was mentioned that national consultations were held to gather the views of other NGOs and smaller grassroots organisations, the data would suggest that the consultation process was not as inclusive as this process might suggest. It was evident from the data that smaller NGOs and grassroot organisations that were not part of the national committees in the first place had not been consulted in the drafting process of the NAP (South Africa civil society 1, Palestine civil society 4, 6). The results of the study would indicate that the membership of these national committees comprised organisations that are well-established and large and are always based in one of the relevant country's main cities. The women leading them were networked, well-educated, had attended several conferences and policy events abroad, and spoke fluent English. One implication of this finding is that we need to question how representative these organisations and their views are of the whole nation they represent in WPS processes. There is a danger that, when this sort of modelling includes only elite NGOs in the work of a national committee, generalisations will be made if it is assumed that these women can represent the views of all women. Almagro (2018) discussed this in her research about who represents women's organisations. She describes this representative type as being the activist, which is an elite position often aided by the international NGOs (for example, the

activist is often invited to participate in international networks and conferences by the international NGOs) to work on advocacy at the international level, as discussed in Chapter 2. This should be taken into consideration in discussions about which civil society organisations are represented and involved in WPS work and who they represent. Who is actually representing the local women in these discussions and what is their positionality?

The data indicates that elite Palestinian organisations have access to the government and international organisations more regularly, and although the majority of them operate in other towns and rural locations in Palestine as well as cities, for some, their work is focused on a much narrower area that does not allow them to develop insights into a wide range of women's experiences across the country. Therefore, these findings may help us to understand how well elite organisations can be expected to take into account the specific needs of a wide range of women, for example, those who live in more rural locations in these countries. The data also highlights how important it is to remember that, as one of the interviewees observed, all of these organisations, quite naturally, have their own motivations and agendas and the fact that they promote gender rights does not mean that they all do it in the same way (Palestine civil society, 7). We cannot assume that one woman can speak for all other women and their experiences.

This section has shown how political interdependency between the different stakeholders means that it is almost impossible to create a 'perfect' environment for the successful implementation of the WPS framework. In part, this is because the work involved in developing a NAP is often funded by the UN or other international organisations that have their own political interests. Also, one cannot necessarily make broad assumptions about how civil society actors will represent the 'local' people, as they will often have their own power hierarchies in play as well, as has been demonstrated in this section.

6.2.4 Complex objectives and goals – insights into the challenges for implementation

Lastly, this thesis will discuss the challenges that may affect the framework's ability to produce tangible impact. The implementation of the WPS framework is a well-researched issue[28], and the contribution of this thesis to the discussion has been presented in the arguments above, which address questions that have not been widely researched and examined in relation to the framework. However, it is prudent to briefly discuss some of the common challenges for the Agenda that have emerged in the findings of this thesis, as they clearly demonstrate that there are ongoing issues with regards to its implementation even 20 years after the initial resolution, 1325, was adopted.

Although the two country cases examined here have different contexts with regards to the adoption and implementation of the WPS framework, the issues involved remain similar for both of them. The data shows that a lack of implementation and of monitoring and evaluating mechanisms, a lack of funding, and the effects of internal and external politics cause difficulties that make it hard to implement the WPS framework effectively. Lack of funding is obviously a particularly serious issue, and even though gender equality and the framework may perhaps be seen as an important cause at the international level, in reality there still seems to be reluctance to invest funds to either implement or finance its implementation at the national level. This finding contributes to the broader discussion on the challenges that budgets cause for the implementation of the WPS Agenda (see for example Swaine, 2017). In fact, both the South African and Palestinian NAPs lack specific budgets, and it is stated that the funding for NAP activities will either come from existing budgets or from any funding that civil society organisations receive (South Africa NAP, 2020; Palestine NAP 2017). Budgeting and funding allocations are also always dependent on policy priorities, which raises questions about what happens when they shift to another issue/priority area. This is specifically relevant in the

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[28] For example discussion on the implementation of the WPS Agenda through international institutions see Wright, 2016; Haastrup, 2019; Guerrina & Wright, 2016; on National Action Plans and localisation of the Agenda see Swaine, 2017; Aroussi, 2017; True, 2016; Shepherd, 2016

current climate, where COVID-19 has inevitably caused issues globally and has most likely shifted funding priorities.

The other issue is the lack of accountability, which arises because the implementation of the framework is left to the UN's member states, which often omit evaluation and monitoring frameworks from their National Action Plans. This is a significant ongoing issue that has been raised countless times before in academic (see for example Miller et al, 2014, Jacevic 2019) and policy literature (see for example Coomaraswamy, 2015). No solution seems to be on the horizon, although the adoption of CEDAW Recommendation No. 30 addresses the relationship between the WPS Agenda and CEDAW, specifically with regards to the implementation of the resolutions under the state's obligations to CEDAW as it "interprets implementation of the WPS resolutions as constitutive of state obligations under CEDAW" (O'Rourke & Swaine, 2019, p. 3). This highlights and addresses the state's responsibility to report on the implementation of the WPS Agenda at the domestic level, meaning that state parties need to report on the implementation of the Agenda according to their obligations under CEDAW (ibid.). Tied in with the issue of accountability, is the absence of any clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Without appropriate mechanisms to measure in some way any successes the framework achieves, it is hard to showcase its effectiveness in any way or share proven good practice. This matter is further complicated by the debate around whether it is legally binding for states to implement Security Council resolutions.

Lastly, there is the issue of political priorities, and we might ask to what extent is gender taking front stage in governments' political discussions? Certainly, in the cases of South Africa and Palestine, gender issues are not currently at the forefront of the political agenda. In South Africa, civil society has lobbied for years for the development of a NAP, but there is clearly political unwillingness to focus time and resources on the issue. The NAP for South Africa was only adopted in 2020, coinciding with South Africa's term as a non-permanent member of the

UN Security Council. In the Palestinian case[29], the activities of the first NAP were largely implemented by civil society organisations rather than ministries or government (Palestine civil society, 8). Are gender issues something that the Palestinian Authority is willing to invest money in, or will its commitment only involve signing papers without following through with actions? When I conducted interviews in February 2020 in the West Bank, President Donald Trump had just announced his so-called peace plan, the "Deal of the Century". Undoubtedly, at that point the plan had become the focus of politics for the foreseeable future.

Since January 2020 Palestine has been suffering, along with other countries, the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic and, in May 2021, Palestinians saw some of the worst violence in years, both in Gaza and East Jerusalem. Priorities shift and we are currently experiencing unprecedented times in global politics, prompting the question as to whether national governments are willing to invest in these issues when so many other shifting and pressing priorities are seeming to take centre stage currently. We might ask too, when will gender issues become a priority?

Although the WPS Agenda is far from perfect, the research findings of this study clearly demonstrate the value that this kind of top-down international policy framework can have at national level. It was apparent that the framework was seen both as an advocacy tool and as a framework that could give legitimacy to the work of civil society organisations (South Africa civil society 4, Individual expert 3; Palestine civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, Individual expert 1). The WPS Agenda is certainly a useful framework for advancing women's security and gender equality in the different country contexts examined here. In the case of Palestine, it is an effective international advocacy tool in the fight against Israeli oppression. The fact that the PA has developed a NAP for the framework is seen to have given a level of legitimacy and power to Palestinian women, although, on the other hand, it could be argued that the NAP has

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[29] Palestine has now adopted a 2nd generation NAP

become just another tool to promote the Palestinian national struggle against the occupation rather than one that focuses efforts on advancing the security and rights of Palestinian women.

The WPS Agenda is an important and useful framework for women in South Africa. The framework is very relevant to the context of South Africa where women face several challenges in their everyday lives. Although there are several shortfalls in the WPS framework, it is evident from the data that it remains a relevant agenda for women in these countries. Not only does it allow organisations to focus their work, but it also enables them to engage with these issues in wider discussions on policymaking, which in turn allows them to have their voices heard in arenas where decisions are made.

The findings demonstrated that although South Africa did not have a formal NAP at the time of the fieldwork in 2018, the civil society organisations were already utilising the principles of the WPS Agenda in their own work (South Africa civil society, 2, 4 and 5). However, as demonstrated by the data, a NAP was seen as a useful tool to ensure that the WPS Agenda becomes part of a nationwide strategy rather than just something that the civil society organisations implement. Even though this thesis has highlighted Shepherd's (2021) argument on how the civil society organisations do not necessarily need a NAP to shape the Agenda to fit within in their work, the findings have indicated how the participants saw a formal NAP as a useful tool for their own work. For example in the case of Palestine, the participants understood the NAP as a valuable framework to advocate their positioning in the international arena, as the formal National Action Plan gave them the structure and legitimacy to do this (Palestine civil society 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, Individual expert 1). These findings contribute to the academic literature on the NAPs. Even though NAPs have been largely criticised in the literature (Aroussi 2017; Haastrup and Hagen, 2020), they are a useful tool to ensure the commitments of the WPS resolutions "become more systematic and permanent" (Jacevic, 2019, p. 276). Although as Jacevic (ibid) highlights, in order for the Agenda to be effective, other tools and policies need to complement and support the efforts of National Action Plans.

I would argue that this point by Jacevic (ibid) is actually critical. As the findings specifically from South Africa demonstrate, the country has several policies, frameworks and even a constitutions which in principle should guarantee women's security. However, as data highlights, the lack of proper implementation is an issue. Therefore it can be argued that a NAP would be the most effective when it is be supported by other national instruments, tools and policies that would complement it. This is where one can really see the value of an international framework such as the WPS Agenda and a more formalised NAP: although it is not perfect, it allows national civil society organisations to advocate and lobby for women's rights both in national and international arenas.

6.3. Conclusion

This chapter has brought together the findings from the two case studies. It has addressed the central argument of this thesis by looking at the suitability of the WPS Agenda from the perspectives of both feminist security theory and intersectionality to the contexts of Palestine and South Africa. This study's findings suggest that the WPS Agenda can be a useful framework for women in South Africa and Palestine; however, several conceptual challenges hinder the Agenda's transformational potential. Unless these challenges are addressed, the tangible impact of the WPS Agenda, for example its applicability to different contexts and situations, will continue to remain limited. The Agenda, in its current state, defines security narrowly and does not take into account the fact that violence happens on a continuum and women experience insecurity in their everyday lives, rather than just during conflict or in the aftermath of conflict. This means that the Agenda actually excludes a large proportion of women and cannot become an Agenda fit for the 21st century unless intersectionality and gendered, intersectional experiences of conflict are taken into account.

This chapter has argued for the importance of ensuring that, within theoretical debates, the discussions around feminist security and intersectionality should be intertwined and connected. At the moment, these conversations happen in silos, next to each other, when in fact the issues

they explore are deeply interconnected. I agree with Wibben's (2020) argument that any discussion about feminist security approaches should use the lens of intersectionality to reveal how security is affected by different intersectional identities.

Sjoberg's (2009) work on feminist scholarship about international security showed that the security of the individual is closely related to national and international politics, and she explored how international politics have an effect on the security of individuals. This chapter has argued that, in order for the WPS Agenda to be truly transformational, it must take into account this broader and more inclusive definition of security. As Sjoberg (2009, p. 186) points out, from a feminist perspective, "gender is conceptually, empirically and normatively essential to studying international security".

As was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the current state of affairs in the world makes the WPS Agenda more relevant than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of violence in Palestine have had a disproportionate effect on women. Therefore, the relevant question is not about whether or not women might need a Women, Peace and Security Agenda but about how the Agenda can respond better to the needs of women.

7. Conclusion

The United Nations Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security" marked its 20th anniversary in October 2020. When Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000, it was celebrated as a major breakthrough for women's rights because it directly addressed women and armed conflict (Tryggestad, 2009). The adoption of the resolution was historic, as this was the first time the issue of women's role and participation in peacebuilding was discussed and debated at the Security Council level (ibid.). The WPS Agenda is considered to be important as it highlights women's experiences in conflict situations and recognises their contribution to conflict resolution and prevention (Cohn, 2004). This is significant in itself, as previous UN resolutions and policy reports had treated women as victims of war rather than agents of change. The Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (Coomaraswamy, 2015) outlines a number of successes in the implementation of the WPS Agenda throughout the years, such as the adoption of a comprehensive normative framework with regards to sexual violence in conflict. Other highlights include increases in the representation of women in international institutions and raising awareness of gender in peace processes (Aroussi, 2020). Even though the WPS Agenda was never designed to be an organising tool for women's movements (Cohn, 2004), many women's organisations and local communities have found ways to make it work for them.

However, despite its significance and some of the successes it has led to over the years, as discussed in this thesis, and as other academics and policy makers have highlighted, the Agenda has not proved to be as transformational for women's rights as was originally thought. Aroussi (2020, p. 4) has argued, for instance, that the "agenda must be reinvented to encapsulate a feminist security perspective that challenges rather than condones militarism, imperialism, colonialism, racism, inequality, and exclusion".

It was within this context that this thesis set out to examine the extent to which the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda is transformational and suitable framework for improving women's security in South Africa and Palestine. For the purposes of this research,and specifically research objective 2, I examined how the people I interviewed understood, interpreted and applied the WPS Agenda in their work. As Shepherd (2021, p. 7) has observed, in order "to know the agenda, we must know the stories". Shepherd here is referring to the importance of understanding how the narratives of the WPS Agenda are presented in the physical home of the Agenda, the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and she asks how "these narratives shape and inform the ways that the agenda is encountered, acted upon and imagined into the future?" (Shepherd, 2021, p. 8).

As was highlighted in the preamble to this thesis, the current global context – which is characterised by the COVID-19 pandemic, increased violence against women in South Africa, and the escalation of violence and the changed political situation in Palestine – has meant that the questions this thesis raises have become timelier than ever. It is important to conduct research that allows us to develop an understanding of how to advance women's security and participation in situations of conflict, and it is vital to assess whether or not international instruments, such as the WPS Agenda, can truly be transformational for women living in South Africa, Palestine, and beyond.

This concluding chapter will address and summarise the findings with reference to the research aims and objectives set out in Chapter 1. Following from this, the Chapter will outline the contribution to knowledge that its findings make, both empirically and theoretically. It will offer some reflections on the policy implications of these findings. In addition, the chapter will address the limitations of this research study and how they were taken into account in the data analysis process. This research has also highlighted new avenues for exploration that will be discussed in a separate section of this chapter. The concluding section will offer some final remarks.

7.1. Research findings

The research involved conducting semi-structured interviews with members of civil society organisations and individual experts from governments and international organisations. The research findings were analysed thematically and interpreted through the lens of feminist security and intersectionality theory. These findings will be outlined here in relation to the original research aims and objectives which were outlined in Chapter 1.

The main aim of this thesis was *to understand whether and to what extent the WPS Agenda is a transformational and suitable framework for improving women's security in South Africa and Palestine by using feminist security theory and intersectionality as lenses of analysis.*

To understand whether the WPS Agenda could be a suitable framework for improving women in South Africa and Palestine, it was important to first ask the participants to reflect what they saw as the key challenges for women's security in these countries. The previous chapters presented in detail that which the participants identified as some of the main challenges for women's security and equality in South Africa and Palestine. The complexity of the situation and multiple challenges for gender equality for women in South Africa were evident in the research findings. One of the challenges highlighted was the imbalance between, on the one hand, the existence of progressive equality legislation and, on the other, the lack of actual implementation of these laws and policies. High rates of sexual violence, domestic violence, femicide, and murder were mentioned as the key challenges for gender equality in the country, amongst other issues such as economic inequality, access to education, treatment by the judicial system, and unemployment. In Palestine three main challenges for women's security were highlighted: the double burden of the Israeli occupation and patriarchy, women's political participation, and the legal system. The findings highlight that the occupation has serious effects on the lives of Palestinian women and that the security of Palestinians cannot be considered separately from the situation of the occupation. The third main challenge that this study has identified for Palestinian women relates to issues caused by the judicial system and

by the outdated legal system that is still in place in Palestine. All of the different areas in the occupied Palestinian territory operate under different judicial systems, thanks to the heritage of the different areas which means that, for example, the West Bank is ruled by Jordanian law.

With this background knowledge, the participants were then asked to reflect if they think the WPS Agenda could be a useful framework to improve women's security. The findings of this thesis demonstrate that, although generally the WPS Agenda was regarded as a useful tool by the interviewees, several challenges impede the transformational potential of the Agenda.

One of the main research findings of this study concerned how the research participants understood how security and peace are defined within the WPS Agenda. As discussed, the foundational Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was designed to be implemented in conflict and post-conflict countries. The findings demonstrate that this definition of security, which is narrowed down to war and post-conflict contexts, is not adequate to many situations and that it would be a mistake to think the Agenda is only applicable to these places. These findings show that the WPS Agenda should be relevant to the South African situation because women experience systematic, structural violence there in their everyday lives. In the Palestinian case, it was highlighted that the definition of security within the WPS Agenda is problematic as it does not address the occupation. This thesis has shown that the Agenda does not take into consideration the uniqueness of the occupation and its legal ramifications, and therefore the specific implementation of the Agenda within the Palestinian context requires careful consideration, as the occupation itself is one of the causes of insecurity for Palestinian women.

Secondly, this thesis presented its research findings with regards to intersectionality within the WPS Agenda and whether or not it can adequately deal with the range of identities generated by factors such as race, class, age, gender, and sexual orientation. The findings show a mix of responses here, from both Palestine and South Africa, as some of the participants said that the

Agenda deals with these issues adequately (South Africa civil society 5, Individual expert 6; Palestine civil society 2, 4), whereas others felt that it did not take into account the different inequalities that women deal with (South Africa civil society 2, 4 Individual expert 3; Palestine Individual expert 3). In particular, it was highlighted, in both South Africa and Palestine, that the Agenda does not take into account the issue of geographical location which can be a huge barrier/enabler for women. Geographical location can affect women's views, for example on issues such as what a NAP should look like, and it can also affect women's security. The linkage between location and security was especially prevalent in the Palestinian case, as women's experience of security can be different depending on whether they live in Palestinian-controlled Area A or the Israeli-controlled Area C of the West Bank.

To understand and examine how the WPS Agenda is interpreted and applied by civil society organisations and other stakeholders at national and local levels in South Africa and Palestine

By interviewing members of the civil society and individual experts in South Africa and Palestine, this study aimed to understand how national stakeholders in South Africa and Palestine interpret, understand, and use the United Nations WPS Agenda.

All research participants were familiar with the WPS Agenda and utilised it in their work in one way or another. This was especially significant finding in South Africa whom did not have a NAP at the time of the field work, but the civil society still utilised the principles of the WPS Agenda in their work. This demonstrates the value of the resolutions at the civil society level, as all of the organisations interviewed work with marginalised communities in South Africa. As Shepherd (2021) has written, the way the WPS Agenda is shaped and retold across different contexts allows the various imaginings of what the Agenda is and could be. The civil society organisations do not necessarily need a NAP to shape the Agenda to fit within in their work. However, as the findings demonstrate, a formalised NAP is a useful framework to not only connect the different stakeholders within the country from local, to regional and national, but

it can also provide a strategy for the civil society to work within, as was seen in the South African case. In the Palestinian case, a formalised NAP allowed the civil society organisations to use it as an international advocacy tool, and for example document Israeli human rights violations.

The level of engagement with the resolution and its aims differed within the organisations. As discussed previously, due to differences in their aims and ethos, the activities they were involved in also varied. A few of the organisations were focused solely on gender issues, whereas the rest had a broader overall focus on peacebuilding, with specific programmes that were aimed at women. For some of the organisations, the WPS Agenda and Resolution 1325 are merely things that they try to incorporate into their overall strategies, as one of the interviewees mentioned. Many of the organisations had conducted some kind of training activity within the broad principles of the WPS Agenda (Civil society 4).

The findings also indicate civil society was active in lobbying for a National Action Plan for both countries. Although these findings need to be treated with caution, as the majority of the research participants interviewed were part of civil society organisations themselves. In South Africa, the findings highlight that civil society organisations have been active agents for pushing the WPS Agenda in South Africa forward (this was later noted in the official South African NAP as well, South Africa NAP, 2020). The civil society actors were particularly strong advocates for the implementation of the WPS Agenda in South Africa as they found the framework to be relevant and meaningful for them. Similarly in Palestine, the findings show how it was the lobbying by the women's organisations in Palestine that resulted in the development of the first NAP. In 2009, a civil society coalition was formed following a call from the General Union of Palestinian Women which brought together various different women's and human rights organisations.[30] Palestine's first NAP was developed as part of a

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[30] The General Union of Palestinian Women is the official representative of Palestinian women within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

consultative process led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and supported by a range of international organisations, including UNFPA, ESCWA, UN Women, and the European Union (ESCWA, 2019).

The findings demonstrate how both places have utilised the WPS Agenda to fit within their own national contexts. In South Africa, the NAP was designed for use in addressing both foreign issues (for example, South African women's participation in peacekeeping operations in other countries) and domestic policy challenges (such as gender-based violence). The Palestinian case is unique in the sense that the NAP includes a pillar on holding the Israeli occupation accountable. This study's findings also highlighted how vulnerable the implementation of the WPS Agenda is to other factors, both internal and external, such as global politics and dynamics. Especially in the case of Palestine, it was questioned whether gender equality issues are really a priority when other pressing matters, such as Israel's annexation plans in the West Bank, compete for the attention of decision-makers.

The research findings also contribute new insights regards to the question of interaction between international, national, and local levels in terms of who designs and funds the implementation of the WPS Agenda at national level. The data demonstrated that the process of designing and developing NAPs involves numerous different actors, from international and national to local-level stakeholders. This is important as there is limited discussion on who gets to be involved in the development of the NAPs and which stakeholders get to decide on the issues to be included on behalf of the so-called 'local people'. This thesis has shown that there is a range of stakeholders involved, ranging from international organisations and national governments to local civil society organisations, including NGOs that are part of the so-called 'elite' and those organisations that operate at the margins. The findings also indicate that international organisations, which include, for example, the UN and EU, provide funding, resources, and guidance to national governments to assist them in developing their own NAPs.

To critically analyse the obstacles that prevent the Agenda from having tangible impact to improve women's security in South Africa and Palestine.

In addition to the above mentioned challenges that prevent the Agenda having tangible impact, mainly the way security is defined within the WPS Agenda, and how intersectionality is completely missing from the framework, the findings highlighted other obstacles for the implementation of the Agenda.

The findings indicate that the WPS Agenda was generally seen as a relevant framework both for Palestinian and South African women; however, there was also scepticism about the practical implementation of yet another international framework. Findings from both places demonstrate that, while many policy frameworks have been adopted, their practical implementation has always been lacking, and it was questioned why the WPS Agenda would be any different. This scepticism was also related to national and global politics, as some thought that implementing the Agenda was just another way for a country either to showcase its progressive views on gender equality to the international community (South Africa and Palestine) or to receive aid funding from countries in the Global North (Palestine).

Lastly, the findings, especially from Palestine, highlighted some of the main challenges for the implementation of the National Action Plan (at the time when fieldwork was conducted, South Africa had not yet adopted a NAP). Three main challenges were identified from the data for the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Palestine: 1) the lack of implementation mechanisms and adequate evaluation and monitoring systems to measure the implementation; 2) the difficulty of funding the activities of the NAP, both at governmental and international donor level; and 3) whether or not there was adequate and genuine political willingness to implement the NAP's activities.

This section has summarised the main research findings of this thesis in relation to the research aims and objectives. The next section will discuss its empirical and theoretical contributions.

7.2. Academic contribution

This thesis makes empirical, theoretical, and policy contributions to knowledge. This section will outline its empirical and theoretical contributions, while section 7.3 will outline its policy implications.

Empirical

This thesis contributes several new empirical findings to the overall discussion about the WPS Agenda, both in academia and in the area of policymaking. Firstly, it presents the findings of the primary research undertaken in South Africa and Palestine. As was highlighted earlier in this thesis, although the academic contribution to knowledge and research around the WPS Agenda is vast, there has been limited research conducted around it within these two country contexts. This is especially true in the case of South Africa. As I have discussed elsewhere in this thesis, research on the WPS Agenda which has a specific country focus often looks at conflict/post-conflict countries rather than countries such as South Africa, which might not fall into these traditional categories. There is also very little academic research on Palestine which investigates the WPS Agenda from the point of view of security and intersectionality.

Secondly, this thesis provides new empirical knowledge on how members of civil society and individual experts view intersectionality within the context of the WPS Agenda. The research on intersectionality and the WPS Agenda to date involves just a few studies, which look at specific categories such as disability (Stienstra, 2019) or the LGBTQI+ community (Hagen, 2016; Hagen, 2019; Davis & Stern, 2019). The few academic papers on this topic still focus largely on analysing the need for intersectionality within the Agenda at the conceptual level (Hagen, 2016; Stern & Davis 2019; Jansson & Eduards, 2016). However, some of the newer studies that have been conducted, for example by Aroussi (2020) on violent extremism in Kenya, use intersectionality as a lens of analysis. Meanwhile, Henry (2021) has written about the necessity for critical race feminism within women, peace and security.

Nevertheless, there has still been little research that provides new empirical evidence on the views of people who work directly on the WPS Agenda at national level and how they understand intersectionality within its framework. This thesis provides evidence that facilitates understanding of the views of people who currently work on, and are involved in the development of, the WPS Agenda at the national level, and it provide insights into how they perceive intersectionality and whether or not they think there is a need for the Agenda in their contexts. In addition to the commonly discussed intersections of identity, such as race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, this thesis promotes the addition of geographical location, and especially the urban/rural divide, into the discussion and adds knowledge that improves understanding of how the geographical location operates in relation to the WPS Agenda.

Lastly, the empirical findings from this thesis provide important insights into how the research participants in South Africa and Palestine understood the WPS Agenda to fit within the contexts of their countries. This is significant because these findings provide evidence for how important it is to understand the insecurities women feel in terms of a continuum of violence, rather than defining security/insecurity as something that only happens within the context of armed conflict. The data from this thesis shows that the research participants saw the Agenda to be very relevant to the South African context, due to their experience of the insecurities that arise in women's everyday lives because of high rates of gender-based violence. These empirical findings feed directly into the theoretical contributions this thesis makes, which are discussed below.

Theoretical

The theoretical contribution this thesis makes confirms the validity of many of the findings about security that have emerged within the field of feminist security studies. This thesis makes two main, original, theoretical contributions, which I will go on to discuss.

Firstly, this thesis argues that, in order for the Agenda to be transformational, it needs to move towards a feminist approach to security, whereby security is seen in terms of the security of the individual rather than state security. The current focus of the WPS Agenda, which is mainly on internationally recognised conflicts and specifically armed conflicts, restricts the implementation of the WPS framework to these conflict situations and hinders the transformational potential of the Agenda. The findings of this thesis have specifically supported Cynthia Cockburn's (2004) insight that we should understand violence as a continuum, and they also support the way that security is defined by feminist scholars such as Tickner (1992), Enloe (1990), Cohn (2004) and Wibben (2011). This thesis argues that the WPS Agenda's notion of security as it currently stands does not provide an adequate framework for dealing with the full range of gendered experiences of conflict and insecurities, and therefore its approach should be shifted so that it reflects a feminist understanding of security, which aims for emancipation and broader social justice (Wibben, 2011).

The findings and analysis of this thesis support the notion that the WPS Agenda should focus on applying a feminist approach to security which is interested in remedying gender subordination. Viewing security from the perspective of individual women's lives, "would change not only what security is, but how it is conceptualised, operationalised and acted on" (Sjoberg, 2009, p. 200). This is linked to Cockburn's (2013) argument that Resolution 1325 has been disappointing in the sense that its focus is limited to the effects of war rather than the causes of war or actually ending wars. For example, rather than aiming to increase women's participation in conflict prevention in the first place, the priority has been to focus on women's participation in peace processes, and rather than preventing conflict and addressing the root causes of insecurity for women, the WPS Agenda has focused on the effects of war (Taylor & Baldwin, 2019). This argument is specifically poignant in the case of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, where the WPS Agenda has not been able to prevent either the ongoing violence or the asymmetry of power between the two parties.

This thesis also highlights the importance of linking the theoretical discussion on intersectionality and debates in the field of feminist security studies together. As was highlighted in Chapter 6, current theoretical discussions in these two fields happen in silos rather than in conversation with one another and specifically in relation to the WPS Agenda. Given that gendered experiences of conflict are diverse and depend on different intersectionalities, it would be an important theoretical advancement for the field to ensure these conversations are intertwined and that, as Wibben (2020) has suggested, intersectionality should become deeply embedded in conversations around feminist security studies. As discussed in Chapter 6, this study has brought these two fields into conversation with one another by developing an understanding of how the intersectional identities of women affect the ways in which they experience insecurity.

Secondly, this research contributes to the theoretical discussion about intersectionality by specifically looking at it within the context of an international policy framework, in this case, the WPS Agenda. As has been discussed in this thesis, very little research has been conducted on the WPS Agenda from a critical, intersectional perspective, although some new research on the WPS Agenda has emerged which uses intersectionality as a lens of analysis (Aroussi, 2020).

This thesis develops the thinking around intersectionality by using it as a lens through which we can understand women's experiences at the national level, gaining insights not only into how women experience security but also into how their own identities or social/geographical locations can affect the ways in which they are able to participate in decision-making and political processes, such as drafting the National Action Plans for Palestine and South Africa. As Lepinard (2014) argued, intersectionality is essentially a feminist practice, in addition to being a tool for critical analysis of social and political practices. Intersectionality can shed light on the differences, rooted in social relations and marked by levels of oppression, which have led to the marginalisation of women's voices. It is important to understand that intersectionality

can be a useful frame for analysing the WPS Agenda. As this study has demonstrated, political, racial, and ethnic divisions are problematic when it comes to the implementation of the WPS Agenda and, if they are not taken into consideration, there is a danger of further division, as well as the exclusion and silencing of the different voices that need to be heard as part of the process.

As was discussed in Chapter 6, in some cases, competing priorities such as the nationalist struggle in Palestine overtake matters of gender security and intersectionality. As Sharoni (1995) argues, national liberation is the most important focus of collective identity for Palestinians. The national struggle dominates the Palestinian political environment and the everyday lives of Palestinians, as was made evident by the data. This thesis has shown that the WPS Agenda is used as a tool to advance the national struggle against occupation by holding Israel accountable. One could theorise from the research findings that actually the primary aim is freedom for every Palestinian regardless of their gender, class, ethnicity, or religion, and that gender, or any intersectional identity, is regarded as being less important to consider. It could also be argued that the national struggle, which is dominated by men, provides yet another way to make women's rights secondary to the cause of national liberation (Jamal, 2001).

Most importantly, in addition to many of the categories already highlighted for intersectional analysis, such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, it is essential to include geographical location as a key factor in intersectional analysis. Including geographical location, especially the rural/urban division as a factor in intersectional analysis enables us to understand how it affects the lives of women but also how it reflects differing power relations and how different social interactions are experienced. The findings of this thesis contribute to this discussion, showing how important it is to ensure that multiple different intersectional identities are included in any analysis, rather than just race and gender, as was originally theorised by Crenshaw (1991), so that intersectionality can operate and be understood as a broad framework of analysis.

Intersectionality has been criticised as a theory due to its supposedly vague nature (Nash, 2008), but it has also been argued that this is what makes it such a successful theory, as its open-endedness enables researchers to draw upon almost any context of inquiry (Davis, 2008). This thesis confirms much of this scholarship, as the theory's vagueness has allowed intersectionality to be used as a tool for analysis in this thesis and has enabled understanding and acknowledgement of differences amongst women in different places and settings. In particular, it has enabled understanding of how structural power relations can affect women's experiences within the framework of the WPS Agenda. For example, as Basu (2016, p. 363) has argued, stakeholders in the Global South tend to be marginalised at international level, but Resolution 1325 must take into account the different "interpretations, resistances and subversions" that differ from the global narrative, particularly when this happens in the Global South, as it is important to recognise the agency of the actors in the Global South – something that Basu claims is often forgotten (ibid.). Utilising the vagueness of intersectionality as a theory has allowed this thesis to draw on multiple different intersections, most notably allowing examination of the urban/rural divide, an issue which is not often taken into consideration in the literature on intersectionality.

These findings on the definitions of peace and security and intersectionality can also be generalised to other contexts. As was discussed in Chapter 6, this study's findings on the concept of security can be applied to other contexts in the world, such as Turkey, where the security situation for women might be challenging but the country is not defined as being either in a state of conflict or in a post-conflict situation. Looking at the broader context, it becomes clear that the WPS Agenda should look at violence and insecurity for women as phenomena which occur on a continuum across both public and private spaces. Therefore, I would argue that not applying the Agenda to contexts such as Turkey and other similar places would be short-sighted and risks wasting the transformational potential that the WPS agenda could have.

Similarly, as has been argued throughout the thesis, failure to take intersectionality into account within the design and implementation of the Agenda means that opportunities to take full account of gendered experiences of conflict are being missed. When women are discussed as a singular category, without considering how, for example, race, class, sexual orientation, or social location affect their experiences of conflict or security, the transformational potential of the Agenda is limited. As has been argued throughout this study, there is no 'general woman', and these findings indicate that intersectionality should always be taken into account when any future WPS resolutions are being adopted or when the Agenda is being implemented.

7.3. Policy implications

What motivated me to examine this particular topic was a desire to understand and examine how and if an international policy framework such as the UN WPS Agenda could advance women's rights at a more national/local level. I have approached this PhD thesis very much from the point of view of wanting to understand policy and the practical impact that research on the WPS Agenda could have. Although both empirical and theoretical contributions are always necessary in academic research, I also wanted to be able to reflect on and contribute to the topic at a policy level too, although I consider the theoretical and practical contributions of this thesis to be very much intertwined with each other.

In Chapter 1, I quoted Ní Aoláin and Valji's (2019, p.54) recent paper which argued that the critique of the WPS Agenda "speaks to a work-in-progress and not a completed project". The authors suggested that it is still a relatively new project within the realm of international policy frameworks, and hence the scholarship on it is analysing its strengths and weaknesses prematurely. I would argue that it is easy to understand critiques of the WPS Agenda, and many of its weaknesses have been analysed in this study as well. However, the WPS Agenda has also made huge progress over the years and some steps have been taken to broaden its scope. Some of the criticisms which have been outlined in this thesis have focused on a lack of political willingness and budgetary issues with regards to the national implementation of the Agenda.

Arguably, these are two issues that will most likely always be problematic, regardless of the policy framework in question. However, this study's data and research have highlighted a few potential implications for policy which can contribute to improving the Agenda, and they will be discussed below.

Addressing intersectionality within the WPS Agenda

I have argued, throughout this thesis, how important it is to take intersectionality into account within the WPS Agenda. In a policy agenda designed for the 21st century, it is not enough to talk solely about women without addressing the different intersectional identities women hold, otherwise there is a danger that women, as a category, are assumed to be one homogenous group. As Crenshaw (1989) argues, the homogenisation of the category of 'women' risks reinforcing the idea that one particular group of women, often white, can speak for all women.

As mentioned earlier, any discussion about security should also consider intersectionality, as gendered experiences of conflict are shaped by the different identities, cultures, and bodies that people inhabit, and therefore there are many gendered experiences of global politics and security (Sjoberg, 2009). It is important to acknowledge that there is not just one universal woman but instead women's experiences in conflict are varied depending on their identities and circumstances. This would be especially important to consider, for example, from the point of view of the LGBTQI+ community, whose rights are still not recognised by many governments and whose members suffer disproportionately from sexual and gender-based violence during conflict (Davis & Stern, 2019). If intersectionality is addressed as a form of power relations, this would make an important contribution to how we understand inequality and how it affects the insecurities women experience. It would also enable a better understanding of intersectionality and of who gets a seat at the table to contribute to the formation of the NAPs, which has an effect how the WPS Agenda is localised. It is important

to ask which women are part of WPS localisation processes and how this affects the way they represent the views of other women.

Considering the different contexts and circumstances to which the Agenda could be applied, and the different experiences of it different women could have, I argue that it would be crucial to address these intersectionalities at the highest policy level and within the framework of the WPS Agenda itself. Although as this study has highlighted how localising the NAPs to each context is crucial, and intersectionality can be addressed in this way to be most relevant, usually, member states look in the direction of the UN when planning the adaptation of these policies. Therefore it would be important to show at the UN level that the institution gives value and importance to different identities and gendered experiences. Ensuring more effective implementation of the Agenda is the first step needed towards ensuring that intersectionalities would be taken into account. After all, as the case of South Africa demonstrates, even if a NAP highlights some aspects of intersectionality, a lip-service commitment that does not involve effective implementation will fail to advance women's rights.

Therefore, given that organisations and national governments usually look in the direction of the UN for guidance, I argue that it would be important to address intersectionality as part of the WPS Agenda. If intersectionality is addressed in another WPS resolution though, it needs to be ensured that the organisations and people involved at national level are well aware of the content and transformative potential of the new resolution. As this study has found, in many cases, organisations and people still take Resolution 1325 at face value and they often fail to look at the broader WPS Agenda and all of the 10 resolutions together when thinking about the Agenda's applicability and implementation. Therefore, even if a new resolution is adopted in future, its appropriate dissemination would be imperative to guarantee any chance of it be applied productively.

Although some might think that adopting more resolutions is not the solution to the problem, when we look at the history of the development of the Agenda, this is how the Agenda has broadened and developed its scope over the years. Although as Myrttinen, Shepherd and Wright H. (2020) have highlighted, often new, emergent themes have first appeared in individual NAPs before they have been adopted into new resolutions within the WPS Agenda. Resolution 1325 started by addressing women's increased participation in peace processes, and since then the Agenda has been broadened to address, for example, wartime sexual violence and violent extremism. This development has allowed the Agenda to become much more comprehensive in scope. Therefore following this precedent, one might argue that addressing intersectionality within the next resolution as part of the WPS Agenda would be a beneficial development.

Which women are representing the so-called 'local'?

Following on from the previous point, although there has been excellent research conducted on what is meant by localisation of the NAP process and who is the 'local' talking on behalf of other women (see, for example, Achiellos-Sarll & Chilmeran, 2020), I would suggest that it is important to consider this discussion from the point of view of intersectionality.

Localisation of NAPs is often encouraged by the international community as the model for how NAPs should be drafted, as this supposedly ensures inclusion of the views of local people and promotes local ownership of the NAPs' planning and implementation processes. However, as the findings of this thesis have indicated, the civil society organisations representing the women in these countries are often what I have called 'elite' organisations that operate within the country's large, urban areas and are led by well-educated, urban, English-speaking women who have formed networks within the international community.

This raises questions about how representative these organisations, their views, and their staff are of whole nations of women who are possibly living very different lives. Although these

organisations and their teams often work in more rural locations and gather views there, it is important to consider the positionalities of the people who are working in these elite organisations and whose voices they are representing. Would they, for example, be able to adequately represent the opinions and voices of women who come from very different circumstances with regards to location, class, and social background? Or will attention to the diversity of women's experience cause further exclusion and silencing of already marginalised communities and people? For example, in my experience many Palestinians have never even heard of some of the communities located in the southern part of the West Bank. These are often communities which are hard to reach,[31] such as the small hamlets in the South Hebron Hills, and they are often the most marginalised communities within Palestine due not only to their geography but to the administrative regions in which they are located. How well are the organisations and people in Ramallah able to represent the views of women in the South Hebron Hills who come from tribal backgrounds if they have never even heard of these communities?

Although I understand that it is not always either practical or feasible to have all civil society organisations take part in developing the NAPs or participate in government meetings, it is important to acknowledge the power dynamic between the different levels of 'local' when we are discussing the localisation process. The sort of modelling process that currently takes place when NAPs are localised includes only certain elite, civil society organisations, and yet these types of process are then widely and dangerously understood to signal that NAPs represent the views of all women within those countries. Generalisations are made where one assumes that localised action plans for the WPS Agenda represent the views of all women, and it is vital that this issue should be taken into consideration when discussing which civil society organisations are represented and involved in WPS work and who they represent. We must ask, who is

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[31] By 'hard to reach', I do not only mean that they are over 3 hours drive away from Ramallah. These small hamlets can only be reached via unpaved roads, require a 4x4 vehicle, and are 1-2 hours away from the main road.

actually representing local women in discussions about planning and implementing the WPS Agenda, and what is their positionality?

Do we need a Gender, Peace and Security Agenda?

There have been increasing calls (Davis & Stern, 2019; Haastrup, 2020) to move towards calling the Women, Peace and Security Agenda a 'Gender, Peace and Security' Agenda. This would allow much wider potential scope for the Agenda and the countries that want to implement it. Although I argue that it will be important to include intersectionality in the WPS Agenda, and I understand the movement to broaden the scope of the Agenda by looking at gender rather than just women, a note of caution is in order. Broadening its scope also creates the potential for it to become an agenda for everyone and about everything. Therefore, I would be cautious about it becoming a 'gender' agenda focusing on men and masculinities as well. I would tend to agree with Swaine (2017) who has suggested that the evidence from different gender mainstreaming policies actually shows that, in order to tackle gender inequalities, there needs to be targeted and specific action rather than implementation through a wider, policy framework. Swaine (2017) argues that targeted action which specifically focuses on improving women's security is the only way to ensure that these matters are given the priority they need.

Similarly, I would argue that, although there is an increasing body of academic literature on men and masculinities[32], as mentioned in Resolution 2467 (2019), there is value in keeping the Agenda's focus on women. One of the landmark achievements of Resolution 1325 was its sole focus on women, who had been completely absent from Security Council decision-making before this resolution. Therefore, the focus of 1325 on the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as their full participation in all efforts to maintain and preserve peace and security, made it a truly historical resolution. Although I recognise the importance of understanding the linkage between masculinities and violence, I would be cautious that

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[32] See, for example, Duriesmith, 2020; Myrttinen, 2019

diluting the Agenda with too many elements – for example, by bringing in issues that men experience during conflict– risks the Agenda losing it focus on women and becoming an agenda that is once again about everything and everyone, so that women's issues are swallowed up within a larger agenda.

The previous section has highlighted the empirical, theoretical, and policy contributions this research has made. The next section will briefly discuss this study's limitations before moving on to discuss potential further research avenues.

7.4 The limitations of the study

Every research project has its limitations, and it is important to identify and mitigate them in order to set the research findings into a realistic framework. I have, throughout this thesis, tried to ensure that I do not overgeneralise from the findings. Instead, I have discussed the fact that the findings represent the views of the groups of people I interviewed and therefore they do not necessarily reflect the views of the whole civil society community, for example. This is an important point to note, not least because, as I have continuously pointed out, we need to ask who gets to represent local women and we also need to unpack the figural concept of the 'local woman' who is often understood to represent the views of other women within a country context. Hence, I do not try to claim that the voices represented in this thesis are speaking on behalf of all women in Palestine and South Africa, but rather offer examples of people speaking and reflecting on this issue from their own backgrounds and positionalities within a certain timeframe and place. As I have also noted previously, this study was not aiming to provide a comparative study of these two countries. Instead, the purpose was to examine the WPS Agenda at a national level through the two examples of South Africa and Palestine from the point of view of civil society and individual experts. I have identified three main limitations for this research, which I will explain briefly here.

The first limitation that affected this study was created by the small sample size of interviewees from South Africa. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, I encountered issues in recruiting research participants in South Africa, as even though I contacted several organisations they were either unwilling to participate or did not reply at all. Although snowball sampling helped me to gain contact details for different people, my experience in South Africa where I was very much considered an outsider was markedly different from the one I had in Palestine where my work experience and contacts made it easier for people to agree to interviews with me. This issue was reflected on in Chapter 3.

The number of interviews conducted in South Africa was relatively small. However, what became apparent both in Palestine and South Africa, especially when using snowball sampling, was that the group of civil society organisations working actively on the WPS Agenda in these countries is relatively small in number. In South Africa, the civil society steering group working on the WPS Agenda consisted of approximately 20 organisations in 2018, and in Palestine approximately 30 organisations are members of the Higher National Committee for the Implementation of Resolution 1325. This in itself provides an interesting reflection of the status of the WPS Agenda in these countries. Hence, although the sample size in South Africa was relatively small, I would argue that this produced a research finding in itself because it reflected the actual reality of levels of interest in the WPS Agenda in these countries at the time, which is something to consider more broadly when discussing the overall results.

The second limitation is the issue of who was interviewed for this research and whose voices they represented. As I discussed at the beginning of this section, I do not try to claim that the voices represented in this thesis are those of people who can speak on behalf of all women in Palestine and South Africa. As argued and theorised in this thesis, it is important to acknowledge who we are talking about when we are discussing local people. For this thesis, I interviewed members of civil societies and individual experts, including employees of international organisations working in these places and governmental bodies, as well as

independent activists and consultants. I mainly interviewed people who were located in the main, urban centres in these two places. For example, the majority of the civil society organisations interviewed were already actively involved in the development of the WPS Agenda at national level and would generally be represented by what I would call an elite woman activist who was engaged, able to participate in politics, and a fluent English speaker who was already networked with the international community and organisations. One could argue that the research participants were already actively involved in this work and probably represented different views than would be offered by a woman who spoke on behalf of a small, grassroots organisation located in rural areas of the West Bank, who would have minimal opportunities to actively engage with the same work. Although I would argue it is important to acknowledge whose voices are represented in this thesis and why, I would not necessarily see the interviewees' overall profile as a limitation because again this offered an interesting research finding in itself, illustrating who is actively involved in this work in these two places. What the snowball sampling revealed is that the circles of stakeholders involved in planning and implementing NAPs and the WPS agenda are generally very small, as I kept being referred back to the same organisations and same people after a while. What this told me was that the work on development of NAPs in these countries is in the hands of a small number of elite organisations that are actively involved in and engaged with this work.

A third limitation for this project, as discussed in Chapter 3, was the COVID-19 pandemic which affected the fieldwork in Palestine that was originally supposed to have happened in two different stages in February 2020 and April 2020. Travel restrictions and lockdowns meant that I was unable to travel to Palestine for the second part of the fieldwork, and hence I conducted more interviews remotely using digital technologies. The early stages of the pandemic also meant that I was not able to reach some participants to whom I had earlier been referred. This might have been because of issues related to the pandemic or because people had been furloughed from their positions. However, due to my previous knowledge of conducting

research in Palestine and the knowledge I had developed of the country context, I did not see it as problematic for the research that I had to conduct some interviews via remote connection, especially as many participants were becoming increasingly familiar with engaging productively this way.

7.5. Further research

A PhD is often the starting point in the career of an academic researcher, a piece of research that informs and prompts other lines of inquiry, and this is the case for me. Conducting this research has made me think of other potential avenues of research that would allow me to build on the study that has informed my thesis.

What was evident to me, while I was conducting this research, was the need to ensure that different voices are heard in the process of developing and reshaping the WPS Agenda. The Agenda should not cause further divisions, exclusion, and silencing of marginalised voices, although arguably it has already contributed to these problems.[33] Therefore I argue, that to further advance the WPS Agenda and to improve the parameters in which the framework functions, further research in the different realms of intersectionality is important.

One of the most immediate research avenues I plan to explore will continue the strand of enquiry in this study that has examined intersectionality within the WPS Agenda. Considering that the existing academic research on this matter is still very limited, there is a lot of interesting potential scope for better understanding of what an intersectional WPS Agenda would look like. More research should be conducted on where the intersections of gender, age, race, sexual orientation, and geographic location, for example, contribute to including or excluding people from peace processes. Considering the focus of the WPS Agenda is on its implementation at national level, it would be especially important to focus the research on the local level in order to understand what different people and groups in these communities see as important. When

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[33] For example, see Aroussi's (2017, p.29) critique on how the WPS Agenda situates "Western States as benevolent saviours of women in the conflict-ridden and poverty-stricken Global South".

this kind of research is conducted from a more intersectional perspective, it should also offer a more inclusive way of understanding what constitutes 'local' in WPS terms, helping to establish which kinds of groups are involved or not involved in the localisation process of NAPs, and the politics and logics that shape inclusion and exclusion, for example.

Further research on intersectionality within the WPS Agenda would also facilitate better understanding about whether there is a need at a more local level to shift the Agenda to focus on 'gender, peace and security' rather than 'women, peace and security'. Research around this topic would also further contribute towards theorisation of the concept of intersectionality and the debate about whether it is an analytical framework for conducting feminist analysis, a concept, or a theoretical framework (Davis, 2008). Nash (2008) argued, for example, that more explicit engagement with the distinctiveness of intersectionality as a theoretical contribution would be needed to explain its value.

I think further research that contributes to developing theory around how intersectionality relates to the WPS Agenda, and how it impacts on women's experiences of insecurity would be advantageous. This would be especially timely now, when the world is still going through the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has further exacerbated inequalities, specifically around gender. Research on how it has impacted the ability of women to attend peace processes, training, and other activities, at the more local level, as well as how it has affected their security, would be especially beneficial in the near future.

7.6. Concluding thoughts

When I started this PhD journey, I was interested to learn about and examine whether an international UN-level framework can have a real, tangible impact at the national and local level for women living in South Africa and Palestine. The WPS Agenda has provoked a vast amount of criticism, both in policy and academic circles, over the past 20 years. Many of these criticisms have been discussed in this thesis, and I was interested to broaden the range of

commentary available on the Agenda by listening to the views of those who are directly working on it or using it as an aid to their work in Palestine and South Africa.

Whilst there was criticism of the effectiveness of the Agenda, the overall message from civil society and individual interviewees was actually a positive one, with most research participants suggesting that the WPS Agenda is relevant to their work and the women of their countries. The interviewees saw the Agenda as a useful tool and reported not only that they base their own work on it but that they adapt it in different ways to make it relevant to their work. In Palestine, this process of adaptation involved women's organisations using the WPS Agenda as a tool to advocate against the occupation (although it could be argued that the nationalist cause has taken over once again and gender rights are being pushed into the background) and in South Africa, even before the formal NAP was instituted (at the time of the fieldwork), the different organisations that participated in this study were already referring to Resolution 1325 and organising activities around the key objectives of the Agenda.

So yes, one could argue on the basis of the interviews presented in this thesis, that civil society members and individual experts believe the Agenda can improve women's security in these countries. However, that is not to say that there are not several challenges remaining if it is to have a tangible impact. This question is particularly important to reflect on given the current global situation, in which the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges and the political situation in Palestine remain as fragile as ever. It is within in this context that one must reflect on whether gender equality is given the attention it needs and if it will again be pushed to the sidelines, away from other more pressing matters.

I remain grateful to all the research participants for agreeing to be part of this research and for the valuable work they are doing to improve gender equality and security within Palestine and South Africa. Their stories and views have helped me to appreciate the ways in which they see and understand the WPS Agenda in a nuanced and holistic way.

In the introduction, I explained that I set out on this PhD journey with the main aim of trying to understand to what extent the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda is an effective and suitable framework for improving women's security. The answer, as the analysis in this thesis has shown, is complex and nuanced, as one would probably expect from an international, UN-level policy framework. Although the application of the WPS Agenda at a national level is not without its challenges, as the interviewees recognised, there remains some space for cautious optimism. The ability to transform the Agenda and its principles by translating it into local contexts allows the actors on the ground to make it a useful framework for them.

What remains clear though is that work to keep pushing and improving and progressing this Agenda through civil society, local grassroots organisations, individuals, international NGOs, the international community, academics, and the UN must be continued. The WPS Agenda can be considered as one tool in an arsenal of tricks used to continue work to improve gender equality and women's security around the world. As one of the research participants so aptly highlighted: "We know that this will not lead to Palestine's freedom, yet we have agreed that we would use it as a tool to shed light on women rights issues in Palestine. We also use it to join other Arab and Palestinian women to fight the same cause" (Civil society, 3). The adoption of Resolution 1325 was praised as historic and, although it will involve work to realise the promise of the WPS Agenda, its potential is real. Now, during these challenging times, it is more important than ever to ensure that the Women, Peace and Security Agenda remains a priority.

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Appendix 1 – Ethics approval

Coventry University

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Laura Sulin

Project Title:

From international norms to local relevance: a study of the implementation
of United Nations Women, Peace & Security resolutions in South Africa and
occupied Palestinian territories

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry
University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and
approved as Medium Risk

Date of approval:

04 February 2020

Project Reference Number:

P61120

Appendix 2 – Semi-structured interview guide

From international norms to local relevance: A study of the implementation of "the Women, Peace and Security" resolutions in Palestine and South Africa

Semi-structured interview questions to guide the conversation

Background information

Briefly

- Could you please tell me more about your organisation/work/unit/team (when was it founded, aims, values, mission, target group etc)? How long have you worked here?
    - Which areas of oPt/South Africa they are working on, are there differences between the areas (regards to what kind of work they do)
    - History of the organisation and its (possible) affiliations to any political organisations
- Please tell me about the projects/mission the organisations/unit/team is working on?
    - Were any of these tied up to the National Action Plan (which stated activities that civil society organisations would/should be delivering)

WPS Agenda in Palestine/South Africa

1. Are you familiar with the UNSCR 1325 and the UN Women, Peace & Security Agenda more broadly? What do you understand it to involve?
2. Do you use/refer to the UNSCR 1325 or Agenda in your work? If yes, why? If not, why not? Please give me examples how you use it. Which particular area(s) do you focus in your work?
3. Could you tell me about the challenges for women's security/participation and gender equality in Palestine/South Africa?
4. Do you think the WPS agenda is a useful framework to tackle these challenges? If so why? Why not?
5. Do you think that the WPS agenda deals adequately with the range of inequalities women face, for example related to race/ethnicity, class or sexual orientation? Prompts:
    a. Ask about the different areas/location
    b. Disability, age, marital status
    c. Any other groups
6. Were/have you been you involved in the drafting process/consultations of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security at any stage? If so, what was your role?
    A) Who is involved? Who/which organisation was involved in the process, who funded it?
    B) Again, were they able to be part of it? Did they feel that it was an inclusive process – did it reflect the different realities Palestinian/South African women face in their everyday life?

7. For South Africa - from your point of view, is there a need to implement the WPS agenda in South Africa?

Question specifically for individual experts:

What do you see as the role of international community/organisations in advancing and promoting gender equality in Palestinian context? What is your role/your organisations role in the process?

<div align="center">Challenges for implementation</div>

8. What do you think are the three challenges to implementing the WPS Agenda in the context you are working on/in Palestine/South Africa? Has the current National Action Plan dealt adequately with these challenges?
9. In its current form, how do you see the WPS Agenda has been implemented in Palestine/South Africa? Is the current National Action Plan relevant? What would make it better?

<div align="center">Concluding questions</div>

- Is there anything else you want to mention/add?
- Can you recommend three other people/organisations you think I should interview for this research?