Lost in Translation: The Impact of International Institutions' Gender Norm Diffusion Practices on Post-Conflict States

by

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This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Leah Sarson;
For not giving up on me;
And for adding to the inspirational sticky notes that cover my walls.

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Abstract:

This thesis analyzes the impact of gender norm diffusion practices employed by international institutions on post-conflict states. This project uses constructivism and feminist institutionalism to explore how the United Nations (UN) diffuses gender norms through United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. It investigates how through the promise of increased resource availability and enhanced state legitimacy; the UN has gained influence over the activities of both government and non-government actors. The purpose is to understand why post-conflict states adopt UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans despite barriers to implementation, how National Action Plans inhibit meaningful local translation of gender norms, and why the UN has failed to adopt the gender norm diffusion process despite limited progress. Outlining the implications of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent NAPs on post-conflict states, this thesis aims to explain why a 'one-size-fits-all' gender mainstreaming approach is insufficient to address global gender inequalities.

List of Abbreviations Used:

Abbreviation	*Explanation*
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, Reintegration
FI	Feminist Institutionalism
LNAP	Liberian National Action Plan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OGA	Office of the Gender Advisor
OSAGI	Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
PDT	Pre-Deployment Training
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
RDF	Rwandan Defence Force
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SiLNAP	Sierra Leonean National Action Plan
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Intervention in post-conflict states has become commonplace. External institutions, such as the UN, have become increasingly involved in the development of democracies as an intentional means of establishing "conformity to international governance norms such as liberal democracy… while implanting rules and conditions for 'best practice' in national government (Roberts, 2008: 538). In post-conflict settings, how do international institutions diffuse gender norms? Women have long been engaged in peace and security matters, however, their participation is often dismissed by masculine conceptualizations of conflict. Traditional conceptualizations of war and conflict have related masculinity to notions of "strong, aggressive, 'leadership'" and the femininity as related to "nurturing, empathetic and caring traits" to determine how a person might participate in or be impacted by conflict (Den Boer and Bode, 2018: 366). These presumptions have shaped approaches to both the prevention of war and post-conflict reconstruction and at the national and international levels. Gender biases have dismissed women and girls as passive actors; predominantly victims in conflict situations and post-conflict reconstruction. The conflation of womanhood and victimhood has prevented the meaningful engagement of women in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda by removing agency from women and positing them as 'helpless' actors rather than leaders and agents of peace. In the late 20th and early 21st century, the international discourse around gender, peace, and conflict began to shift to acknowledge the critical role of women in the establishment and preservation of peace.

Much of the United Nations (UN) humanitarian efforts inherently universalize norms (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). The UN is regarded as a legitimate international

governing body, working with states to create and reinforce policies, practices, and standards. The UN is a driving force for change in the international system, and therefore its influence on the behaviour of state actors cannot be ignored. An example of such efforts is the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. A significant aspect of UNSCR 1325 is the inclusion of women in all levels of decision-making in preventing, managing and resolving conflict. UNSCR 1325 was celebrated as a key milestone toward a gender-conscious approach to contemporary conflicts. More than 20 years have passed since the UNSCR 1325 was created and despite all the optimism surrounding the resolution, the outcomes have been widely criticized by both scholars and practitioners (Tryggestad, 2009: 549-552; Gibbings, 2011: 523-524)

UNSCR 1325 was the first resolution to bring global attention to the fact that the impact of conflict on women and girls differs in some ways from men and boys, as well as the call to ensure women are engaged in the maintenance of peace and prevention of conflict (George and Shepherd, 2016: 297). The hope was that it would find itself "into mainstream political consciousness" (George and Shepherd, 2016: 300). UNSCR 1325 was considered to be "a vital and innovative political framework" (Shepherd, 2008: 383). The resolution focuses on multiple facets related to the WPS agenda, including the participation of women in political matters, and support for survivors of conflict, particularly those that have experienced SGBV (George and Shepherd, 2016: 298). UNSCR 1325 takes a gender mainstreaming approach to centralizing the experiences of women in all aspects of conflict, from peace negotiations, to peacekeeping operations, to post-conflict reconstruction (Bell and O'Rourke, 2010: 942-943). As a means of

“binding” member states to the implementation of UNSCR 1325, the UN has emphasized the importance of adopting National Action Plans (NAPs), which lay the foundation for the pathway forward that each individual state intends to take (George and Shepherd, 2016: 298). The purpose is to ensure states embrace a gender perspective, including the support of local women’s initiatives, regulated protections of women and girls in conflict, as well as the recognition of the unique experiences and needs of women during and after conflict (Bell and O’Rourke, 2010: 943).

UNSCR 1325 has been widely celebrated as a “significant moment in international policy-making” (George and Shepherd, 2016: 300). The resolution was the first of its kind to acknowledge that the maintenance of peace required the full inclusion of women in all aspects of participation (Bell and O’Rourke, 2010: 943). Initially, the introduction of UNSCR 1325 excited members of Civil Society Organizations (CSO), giving hope that this was the beginning of increased support for local agents working towards addressing the impact of conflict on gendered experiences (George and Shepherd, 2016: 300). The resolution was viewed as “ground-breaking” (George and Shepherd, 2016: 300), and was considered a “major victory” in terms of centralizing gender equality discourse within the UN (Bell and O’Rourke, 2010: 943). Advocates for gender equality have proclaimed that UNSCR 1325 is “a significant success story for gender mainstreaming” (Charlesworth, 2005: 15). I argue, however, that this is because it is the first of its kind and therefore, there is no more robust alternative to compare it to. The standard for international gender norms remains low when it is solely compared to the absence of any previous framework. Critiques of UNSCR 1325 have claimed that this and subsequent resolutions “reinforce and reproduce restrictive gendered frameworks that

support rather than challenge the broader liberal peacebuilding projects…" (George and Shepherd, 2016: 301). Despite critiques, many states have decided that UNSCR 1325 is worth adopting. Calls to recognize the inability of NAPs to be meaningfully localized have gone ignored. In one UN debate on UNSCR 1325, the representative from the Government of the Philippines noted that the WPS agenda must find a way to be adopted by states in a way that considers local context and history (George and Shepherd, 2016: 298).

UNSCR 1325 garnered significant support during its development in 2000, leading it to be the UN's first unanimously adopted resolution. The resolution sparked global discourse on the participation of women in peace and security, leading states, international bodies, and local NGOs to call for significant change. 20 years after the introduction of 1325, one must ask why a widely accepted and celebrated resolution has had such limited success around the globe. As of 2019, roughly 14% of personnel in UN peacekeeping missions were women (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2019). This might be a drastic increase in comparison to three decades ago, however, we have not been able to put more effort into increasing this number given the amount of research that highlights the significant operational and humanitarian aspects of incorporating gender parity in such UN peacekeeping missions (Porter, 2007; Bleckner, 2013). Women have long faced legal, societal, and cultural barriers to participating in peacekeeping missions. Women across cultures and communities have found their role as peacekeepers to be heavily intertwined with movements for gender justice and equitable human rights (Porter, 2007: 32). Though women have been accepted as peacekeepers and more frequently operate in

the security sector, their roles are often limited and they are rarely offered equal opportunities to their male counterparts (Simić, 2010: 188).

UNSCR 1325 acknowledges the crucial role of women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, and conflict prevention (Porter, 2007: 11). While the establishment of UNSCR 1325 appears to have been a milestone for women and gender equality in peace efforts, it has failed to fulfill its mandate. UNSCR 1325 emphasizes the increased inclusion of women in security forces, recognizing that women involved in peacekeeping efforts can address the unique needs of women and children as they are familiar with the increasingly vulnerable context they are living in (Porter, 2007: 16). Despite this goal, the representation of women in peacekeeping missions remains low. As of 2019, roughly 14% of personnel in UN peacekeeping missions were women (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2019). This might be a drastic increase in comparison to three decades ago, however, the majority of peacekeeper contributing states have not successfully addressed gender disparities among their cohorts as per the ambitious targets set out in UNSCR 1325. A significant amount of research has highlighted the improved operational effectiveness as a result of incorporating gender parity in UN peacekeeping missions (Porter, 2007; Simić, 2010; Bleckner, 2013). While this research supports the ambitious targets set out by UNSCR 1325, it also notes that the resolution fails to address the myriad of systemic barriers that must be addressed for the increased participation of women in peacekeeping cohorts to be done positively. Despite criticism, the UN has continued to insist that UNSCR 1325 is a positive, universally applicable means of promoting gender norms globally.

One key problem with UNSCR 1325 is that it was established in an international security body with institutionally embedded ideas that operate under the assumption that the feminine must be subordinate to the masculine, particularly as it relates to understandings of conflict and violence (Den Boer and Bode, 2018: 366). This means that the basis for the norm diffusion process stems from an institution that has its own unaddressed gender biases. This explains why the UNSCR 1325 has insufficiently addressed the gender-powered dynamics embedded in domestic political and security institutions. This is particularly true for post-conflict states, as the resolution is inhibited by unaddressed biases at the UN level.

While gender mainstreaming practices emphasize statistics and data as the primary key performance indicator, such information provides an incomplete story of progress. For example, when considering an increase in female participation in security forces, they have indeed become more widely accepted in security institutions, however, their roles are often limited and they are rarely offered equal opportunities to their male counterparts (Simić, 2010: 188). Restrictions on how women are formally or informally allowed to participate in peace efforts inhibit the impact intended to be made by these changes. The failure to address the limitations of gender mainstreaming practices is widespread in efforts to diffuse gender norms in post-conflict states.

The United Nations (UN) has insisted that National Action Plans (NAPs) are essential to the success of UNSCR 1325 for each signatory (Basini, 2017: 53). These claims are made without consideration for the barriers facing post-conflict states trying to implement their NAPs. Post-conflict states often lack the financial resources, formal structures, and trained personnel to successfully implement, monitor, and evaluate NAPs

(Basini, 2017: 53). The unique challenges faced by post-conflict states disprove the claimed universality of UNSCR 1325. Disregarding the contextualization of UNSCR 1325 to meet the local needs and limitations of individual states means that NAPs are incapable of addressing inequality in post-conflict contexts (Basini, 2017: 53). Ultimately, any research related to the NAPs and UNSCR 1325 should be conducted in such a way that lays a framework for improved policy approaches to address the restrictive application of 1325.

I argue that international institutions diffuse gender repressive norms through the promise of increased resource allocation, state legitimacy enhancement, and co-opting local agenda setting to suit an international agenda. The UN has ensured this norm diffusion process through the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent localization of the resolution through National Action Plans (NAPs). To demonstrate this, I review the literature on norm diffusion, considering various perspectives on how norm diffusion manifests in the local context. I also consider the implications of local norm translation to determine the effect this has on the success or perceived success of the NAPs. Evaluating the local norm translation process provides insight into whether the methods employed by the UN to diffuse norm standards in post-conflict states are effective. UNSCR 1325 is a process of gender mainstreaming, intending to centralize gender in all aspects of peace and security. This project further considers whether gender mainstreaming, in the way it has been employed by the UN through 1325, is capable of meaningfully addressing gender inequality in post-conflict states. Using literature which provides a critical analysis of gender mainstreaming practices and whether they are

successful in practice, I suggest that these practices fail to address local gender issues in post-conflict contexts and are used primarily to reinforce the UN's liberal peace agenda.

I analyze gender equality in each state both before and after post-implementation of the NAP(s) to consider whether the implementation of 1325 has led to progress in terms of local gender relations. This analysis will be done with the intention of better understanding the impact of the NAPs while also identifying gaps. Considering the post-conflict context of Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, the analysis of gender relations prior to NAP implementation will be intertwined with an examination of the impact of gender and conflict. In addition, I will use literature that explores the relationship between UN intervention and norm diffusion, either overtly or inadvertently, to consider whether there may be a relationship between intervention and norm acceptance. When considering gender relations, I will pull directly from the mandates set out in UNSCR 1325 to evaluate the success or perceived success post-NAP implementation.

Considering literature on norm diffusion, NAPs, and gender mainstreaming, will help form an improved understanding of how norm diffusion takes place, and why norm diffusion through 1325 has been ineffectual at addressing gender inequality in post-conflict states. We would expect that states with NAPs on 1325 would see improved gender equality standards based on the increased resource availability and efforts in implementation. Instead, we see disparities in gender equality practices between rural and urban areas, failures to adequately monitor and evaluate NAP implementation efforts, and restrictions on agenda setting that inhibit meaningful change at the local level. I hypothesize that gender mainstreaming norms at the international level shape gender mainstreaming norms at the national level, allowing for the motives of the UN related to

the promotion of a liberal peace agenda to overshadow meaningful efforts to address gender inequality in post-conflict states.

The UN diffuses norms in post-conflict states through the promise of resources and legitimacy enhancement. Due to the costly nature of implementing UNSCR 1325, the UN tends to provide financial support to post-conflict states during the early stages of NAP development. The promise of resources goes beyond the UN itself, as a growing number of external actors have become invested in supporting post-conflict states directly or indirectly with the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent gender mainstreaming norms. This is evident in the development of Canada's 'feminist foreign policy' where the government has required all aid projects to have some element of consideration for gender equality. Resources may come in the form of financial commitments or increased 'person power.' Post-conflict states are more likely to secure an increased presence of personnel from international organizations with mandates related to gender equality once they demonstrate a commitment to progress on the matter. Countries attribute legitimacy to states that demonstrate shared values. Cooperation with the UN and its subsequent norm standards increases the likelihood that other global powers will be willing to align with post-conflict states and work to rebuild their state institutions, economies, and infrastructure.

In the process of norm diffusion, they inherently gain influence over state agendas which end up strongly promoting a liberal idea of women's empowerment at the expense of the needs of local women and girls. It has been suggested that the liberal concept of women's empowerment is not radical enough to push for change from normative gender relations (Duncanson, 2019: 115), noting that increased influence over the agendas of

local governments or grassroots organizations risks hindering the progress of gender equality rather than supporting it. Due to the instability of post-conflict states, external intervention can lead to dependency on resources for sustained peace if not done properly. Effective intervention must consider the longevity of newly introduced programs and practices in the absence of the UN or other external actors. Programs and practices that are reliant on external actors are threatened when external actors remove themselves, increasing the likelihood that a post-conflict state will succumb to its fragile stability.

During the rebuilding process, post-conflict states require significant investments to rebuild infrastructure and local economies. Economic incentives have long been used to encourage the development of liberal democracies (Roberts, 2008: 548), and applied to enforce values reflective of liberal democracies such as gender equality. Cooperation with international norms, particularly gender norms, increases the likelihood of external economic investment from institutions like the UN. This motivates post-conflict states to eagerly agree to international principles like UNSCR 1325. While there might be financial benefits to signing on to UNSCR 1325, there are also significant costs. The price of the implementation of NAPs is unattainable to post-conflict states without external support. Emphasizing the need for NAPs to state signatories of UNSCR 1325 enforces them to build a dependent relationship with the UN and international, predominantly Western donors. This creates a cycle where a post-conflict state must adopt UNSCR 1325 to increase support for reconstruction, however, the state is then unable to seek autonomy over gender discourse as the reliability of external actors only increases.

Establishing state legitimacy is crucial for long-term peace and stability (Dagher, 2018: 85). While important, legitimacy can be difficult for states that have been recovering from civil conflict. Two ways legitimacy can be achieved is through 'shared beliefs' and 'international recognition of sovereignty' (Dagher, 2018: 87). As gender equality has been centralized in UN discourse, it has defined international norm standards. This norm standard is reflective of shared beliefs on gender and equality amongst UN member states. Adopting UNSCR 1325 through a NAP is representative of a state accepting the international norm standard on the women, peace and security agenda, consequently signalling that the state has a 'shared belief' with other members of UNSCR 1325 signatories on gender equality.

Through the promise of resources and enhanced legitimacy, the UN gains influence over agenda setting in post-conflict states. When a state must choose between adjusting to accept an international norm or addressing the needs of its citizens, the former takes a greater priority (Roberts, 2008: 541). That is the cost of intervention, and the subsequent resources, both financial and otherwise. Resource commitments from the UN come with stringent requirements around allocation, implementation, monitoring and reporting. The UN can dictate what post-conflict governments and community-based organizations prioritize as long as these agencies are reliant on the UN for resources and access to the international aid community.

Conceptual Framework

There are two categories of gender norms to consider. First, I identify negative gender norms as norms that inhibit progress towards gender equality, whereas positive gender norms facilitate progress towards gender equality. Negative gender norms may

also be identified as gender repressive norms, whereas positive gender norms may be referred to as gender equality norms. I argue that gender repressive norms are embedded in frameworks like UNSCR 1325, and the institutions wherein the establishment and enforcement of such frameworks take place, which inhibits the inclusion and prosperity of women individuals. Gender repressive norms are reinforced by the contested views of 'gender' and 'equality' at the international and national levels which result in the inconsistent application of policy into practice (Krook and True, 2012: 112). Gender repressive norms can go unnoticed for their repressive nature, as these norms often appear to address gender inequality to a certain, limited degree. I argue that the norms diffused through UNSCR 1325 are an example of gender repressive norms, as the resolution has not meaningfully increased the effective improvement of gender equality standards, particularly in post-conflict states, as it was intended to do.

In contrast, gender equality norms are "… a means of recognizing and ensuring that women's voices and perspectives are integrated into peacebuilding efforts" (Doeland and Skjelsbaek, 2018: 995). This goes beyond increasing the representation of women in peacebuilding and considers the socio-economic and institutional barriers to meaningful participation and protection of women. In contrast to gender repressive norms, gender equality norms require consistency and cohesion between policy and practice. Policies related to peace and security tend to be at odds with gender equality norms (Doeland and Skjelsbaek, 2018: 997), due to the historic absence of women and girls from peace and security discourse. An example of a gender equality norm in this context would include addressing the systemic barriers that exist within political institutions which prevent women from speaking up against gender injustices. UNSCR 1325 aims to address the

lack of feminine representation in all matters related to peace and security (Doeland and Skjelsbaek, 2018: 997), however, the inconsistent application of UNSCR 1325 calls into question the repressive nature of the norm diffusion process through NAPs.

Gender mainstreaming is the centralization of gender in all institutional operations rather than the separation of gender or 'women's issues' into a special institutional category (Winslow, 2009: 539; Charlesworth, 2005: 1). It has become the most favoured approach by international institutions to address gender inequalities by offering a stark contrast to traditional methods known as "gender sidestreaming" (Charlesworth, 2005: 1). The adoption of NAPs would be considered an example of gender mainstreaming, as NAPs are intended to lay the foundation for the centralization of gender in all domestic peace and security matters. The following case studies demonstrate the multitude of issues with gender mainstreaming as a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to achieving gender equality, particularly in post-conflict countries. One common issue is the emphasis on quantitative outputs and the disregard for qualitative outputs. When measuring success, the UN focuses on numerical data, such as how many staff have been trained on gender sensitivity or how many women have been demobilized from an armed group, rather than considering the nuance of gender and conflict (Winslow, 2009: 543). Such nuance would include considering the impact of gender sensitivity training in all-male peacekeeping cohorts, the barriers that prevent women from accessing demobilization programming, or the socio-economic factors that inhibit women's ability to be taken seriously in political spaces.

NAPs demonstrate a state's formal acceptance of the UN's established gender norms. This is what centres the UN in the norm diffusion process. The limitations of

cooperation in a contemporary context, as well as what exactly constitutes cooperation. Resolution 1325 has the potential to address gender inequalities, only so far as the UN is willing to implement and enforce the standards set within the resolution. I propose that what has happened instead is the normalization of the tokenization of women through gender mainstreaming practices. A key component of this argument revolves around the UN's inability to learn and adapt over time. With more than two decades passed since its implementation, there are multiple problematic shortfalls of 1325 that remain unaddressed. One example of this is the UN's emphasis on a quota-based approach when it pertains to integrating women into peacekeeping forces.

In spaces that are deeply associated with masculinity, such as within security institutions, conflict, and post-conflict contexts, it is not enough to change policies alone. Policies create a framework for addressing gender inequality, however, if those responsible for implementing the framework fundamentally disagree or reject it, it is likely to have little impact. The successful localization of UNSCR 1325 depends on building 'gender awareness' in each state prior to the adoption of a NAP. While PKOs increase the likelihood of a state accepting the influence of the UN, and PKOs have shown to encourage post-conflict states to abide by international norms (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 193), I argue that PKOs are not a means of diffusing gender norms. Instead, I argue that they are the beginning or strengthening of relationships between the UN and states that have experienced conflict. I identify NAPs as the primary indicator of gender norm diffusion as it indicates not only acceptance of UNSCR 1325, but a willingness to take some level of action towards diffusing the norm into the local context. Building gender awareness is the process by which the gender biases that divide the socio-economic roles

of men and women are addressed through “actions and policies to counter such inequalities” (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 181). Promoting gender awareness through policy alone is performative, and fails to break down traditional gender norms.

Liberal feminist approaches to gender mainstreaming, as seen through the UN’s implementation of UNSCR 1325, fail to adequately acknowledge the interplay between ‘gender’ and ‘power,’ which inhibits institutional change (Hudson, 2012: 448). The UN’s advocacy of gender mainstreaming as the necessary global approach to gender equality has made it difficult for states to contest gender mainstreaming norms, despite the criticisms of gender mainstreaming (Hudson, 2012: 448). The ECOSOC defined gender mainstreaming as, “… the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels” (Charlesworth, 2005: 4).

But who is responsible for the perceived failures of 1325? There is debate among scholars regarding the direction of norm diffusion between international and domestic spheres. Finnemore and Sikkink claim that domestic norm entrepreneurs tend to shape the establishment of international norms, however, domestic dialogues around norm changes utilize international norms in their favour (1998: 893). The norm entrepreneurs that Finnemore and Sikkink are referring to, however, are not government actors and predominantly exist outside of the state’s political institutions. The international institutions, then, are supporting and encouraging, the norm shift at the domestic level by providing a basis to non-government norm leaders domestically to make their case for change.

When applying Finnemore and Sikkink's norm "lifecycle" I will define the UN (international) as the 'norm entrepreneur' and states (national) as 'norm leaders' (1998: 893), as the UNs widespread legitimacy has attributed the international institution with the influence necessary to secure global buy-in from member states on UNSCR 1325 and subsequent gender mainstreaming practices. The norm entrepreneur must be considered legitimate and influential to get buy-in from norm leaders. The UN fits this criterion given the reach of its membership and influence. There are multiple ways that an international governing body can reinforce norms. The first is through "direct action," such as the establishment of policies and enforcement through the given authority to the international body (Hanania, 2021: 656). Second, through "normative declarations" an international body can utilize aspirational declarations to inspire change at the domestic level and enforce a "new logic of appropriateness" (Hanania, 2021: 656). The UN employs both methods regularly. The level of influence on the international sphere is arguably unmatched. It is the level of influence; the ability to both inspire change and punish disobedience, that has attributed the role of norm entrepreneur to the UN.

While norms can flow in many directions, I will be focusing on the diffusion of norms from the international sphere to the national sphere. In analyzing the directionality of this relationship, I highlight how local grassroots movements are inextricably linked to the influence of the UN in the norm diffusion process. It is likely that without the leverage of the UN agenda, many of these non-government organizations would not have had the leverage necessary to sway domestic actors. Through the promise of increased resource availability and legitimacy enhancement, the UN gains significant influence over the political and social agendas in post-conflict states. The adoption of a NAP does

not inherently signify the localization of UNSCR 1325. The perceived universality of NAP implementation across states, particularly post-conflict states is limited by the notion of relativism. While "the global human rights regime relied on national implementation of international human rights," the implementation of international norms is subject to the relativity of sovereign states (Donnelly, 2007: 283).

Efforts of gender mainstreaming strategies to increase female participation in international and domestic institutions have called into question the effectiveness of such strategies (Charlesworth, 2005: 7). This is partially because women remain underrepresented in political and security institutions, but also due to the persistent limitations on women that exist in political and security spaces. Gender mainstreaming language and practices have enforced a performative approach to addressing gender inequalities. While it is not difficult to encourage the acceptance of a gender mainstreaming language in policy and public discourse, it frequently lacks the necessary follow-up in terms of monitoring and evaluating the success, or lack thereof, relating to gender mainstreaming practices (Charlesworth, 2005: 11). Given this practice, gender mainstreaming efforts are more focused on the outward appearance of institutional behaviours rather than the tangible impact being had on addressing gender inequalities.

The UN has been critiqued for its imposition of gender mainstreaming practices as they have predominantly been reinforced by the United States and other English-speaking countries (Charlesworth, 2005: 12). The concept of gender mainstreaming itself has been critiqued for its application in international institutions, noting that it "is both too broad and too narrow to serve as a useful tool in the international arena" (Charlesworth, 2005: 12). Considering that the concept of gender mainstreaming is

primarily based on Western understandings of gender and gender inequality, it is difficult to accept that this practice could be universally applicable and effective in post-conflict countries where ideas of both gender and inequality are based on entirely different conclusions.

The application of gender mainstreaming practices in the UN has been entirely contradictory to the concept of gender mainstreaming itself. While gender mainstreaming is intended to centralize gender awareness in all institutional activities, the UN has behaved as though certain activities are "impervious to concerns of gender," as noted in the absence of gender mainstreaming mandates in the International Court of Justice and the International Law Commission (Charlesworth, 2005: 14). The selective application of gender mainstreaming within the UN institution calls into question the internal belief in its ability to address gender inequalities, or at the very least, how limited the UN's commitment to addressing gender inequalities truly is.

Quota-based policies have demonstrated minimal effectiveness in this regard, yet are still encouraged in contemporary gender mainstreaming efforts (Krook & True, 2012: 112). Quota-centric practices inadequately standardize guidelines surrounding the treatment of women in security forces, as well as their deployment status or access to adequate training. Why, then, would security forces continue to apply practices that do not achieve their intended objective? International norms regarding women's rights have been opposed domestically throughout history (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 894). In a contemporary context, opposition to norm change might manifest differently. Instead of outward objection to norm change, states might instead abide by the minimum necessary

standard of implementation regarding a resolution to maintain the status quo and to satisfy domestic, nongovernment actors.

Finnemore and Sikkink acknowledge that when norms are diffused from the international to the state, the norm then "work(s) their influence through the filter of domestic structures and domestic norms, which can produce important variations in compliance and interpretation…" (1998: 893). This variation can become greater if states interpret the norms as relaxed, unimportant, or performative in nature. The interplay between institutions and the social actors within the institutions raises an interesting question. Are institutions built by and for men able to adequately adapt for the meaningful inclusion of women in political decision-making and policy implementation, particularly as it pertains to matters of peace and security? The impact of traditional perceptions of conflict and its relationship to gender identities. Perceived notions of femininity as related to "nurturing, empathetic and caring traits" feed into the removal of agency from women in conflict situations, where notions of masculinity being associated with "strong, aggressive, 'leadership'" traits continue to center male discourse (Krook and True, 2012: 112). While the existence of 1325 acknowledges the critical role, women play in all aspects of the peace process, its existence alone does not challenge misconceptions around gender in conflict that have shaped our approach to peace and security for the greater part of history.

One might expect that the implementation of a resolution related to gender inclusion, such as 1325, would cause a shift in institutional behaviour. The adoption of a resolution, however, is not sufficient on its own. This is, in part, due to institutionally embedded biases that shape the UN's legal principles. The physical inclusion of women

in political decision-making within the UN, and the presence of women in peacekeeping efforts, does not mean that women have been accepted into the institutions (Cudworth, Hall and McGovern, 2007:230). The true acceptance of women in political and security spaces would require equal treatment of men and women within the institutions, as well as equal opportunity to access institutional spaces.

Since the UN is an agenda setting body it has control over the dialogue surrounding normative behaviour regarding peace and security matters. When it comes to integrating gender in topics where gender has historically been disregarded, such as conflict, it may only be addressed by fully integrating gender considerations into policy and practice rather than simply adding it as a consideration or by-product of peace and security matters (Youngs, 2008:694). While this might seem radical to some, it is the exact radical change that could disrupt an institutional system that was not built to serve women in the same way it was built to serve men. Understanding the nuances of gender in conflict highlights the importance of centring gender in peace discourse. Conflict increases certain risks to women and girls, including the intentional weaponization of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by armed groups to assert control and power (Bleckner, 2013: 339-340). In addition to atrocities committed by armed groups, UN peacekeepers have also been perpetrators of SEA in conflict situations. Research has demonstrated that the integration of women into frontline peacekeeping efforts also increases accountability measures, decreasing accounts of SEA committed by UN peacekeepers (Bleckner: 2013: 342-349). This does not mean that solving gendered inequalities in conflict situations is as simple as meeting quotas to achieve this shift. How can we set an expectation of increased female integration while offering women no

safeguards from gendered hostilities from not only armed groups, but fellow peacekeepers? If the UN institutional culture does not empower women to act to the full extent of their roles, with the confidence to speak up, report injustices, and advocate for change, then meeting tokenizing quotas will have no positive effect on addressing gender inequalities. Research related to the benefits of having women in peacekeeping efforts has not necessarily exemplified what the UN has done right in regards to gender and peacekeeping, as there are still significant barriers to female participation. The research that has been conducted on the few cases of gender parity in missions, however, does highlight the importance of addressing the perceived failures of 1325.

Centring gender in peace and conflict discourse also means centring gender in conversations around justice. Those predominantly responsible for enforcing transitional justice in conflict situations have been men who lack adequate training on approaches to gender-sensitive justice (Thompson, 2017: 178). While Thompson argues that gender-sensitive training should be provided to all peacekeepers before deployment, it may not be enough to address current inadequacies. Providing gender-sensitive training to predominantly male cohorts of peacekeepers does not have the same impact as the presence of women and the representation of voices that are often marginalized in conflict situations. Even with training, gender biases embedded in UN institutional culture will continue to overshadow these efforts. Including modules on gender sensitivity during pre-deployment training (PDT) sessions may be one of the most effective methods of creating peacekeeping cohorts that are cohesive to the meaningful integration of women in frontline peacekeeping efforts (MacKay, 2003: 217-219). Adequate gender-sensitivity training must be provided in tandem with efforts to increase

female participation. One of these events occurring in isolation from the other is ineffectual. Training without increased representation reinforces the tokenization of gender-responsive efforts, as it simply checks a box rather than enforces tangible change to current peacekeeping practices that fail to consider the gendered experiences of conflict. This is not to say that gender-sensitivity training removes the tokenization of women through quota-based practices.

Theoretical Framework

To analyze the diffusion of gender mainstreaming norms from the international sphere to the national sphere I will apply two theoretical approaches: constructivism and feminist institutionalism (FI). Constructivism considers the role of norms, culture and ideas in politics, particularly in regard to a social analysis (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). Understanding norm diffusion between the international and national spheres requires a contextual analysis of the social factors which shape norms in the time and place in which they are being diffused. Norms are shaped by the actors that are products of the time and place in which they exist. Therefore, norms must be considered in a social context. This will support the following thesis in considering the social context which lead to the wave of gender mainstreaming becoming so prominent in international institutions and why international institutions continue to insist that gender mainstreaming, as applied through NAPs, is the most effective way to address gender inequalities globally.

Constructivists analyze the key roles played by both institutional structures and individuals and how they interact with each other. The motivations of individuals within state institutions to abide by institutional norms shape whether localization efforts will be

sufficient. This element of constructivism will support the analysis of norm diffusion practice in contributing to an understanding of why international institutions would have a vested interest in norm diffusion in post-conflict states to begin with. Constructivists believe that cooperation between international and domestic institutions is in the best interest of both international and domestic actors, which is what leads to the acceptance of norm change (Lantis, 2016: 385). While this may be true, the power dynamics of this supposed mutually beneficial relationship are skewed in the case of post-conflict countries. Post-conflict countries do 'benefit' from norm acceptance, particularly in the case of gender mainstreaming norms, through increased resource availability upon norm acceptance. In the post-conflict context, however, is this truly an agentive choice if the alternative is no resource availability for nations in their reconstruction period, where the need for funding to rebuild infrastructure is dire?

Lantis claims that there is a 'new wave' of constructivism that acknowledges the interdependency of norms on institutional structures and individuals, noting that norms are something that can be manipulated by actors (2016:386-387). While this is key to the localization of human rights norms, when a norm is poorly developed it increases the likelihood that the localization of the norm will be inadequate to address the root cause of the norm change process. Gender mainstreaming norms are manipulated by state actors to some extent, however, this has not been to improve the applicability of the new norm at the local level. While constructivism explains the ebb and flow of international and domestic norms, it does not consider the nuance of gender norms and the limitations they face during the localization process. This is particularly true when considering post-conflict contexts. While manipulation of a norm is possible at the state level, post-conflict

countries are less likely to manipulate a norm, especially one that is poorly monitored, when it increases the chances of positive intervention in terms of resources and increased international cooperation.

Constructivism highlights the significance of international norms and how they shape normative behaviour at the state level (Grant, 2018: 257). By accepting a new norm, states are reinforcing the global authority of the UN and its subsequent organizations. Constructivism helps to understand not only the direction of the relationship between norm diffusion, but also the reason behind the acceptance of international standards by social actors at the domestic level. This will be utilized to support our understanding of why state actors might adopt new norms that may not be reflective of the nation's historical values and culture, particularly historical gender norms. Variations of constructivism have taken different approaches to the understanding of norm diffusion. Agential constructivists highlight that "…actors affect and shape the legal, political, institutional, and social environments in which they operate" (Grant, 2018:257). This emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the identities of the actors within political institutions, knowing that their identities may shape discourse and practice. Each of the following case studies, while demonstrating similar characteristics in the norm diffusion process, is unique in how their state actors interact with UN institutions.

Social constructivism takes the identities of actors a step further to consider the "social environment" in which individual states construct their own identities, and how this constructed identity dictates government decision-making processes (Chandler, 2013: 218). Social constructivism situates domestic institutions in relation to "the importance of

global or international 'norms, identity and culture'" when considering the motivation behind domestic norm development (Chandler, 2013: 218). Understanding why states adopt international norms helps to build our understanding of the tactics employed by international institutions like the UN in order to shape domestic activities related to gender mainstreaming.

In terms of norm acceptance, or internalization, it is only recently that constructivists have begun to pay attention to the motivations behind compliance (Checkel, 2001: 557). Some constructivists have argued that the motivation behind state compliance to international norms has little to do with international institutions and more to do with domestic actors, such as non-government organizations applying a level of "social sanctioning" on states while leveraging international norms (Checkel, 2001: 557-558; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 893). I do not dispute this claim; however, I suggest that non-government actors applying such pressure would not be sufficient to motivate norm acceptance. Instead, I consider how interstate 'social sanctioning' may occur. Nations with similar values are more likely to engage through resource distribution and trade agreements. The informal promise of enhanced partnerships with other nations is a strong motivation for post-conflict states to adopt norms reflective of universal values shared among dominant powers in the global arena to secure greater support during the construction period.

While constructivism allows for the consideration of individual actors and the ways in which actors shape political spaces, it is not adequate on its own to analyze how gender norms permeate through institutional structures. Constructivism considers agents and their experiences, however, one cannot assume such a framework will sufficiently

analyze the impact of gender power dynamics on individuals and how the shapes the ways these individuals shape institutional decision making. Gender-neutral practices are known to inherently favour masculine presumptions. This is particularly true when exploring topics such as peace, security and conflict because internalized biases naturally remove feminine connotations from such topics. Therefore, it is necessary to centralize gender to challenge traditional masculine discourses around peace, security and conflict; and applying FI does just this.

FI falls under New Institutionalism (NI) and was established out of recognition for the gender-blindness of NI scholarship (Thomson, 2017: 179). FI provides a necessary shift in institutional theoretical analysis by acknowledging that understanding change is just as important as understanding static behaviour or continuity (Thomson, 2017:180). Understanding change will help improve our understanding of how the UN works to influence the shift towards gender mainstreaming in post-conflict countries. FI recognizes that institutions are dynamic in nature, and shape the social actors both within and outside of the institution in question (Holmes, 2020: 216). I will apply this concept when analyzing the impact of gender mainstreaming norms on local organizations that operate outside of the political and security institutions. Identifying local women's organizations as social actors impacted by the international to domestic norm diffusion process highlights the ways in which local women are impacted by norms which contradict actions that would tangibly address local issues.

How can institutions built without consideration for gender or 'women's issues' then be adapted by resolutions to then centralize gender in all activities? Policy changes alone are insufficient in addressing the gender gap in political spaces. Such a gap notes a

need for increased inclusion of women in political spaces, however, the relationship between social actor and institution is complex, with scholars disagreeing on which entity has control. Holmes argues that, "Feminist Institutionalism aims to understand and explain how power is distributed within institutions" whereas gender is positioned as a primary unit of analysis (2020: 214). FI will be employed to center the discourse of this research around the power structures in place and the impact these structures have had on the diffusion of repressive gender norms. Holmes goes on to explain that both formal and informal norms shape what feminine and masculine forms of behaviour are considered acceptable within an institution (2020: 216). This aspect of FI will be employed to critique the 'add-women-and-stir' aspect of gender mainstreaming, noting that women's acceptance into political and security institutions does not directly correlate to women's full participation in these institutions.

FI identifies two critical actors as the 'reformers,' who strive to change institutions and the 'institutional enforcers,' who are those that benefit from the current system in place, typically upper-class heterosexual men (Holmes, 2020:217). The promotion of gender mainstreaming practices, even in political spaces, does not dispute this concept of FI. Instead, the performative nature of gender mainstreaming as it is currently applied in international and domestic contexts poses the question of whether gender mainstreaming was intentionally chosen due to its limitations in addressing institutional inequalities. FI explores the intentionality of both inclusion and exclusion of the female experience from within institutions (Holmes, 2020: 217). Considering the power dynamics at play in political and security institutions, this may explain why actors might outwardly want to include women and feminine perspectives, while also

inexplicitly enforcing conditions that protect authority skewed towards masculine interests. Some have argued that meaningful gender change in institutions relies less on increased numbers of female representation, but rather a focus on ensuring women are "critical actors," holding positions with significant authority and influence (Thomson, 2017:181-182). This aspect of FI will be employed when analyzing the impact of gender mainstreaming and its effort to increase the numbers of female representation in institutional spaces. Employing a framework like FI when discussing gender discourse is necessary when analyzing the inadequacies of norm change.

Both formal and informal rules developed in and enforced by institutions have a gendered element (Thomson, 2017: 178). FI has historically been predominantly interested in positive norm change related to gender, however, it has also been employed to explore the obstruction of and resistance to gendered norm change (Thomson, 2017:178). For the purposes of this project, I will be focusing on the latter, acknowledging the establishment of 1325 as an outward show of positive change, but the perceived failures of implementation as a result of institutional resistance to such a change. FI indicates the importance of analyzing silence and inaction to the same degree that researchers would explore action and discourse, noting that masculine ideals are typically centred in formal institutions (Thomson, 2017:180). The lack of adaptation on behalf of the UN to address the inequities of the implementation of 1325, particularly in post-conflict countries, is a key example of inaction that will be explored in this research.

The understanding of gendered power dynamics requires a robust analysis through the lens of a theoretical framework like FI. Through FI, we can better understand the diffusion of power in political institutions and the gendered elements that shape

access to political spaces and control over political decision-making (Thomson, 2017:180). UNSCR 1325 is intended to increase access to security institutions, but does increased access shift power dynamics or reinforce them? Employing FI to analyze the gender elements of access to political spaces will contribute to an improved understanding of how women's action is limited within institutions regardless of perceived changes. FI considers the impact institutional structures have on restricting or promoting issues of gender equality or the lack thereof (Thomson, 2017:188). This consideration will build on the analysis of how the UN, through norm diffusion of gender mainstreaming practices, actively restricts gender change while positing their actions as positive gender reform.

I argue that UN peacekeeping is an inherent project of norm diffusion among states. A major component of peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction is capacity building. FI allows us to complete a critical analysis of the malleability of post-conflict institutions in the capacity-building process. It considers gendered influences on both pre-existing institutions and new, post-conflict institutions, noting the significance of institutional change related to new practices and new ideas of gender (Thomson, 2019: 606). Understanding norm diffusion from the international sphere to the domestic sphere allows us to consider the history of a longstanding institutions such as the UN and many of the state governments, as well as the 'newness' of institutional considerations to gender as well as the 'newness' of post-conflict governing bodies.

There are particular aspects of FI that position scholars to analyze post-conflict institutions from a gendered perspective. FI considers the "newness" of post-conflict political institutions while not discarding the influence of past institutions (Thomson,

2019: 607). An understanding of how newly developed governments are shaped by past norms and new norms supports the analysis of post-conflict countries' acceptance and application of gender mainstreaming norms That is with the consideration that newly developed institutions are not inherently starting from scratch and are still subject to institutionally embedded gender biases which permeate from the actors that exist in the institution and their personal biases. FI is also interested in the ways that informal practices, such as unspoken rules and norms, shape the ways that gender interacts within an institutional space (Thomson, 2019: 608). Critiquing the failures of 1325 to meaningfully address gender inequalities in post-conflict states, and the overall objectives of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, necessitates an understanding of the informal practices that overshadow the formal standards set in 1325. FI also acknowledges the potential of formal mechanisms to foster gender inclusivity in political institutions (Thomson, 2019: 608). As such, it lays a foundation that both the formal and informal mechanisms of institutions can eventually adapt to adequately address gender inequalities.

Constructivism and FI are complementary frameworks, used here as a means of taking a holistic approach to a topic which explores gender norm diffusion from the international sphere to the domestic sphere with the consideration of both intuitional structural limitations and the agency of individual, social actors that both shape and are shaped by the institution. The use of constructivism will allow me to consider the social context in which norms are constructed and then diffused. It also positions this thesis to explore the interplay between individual actors the international and domestic institutions that they exist within to better understand how individual interests shape political agendas

and resulting norm change. Furthermore, constructivism allows us to understand the motivations behind state cooperation with international norms, and as a result, the tactics employed by international institutions to ensure that states remain motivated to accept international norms. Where constructivism falls short of explaining how gender and power dynamics impact the interplay between institutions and individual actors, FI fills this gap to analyze the role of institutions in both inhibiting and promoting change related to gender equality. For the purposes of this thesis, I will primarily be focusing on the aspects of institutions that have thus far inhibited positive gender change while critiquing the performative nature of gender mainstreaming norms as they are enforced through the UN onto post-conflict states.

Sources and Methods

Through the analysis of case studies, this project will demonstrate that the UN has diffused gender mainstreaming norms through the implementation of UNSCR 1325. I argue that UNSCR 1325 has had an adverse impact in these cases, as the resolution does not adequately address the unique challenges in post-conflict states as it relates to gender inequality. Exploring how international institutions diffuse gender norms in post-conflict states will provide insight into why the process fails to address gender inequalities. This thesis focuses on post-conflict states to understand how UN peacekeeping efforts are utilized as a means of norm diffusion. All countries will have introduced NAPs on 1325, although implementation may vary. Each state's NAP will be analyzed to determine the extent to which the implementation of UNSCR 1325 has considered the local needs of each state's citizens or prioritized the greater UN agenda. I will also consider how the UN has incentivized the adoption of NAPs, including the promise of resource distribution and

enhanced state legitimacy. In addition to analyzing the NAPs, this project will also build on existing literature on the NAPs, norm diffusion, gender mainstreaming, and gender language employed in legal frameworks. This will allow for a more holistic picture of how norms are diffused through the implementation of 1325, as well as whether the NAPs, as the primary means of implementation, are having a tangible positive impact on women and gendered relations in each respective nation. The case studies that have been selected for this project include Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

In building case studies for this project, I consider the three critical elements to establishing an adequate case study as defined by Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. That includes a concrete definition of the "universe" in which a group of cases is being studied, the selection of cases reflective of a strong research strategy rather than information availability, and the consideration of "variables of theoretical interest for the purposes of explanation," in a way that may help policymakers shape different outcomes (George and Bennett, 2005: 92). Understanding the socio-political factors that will in some cases differentiate the case studies and in others tie them together will be essential to the analysis of how each state interacts with its NAP during the implementation process.

The first case study focuses on Rwanda, considering the significant strides which have been taken to improve gender equality and gender relations in the country. Rwanda's first NAP was introduced in 2009, and while this is a significant amount of time after the implementation of UNSCR 1325, Rwanda has been broadly looked at as the ideal "success story" of 1325 (Madsen, 2019: 174). Considering the perceived success of 1325 in Rwanda (Madsen, 2019: 174), this could demonstrate that the state has

accepted the gender mainstreaming norms set by the UN. Due to Rwanda's global recognition for its progress on the WPS agenda, it is also possible that other countries may look to its framework as a starting place for their own implementation, making Rwanda an ideal 'norm leader.' Madsen argues that the case of Rwanda demonstrations "norm translation" from the international level to the national level through the implementation of 1325 (2019: 176). Additionally, Rwanda shares the UN approach to integrating women through designated quotas, a common metric for success in gender mainstreaming practices, focusing on 1325's target of 30 percent female members in peacekeeping cohorts (Holmes, 2014: 321). While this goal is related to the security sector, Rwanda's quota practices have been far more successful in its domestic institutions. The question remains, has the praise for Rwanda's gender mainstreaming efforts been due to tangible success or number-based rhetoric?

The second case study will focus on Sierra Leone, which implemented its first NAP on UNSCR 1325 in 2010. Critiques of Sierra Leone's NAP have highlighted that it has failed to address structural and institutional factors of violence against women, and disregards the linkages between sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during wartime and its persistence in subsequent peacetime (Beoku-Betts, 2016: 656). Basini and Ryan state that local ownership of Sierra Leone's NAP could be considered performative, as despite high engagement from local NGOs and civil society, the documents produced by the government were "monopolized" by international counterparts and impeded local implementation efforts (2016: 395). Sierra Leone shows the extent to which UN influence can shape local discourse on the WPS agenda, so much so that implementation fails to address gender inequalities in the post-conflict context.

Situations like this may demonstrate the limitations of NAPs in addressing local issues, despite the Security Council's claims that NAPs are the only means of implementing 1325 successfully.

The third and final case study will focus on Liberia, which implemented its NAP on UNSCR 1325 in 2009. It has been noted that there was significant 'top-down' pressure on Liberia from the UN to implement a NAP, and it was following calls from the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) stating that NAPs were the only means of acknowledging the role of women in peacekeeping that Liberia began developing its plan. (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 391-392). The UN has continued to be heavily involved in the implementation of the LNAP, taking measures to enforce a liberal peace agenda. This sort of pressure may have forced Liberia to enforce quota-based goals for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, but has not translated into meaningful change towards a more gender-equitable state.

In this thesis, I will demonstrate that with the promise of increased resource allocation and enhanced state legitimacy, the UN can gain influence over post-conflict states to ensure that the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and gender norms are reflective of a liberal peace agenda. Norm diffusion on gender mainstreaming occurs through these tactics as a means of reinforcing a liberal peace agenda. I argue that the increasingly interconnected nature of contemporary politics has encouraged the acceptance of international norm standards for states to gain a 'seat' at the international table. Second, I argue that UNSCR 1325 demonstrates the role of the UN as a norm entrepreneur through the diffusion of gender mainstreaming norms., I expand on this point to identify how the standards put in place by the UN on UNSCR 1325 have ultimately failed to adequately

support the intended purpose of the WPS agenda. I explore the motivations behind state acceptance of 1325, noting that cooperation in the pursuit of legitimacy and acceptance from the international community plays a significant role. Identifying NAPs as the primary indicator of implementation of 1325, I analyze the ways that various NAPs have improved, decreased, or remained neutral in addressing significant gender issues. This analysis will allow for a better understanding of whether NAPs are serving the local contexts of post-conflict states, or rather the larger liberal agenda of the UN through the stringent enforcement of gender mainstreaming practices.

The UN encouraged a top-down approach to implementing UNSCR 1325, ensuring that UN bodies were central to the development of NAPs (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 192). While monitoring and evaluation practices of 1325 implementation are limited, the UN insists that NAPs are essential to ensuring states are held accountable in the progression of the WPS agenda (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 193). UN peacekeeping missions serve as a norm diffusion project, requiring local actors to attribute authority and legitimacy to the UN (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 193). Maria Martin de Almagro argues that no norm diffusion theory has been able to adequately explain "international norm diffusion and their implementation in national and local contexts" (2018: 675).

Richard Hanania highlights two ways in which international institutions can set norm standards (2021: 656). One is through 'direct action' which occurs when an international institution exercises its authority to create and enforce new policies. Direct action may result in voluntary norm acceptance to abide by checks and balance mechanisms or through the use of sanctions and other means of enforcement (Hanania, 2021: 656). The other option is through 'normative declaration' which are statements that

inspire countries to abide by new norm standards because of the potential benefits of such changes (Hanania, 2021: 656).

The UN employs the following definition of gender mainstreaming:

> "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political and economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (ECOSOC AC, 1997).

This definition is broad and can be interpreted and applied in a plethora of ways. What it fails to do is acknowledge that the 'concerns' of women and men may be conflictual, particularly in terms of power dynamics. Considering that war and conflict are perceived as masculine notions, "assessing the implications" of fractured structures that do not consider womanhood in the first place is insufficient.

Part of the issue is the lack of centralization of approaches to gender mainstreaming, leading to inconsistent communication between the UN and field missions and subsequently an "ad hoc" approach to implementation (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 180). While there have been subsequent resolutions since 1325, this analysis will focus on 1325 as it is the most central to implementation, particularly through the establishment of NAPs (Beoku-Betts, 2016:657). This will require an analysis of the various inadequacies of UNSCR 1325. These predominantly surround the failures around

consideration for local needs, or a lack of consideration for certain failures appear to be universal across the case studies included below. Multiple applications of UNSCR 1325 reinforce the narrative of female identity is inextricably linked to victimhood, often through the emphasis on issues related to SGBV (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 197-198).

When we discuss the increased participation of women in the security sector, by focusing primarily on numbers and omitting a qualitative analysis, a big part of the picture is missed. While the UN has implemented procedures to encourage more women to join peacekeeping missions, they are often given administrative roles or kept away from the frontline efforts of a mission (Bleckner, 2013: 341). This demonstrates how a narrative focused solely on numbers could misconstrue what is perceived as a success. Increased numbers in terms of representation are not mutually exclusive to improved gender relations or increased gender equality. Achieving gender equality would require more than simply allowing women into non-traditional spaces. This highlights one of the key issues with gender mainstreaming as a primary approach to gender equality, as it lacks the ability to take an intersectional approach to gender inequalities.

Efforts to increase female participation in the security sector since UNSCR 1325 continue to face barriers that the UN appears to be unprepared to address. A key consideration here is the 'institutional culture' within the UN that has led to significant numbers of SEA across multiple missions (Simić, 2010: 190-191). While there has been research to demonstrate how the inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions can help address SEA through increased accountability and the use of reporting mechanisms (Bleckner, 2013: 347), it is also pertinent to consider the fear women may face when joining an institution with such a dark history as perpetrators while intended to protectors.

One limitation of this thesis is the limited availability of primary data. While the case of Rwanda has a good number of primary interviews recorded in previous literature, such as in the work of Debusscher and Ansoms (2013), the same availability has not been sourced for the cases of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Access to primary data would enrich this project by centralizing the lived experiences of those directly impacted by UNSCR 1325 and subsequent NAPs in each respective state. While each case study does include quotes from local CSO staff, INGO staff, survivors of conflict, and government affiliates, which discusses the impact of UNSCR 1325, it is not as substantive as desired.

An additional limitation of this research to consider is the potential bias embedded in the literature that this project is built upon. The literature on this subject is limited, and a great deal of the pre-existing literature has been skewed towards a heavily critical lens of UNSCR 1325, the UN, and the intentions of local government actors to implement NAPs. The small sample size of case studies presented is a limitation of applicability, including the fact that the case studies are all focused on African states, and data may present differently in post-conflict states from other regions.

The below case studies demonstrate key shortfalls with the implementation of 1325, including an inconsistent application of guidelines, inadequate resources and monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and spending discrepancies. What is clear is that gender mainstreaming as a practice fails to adequately support the WPS agenda in post-conflict contexts. If NAPs on UNSCR 1325 prove to be inadequate in addressing the unique issues of post-conflict states, then why does the UN continue to insist that NAPs are the best avenue? The cases of Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Liberia will demonstrate that the UN utilized resource availability and the perceived promise of enhanced state

legitimacy to ensure these post-conflict states would establish a dependent relationship on the international organization which would reinforce its agenda setting power. UNSCR 1325 gave the UN the ability to do this through NAP implementation as UNSCR 1325 is reflective of shared international values, and once adopted, opportunities for greater international support and recognition increased.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Insufficient research exists on the effect of the methods employed by international institutions to diffuse gender norms onto post-conflict states. This project aims to highlight subject areas related to the WPS agenda and norm diffusion processes impacting post-conflict states that could warrant greater interest from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. I argue that performative gender mainstreaming norms have been diffused from the international sphere to the domestic sphere through the promise of increased resources and state legitimacy enhancement which has resulted in the UN securing agenda setting influence over post-conflict states. Power imbalances and institutionally embedded gender-biases shape how women are – or are not – integrated into political and security institutions. This not only shapes the presence of women in formal institutions, but their ability to impact policy and practice. Understanding the root cause of the under-representation of women in political and security institutions will better prepare practitioners on how to approach the issue. Views of gender and its relationship to peace and security have gone through a definitive transformation in the last century. Notably, in the mid-1990s there was a shift towards gender mainstreaming at the UN level as the perceived effective means of achieving global gender equality (Krook and True, 2012: 113). Many authors, however, have highlighted the issues with gender mainstreaming and its ineffectiveness when it comes to addressing gender inequality in peace and security matters (Newby and Sebag, 2021: 148-70; Kreft, 2017: 132-58; Olsson, 2000:1-16). One must wonder, then, why the UN is so insistent that gender mainstreaming is the best, primary approach to gender issues within the international institution and transcending into domestic peace and security projects.

This thesis draws on research regarding the norm lifecycle and its interplay between the international and national spheres. Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink discuss what they coin as a "two-level norm game," arguing that international and domestic institutions cannot exist in isolation from one another (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 893). While it is not widely contested that there is a relationship between the national and international spheres, there is debate on the direction of the relationship. When applying Finnemore and Sikkink's norm "lifecycle" I will define the UN (international) as the 'norm entrepreneur' and states (national) as 'norm leaders.' The authors break down the norm lifecycle into three sections; *norm emergence* - where the norm entrepreneur persuades norm leaders to promote their cause, *norm cascade* - where a broad acceptance of the norm occurs, and finally, *internalization* - where the norm is taken for granted and no longer gaining much attention (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 895). My research will explore the problematic normalization of ineffective gender mainstreaming practices through the lens of the norm lifecycle to determine if the UN has reinforced negative norms at the state level which lead to the tokenization of women in the security sector.

Krook and True discuss some of the problematic practices associated with gender mainstreaming at the UN level which may have set a poor example for states implementing their NAPs regarding 1325. First, they discuss the UN's quota-based approach to integrating women into peacekeeping, noting that such policies have had a minimal impact (Krook and True, 2012: 112). This practice is inextricably linked with tokenism as it allows institutions to produce seemingly good statistics on integration but lacks any accountability in regards to how women in peacekeeping are being trained,

deployed, and promoted. The authors also discuss the rising trend in gender mainstreaming to remove the acknowledgement of gender altogether to appear gender-inclusive (Krook and True, 2012: 112). This means removing all gendered language from written policy to appear gender-neutral. The assumption is that gender neutrality will transfer to more gender-equitable practices. The impact of language on traditional conceptualizations of war and conflict relates masculinity to notions of "strong, aggressive, 'leadership'" and femininity to "nurturing, empathetic and caring traits," which are deeply ingrained in perceptions of how a person might participate in or be impacted by conflict (Den Boer and Bode, 2018: 366). Gender mainstreaming as a practice then threatens to remove gender in policies at the national and international level, leading to the continued masculinization of security institutions. This represents the inability of gender mainstreaming practices to address gender inequality in post-conflict states, as it disregards the historical dominance of masculine experiences and masculine authority.

Ryan and Basini discuss the connection between the establishment and "compliance power" in relation to NAPs in post-conflict states (2017: 193). They attribute this to the perceived legitimacy given to the UN by states, which have had active UN peacebuilding missions, which increases the likelihood of states accepting UN authority and influence (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 193). This perspective highlights the directional nature of norm influence from the international to the national level, as the reasoning behind states adhering to international norm cycles and norm changes are multifaceted and could impact states in a variety of ways. States which adhere to NAPs due to the impact of UN peacekeeping missions domestically could influence other states

which have not had domestic peacekeeping missions present, due to perceived legitimacy and broad acceptance of UN norms.

Torunn L. Tryggestad discusses the norm influence of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) as it pertains to gender. She notes that the broad impact of 1325, from its support to national implementation has been significant, however, she fails to analyze the effectiveness of this response in regards to meaningfully impacting women in national and international security institutions. She argues that the PBC has done a satisfactory job of integrating the concerns of women into formal security structures (Tryggestad, 2010:166). This comes back to making arguments based on numbers rather than defining what meaningful engagement and meaningful participation look like. She also argues, however, that the limitations to the PBC and its efforts to advocate for improved gender inclusivity are due to varying power structures, and proposes a concluding argument that norms around women and peacebuilding have not yet cascaded through a significant number of member states (Tryggestad, 2010: 167-169). I draw on this analysis to demonstrate the directionality of norms, as well as the limitations of norm diffusion in security structures.

Georgina Holmes discusses some of the shortfalls of the implementation of gender mainstreaming practices encouraged by the UN through an analysis of training in regards to "gendered peacekeeping labouring practices" and its direct impact on women in domestic security structures (2019: 58). She argues that Rwanda is significant in this analysis both as it is one of the highest UN peacekeeping contributors with a proven history of deploying female peacekeepers to a variety of missions and conflict contexts, and due to the government's efforts regarding gender mainstreaming national security

policies in direct relation to Rwanda's 1325 NAP (Holmes 2019: 59). Her research highlights the lived experiences of female members of the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF), primarily focused on the delivery of pre-deployment training (PDT). Multiple interviewees expressed the gendered elements of their assigned roles, expressing the distinction between the actionable items of male peacekeepers versus female peacekeeper (Holmes, 2019:74). Some women recalled the lack of female leadership representation in PDT and the emphasis on female peacekeepers being trained to interact with local women while in theatre, particularly survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (Holmes, 2019:74-75). Furthermore, female peacekeepers returning from Mission expressed that they did not feel their PDT was adequate in preparing them to deal with local populations, including interactions with survivors of sexual violence (Holmes, 2019:78). The responses from returning peacekeepers highlight that integrating women in terms of numbers is insufficient if security institutions are not prepared to invest in a higher quality of training for both men and women in regards to female experiences in conflict and SGBV. This piece also explores the implications of norm diffusion from the UN level to the national level in its case analysis of the RDF.

Understanding the disparity of gender integration in the UN requires an institutional analysis of socially embedded biases within the UN and the establishment of its ruling doctrines and legal principles. Erika Cudworth et al. note that institutions, more specifically those with a political agenda, had begun to allow women into their processes, but not welcome them (Cudworth, Hall and McGovern, 2007: 230). While it is important to acknowledge this reality, I want to go a step further into understanding why after

decades of feminist rhetoric this continues to be the case within the operations of the UN. Cudworth et al. explain that the ‘New Right’ poses a great threat to feminist ideas, which inhibits the meaningful integration of female peacekeepers within national and international security institutions (Cudworth, Hall and McGovern, 2007: 234). Cudworth et al. demonstrate that simply adding women into institutions does not directly translate to progress on gender issues. Instead, these practices are sometimes performative and lack the genuine intention to address gender inequalities both in and outside of formal institutions.

Since UNSCR 1325 outlined a commitment to increasing female participation in PKOs, the UN has made efforts regarding gender mainstreaming within its institution. Heidi Hudson critiques UN efforts on gender mainstreaming, noting that “the liberal peace project uses gender discourses as a tool to enforce its norms” (2012: 444) Hudson’s critique of gender mainstreaming suggests that these practices are not designed to address gender inequality in post-conflict states, but rather, to push a global liberal peace agenda. In this regard, the UN is more concerned with diffusing norms that fit the international organization’s agenda than it is concerned with meaningful change on the ground. Hudson goes on to discuss the implications of gender discourse predominantly being “shaped and reproduced” by Western actors and the UN, as this discourse “exert(s) significant power in determining the gendered path of post-conflict peace and reconstruction processes” (2012: 444). This demonstrates that gender mainstreaming actively removes agency from local decision-makers in post-conflict states, acknowledging that the practice was not created with non-Western experiences in mind.

Gender mainstreaming, as a Western conceptualization, challenges the idea that UNSCR 1325 is universally applicable.

Karim explores written policy and what is done in practice has impeded efforts to improve gender mainstreaming within the UN. She critiques the approaches made following UNSCR 1325, stating the changes have been tokenizing and that the dialogue surrounding conflict at the institutional level has remained masculinist in nature, favouring male perspectives (Karim, 2017: 823). Karim's critiques show the limitations of gender mainstreaming as it pertains to centring gendered experiences in institutions. Similarly, Barrow notes that gender biases which transcend institutions may inexplicitly shape legal principles and how they are applied in practice (2010: 223-227). Both scholars argue for the separation of perceived approaches to gender mainstreaming and what ends up occurring in practice.

Youngs demonstrates that gender must be written explicitly into policy, especially in terms of conflict-related policies that have historically disregarded gender considerations as irrelevant (2008: 694) She argues, in contrast to Krook and True, that gender mainstreaming is the best means of achieving the centralization of gender in policy. Her critique of gender-blindness builds on the problematic identified by Karim and the significance of being intentional with language when it comes to gender mainstreaming. Youngs takes it a step further to argue that gender cannot simply be a consideration, but rather, that centralizing gender as the "core of policy consideration" will be necessary to address the impact of longstanding institutional gender biases (2008: 695). Youngs suggests that gender mainstreaming as a concept has the potential to address gender inequality, however, her analysis is largely theoretical. She looks at the

potential contributions of gender mainstreaming to challenge traditional conceptualizations of gender within international relations (IR) theory. While I agree that gender mainstreaming, in theory, can centralize gender discourse in IR, in practice there are more challenges to the implementation of gender mainstreaming that go unaddressed in Hudson's research. The primary challenge being that that institutions which enforce gender mainstreaming policies are inherently masculine, and a further understanding of institutional power imbalances is required to analyze whether gender mainstreaming could ever be successful in practice.

Bleckner explores the harmful impact that tokenism and rhetoric around women in peacekeeping has had on addressing gendered elements of conflict. She articulates that sexual violence is not just a by-product of war, but rather, an intentional weapon in war and that the presence of active conflict increases the vulnerability of women and girls to be subjected to SEA (Bleckner, 2013: 339-340). She highlights the complexity of this issue by stating that the UN not only fails to protect women and girls in conflict from SEA, but UN peacekeepers have also been perpetrators of SEA; she continues to state that the best way to meaningfully address this persistent issue is to increase accountability within the UN through the meaningful integration of female peacekeepers (Bleckner, 2013: 342-349). Bleckner's research is at the forefront of discussions around SEA in PKOs, and it will be essential to analyze the elements of UN institutional culture which inhibit the meaningful integration of female peacekeepers in frontline efforts. While Bleckner has called for increased female participation to address SEA in missions to address the problem, one must consider the complicated dynamics of encouraging a

female service member to enter an environment that inherently increases her risk of being exposed to the crime her presence is intended to prevent.

Building on the disconnect between policy and practice, Lyndsay B. Thompson discusses the gap between the conversations around gender-sensitive justice within the UN and the training provided to predominately male peacekeeping cohorts. She explains that "male peacekeepers in charge of ensuring the transitional justice process in areas where sexual violence has been endemic," are lacking an aptitude for gender-sensitive justice (Thompson, 2017: 178). When discussing barriers to female participation in frontline PKOs in my research, analyzing the performative nature of the UN approach to implementing gender-equitable standards will be critical in outlining why we have not yet achieved the goals set out in 1325.

Adequate Gender-Sensitive Training has been a common theme throughout research related to female integration in PKOs. This training is emphasized in UNSCR 1325 as a means of creating more gender-equitable standards in peacekeeping missions, which, in theory, would increase female participation. Angela Mackay argues that the absence of a gender-conscious approach to pre-deployment training (PDT) is a significant barrier to such integration, as troops may lack an understanding of how gender influences how individuals experience and are impacted by conflict (MacKay, 2003: 217-219). This is not only relevant to the experiences of women in peacekeeping cohorts, but also to the women and girls in the communities where peacekeeping missions are taking place. The need for an improved understanding of gender experiences must not only rely on motivations to increase the numbers of women in security spaces but rather with the intention to improve the quality of protection provided by peacekeepers to all civilians,

regardless of gender. Paul Higate analyzes the impact that gender sensitivity training has had on troops deployed in the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), which covered a variety of topics such as social constructions of gender, the unique experiences of women and girls in conflict, and the obligation to honour and respect the MONUC Code of Conduct (2003: 13). Higate notes that the troops interviewed who did not see the importance of the training at the time it was being delivered, began to appreciate the training once they found themselves in the field faced with different situations involving women and girls (2003: 19-20). The work of both Mackay and Higate is almost twenty years old, and despite the research exploring the benefit of gender sensitivity training, it has yet to have been applied by the UN to address some of the key elements outlined in 1325. Gender sensitivity training should be applied more broadly throughout the UN and its agencies as a means of addressing institutional biases beyond peacekeeping missions, reaching decision-makers and practitioners as well.

Previous research on gender mainstreaming and gender norm diffusion have largely been two separate critiques. The analysis of international organizations' role in gender norm diffusion on post-conflict states requires a greater focus to understand how the implementation of current projects through UNSCR 1325 are ill-equipped to address gender inequalities in the post-conflict context. Scholars have long critiqued gender mainstreaming and its overall ineffectiveness, noting the gaps between gender mainstreaming in theory and practice. Some have argued that gender mainstreaming is a failed project, while others have argued that the concept has potential if applied differently. It has been suggested that gender mainstreaming through UNSCR 1325 has

been intentionally employed by the UN to progress a liberal peace agenda globally, challenging the idea that gender equality is the primary ambition of NAP implementation. The following thesis will work to build upon previous literature on norm diffusion and gender mainstreaming to enhance our understanding of how gender mainstreaming norms are diffused from the international sphere to the national sphere. It also aims to improve our understanding of how gender mainstreaming is an inadequate practice to address gender inequalities in post-conflict countries and explain why the UN insists that gender mainstreaming, as enforced through NAPs on UNSCR 1325, is the only means of addressing gender inequalities.

Chapter 3: The Case of Rwanda

In an effort to boost Rwanda's economy, enhance its global standing, and repair the country following the lingering destruction of the Rwandan Genocide, the Government of Rwanda ensured it shaped its policy priorities around the favourable global discourse. Rwanda's gender equality policies are a strong example of this. Rwanda's gender equality policies, including the quota-based practices in parliament, gained the country global attention. The focus on gender equality secured great international donorship and financial aid for Rwanda, reinforcing its performative commitment to gender progress. These shifted priorities trickled down onto CSOs in the country, restricting which organizations could qualify for funding. This required CSOs to either adapt to government mandates, and as a result, the government's perspective on the country's gender equality needs, or to forgo access to international donor funds. Rwanda has been applauded for the progress made on gender equality in the country, however, the extent to which this progress has had a tangible impact on the lived experiences of Rwandan women and girls is unclear. Through the acceptance of UNSCR 1325, the development of NAPs, and performative gender equality projects, Rwanda has been able to secure enhanced legitimacy from the international community due to perceived shared norms. Furthermore, Rwanda's adoption of NAPs in support of UNSCR 1325 has also allowed the UN to influence the government's agenda in regard to the gender discourse. This has resulted in performative changes to gender policy and practice in a way that meets the minimum standards set by the UN through 1325.

Resource Availability

In Rwanda's post-conflict period, aid availability has been essential to the country's economy and social service delivery (Jones and Murray, 2018: 35). Because of this, the Rwandan Government and CSOs within the country have built a dependency on international donorship to continue certain projects and programs. As UNSCR 1325 has gained significant global moment since its inception, the UN and international non-government organizations (INGOs) have begun to boost support for gender equality initiatives. This has required the government in Rwanda to ensure its priorities reflected where international organizations were willing to make financial commitments. A member from an international donor organization reflected on the motivations behind Rwanda's gender policies:

> "…gender is 'in fashion' and it 'attracts donor money.' As Rwanda depends heavily on donor funding for its government budget, it is argued that the 'power of the purse' is the most important motivation for adopting gender quality practices." (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1124).

As resources are essential to the country's rebuilding, it is not surprising that Rwanda would shape its dialogue in such a way that would secure external investment. The issue is that the outcome of such conformity has led to performative action on gender inequality in the state which has led to limited meaningful change.

The same trends related to resource allocation occur at the local level, where grassroots charities and women's organizations must adapt to the mandates set by the government. USAID, an international organization that provides funds for CSO activities, filters their donation through the Ministry of Local Government, which then requires

CSOs to be fully aligned with government targets to receive funding in the first place (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1126-1127). This means that the performative gender discourse happening at the government level will trickle down and inhibit the work being done by CSOs and grassroots women's organizations, as they are required to pivot their mandates to be deemed appropriate by government officials.

The sustainability of CSOs in Rwanda is dependent on small-scale donorship from INGOs, which often requires CSOs to ensure their mandate or at least a particular project, is reflective of the donors' primary concern (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1127). These projects are often restrictive, not only in what they will fund but also in the timelines CSOs are allowed for spending, preventing any meaningful, long-term impact (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1127). When CSOs are reliant on external funds, they become limited in the activities they can carry out. This puts a heavy burden on local organizations to carry through daunting projects in a short amount of time, leading to burnout of staff and resources that are not covered by the external funds. These funds often come with strict conditions, and can sometimes impede the work of CSOs more than it supports their mandate (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1127). But for many of these organizations, it is a matter of adapting to these stringent requirements or ceasing operation altogether. These adaptations also limit what the CSOs can do beyond what projects are being funded by international organizations. Accepting international donorship restricts the ability of CSOs to engage in advocacy activities, lobbying the government, and monitoring and critiquing policy development (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1127). This process effectively silences CSOs from being drivers of change and speaking up for the voices of citizens that are not reflected in the Rwandan

parliament. One representative from an international donor organization noted that "civil society was much more active [in research, advocacy and lobbying] ten years ago than it is now" (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013:1127). This demonstrates the level of compliance CSOs are willing to abide by to secure international donor funds. The diffusion of gender norms has effectively inhibited progress due to its lack of regard for local experiences. While the Rwandan government is the actor enforcing this compliance, it is motivated by the restrictions on funds put in place by international organizations. This shows that UNSCR 1325 lacks the safeguards necessary to ensure the inclusion of local organizations in gender equality projects, which the resolution emphasizes as critical to the success of implementation, in post-conflict and authoritarian states. Ultimately, this challenges the perceived universality of the resolution.

Activists in Rwanda have critiqued the government for the lack of resources it has invested into substantiating its outward commitment to gender equality (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1123). What limited resources exist have been augmented by resource commitments made by the UN. For example, of the staff employed with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) who were tasked with portfolios related to gender issues, half were compensated by the UN and not the Government of Rwanda (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1123). Through these staff allocations, the UN demonstrated a commitment to furthering gender equality in Rwanda, and in the absence of this support, there would be more barriers for the Government of Rwanda to overcome in the pursuit of the country's ambitious gender targets. This raises the concern of whether Rwanda would have made even the slightest investment into the Ministry if it were not for both the external pressure and resource commitments made by the UN. This

emphasizes the reliability gender progress in Rwanda has on the UN, which leads to an uncertain future for progress if the external resources were to ever be removed. Adequate gender equality programs would require consideration for long-term capacity building, which is currently lacking from the UN's engagement in gender equality practices and NAP implementation.

The promise of international aid and donor funds has led to an acceptance of shifted gender norms reflected in UNSCR 1325. Change to gender norms must also reflect the intersectionality of oppression, acknowledging that the experiences of women are not universal. Such change must also consider limitations to participation depending on socio-economic class, ethnicity, and race. Despite the diverse experiences of women in Rwanda, gendered policy changes in Rwanda have focused on 'women' as one homogeneous grouping and disregarding how gendered divides do not impact all women equally (Berry, 2015: 6). As such, the increased representation of women in political and security institutions is not reflective of the diversity of women in Rwanda as it pertains to education levels, socio-economic class, ethnicity, and race (Berry, 2015: 6). There is a significant divide between the 'political elite' women and non-elite women in terms of their perspectives on how adequately gender divides have been addressed (Berry, 2015: 10). The division between elite women and non-elite women in Rwanda also impacts the level to which women can participate in gender equality projects, as well as the outcomes of said projects. Given that elite women are more likely to participate in government decision-making on gender, the experiences of elite women shape the distribution of resources as well as policy discourse (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1113). This means that the burden of gender inequalities faced by non-elite women is less likely to receive

funding. Once again, UNSCR 1325 fails to consider the strategic implementation of gender equality projects on behalf of governments in post-conflict states which leads to the inconsistent application of resources. As long as governments must shape their mandates based on the promise of secured funding, government actors will continue to disregard organizations and the needs of their citizens that are not reflected in the reporting requirements of such funding initiatives.

Stringent reporting requirements associated with funding have also led to a disconnect between local women's organizations and their advocacy, and what is outlined in resolution 1325. While 1325 has boosted the position of many local women's organizations, particularly in Rwanda, it has also limited their advocacy efforts by requiring them to fit in a certain box which excludes consideration for "local gender understanding and practices" (Madsen, 2018:71). This highlights a key problem with the norm diffusion process from the international to the national, as 1325 was designed to be a one-size-fits-all gender mainstreaming project. A one-size-fits-all approach fails to account for the diverse experiences and needs of women and girls in a post-conflict setting. This approach has forced some local women's organizations to adapt the work they have long been doing in their communities to better align with the language employed in UNSCR 1325 in order to increase the likelihood of international engagement on women's issues while also increasing their chances of gaining funding (Madsen, 2019: 183). This demonstrates the ways that UNSCR 1325 can dictate the decisions of local organizations, as much as government actors, through resource allocation. Organizations desperate for financial aid will pivot their mandates to secure funding that will allow them to continue to operate. Members of local women's organizations have called for

further consideration of UNSCR 1325 and its ability to reflect the needs of everyday Rwandan women (Madsen, 2019: 184). Women's organizations continue to advocate for change in this regard, however, at the same time, they continue to concede to the stringent sponsorship requirements of UN agencies. Being at the hands of international organizations slows down the progress of local women's organizations, while also inhibiting progress on the gender issues that Rwandans would consider to be the most pressing.

Legitimacy Enhancement

Due to efforts made by Rwanda's government, led by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), the country is one of very few around the world that have achieved most of the outputs of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), including improving female fertility, maternal mortality and health care services for women (Jones and Murray, 2018: 33). This represents Rwanda's commitment to progress and development, particularly as it pertains to women's issues. This progress not only improves the legitimacy of the government to the citizens of Rwanda but also to nations around the world. In addition, the Rwandan Parliament, an institution that once prohibited the participation of women, has now surpassed gender parity. Currently, more than 60 percent of sitting members are women (Lorentzen, 2017: 658). The increased participation of women is partially attributed to the quota policy put in place by Paul Kagame which required at least 30% of all levels of government to be reserved for women (Madsen, 2018:76). Now, Rwanda is celebrated globally for its high level of engagement of women in the country's politics (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 326), applauded for consistently ranking with the highest percentage of female political representatives in their national parliament

(Madsen and Hudson, 2020:560). These actions have had a significant impact on improving Rwanda's global image, and subsequently increasing interest from international organizations and other states for potential partnerships and investment.

Rwanda has accepted gender mainstreaming norms through the implementation of UNSCR 1325, however, this was not motivated by a desire to improve the experiences of women in Rwanda. David Ambrosetti explores the significance of 'social sanctions' as a motivation toward state cooperation with UN norm standards (2010: 152). When something is deemed a standard for the collective good, it can cause pressure for a state to abide by the norms in order to "fit in" with the global standard. If a state refuses to abide by a norm, particularly one that is deemed in the interest of the common good, they may receive adverse responses from other countries. Cooperation with global norm standards shapes the "collectively acknowledged identities" from state to state (Ambrosetti, 2010:160). The risk of negative 'social sanctions' is enough to persuade a country to participate in a norm change (Ambrosetti, 2010:167). It is possible that shared norms increase the likelihood of state-to-state, and international to national support.

Rwanda's second NAP strives to fit the liberal-feminist gender mainstreaming narrative which is reflective of the predominant global discourse on the WPS agenda (Madsen and Hudson, 2020: 563). This signifies Rwanda's increased alignment with the UN's liberal peace agenda of which UNSCR 1325 is reflective. While sacrificing local ownership over UNSCR 1325 in the process, cooperation with the UN has other benefits as well. Cooperation on 1325 is a means of keeping the UN satisfied while also diverting the international community's attention away from human rights issues which may otherwise warrant sanctions or intervention (Madsen and Hudson, 2020:558). By shaping

the narrative around the country's progress, Rwanda is able to enhance its global standing which promotes the greater interest of international organizations and foreign countries to promote and support continued efforts to establish and maintain the liberal peace agenda in Rwanda. Rwanda's NAP implementation, and its failures to enact meaningful change toward gender equality, highlight the ways in which women are posited as figureheads to serve the country's political agenda (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 327).

The data on Rwanda's implementation of its NAP is limited. Any efforts to track the success of 1325 have been impeded by sparse documentation from stakeholders, and inconsistencies in monitoring and evaluation practices (Madsen, 2018:74). Failure to adequately monitor the progress of 1325 in Rwanda demonstrates a performative investment in the meaningful implementation of 1325. This adds to the narrative of performative action on behalf of the UN and its gender mainstreaming endeavours. Rwanda's quota-based practices in both its political and security institutions are reflective of a gender mainstreaming approach to addressing gender inequality. In a non-democracy like Rwanda, such practices are often employed to improve the country's legitimacy globally (Muriaas, Tønnessen, and Wang, 2013: 91) This demonstrates that Rwanda's motivations to implement UNSCR 1325 and subsequent gender mainstreaming practices are less about the tangible change to gender equality and more about the country's external image and enhanced legitimacy.

Rwanda's approach to rebuilding its economy reflects the strategic application of addressing gender inequalities in the country. To become competitive with the global market, Rwanda has acknowledged the need to build a knowledgeable workforce in order to meet local and international labour market demands through the improvement of

gender equality in higher education (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1119). This demonstrates that the Rwandan government is motivated by its external competitiveness rather than the impact gender equality in higher education may have on the quality of life for women and girls in the country. In fact, the National Gender Policy includes various programs which associate gender equality and the country's economic growth (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1119). The linkage shows that the government's commitment to gender equality is conditional on the predicted outcome of an enhanced national workforce and increased global competitiveness and recognition. A representative from an international donor organization observed the following:

> "[Gender equality is] about how much women can actually produce to contribute to the development of the country… as long as you produce, you are a target of things [referring to policies], but what about other aspects of inequality?" (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1120).

Her perspective raises two concerns. First, is the extent to which other aspects of gender inequality go unaddressed by the Rwandan government due to their incompatibility with the government's agenda. Second, is the fragility of the commitments to address gender inequality that are currently in place. If the priorities of the government shift or the current measures toward gender equality are no longer mutually beneficial, such commitments would likely cease. This fragility emphasizes the issues with UNSCR 1325 implementation as it incentivizes state cooperation but lacks adequate monitoring and evaluation practices and well as accountability measures.

A member of an international donor organization noted that, "They have to sell Rwanda, and in order to sell something you have to make a nice picture. Gender equality

is part of this. But they only want numbers" (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1124). This highlights both the emphasis on Rwanda's external image, as well as the performative nature of gender equality projects. The pursuit of gender equality becomes a checkmark on a list for other countries and international organizations when deciding where to allocate their funds, efforts, and cooperation. This explains the prioritization of quantifiable outputs related to UNSCR 1325 implementation, as these outputs are easily transferrable into reports that would attract international attention. For this reason, the Rwandan government continues to utilize "policies with a high 'public relations' potential" (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1125). The problem is that these policy priorities come at the detriment of meaningful change toward gender equality.

Agenda Setting

The way that Rwanda's NAPs are written gives insight to why gender issues may persist in the country despite the perceived change. Traditional notions of womanhood continue to persist throughout Rwanda, resulting in an inconsistent approach to the progression of gender issues (Holmes, 2014: 323). The order of the priorities listed in the NAP, as outlined in UNSCR 1325, reflects these traditional views of womanhood and how they impede progress on gender equality. The first two priorities of Rwanda's NAP are "prevention of gender-based violence" and "protection and rehabilitation of survivors' dignity" (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 322). These priorities supersede the prioritization of the engagement of women in peace and security matters, as they situate women relative to their victimhood, feeding into traditional perspectives of gender in relation to conflict (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 322). When women are posited as recipients of aid but are removed from the agentive nature of post-

conflict reconstruction, these traditional gender norms are reinforced. The implementation of 1325 has emphasized gendered power dynamics which wrongfully depict women as solely victims (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 188). In implementing UNSCR 1325 through NAPs, Rwanda continues to abide by global gender mainstreaming practices while disregarding the agency of women and the intersectionality of their experiences.

Rwanda's NAPs put a heavy emphasis on quantitative measurable activities reflective of the international discourse on UNSCR 1325 implementation (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 323). In doing so the government of Rwanda is meeting the minimum requirements necessary to appease the UN and the international community with their implementation measures. Neither of Rwanda's NAPs acknowledge what is required to translate quantitative measurable activities into the meaningful inclusion of women in political and security institutions (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 325). This is a gap in UNSCR 1325 and the absence of any adequate monitoring and evaluation requirements for signatories. In this regard, the UN has set a low standard for tracking progress on NAPs, therefore states do not need to demonstrate impact.

Many of those entrusted with the government's budget allocation and what monitoring and reporting mechanisms do exist are appointed, not elected, including those in Cabinet positions (Jones and Murray, 2018:35). As outlined in the country's NAPs, the non-government actors planned to engage in the implementation process are predominantly from an elite social class (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 327). The government's favourability of elite actors engaged in gender equality projects has negatively impacted implementation, as it skews input and action in favour of one

very particular experience. As expected, the experiences of elite women vary greatly from non-elite women. When non-elite women are excluded from the discourse, the issues they face are less likely to be addressed, or at the very least considered. One representative from an international donor organization noted that, "The elite wants to go very, very fast, but without consulting with the population, this can have an adverse effect" (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1128). The government's decision to selectively engage elite women is tactical, as elite or upper-class women are more likely to be cooperative. This requires less effort from government representatives and increases the speed at which donor outputs are being met.

Efforts to implement 1325 have removed agency from Rwandan women while actively reinforcing traditional gender norms (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 317). This is the opposite impact you would expect when considering the increased number of female representatives in Rwanda, which is why the numbers alone are an insufficient indicator of success when it comes to the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Changes from Rwanda's first NAP to its second lead to decreased engagement of local women's organizations. Instead of continuing implementation efforts with local women's organizations already advocating for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, the government established National Working Groups as a replacement. This shift is contrary to what we would expect to see with UNSCR 1325 implementation, considering the resolution emphasizes the importance of including local organizations in all gender mainstreaming practices. While the government claimed that this was due to discrepancies in monitoring and evaluation of implementation (Madsen and Hudson, 2020:559), they wanted to have greater authority over the discourse and reporting

outcomes. Despite UNSCR 1325's requirement to engage local stakeholders in NAP implementation, Rwanda's NAPs do not recognize the role of civil society organizations in the process of localizing the resolution (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 327). Rather than focusing on numbers alone, meaningful change toward gender equality would require the support of women, regardless of socioeconomic background, and their ability to both understand and challenge the patriarchal systems that impede the progress of gender equality initiatives (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1112-1113).

Accounts of SGBV in Rwanda remain high in the country's post-conflict period. Considering this, it is not necessarily surprising that the prevention of SGBV is one of the top priorities outlined in the 2009 NAP. The institutionalization of prevention has taken a liberal-feminist approach, favouring legal amendments and policy changes as a means of addressing SGBV (Madsen and Hudson, 2020:564). While Rwanda's NAP centers addressing violence against women, SGBV persists. Barriers to addressing SGBV included limited reporting mechanisms, intimidation, retaliation, and lack of financial autonomy (Madsen, 2018:77). The framework of Rwanda's NAP fails to acknowledge the role of women in driving change in positions of community leadership, and thus, CSOs which have long been committed to addressing SGBV in the country have been left out of the NAP implementation activities regarding SGBV (Bkörkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015: 322).

Both of Rwanda's NAPs painted an image of women based on traditional gender notions, related to the nurturing and peaceful perceptions of women and highlighted through traditional conceptualizations of motherhood and feminine labour (Madsen and Hudson, 2020:560). While the notion of 'peaceful women' led to greater dialogue around

the role of women in peace discourse, it has also failed to fully capture the complexity of gendered experiences. The oversimplification of the female experience that we see in the NAPs completely disregards the influence of socio-economic status, sexuality, and ethnicity, and thus fails to adequately outline how the inclusion of women in peace discourse may have a positive impact on the outcome (Madsen and Hudson, 2020:660-661). Failure to identify this impact only emphasizes the tokenization of women in peace discourse, as minimal effort has been made on behalf of those implementing the NAPs to fully understand its importance. Men have long been intertwined in the dynamics of war and peace discourse, so there is no question as to why they exist in these spaces. They are not viewed as one homogenous group, and therefore it is not assumed that all men will exist in peace and conflict discourse equally. It is equally important to achieve a status quo where women are recognized for the same complex experiences and contributions. When it comes to a choice between activities that will promote gender equality, or projects which work towards economic prosperity, the latter choice is continuously favoured by the Rwanda government (Debusscher and Ansoms, 2013: 1120).

A key shortfall in the analysis of the success or perceived success in terms of female empowerment and gender equality is that it has primarily been measured by the improved accessibility of institutional spaces for women and moved forward as though this is sufficient. Access alone does not change institutional spaces, rather, it must be followed by authority over institutional spaces (Berry, 2015: 5). When women are added into institutions but their authority is limited, the change that has occurred reinforces stasis rather than meaningful change. Rwandan women have noted that men have resisted their involvement within these structures, sometimes completely disregarding

what they have to say (Madsen, 2018:76). Berry expands on this problematic trend, stating that, "…these efforts integrate women into the very system that produced their subordination in the first place and do little to dismantle the original structural or cultural reasons that boys initially outnumbered girls in [the institution]" (Berry, 2015: 5). This highlights the need for a more transformative approach to gender equality practices. The performative gender mainstreaming initiatives, which appease the UN standards set in UNSCR 1325, continues to reinforce institutional power imbalances rather than challenge them. Women might have a seat at the table, but many in government remain left out of larger discussions around peace and security and continue to struggle to have discourse on issues related to the experiences of women (Madsen, 2019: 182). Rwanda's political structure continues to reflect traditional ideas of masculine leadership, where men predominantly hold seats of higher status and with great influence, such as finance and security portfolios (Madsen, 2019: 182). The meaningful change would require an expansion beyond quota-based gender mainstreaming practices and a willingness to forfeit the power structures embedded in political and security institutions that continue to favour masculine authority.

Despite Rwanda's global recognition for the country's progress on gender equality, a great deal of change is required to meaningfully address gender inequality beyond quota-based practices. The government must re-evaluate the ways in which it engages CSOs. Improving gender equality in Rwanda requires the government's willingness to listen to local organizations that may not necessarily agree with the standards set in UNSCR 1325, but speak to the pressing issues facing women and girls throughout the country. Capacity-building projects should be a priority of both the

government and international organizations, both to ensure that the government is investing the necessary time and resources into gender equality projects and to ensure these efforts will continue once external resources are no longer available. The pursuit of improving Rwanda's image should be done with greater consideration to meaningful changes, that not only lead to enhanced legitimacy but also an improved quality of life for all citizens resulting from established gender-equitable standards. Adding women into institutions that were not built to serve them in the first place further leads to tokenization. Rwanda's efforts to increase the representation of women in political institutions have followed the method of 'add women and stir' – a process promoted by gender mainstreaming practices that has a questionable impact. With women under-represented in roles where they have the agency to address gender inequalities, political discourse in the country will continue to dismiss the needs of women and girls. This further demonstrates the failure of quota-based practices as prioritized in UNSCR 1325, as representation only goes so far as to the meaning attributed to that representation. If the roles are performative, the women that fill these roles will continue to face adversities in institutions that were not intended to serve them in the first place.

Chapter 4: The Case of Sierra Leone

Similar trends emerged in Sierra Leone's post-conflict period. The need for resources led to an increased reliance on external institutions, giving foreign actors influence over domestic activities. This influence heavily impacted both government activities and community organizations as well, as external actors could apply stringent conditions to resources. The increased spending on gender equality measures by external organizations was not reflected in the government's budgets. Limited internal resources were focused on implementing the costly and ambitious goals of UNSCR 1325. Unlike Rwanda's post-conflict period, UN agencies were heavily involved in the rebuilding of Sierra Leone. This is evident in the ways that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) engaged with local actors in addition to post-conflict reconstruction efforts done on the part of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Despite increased UN involvement, efforts to implement UNSCR 1325 in Sierra Leone were poorly documented, limiting the evaluation of any tangible impact made by the country's NAP. Other international actors also gained interest in Sierra Leone's gender mainstreaming capacity-building efforts, signalling recognition of enhanced state legitimacy and improved global interest in the state's ability to thrive. The promise of increased resource allocation and legitimacy enhancement through the acceptance of gender mainstreaming norms in Sierra Leone has preserved the UN's influence over local decision-making practices in both government and non-government sectors. This influence has shaped local decision-making processes to reflect international norms to the detriment of meaningfully addressing gender inequality in the country. The gap between

what issues UNSCR 1325 is intended to address, versus the critical needs of civilians in Sierra Leone, challenges the universality of the resolution.

Sierra Leonean women were central to the end of the country's eleven-year Civil War (1991-2002). Women's organizations, such as the Sierra Leone Women's Movement, and the Women's Forum, encouraged and facilitated peace discussions amongst military members while lobbying for a democratic process for elections (Beoku-Betts, 2016:660). The role that women played in this discourse positioned these organizations to leverage discussions around women's rights and gender equality while the country began to rebuild. The momentum of women's organizations has not dwindled since then, as these grassroots organizations continue to advocate for women's rights, gender equity, and meaningful policy changes (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 195). These organizations and their advocacy efforts have made some notable accomplishments. For example, since the Civil War, more women have found themselves in positions of authority in the governmental and judicial systems, in part due to their recognized role as peacebuilders (Beoku-Betts, 2016:661). Still, barriers persist for women entering politics in the post-conflict period. Men continued to dominate positions of authority in the political spheres, where requests from women's organizations are continually dismissed and overlooked. Despite efforts, calls to increase the number of women in parliament have been dismissed (Beoku-Betts, 2016:665).

As the Government of Sierra Leone rebuilt its structures nearing the end of the conflict, efforts were made to integrate gender considerations. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) was established in 1998. This Ministry, responsible for the promotion of the rights of women and children, was deemed

"one of the weakest and least influential" ministries in Sierra Leone by the African Development Bank due to a lack of funding (Beoku-Betts, 2016:665). This lack of funding for this Ministry represents the priorities set by the Government of Sierra Leone. It is as though creating the MSWGCA was checking a box in order to appease changing global standards on gender, even prior to the introduction of UNSCR 1325. Multiple factors may explain the ineffectiveness of the MSWGCA. One consideration is that the majority of representatives in a position of authority have been men (Beoku-Betts, 2016: 665). First-hand knowledge of the experiences of women in Sierra Leone could be behind the lack of initiative in advocacy efforts. Men are also less likely to advocate for the dismantling of systems that have been built to centre the male experience and male-dominated authority. Parliamentarians have dismissed continued calls to increase the number of female representatives in government, showing a lack of regard for this recommendation (Beoku-Betts, 2016:665).

While Sierra Leone did not sign onto UNSCR 1325 when it was established in 2000, the government's decision-making processes began to pay more attention to gender in a way that was in line with the resolution. That same year, the Government of Sierra Leone adopted the National Policy for the Advancement of Women and the Policy on Gender Mainstreaming (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010: 260). Many of the activities outlined in Sierra Leone's commitment to gender progress were reflective of suggestions made in UNSCR 1325. It included the establishment of an affirmative action plan which set 30 percent as the standard representation of women in government (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:261), which is similar to the quota standards set out by UNSCR 1325. These actions may have been demonstrative of the country's desire to work more

closely with the UN and its member states in order to increase access to resources and to gain a 'progressive' reputation as it rebuilt and tried to gain status as a global leader.

Since the UNAMSIL was established prior to the introduction of 1325, gender mainstreaming and gender considerations were absent from initial planning (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 195). UNAMSIL's mandate was revised between 2000 and 2003 to recognize the implications of war on women and children, particularly in regards to SGBV (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:261), aligned with the global discourse on women, peace, and security. Those working on the gender portfolio for UNAMSIL noted that despite hope surrounding UNSCR 1325, its introduction did not change funding availability in the Mission for gender issues as compared to before the resolution (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 195). The lack of meaningful change, despite the change in discourse, demonstrates a gap between the rhetoric surrounding the WPS agenda and actionable items. UNAMSIL played a key role in developing the country's NAP (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 193), ensuring the UN maintained authority over the direction that the SiLNAP took from its inception. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) was mandated to implement components of UNSCR 1325, more specifically through the prioritization of gender perspectives in post-conflict programming facilitated both by the UN and the Government of Sierra Leone (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:262). This further entrenched the UN's influence over the direction of Sierra Leone's gender programming, ensuring a narrative shaped by "global" – predominantly Western – perspectives.

Resource Availability

International organizations, like the UN, have the resources and influence necessary to shape the mandate of the Sierra Leonean government, knowing that in a post-conflict context states will do what is necessary to secure funding and support (MacKenzie, 2009: 259). This can prevent countries from shaping their policies to reflect the current needs of their population in a pursuit to satisfy external actors. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), for example, has worked collaboratively with NGOs, the MSWGCA, and local organizations in Sierra Leone through the Peacebuilding Fund (PFB) to advocate for the protection of women's rights in the country (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:262). The PFB, which was established by UNIFEM, supported subsequent projects which prioritized enhancing gender considerations in security sector reform and improved resource accessibility for survivors of SGBV (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:262). Cooperation with UNIFEM's agenda is the sole reason this funding became available, and it served as an incentive for government agencies and local organizations to shape their programming and policies to align with the goals of the UN agency.

The estimated budget for SiLNAP is particularly significant for a post-conflict country that is still re-building its infrastructure, as it sets the country up for failure in terms of meeting the objectives laid out in UNSCR 1325. The cost of implementation for SiLNAP is an estimated U$23.3 million, and the cost of developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy is an estimated additional US$1.6 million (Basini, 2017: 57). The budgetary requirements associated with implementing UNSCR 1325 require post-conflict states to develop a dependency on external organizations, like the

UN and INGOs. The implications of this have already been felt by Sierra Leone due to its inability to fund the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of SiLNAP, making it necessary to rely on funds from various UN agencies and international organizations that come into the picture with their agendas (Basini, 2017: 57). External resources come at a cost, and that is the forfeiture of control over projects and desired outcomes. The UN's failure to adapt NAP standards or implementation efforts of UNSCR 1325 in post-conflict states shows that the UN continues to favour practices that increase state dependence.

The lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation processes remains a significant barrier in determining whether SiLNAP has had tangible success. There is no identified qualitative measurable to determine targeted outcomes, and it remains unclear where funding related to SiLNAP should be allocated between government agencies (Beoku-Betts, 2016:665-666). This discrepancy comes with an increased risk of misspending the funds, either intentionally or unintentionally. For this reason, the increase in financial resources from the UN has not necessarily translated positively to implementation efforts. The MSWGCA felt the detriment of insufficient funding and struggling to access equipment or even electricity (Basini, 2017: 57-58). The shortfall in resources for the department responsible for progressing gender equality in the country demonstrates the lack of a meaningful commitment to change on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, but it also demonstrates poor oversight on behalf of the UN. Providing this funding is once again, more like checking off a box than it is addressing the inequalities that persist in post-conflict societies.

Once UNAMSIL began to prioritize gender as a consideration in its revised mandate, the Mission began to provide training on SGBV to government agencies and NGOs (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:263). This demonstrates the Mission's dedication to addressing issues of gender with a 'victim-first' mentality, rather than exploring ways to approach gender that provided more agency to women. UNAMSIL could dictate this priority as they had the staff capacity and financial resources to provide this training to government agencies and community practitioners in Sierra Leone. UNAMSIL also funded radio ads in Sierra Leone that featured discourse on issues of gender equality and domestic violence, while also making efforts to familiarize citizens with UNSCR 1325 (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:263-264). While the UN might be applauded for this dedication, the implications of dictating this discourse must be considered. Here, the UN has reinforced the prioritization of addressing SGBV, which is heavily emphasized in UNSCR 1325 but does not necessarily reflect the local needs. Promoting the narrative of women as victims poses the risk of reinforcing traditional gender norms in Sierra Leone. This could further prevent women from accessing political spaces or leadership roles because of the misassociation of 'womanhood' with 'weakness' and an absence of agency. This demonstrates the UN's priority of reinforcing the standards set in UNSCR 1325 rather than adapting to local contexts. Restrictions on funds and resources further inhibit the local acceptance and translation of UNSCR 1325 through the requirement of frameworks and outputs that do not reflect the specific needs of an individual country (Basini, 2017: 58).

Legitimacy Enhancement

Sierra Leone has struggled to achieve state legitimacy due to corruption embedded in its political institutions (Vitalis Pemunta, 2012: 200). Considering the pressure placed on Sierra Leone by the international community to implement the SiLNAP (Basini, 2017: 51), this was seen as an opportunity to distract from the corruption and strive to gain a seat at the table in global discourse as the country continued to rebuild. The standards set for implementation of UNSCR 1325 in post-conflict countries are no different from any other states. Post-conflict states, however, do not have the resources of other states. In this regard, the UN has set Sierra Leone up for failure. The SiLNAP has been designed to meet impossible standards, that the country does not have the resources or infrastructure to complete (Basini, 2017: 51). Sierra Leone has accepted the impossibility of proper implementation, as the goal is not necessarily to meaningfully achieve gender equality, but rather to create the perception of a 'progressive' country that would receive greater global recognition and acceptance.

Efforts to localize the SiLNAP had gained the attention of international organizations beyond the UN. The Global Network for Women Peacebuilders, an NGO based in the United States, has provided funding to support implementation through policy development and establishing programming (Basini, 2017: 52). In a post-conflict setting, such financial commitments from countries like the United States are significant resources that fill a critical gap in Sierra Leone's infrastructure. The external interest in Sierra Leone's post-conflict reconstruction stems from the commitment to UNSCR 1325 through SiLNAP. Through this commitment, Sierra Leone has demonstrated 'shared

values' with other countries that have also signed on to UNSCR 1325, encouraging support for foreign countries through the enhancement of Sierra Leone's legitimacy.

Agenda Setting

There is some contestation with how SiLNAP has supported the mandates of local women's organizations. While it has helped give momentum to certain groups, it has also emphasized the gap between urban and rural women's organizations, favouring the needs of the former (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 195). The selective nature of SiLNAP, as reinforced by UNAMSIL, encourages local organizations to adapt their mandates to be favoured when it comes to funding and resource allocation. Considering UNSCR 1325's emphasis on local engagement in implementation, attention should be given to the processes of local engagement. It is notable that women's NGOs may have been prioritized based on connections in the international sphere that often reflected urban and upper-class membership (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 194), as this not only demonstrates inequitable considerations of gendered experiences, but also the fact that the UN has strategically collaborated with stakeholders that are more likely to cooperate with their mandate regardless of effectiveness.

Local women's organizations in Sierra Leone have been negatively impacted by the agenda setting power that UNSCR 1325 has afforded the UN. SiLNAP has restricted the agency of these organizations with limitations on funding which require measurable goals that must be achieved within restrictive timelines that prohibit the undertaking of projects that may make a lasting impact (Beoku-Betts, 2016:666). Stringent guidelines which favour quick and measurable deliverables may not serve local women, but they are easily adapted for reports that look favourable to the UN and their efforts in Sierra Leone.

Despite SiLNAP being a guiding document in the post-conflict period, the priorities of UNAMSIL continued to disregard the needs of women and girls during the transition into peace. This was demonstrated in the case of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR). It is estimated that armed groups in Sierra Leone's Civil War consisted of up to 50% women, however, during the DDRR processes less than five thousand of the seventy-five thousand adults that received programming were female (MacKenzie, 2009: 245). For children, the discrepancy was even greater. A mere 8% of children receiving DDRR programming in Sierra Leone were girls (MacKenzie, 2009: 245), representing a stark gap in accessibility of such programming for men and women, boys and girls. This demonstrates the lack of consideration for the diverse roles women and girls held during the civil war.

While the barriers facing women and girls when it comes to DDRR programming are vast, one element that cannot be ignored is the impact of traditional conceptualizations of conflict and how that impacts program development. Gender biases have shaped how actors view women and girls in armed groups, perpetuating the misconception that they are not "real" soldiers, and instead positing them as victims caught up in the chaos of war (MacKenzie, 2009: 245). This once again demonstrates the removal of agency of women and girls, creating a narrative where women have no choice over their role in conflict or post-conflict societies, emphasizing that the implementation of SiLNAP failed to meaningfully address gender inequalities facing former female combatants in the post-conflict period. This can be linked back to the dialogue reinforced by the UN and its implementation of 1325. The reinforced narrative that women are predominantly victims in times of conflict, as emphasized in the UN's campaigns on

SGBV, works the erase the nuances of gender and conflict. If DDRR programming is designed for perpetrators, and the popular discourse on women in conflict only focuses on victimhood, then it is understandable that no space would be made for women in this programming. The issue is that this is a false narrative.

The failures of DDRR programming in Sierra Leone demonstrate a piece of the bigger picture, being that issues facing women and girls are often an afterthought. Distrust in government and the international aid community, lack of adequate information, and campaigns targeted toward men were all common themes discussed by her respondents (MacKenzie, 2009: 250-251). If the UN, as an agenda setting body in Sierra Leone's post-conflict period, makes no effort to encourage female combatants to participate in DDRR programming, then the idea that they were passive actors will inherently trickle throughout society. Not only did the UN not encourage women to participate in DDRR, but they also actively prevented their participation. An initial requirement to return a gun in order to access DDRR services (MacKenzie, 2009: 250-251) represents the prioritization of masculine identities in war. This is not representative of wartime identities, as the many other roles that women take in armed forces are crucial to the war efforts, but do not always require access to a traditional weapon, such as a firearm. A failure to recognize the many other roles women and girls may have in a conflict, and then to actively prevent them from accessing DDRR services, is an implication of the unaddressed masculinities in conflict and post-conflict societies. It is an implication perpetuated by UN bodies that are responsible for capacity building and creating the foundation for such programs. Eventually, the requirement to provide a gun in exchange for entry into Sierra Leone's DDRR programming was removed, however,

the communications on this change were insufficient and many women were unaware that the programming had become accessible to them (MacKenzie, 2009: 250). This lack of clear and accessible communication highlights two problems. First, the low numbers of former female combatants seeking DDRR programming were not initially concerning to facilitators and stakeholders. Second, the removal of the outward barrier did not fully address the problem. One former female combatant expressed that, “all of us were combatants but treated as house wives and sex slaves,” when discussing life in Sierra Leone after the Civil War (MacKenzie, 2009: 253). This demonstrates the lack of consideration for the diverse lived experiences of women during Sierra Leone’s civil conflict, showing that UNSCR has failed to adequately challenge gender biases in the post-conflict period. The treatment of women accessing, or trying to access, DDRR programming faced the direct implications of the UN’s insistent dialogue on women as victims rather than as agentive individuals in a time of conflict.

The case of DDRR programming highlights the ways women and men experience conflict and post-conflict periods differently. Former female combatants have expressed that while Sierra Leone has entered a post-conflict period, “different forms of violence such as forced marriage, sexual exploitation, and isolation continue despite the cessation of formal conflict” (MacKenzie, 2009: 258). If former female combatants feel the weight of unaddressed mental, physical, social, political, and economic implications of conflict, Sierra Leone as a country will be unable to meaningfully move forward in peacetime. UNAMSIL’s Gender Advisor (GA) was tasked with implementing gender mainstreaming practices amongst the Mission’s staff while also working with the Government of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:264). The clear lack

of consideration for gendered experiences in conflict highlights a failure in this programming, particularly when reviewing the discrepancies in DDRR programming.

UNAMSIL does not only set the agenda for its agencies or the Government of Sierra Leone. It also sets the tone for what projects donors are willing to fund through civil society organizations and NGOs. These actors will prioritize issues depending on funding availability, sometimes disregarding the needs of locals to favour the 'international agenda' to access resources (Vitalis Pemunta, 2012: 196). The ability to influence multi-level agenda setting in the country gives the UN the ability to completely overshadow certain issues facing women and girls in Sierra Leone in the process of prioritizing outputs that generate positive numbers for internal UN monitoring and reporting efforts.

The establishment and implementation of SiLNAP represents a UN agenda far more than it does a meaningful desire to change gender norms and achieve gender equality in Sierra Leone. This is demonstrated by the lack of effectiveness and disorganization at the state level. Misunderstandings related to the responsibility of the implementation of SiLNAP, presuming that it was primarily under the jurisdiction of the MSWGCA, have led to inaction at the government level as various agencies continue to point fingers (Basini, 2017: 56). The clash between international interests and local interests generates tension between what is done, and what ought to be. These conflicting interests have been partially responsible for the dismissal of and inaction related to the SiLNAP, as local actors, particularly those that do not receive funding from the UN or external bodies, lack the motivation to enforce a mandate that does not reflect domestic interests (Basini, 2017: 56). Insufficient monitoring and reporting mechanisms increase

the risks of corruption, leading to inappropriate spending of funds or allocation of resources (Basini, 2017: 56). What monitoring and evaluation practices did exist were primarily managed by NGOs rather than within internal government structures (Basini, 2017: 57).

While UNAMSIL is perceived to have adapted to consider gender and conflict with its programming, plenty of the Mission's actions demonstrate the contrary. UNAMSIL did not increase or adjust its resource allocations to better consider the experiences of women or the issue of gender in the conflict (Beoku-Betts, 2016:661-662), showing a lack of prioritization of female experiences as compared to male experiences in conflict. Gender mainstreaming practices were employed by the Mission; however, they were only intended to have a short-term impact (Beoku-Betts, 2016:662). This is crucial as the intention behind any external intervention in a post-conflict country like Sierra Leone should be done with great consideration for capacity building and the longevity of achievements.

Like in other countries, staff shortages and limited to no funding made it difficult to implement the ambitious goals of the resolution (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 194). Following successful efforts to recruit a gender specialist, UNAMSIL quickly learned that her lack of seniority impeded her ability to shape policy discussions (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 194). Beyond Mission implementation, Sierra Leone's government also resisted changes proposed by 1325 by refusing to include a budget line for SiLNAPs implementation (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 194). Experiences during the Civil War in Sierra Leone were undoubtedly gendered. Women experienced high rates of SGBV, as well as other human rights abuses, during the conflict, leaving lasting physical and emotional scars (Beoku-

Betts, 2016:660). The unique experiences of women during conflict should have warranted a greater emphasis on gender-conscious programming in the post-conflict period, but rather, women continued to fall through the cracks.

The UN and the Government of Sierra Leone's approach to gender issues, while mainstream, "… lacks the political mobilization and consciousness-raising for structural change that feminists have demanded as the bottom line…" (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:262). This is a clear failure of the gender mainstreaming practices outlined in UNSCR 1325, as it inadequately addressed the structural barriers to implementing meaningful change towards gender equality. There are implications of UNAMSIL's role in implementing UNSCR 1325. One is that it has allowed the Government of Sierra Leone to forgo responsibility for gender change as it can note that it has largely been the responsibility of UNAMSIL. This is an issue for two reasons. First, it prevents the Government of Sierra Leone from internal capacity building in regard to gender justice. With UNAMSIL predominantly carrying the burden both in terms of resource allocation, training, and implementation, there is no incentive for the government to meaningfully carry out their own initiatives. Second, UNAMSIL has many limitations to the work it has been carrying out regarding gender mainstreaming. Many of the UN agencies in Sierra Leone are understaffed, including UNIFEM and UNIOSIL's Gender Advisory (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:264). Funding allocations also demonstrate a gap in gender considerations through Mission initiatives. Of PBF-funded projects in Sierra Leone, those that were mandated to conduct peacebuilding initiatives directed at both men and women failed to provide a gender breakdown for their outputs (Abdullah and Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010:264). This demonstrates an acknowledgement that peacebuilding

efforts do not inherently serve men and women equally. It also does not consider the fact that in conflict-related discourse, the experiences of women are often dismissed due to the masculinization of war-related issues.

The Government of Sierra Leone, as well as local women's organizations, have conceded their autonomy over decision-making practices in order to secure external resources from the UN and other international organizations. Due to the costly nature of post-conflict reconstruction, ensuring the adoption of gender mainstreaming practices outlined in UNSCR 1325 are a small cost to secure increased financial support and aid. The forfeiture of decision-making autonomy has increased the divide between urban and rural women's organizations, as the former benefits more from cooperation with international organizations and agencies. This rift represents a greater divide between the needs of women and girls in Sierra Leone and what is being addressed by the current gender mainstreaming practices in place. While the Government of Sierra Leone has struggled with its image due to corruption within its political institutions, the adoption of the SiLNAP has allowed the government to repair its international image and build legitimacy without requiring much meaningful change. Efforts to meaningfully address gender inequality have been sabotaged by the impossible standards set in UNSCR 1325, most notably the costs associated with implementing SiLNAP. The costs of implementation are beyond what the country could feasibly afford during its post-conflict reconstruction efforts, requiring Sierra Leone to be reliant on external actors for perceived progress on gender issues. The case of Sierra Leone demonstrates the inability of UNSCR 1325 to adapt to the needs of post-conflict states to improve gender equality across the urban-rural divide.

Chapter 5: The Case of Liberia

The divide between urban and rural women's organizations was also emphasized in Liberia following the implementation of the LNAP. The focus of UNSCR 1325 implementation has been predominantly in the capital, Monrovia, disproportionately addressing the needs of women and girls throughout the country. This is caused by the lack of autonomy over decision-making at the local level which stems from the heavy external involvement on the part of the UN and other international organizations. Both government agencies and local women's organizations experience limited agency over decision-making, as commitments are often reflective of what international institutions and organizations are willing to fund. In terms of gender equality efforts, this is almost always skewed to reflect the gender mainstreaming parameters outlined in UNSCR 1325. The reliability on external actors for resources comes from the high costs of LNAP implementation, which are unattainable for post-conflict states on their own. Post-conflict states like Liberia accept the precarious nature of UNSCR 1325 implementation to secure enhanced legitimacy from the international community. Pressure from the international community was a key factor in Liberia's implementation of the LNAP, representing that the image of the country was a significant consideration during the post-conflict period. The external sway on Liberia's gender equality efforts demonstrates the limitations of the LNAP to address localized gender issues.

Liberia has witnessed two civil wars, first from 1989 to 1997, then from 1999 to 2003 in which 150,000 people were killed. Grassroots women's organizations were accredited for their efforts advocating for peace and calling for an end to the civil war in 2003, most notably the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace and its widely

acclaimed pro-peace campaign (De Almagro, 2018: 690). Since the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established following the introduction of UNSCR 1325, gendered elements of conflict were at the forefront of UNMIL since its inception. UNMIL was the first Mission to include gender mainstreaming as outlined in 1325 in their initial mandates (Basini, 2013: 542). UNMIL established an Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA) to conduct gender-sensitive training related to "policy, actions and environments" to ensure consideration was given to gender in the Missions programs and activities (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 190).

The OGA's close interactions with the government eventually led to the establishment of Liberia's NAP (LNAP) (De Carvalho and Schia, 2009: 2). Since the implementation of LNAP in 2009, there have been no formal monitoring and evaluation practices in place (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 191). This has made it difficult to formally track successes and failures. The UN Mission in Liberia called for the establishment of a NAP to enforce UNSCR 1325 in the country and remained engaged in the development of the LNAP (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 193). Despite UNMIL's involvement in the implementation of UNSCR 1325, the early stages of introducing gender mainstreaming practices received limited resources from the Mission. In 2003 there were 15,000 new troops that required training from the OGA which was staffed only by a volunteer that struggled to gain the respect necessary from senior officials (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 190). The limited resources persisted over time. While the OGA did eventually gain paid employees, come 2008 multiple positions, including the role of Senior Gender Advisor, remained vacant.

This is not to say that the OGA was a failure. The OGA has been a strong advocate for gender equality and is actively working to change the narrative for women and girls in Liberia. One of the notable accomplishments made by the OGA included broadening the definition of 'combatant' to include 'women associated with fighting forces' to acknowledge the diverse set of roles women and girls undertake when in an armed group (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 190). This work led to the disarmament and demobilization process of 21,000 women and girls, which is 19,000 more than was expected (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 190). Still, many of the goals set out in the LNAP have been unattainable by the OGA alone.

The UN, through UNMIL and other agencies, utilized its post-conflict intervention to enforce the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through the establishment of the LNAP. They did this through the promise of resources that would be otherwise absent in post-conflict Liberia, the lure of legitimacy enhancement through the network of signatories on UNSCR 1325, and reinforced their authority through agenda setting endeavours that deepened Liberia's reliance on the international institution. One of the key issues identified through a series of interviews conducted by Helen Basini was the replication of approaches to gender mainstreaming in Sierra Leone, which meant that unresolved issues in the gender mainstreaming programming in Sierra Leone transferred over to Liberia (Basini, 2013: 543).

Resource Availability

While the localization of the WPS agenda is an essential pillar of UNSCR 1325, not all women's groups are given equal access to participate in the development of NAPs. Women's groups with elite, international connections, often found in urban areas, were

more likely to be included in the discourse (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 194). Rural women's organizations were also excluded from the development of the LNAP and programming related to implementation (Hudson, 2017: 17). UNAMIL's intentional targeting of urban, elite groups reflects the Mission's desire to engage women's organizations that are most likely to comply with the gender mainstreaming norms which are largely reflective of Western conceptualizations of gender. Organizations with international connections are likely to be more welcoming of external norms, wanting to comply with the standards being met by their international counterparts. The exclusion of rural women's groups limits the likelihood of a documented backlash against efforts to guide the local dialogue on gender mainstreaming.

Rural women have also received less support in regard to gender programming and services as compared to women in Liberia's capital. The urban center of Monrovia has seen a greater impact of OGA and LNAP as compared to rural areas within the country (De Carvalho and Schia, 2009: 3). While efforts to provide gender-sensitive training to police personnel, with special consideration for SGBV, have been a notable accomplishment, there remain barriers to reporting that have yet to be addressed. Due to limited resource availability within Liberia's National Police Force (LNP) they have faced difficulty servicing their districts, leaving predominantly rural women with the difficult choice of leaving behind their families and jobs while they make the lengthy journey to the city center to report crimes of SGBV (De Carvalho and Schia, 2009:3). This demonstrates why numbers alone are not enough cause to celebrate changes in relation to gender justice. The number of individuals trained, or the number of women recruited into security forces is only one aspect of achieving gender equitable standards.

UNAMIL's spending on gender efforts should be considered as strategic as the decisions on who has a seat at the table. Focusing on what limited resources exist for the Mission in urban areas will further reinforce the cooperation of the urban, elite women's organizations that are already more likely to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325 without criticizing the Resolution's failure to adapt Liberia's post-conflict context.

The emphasis on SGBV in LNAP and implementation efforts has proven problematic, overshadowing other key areas of gender equality that have yet to be addressed in Liberia. One member of an INGO in Monrovia expressed the following:

> "I think that there is too much of a focus on SBGV. The [Ministry of Gender and Development] tends to highlight it more than other issues, maybe because they know they can easily attract donor funding with the issue. It's not that SGBV isn't an issue, it's just that focusing only on it means that other important issues that are really impacting women are not given enough attention." (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 197).

This emphasizes that local agencies are actively shaping their mandates based on external, often international, interests. While it may make sense to follow funding opportunities, this process also removes the agency from local actors to address pressing issues that can be identified through lived experiences. Through this process, the UN continues to shape local discourse on gender equality and reinforces gender mainstreaming as the primary means of addressing inequity.

Despite the revenue streams that became available to develop the LNAP, resource restrictions have prevented full implementation. Budget limitations on gender mainstreaming have fluctuated since UNMIL was established. Notably, budget

allocations for the Mission were determined one week prior to the arrival of UNMIL's first Senior Gender Advisor, leaving a void in advocacy for gendered concerns (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 194). As the Mission gained staff for the OGA, they also faced challenges of perceived seniority and criticisms of experience and talent (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 194-195). This has less to do with the experience of the individuals employed in the OGA and more to do with the perceived inferiority of gendered issues and gendered experiences in the hyper-masculinized context of post-conflict situations.

Limitations to UNSCR 1325 went beyond UNMIL. When it came to the LNAP, the government ignored calls to incorporate a budget line for implementation (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 194). This could be reflective of the Mission's inadequate budget allocations for fulfilling the mandate of UNSCR 1325. If the overarching body responsible for creating and overseeing the Resolution fails to properly resource and fulfill their commitment, it is feasible that governments lack the incentive to take the investment seriously. As the UN sets the tone for gender mainstreaming, particularly in a post-conflict context, it would be fair to presume that the bar has remained low in regard to resource allocation.

A country director with a peacebuilding civil service organization in Liberia's capital noted that:

> "… it's one thing to develop the plan, but it's another thing to develop and sustain funding to carry it out. The government should be committed to the process of implementation and funding, but it's very ad-hoc. There is a lot of short-term intervention for problems that really require longer-term strategies. The pieces of implementation are scattered." (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 397).

The successful implantation of UNSCR 1325 requires meaningful local ownership, including a financial commitment from government actors. The issue here is that the country has been partially motivated to adopt the resolution by the prospective resources in place from the UN. The UN, however, provides these limited resources strategically to meet its international objectives. Post-conflict states, like Liberia, do not have the internal financial resources to meet the gaps left by the UN, leading to the inconsistent application of the resolution as highlighted in the above quote. Like the SiLNAP, the resources required to fulfill the mandate set out in UNSCR 1325 through LNAP were "too complex and costly," preventing successful implementation (Basini, 2017: 51). Becoming a signatory of UNSCR 1325 ensured that Liberia would become reliant on the UN to achieve even low-level successes.

Legitimacy Enhancement

Despite the initial support for UNSCR 1325, particularly as a tool to push forward the local women's agenda, over time it has appeared that the Resolution has caused just as many barriers. One representative from an INGO in Monrovia noted in regards to Liberia's implementation of UNSCR 1325:

> "They should have their own policy that is tied to issues that impact women in Liberia, not necessarily policy that is tied to the global agenda of 1325. I think for the NAP the government was pushed by the international community to be in line with global practice and increase global visibility, but that it wasn't necessarily written to address women's issues in Liberia." (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 197).

First, this statement demonstrates that the influence of the international community played a significant role in encouraging, or pressuring, Liberia to implement UNSCR

1325. Second, it shows that UNSCR 1325 has insufficiently been contextualized in Liberia. Through the norm diffusion process, this international norm has overshadowed the needs of local Liberians (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 197). This is an example of how gender mainstreaming practices are insufficient in meaningfully approaching the WPS agenda. Each state has its own unique history with domestic gender relations. Meaning that while some barriers may be universal, others are contextual and cannot be approached with a 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

There was speculation among Liberians regarding the impact of "international" pressure on the country's decision to adopt the LNAP, noting that Liberia's government viewed cooperation with UNSCR 1325 as a means of "speaking" with fellow signatories (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 394). The following statement was made by a representative of a community peacebuilding organization:

"I think for the NAP, the government was pushed by the international community to be in line with global practice and to increase global visibility, but that it wasn't necessarily written to address the women's issues in Liberia." (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 394). Some explicitly expressed that the adoption of the LNAP was Liberia's "…means of gaining legitimacy" (Basini, 2017: 54).

Agenda Setting

Due to criticisms from local women's groups and NGOs, the OGA eventually ensured that local Liberians were put in charge of the facilitation of gender programming while the OGA remained responsible for monitoring and reporting (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 191). In line with the gender mainstreaming goals in 1325, the OGA has been a proponent of quota-based practices when it comes to gender integration in Liberia. In

terms of elections, the OGA has emphasized the 30 percent target that is outlined in 1325 but applied to the amount of female representation that should be achieved in Parliament (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 191). Eventually, a Civil Society Organization (CSO) observatory was put in place and deemed responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the LNAP. Former employees of the CSO expressed limited resource contributions from the Government of Liberia and a lack of communication (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 399). Working closely with the MoGD, the CSO staff noted they rarely received feedback on the reports they sent to the Ministry, and the broken chain of communication meant that the reporting requirements outlined in UNSCR 1325 were not achieved (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 399). Funds for monitoring and reporting were not available from the government, meaning that any efforts required external donors (Basini, 2017: 54).

In terms of local norm translation, there was less pushback from local NGOs than what occurred in Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Local women's organizations were welcoming of the shift in policies and implementation towards a more inclusive understanding of gendered experiences, and have noted a significant improvement for women and girls in terms of access to education and employment (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 191-192). These changes were not only attributed to UNMILs gender mainstreaming practices, but also to women holding political office, such as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was Liberia's president at the time (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 192).

While the OGA has made positive changes while integrating gender mainstreaming into UNMIL's practices, it is not a perfect system. The OGA is directed by the desires of the UN, based on the institution's perception of what is needed in

Liberia to achieve a 'gender just' society. Despite a generally positive response from NGOs on UNMIL's efforts, the organizations were unable to identify the key achievements of OGA (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 192). The OGA has made efforts to include local NGOs in their projects, however, local knowledge has not been central to their efforts and has been pushed aside to suit other priorities (De Carvalho and Schia, 2009:3). Despite criticisms from local women's organizations, UNMIL has failed to adequately include the voices of women's peace initiatives in consultation processes and programming, as is encouraged through UNSCR 1325 (Nduka-Agwu, 2009: 195). A focus on "quantitative goals" has also restricted action on police reform to address internal corruption that could increase the vulnerability of women and girls (De Carvalho and Schia, 2009:3). The focus on quantifiable goals shows the prioritization of outputs favourable in reports rather than driving meaningful change towards gender equality.

The implementation of LNAP has also generated a discourse which threatens to remove the agency from women in the discourse of gender issues. The movement on gender issues in Liberia has focused on addressing rape and HIV/Aids (De Almagro, 2018: 684). This discourse has been encouraged by the UN through the centralization of such topics in 1325. The issue becomes when this discourse overshadows the complex dynamic of gender relations in a post-conflict society that includes but also expands beyond SGBV. Once again, this narrative perpetuates conceptualizations of women as victims rather than their own agents. Furthermore, despite this emphasis on SGBV in the LNAP, high rates of rape and sexualized violence continue to plague Liberia (Basini, 2013: 553). Basini claims that this demonstrates UNSCR 1325's, "narrow concept of

justice which focuses on sanctions and prosecutions, and fails to address strategies that respond to victims' needs" (Basini, 2013: 553).

There have been circumstances where meaningful efforts to address gender inequality have been sacrificed in the name of implementing gender mainstreaming practices as outlined in UNSCR 1325. This is particularly true for the implementation of DDRR processes, where the only tangible success was the increased participation of women and many female participants found the process failed to adequately address their needs (Basini, 2013: 537). Considering the role women's organizations played in advocating for and eventually achieving peacetime discussions, it would seem appropriate that processes regarding gender relations in Liberia's peacetime be highly considered during the implementation of various post-conflict projects. Unfortunately, this was not the case. In the case of DDRR programming, Liberian women were dismissed for having a perceived lack of knowledge on the subject, and UNMIL proceeded to seek guidance from Sierra Leone and Kosovo instead (Basini, 2013: 543). This lack of value on local knowledge and engagement had an adverse impact on former female combatants, causing confusion and creating barriers to accessing programming. One study found that 76.4% of its participants, all former female combatants, self-demobilized due to a lack of information (Basini, 2013: 546).

The strategic inclusion of local women's organizations has benefited the UN and the perceived success of UNSCR 1325 in Liberia. The grassroots efforts of local women's groups in Liberia has provided support for the LNAP indicators by increasing female engagement in post-conflict resolution processes, providing rights-based education to women, and implementing empowerment initiatives (Ryan and Basini, 2016:

395). By making efforts to include local women's organizations in the initial planning stages for the LNAP, the UN has effectively co-opted the labour of these groups and benefited from off-setting the burden of implementation. There are potential implications to local women's organizations becoming ad-hoc advocates for the local translation of UNSCR 1325 outside of the time commitment and resource re-allocation. The relationship between local women's organizations and international actors the like UN is subject to a disproportionate power balance, where the local actor can easily become consumed by the agenda of the international actor. When this occurs, there is a perceived collaboration between the UN and the local women's organizations, however, the local organizations risk becoming an extension of the UN agenda rather than an agentive actor in the discourse (Hudson, 2017: 17). This could cause a rift between local women's organizations that engage with UNSCR 1325 and the communities that these organizations are intended them to serve, potentially painting them as 'traitors' to the local women's movement, causing resentment and creating barriers to meaningful local engagement.

The culture of impunity that manifests during conflict times has persisted in post-conflict Liberia. This is in part due to the limitations facing the country's judicial system. Inability to access lawyers, an overly burdened police force, and a court system that was not designed to address cases of SGBV have made it, for all intents and purposes, impossible for women and girls to seek legal justice on the matter (De Carvalho and Schia, 2009:3-4). Challenging legal barriers to SGBV and other gendered issues requires more than adapting laws and legal principles. Gender biases have been socially embedded in conceptualizations of womanhood. These biases have painted an image of

women as subservient to men that have long impacted legal, political, and social realms (De Almagro, 2018: 684).

The case of Liberia demonstrates the performative nature of UNSCR 1325. While the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is emphasized by the UN, missions rarely have the resources to put behind it. This was true for UNMIL, that despite its emphasis on UNSCR 1325 from the very beginning, lacked a budget line for its implementation (Basini, 2013: 552). A quota approach to evaluating the success of gender equality fails to adequately address socially embedded power dynamics which shape the way that men and women exist in spaces together (Basini, 2013: 552). The ways that UNSCR 1325 has co-opted the narrative on the WPS agenda have caused more harm than good. The earlier reference to Liberia's local women's organizations and the ways they shaped peace advocacy and discourse prior to UNMIL demonstrates that local agents have always been capable of being agents of change both in terms of gender issues and the pursuit of peace (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 194).

It is worth considering the motivation behind accepting an international norm, such as that of gender mainstreaming, through UNSCR 1325. Interviewees of a study conducted by Ryan and Basini noted that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 as a means of improving the country's global standing, with one participant stating:

> "It also shows that Liberia is a part of the international community. It engages with a specific protocol and shows that Liberia wants to be a part of a global society" (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 196).

This motivation could explain why Liberia, among other countries, would accept this norm to the minimum standard possible. One that does not require heavy resources,

sound monitoring and evaluation, or meaningful efforts to address gender power dynamics in political and security spaces. Rather, a change that shines a light on positive statistical changes, no matter how small.

One of the perceived successes of the LNAP was the progress made in regards to 20 percent recruitment quota for the country's security sector, which has been achieved or near achieved by multiple organizations including the LNP (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 395). But, can quota standards be translated into meaningful success? Moving away from the 'add women and stir' model of gender mainstreaming, the numbers alone do not tell the whole story. In this analysis, there is no consideration for the impact of institutional and structural gender power dynamics and how they continue to impede women and their ability to thrive in the security sector (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 395).

Effective infrastructure and capacity building was not a clear priority by UN organizations implementing LNAP in Liberia. Implementation efforts were plagued by inconsistent and ineffectual communication and structures. Gender Focal Points were established in various government Ministries to promote LNAP implementation across the board, however, this role ended up being tokenizing in nature as they were held by women in roles that were traditionally dismissed as unimportant or lacking influence, such as librarians and secretaries (Ryan and Basini, 2016: 398). This is an example of the implications of adding women to roles or spaces without addressing the institutional or structural gender biases and power dynamics that inhibit their success.

The perceived success of LNAP implementation has been clouded by the plan's inability to address local gender issues. The LNAP has proven to be insufficient due to the amount of leverage it allows the UN to have over the agenda on gender equality. This

is reflected at the government level and with local women's organizations. The Liberian government has skewed its focus toward quantifiable goals to reflect the outputs of UNSCR 1325, ignoring factors of gender inequality that are not measurable in terms of numbers. Local women's organizations have also shifted their focus in order to secure funding from UN agencies and international agencies that follow the mandate of UNSCR 1325. This is demonstrated through various organizations' heavy focus on SGBV while disregarding other issues facing women throughout the country. UNAMIL's focus on working with organizations in Monrovia, combined with the lack of consideration for the perspective of local women on gender equality measures, has increased the divide between urban and rural women's organizations in the country. This divide has also meant that resources are allocated disproportionately, leaving the concerns of rural Liberian women largely unaddressed. The inequitable application of funding, resources, and disproportionate decision-making authority between local and foreign actors, emphasizes the gaps of UNSCR 1325 which inhibit tangible progress on the ground.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

As long as the UN takes a one-size-fits-all approach to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through the application of NAPs, post-conflict states will continue to fall through the cracks. The UN has taken measures to ensure that gender mainstreaming norms are diffused but has sacrificed meaningful engagement in the name of universality and ease. In Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, there is a gap in NAP implementation efforts between urban and rural areas. This gap is largely due to performative local engagement on NAPs which have shown to favour urban, elite women's organizations in the case of all three countries. The lack of local engagement prohibits the NAP from embedding the needs of women and girls in its foundation, instead favouring a generalized gender mainstreaming discourse.

This research calls into question the effectiveness of NAPs. While NAPs have been identified as the UN's preferred method for implementation of UNSCR 1325, it has proven ineffective to localize international gender norms and ensure meaningful ownership of the resolution. Through the promise of increased resource availability and enhanced state legitimacy, the UN and international organizations maintain a high level of influence that prevents meaningful localization from occurring. The leverage obtained by international organizations through increased resource availability and enhanced state legitimacy requires states to forgo a certain level of control over the ways in which it strives to address gender inequality domestically. This trickles down and shapes the mandates and actions of CSOs, meaning that international discourse shapes gender equality projects at various local levels. As long as international organizations maintain this level of influence, the barriers to meaningful local ownership will persist.

There are a couple of generalizations that can be pulled from this research. The first generalization is the ability of the UN to secure 'compliance power' through UNSCR 1325. The failures of NAP implementation do not represent a resistance or lack of compliance with UN norms, but instead are an indicator of regressive norm diffusion. Compliance still occurs and is noted in the influence on local agenda setting practices. In all three case studies, it has been observed that government actors and CSOs have complied with the mandate of UNSCR 1325 by shifting policies and organizational priorities in order to appear in line with the resolution. The promise of increased resource availability, as well as enhanced state legitimacy, increases the influence of the UN on states and in the process, ensures the international organization obtains compliance power over post-conflict states that adopt NAPs.

The second generalization from this research is the gap in participation in the localization processes related to UNSCR 1325 implementation. While UNSCR 1325 calls for the localization of the resolution, the 'who' and 'how' of local engagement is strategically selective. In all three case studies there were gaps noted in the inclusion of urban, elite women's organizations and exclusion of rural women's organizations. While the means of selective engagement varied in the case studies, and was not limited to the urban-rural divide, the intentional collaboration with organizations more likely to favour UNSCR 1325 and international norm dialogue was evident throughout this research. The gap in participation highlights a critical barrier to meaningful local ownership and suggests that the preservation of UNSCR 1325 is the primary concern in the gender norm diffusion process. The applicability of NAPs then is skewed in the favour of the UN

itself, as it functions as a means of promoting the liberal peace agenda under the guise of local ownership.

The process of norm diffusion as it occurs negatively impacts efforts to address gender equality in post-conflict states. To transition to positive norm diffusion, the UN must forgo the idea that NAPs are the only means of successful implementation of the mandates laid out in UNSCR 1325. Posing NAPs as the only means of implementation will continue to enforce a dependent relationship between post-conflict states and international institutions, including the UN, its agencies, and Western aid organizations. Due to the complex and expensive nature of NAPs, it demands that this reliance on external actors persists.

The increased reliance on external actors decreases the autonomy over decision-making of local governments and women's organizations that have a direct stake in addressing gender inequality. The more external organizations involved in the funding and development of NAPs, the more caveats that shape what is included and excluded. Local governments and women's organizations will continue to meet these caveats because restricted resources are better than no resources. These agreements, however, come at the cost of implementing change that would have a lasting positive impact on the post-conflict states that have adopted NAPs.

The compiled list of failures of NAPs and the negative impact they have had on the post-conflict states which have implemented them has brought me to two potential explanations for the UN's insistence on NAPs. The first potential explanation is that the actions of the UN in post-conflict states as it relates to gender equality are intentionally performative. This would explain the emphasis on quota-based practices in NAP

implementation, as improved statistical data is easier to obtain than a more meaningful analysis that considers the lived experiences of women and girls involved in post-conflict reconstruction. The minimum standards set through these practices allow the UN and its agencies to claim that, to some extent, the NAPs are successful and that the commitment to gender mainstreaming practices is validated.

While this research has established the UN uses the promise of resource availability and the potential for legitimacy enhancement as a means to encourage and influence norm diffusion, further research might consider why this process might be beneficial to the institution. Future research should explore the motivations of the UN in greater depth, to better understand why the increased dependency of post-conflict states on the UN continues to be reinforced by norm diffusion practices and no efforts have been made to address the lack of local capacity building. It should consider why the UN continues to advocate for NAPs as a means of UNSCR 1325 implementation despite the criticisms and perceived failures of the framework, particularly in post-conflict states. Future research should also explore what tangible alternatives exist to NAPs as a more effective means of diffusing gender norms outlined in UNSCR 1325. The critique of gender mainstreaming practices employed in UNSCR 1325 should be further studied to improve our understanding of the concept's core issues. This field of study would benefit from an analysis of whether gender mainstreaming is a failed concept, or if in terms of UNSCR 1325, gender mainstreaming practices are being misused or misinterpreted.

If the UN were to accept that NAPs are an inadequate tool used for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in post-conflict countries, then efforts to find an alternative must be done through consultation with political leaders and local women's

organizations and a commitment to center the lived experiences of locals over the agenda of the UN itself. It is not to say that external resource allocation is inherently negative, especially considering the instability of post-conflict countries. However, all external contributions to post-conflict states should include a comprehensive strategy on capacity building and an established plan to ensure the state will be able to continue efforts toward gender equality when the external resources are no longer available. This is currently a significant failure of NAPs, as the potential for successfully achieving outputs is dependent on long-term reliance on external actors.

Despite the celebrations of over two decades of UNSCR 1325, critical issues remain. A concerning commonality between the above case studies is that implementation of UNSCR 1325 continuously comes last on the list of local priorities due to a lack of perceived importance on the issues facing women in these post-conflict contexts (Ryan and Basini, 2017: 196). The inability to address the lack of action on gender issues at the local level is a failure of UNSCR 1325 itself. Ultimately, meaningful changes to approaches to gender in conflict situations must be met with a "change of perspective" and a willingness to break down normative barriers between understandings of gender, statehood, and the private versus public dichotomy (Den Boer and Bode, 2018: 368). The emphasis on quota-based successes is reflective of the UN's priorities, which are less about meaningfully addressing gender inequalities and more about advancing a liberal peace agenda.

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