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Muehlenhoff, H.L.

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Unpacking the making of National Action Plans: governmentality, security, and race in the Dutch implementation of UNSCR 1325

Hanna L. Muehlenhoff (she/her/hers) ⓘ

European Studies, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

ABSTRACT
In 2000, the United Nations Security Council decided on Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). More than 80 countries around the world have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement the resolution. The existing literature on NAPs in the Global North is critical of how states use the WPS agenda for traditional security goals and hardly include civil society in their policies. The Dutch NAP has not been studied yet, although it is built on a strong relationship between the state and civil society organizations, the latter being partners and signatories of the NAP. Based on interviews with signatories of the third Dutch NAP, this contribution unpacks and analyzes NAP *making* as governmentality. I argue that the plan's governing structure has led to more comprehensive understandings of security and gender in the NAP, yet it is still made for specific racialized "Others" and prioritizes national security interests. The NAP is primarily a funding instrument and is exclusively available to signatory organizations. This has created competition for funding and influence between different civil society groups, rewarding large development and peace organizations, and thus white Global North knowledge, marginalizing women's rights and diaspora organizations, and excluding local actors.

Introduction

To date, 89 countries around the world have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) adopted in 2000 (PeaceWomen nd). More than two decades after its introduction, the WPS agenda has become an internationally recognized reference point and broadly accepted

CONTACT Hanna L. Muehlenhoff ✉ h.l.muehlenhoff@uva.nl ◼ European Studies, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

norm. However, feminist scholars criticize the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and NAPs for, among other things, their outward-looking nature (in the case of NAPs in the Global North) and their predominant focus on national security and militaries (Joachim and Schneiker 2012; Pratt 2013; George and Shepherd 2016; Lee-Koo 2016; Shepherd 2016).

This stands in contrast to the original intentions of UNSCR 1325 to overcome wars, yet it is not surprising; the outward-looking NAPs of the Global North are often written in foreign ministries with little expertise in gender and in a context of "elite-centric security governance" (Shepherd 2016, 333). Feminists have long argued for taking women's perspectives and knowledge into account when creating new policies and have shown that NAPs are more in the spirit of the WPS agenda when civil society is able to influence their development (Joachim and Schneiker 2012; Lee-Koo 2016; True 2016). The adoption of UNSCR 1325 itself was the result of successful lobbying by women's civil society organizations (CSOs) (see Cohn 2004).

We know that "women's CSOs are a driving force behind institutionalization processes at the national level" (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2019, 6), but how this works in practice is underexplored. The Netherlands systematically includes Dutch CSOs in NAP making, and more than 70 CSOs have co-signed the fourth NAP (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2020). The third (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016) and fourth NAPs (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2020) are presented as partnerships between their signatories, including ministries, knowledge institutions, and CSOs. This strongly institutionalized partnership model stands out when compared to other NAPs, such as those of the United Kingdom (UK), Sweden (Joachim and Schneiker 2012), and Australia (Lee-Koo 2016). In each of those cases, civil society has been consulted to varying degrees but in a less systematic fashion. Since the adoption of the first NAP in 2007, the Dutch Gender Platform WO=MEN ("Women Equals Men") has been the coordinator for scientific and civil society input for the NAPs. Despite this unique set-up, there is no in-depth study of the Dutch case that critically assesses the relationship between the state and civil society in the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

While recognizing the importance of civil society inclusion for NAPs, the *practice* of governing the implementation of WPS with civil society must be subject to greater scrutiny. This contribution unpacks the making of the Dutch NAP and develops a critical analysis of civil society participation in NAP making and the attendant politics of inclusion and exclusion. Existing research on the national implementation of the WPS agenda in the Global North is often limited to studying the policy texts (the NAPs) themselves (Wright 2019, 15). Although they are an important reference point and enabler of policies, it is less clear how these action plans come about and are implemented.

This article problematizes the practice of state–civil society cooperation by drawing on a feminist governmentality perspective, which conceptualizes

government as an activity not solely originating in the state but enacted through a range of societal actors (see Oksala 2013). Moreover, this approach is particularly well suited to understanding the sphere of civil society as one of inclusion and exclusion, co-optation, competition, and contestation (Roy 2018). While feminist international relations scholars have employed Foucault's notions of biopolitics and governmentality to understand the co-optation of feminist activism and goals (Prügl and True 2014; Repo 2014), research on WPS, and specifically on NAPs, has not done so. Focusing on the governing structure of the third Dutch NAP, I argue that while its cooperative character has led to a more comprehensive NAP, in terms of its understandings of security and gender, it still focuses the WPS agenda on the Global South (and, indeed, on selected locations within that). In doing so, it prioritizes Dutch national security interests and produces racial hierarchies of legitimate knowledge by excluding civil society actors active in the target countries from its governing partnership. I share the "unease" expressed by Haastrup and Hagen (2020, 135) "with the way in which the dominant practices of WPS serves to perpetuate 'white saviour' narratives around peace and security institutions." In fact, the Dutch NAP is mainly a funding instrument available exclusively to signatory organizations that compete for financial resources and influence, rewarding large development and peace organizations and sidelining women's rights and diaspora organizations.

My analysis is based on the study of the third Dutch NAP (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016),[1] the *Mid-Term Review: National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2016–2019* conducted by an external consultant for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and made publicly available (Herweijer 2019), and nine semi-structured interviews with CSOs that signed the NAP. First, I analyze the discourse of the Dutch NAP of 2016–2019 to understand who (in other words, whose knowledge and security) is included and excluded. Second, I analyze the practice of NAP making based on interviews that I conducted in 2019 with the Gender Task Force in the MoFA of the Netherlands, the coordinator at the Gender Platform WO=MEN,[2] and five different organizations that are co-signatories of the NAP. I spoke to employees of two established peace and development organizations, two representatives from different diaspora organizations, and one person from a women's rights organization. Thus, my interview pool covered different types of civil society actors, ranging from organizations that are considered professionalized to smaller and more activist organizations. Their relationship with the ministry and other stakeholders varies greatly. I shared one of my first drafts (with approved quotes from the CSOs) with my interviewees from WO=MEN and the MoFA to engage them in the criticism brought forward. In the spirit of perceiving our relationship with research subjects also "doing gender" as one of "critical friendship" (Holvikivi 2019), I scrutinized their engagement through a close consideration of the power hierarchies

between the different research subjects. Indeed, my interactions with the different actors were central to understanding the NAP partnership and its tensions.

I begin by briefly discussing the feminist and postcolonial literature on the WPS agenda, and its critical account of NAPs. In the second part, I theorize NAP making as governmentality, highlighting issues of inclusion and exclusion. Third, I analyze who – and whose security and knowledge – are included and excluded in the goals and governing structure of the Dutch NAP. Fourth, and relatedly, I scrutinize the relationship of inclusions and exclusions in NAP making. The article ends with a discussion and conclusion of my findings.

NAPs and feminist disappointments

As the feminist WPS literature shows, most NAPs in the Global North are "made for" the Global South. Shepherd's (2016) analysis of the NAPs of the United States (US), the UK, Australia, Georgia, Germany, and Italy reveals that these are outward looking and focus on the military. They construct a less civilized image of the "Other" and aim at "making war safe for women." Instead of challenging militarism and traditional security policies, NAPs are integrated into existing foreign and security policy frameworks, limiting WPS to gender mainstreaming within security and military institutions (Cohn 2004; Shepherd 2016; Wright 2019).

Moving our attention to NAPs in the Global South, Martín de Almagro (2018, 400) suggests that the WPS discourse produces subject positions that "constrain what can be thought, said and done." Analyzing the NAPs of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Liberia, she argues that the involvement of the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Fund, UN Women, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) creates hierarchical and binary divisions based on racialized, sexualized, and classed subject positions. In so doing, certain representations of the subject position "participant" are seen as "competent" by dominant discourses, while others are rendered invisible. This critique is especially relevant in respect of the way in which the outward-looking NAPs of the Global North manifest the idea that experts from the Global North have to fix problems in the Global South (Shepherd 2016, 325). Parashar (2019, 2) highlights

> the epistemic violence and marginalization that present the Global South as contexts and sites without agency and lacking in any "progressive" gender discourse, as well as the complicity of feminists in promoting statist agendas without querying their own positionality, ethical commitments, and privilege.

Women's organizations in the Global South are usually only involved as recipients of NAP funding, if at all. In this way, NAPs perpetuate racialized hierarchies in international relations (Haastrup and Hagen 2020).

However, scholars and activists also point to the important role of civil society in the creation of NAPs (PeaceWomen 2013). True (2016) argues that the actors involved in drafting NAPs influence the implementation of the WPS agenda. Lee-Koo (2016, 340) shows for the case of Australia that civil society "echoed the global feminist ambitions" of feminist activism in the context of UNSCR 1325. In Ireland, civil society groups working within the country pushed for including the experiences of women from Northern Ireland in the Irish NAP (Hoewer 2013). Joachim and Schneiker (2012) suggest that civil society participation influences how comprehensive NAPs are in addressing structural change and how inclusive they are in taking the perspectives of women into account. They find that Sweden and the UK have more ambitious NAPs than Germany because civil society groups were able to contest existing security knowledge.

Whether the WPS agenda is successful in transforming international security policies and contributing to a world that is more just – in gender, racial, and economic terms – depends on whether it builds on the experiences of women and activists in different contexts. This contribution thus explores the case of the Netherlands, which has one of the most institutionalized NAP partnerships with civil society in the world, to critically interrogate the opportunities and pitfalls of involving civil society in NAP making. It does so by analyzing that making as governmentality.

NAP making as governmentality

Feminist scholars have scrutinized how the arrival of feminist demands in policy circles and on political agendas has led to their co-optation (see Prügl and True 2014; de Jong and Kimm 2017). While they have noted that the WPS agenda has been watered down and/or instrumentalized for other goals – such as when mobilized to increase gender equality in the military – less attention has been paid to how this comes about and how civil society engages with policymakers when making NAPs (for an exception, see Lyytikäinen and Jauhola 2020). To do so, I draw on the international development literature that has studied such dynamics in the context of development aid. As shown below, the Dutch NAP is indeed mainly a funding instrument for CSOs, and most often, it supports projects conducted by established development organizations. It thus seems apt to learn from the insights of development studies, which has made use of Foucault's concept of governmentality to understand the relationships between (donor) states, international organizations, and civil society.

While some scholars criticize Foucault for his Eurocentric philosophy (and lack of gender sensitivity) (Ove 2013; Roy 2018), others such as Li (2007) demonstrate the usefulness and value of the governmentality lens for studying a (post)colonial setting. Accordingly, international development policies

continue to be entangled in (post)colonial power relations and can be understood as racialized governmentality aimed at improving the well-being of Others deemed less developed (Ove 2013). Similarly, the WPS agenda should be considered in the light of the "problematic history of feminism as imperialism, where feminists have been complicit in both the production and the marginalization of the gendered subaltern" (Parashar 2019, 3). In NAP making, however, CSOs are not only the recipients of funds but also meant to participate in drafting the policy. Understanding NAP making as governmentality allows us to analyze the continuities of governmental rationalities shaping the policy, funding recipients, and civil society in the Global North and the Global South in different, yet similar, ways (Ove 2013).

Foucault's (1982; Foucault, Senellart, and Burchell 2008) notion of governmentality describes how governing, as a relationship of power, promotes specific mentalities shaping the subjectivities of citizens even after sovereign state power has been increasingly decentralized, such as is visible in the decline of the welfare state in Western democracies. The analytical value of the concept of governmentality, for the purposes of the current analysis, lies in its understanding of governing as diffusing responsibility, such as through involving civil society in policy making and practice. Moreover, it reveals that governing is messy and involves a variety of actors whose relationships are shaped by dynamics of contestation, inclusion and exclusion, competition, and co-optation.

The idea of civil society inclusion is typical for neoliberal governing at a distance (Joseph 2013, 44). Critical scholars have questioned this simple ideal of politics "from below" by highlighting its exclusionary and potentially co-opting quality. For example, the participation of civil society in policy-making processes usually privileges more professionalized, larger associations (Jaeger 2007). Furthermore, the governing principle of competition includes those organizations that accept or adopt the dominant economic rationalities:

> [W]e've been encouraged to be little more than self-interested subjects of rational choice (to the *exclusion* of other ways of being and often at the expense of those "irresponsible" others who have "chosen" not to amass adequate amounts of human capital). (Hamann 2009, 58, emphasis added)

Of course, this is not always a choice as many organizations do not have the chance to obtain the resources needed to take part in governing or in the competition for funding. Moreover, the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are also produced by racial hierarchies, designating (white) representatives of the Global North as the ones with expertise (Martín de Almagro 2018, 400). This can be traced back to the persistent national security paradigms of the Global North identifying states in the Global South as "trouble-makers," or "failed states" (see Bilgin 2008), in need of security and

development provided by white experts (see Ove 2013). As shown below, NAP making, in the case of the Dutch NAP partnership, is also marked by whiteness (Haastrup and Hagen 2020).

This leads to policy choices that do not challenge the *status quo*. When CSOs are firmly part of the policy world, they are less inclined and able to monitor and challenge state policies (Amoore and Langley 2004, 103–110; Jaeger 2007, 270–271). Yet, even newcomers and activists may "play the game" when subject to the rationalities of the current political order, often in good faith to make their claims resonate (Edenheim and Rönnblom 2016) or gain legitimacy as actors (de Jong and Kimm 2017, 191). These dynamics facilitate the emergence of more consensual discourses (Feldman 2003; Cornwall and Brock 2005; Olivius 2014) and the incorporation of feminist demands into old, most often neoliberal and state-centered, structures (de Jong and Kimm 2017).

In the Dutch case, the interest of CSOs in ensuring that their priorities and countries of operation are included in the NAPs is closely linked to future funding through the NAP framework. Thus, the sphere of civil society is marked by tensions, a space of community, and competition (Muehlenhoff 2019). International funding works through "technologies of agency and performance that foster entrepreneurial and competitive conduct" (Jaeger 2010, 72). Funding mechanisms also make non-governmental actors responsible for implementing state policy goals. This responsibilization makes it hard for them to challenge policies.

This article problematizes the participation of civil society in NAP making. Yet, it also highlights that civil society actors have some freedom and ability to contest policies and resist such cooperation or its specific rationalities. Governmental power only works through the freedom of the individual (Li 2007; Roy 2018; Muehlenhoff 2019). As a "mode of action upon the actions of others" (Foucault 1982, 790), it teaches the individual self-conduct. However, "[u]nderlying every conduct of conduct is thus the possibility of refusal, reversal or resistance" (Roy 2018, 207). For instance, Li (2007), in the case of World Bank funding in Sulawesi, finds that local communities contest the politics of development, even when hidden behind technical language and instruments. Resistance may also entail the transformation or co-optation of rationalities, such as using reporting mechanisms to increase political awareness (Muehlenhoff 2019).

In light of the above discussion, the inclusion of CSOs in NAP making may contribute to the contestation of traditional security understandings. Yet, as my analysis shows, governing WPS with civil society constitutes a *specific* set of CSOs as partners of the state, enabling competition between different parts of civil society, excluding many, and potentially co-opting the ones included. In the next section, I study who – and whose security and

knowledge – are included and excluded in the Dutch NAP through examining its partnership model and aims.

Dutch NAPs: made at home, meant for the world

The Netherlands had three NAPs by the year 2020. It published its fourth NAP in December 2020. The first NAP covered the years 2008–2011, the second NAP ran from 2012 to 2015, and the third NAP was for 2016–2019 (extended until 2020). The first NAP was mainly a strategic document underlining the intention of the MoFA, Dutch knowledge institutions, and CSOs "to support the implementation of the Dutch National Action Plan on resolution 1325" (MoFA Netherlands 2008, 6). The NAP was the consequence of the so-called Pact of Schokland in 2007, a set of agreements between the Dutch state and civil society to implement the Millennium Development Goals. In this context, an agreement on WPS was signed as a commitment to collaboratively develop a NAP for UNSCR 1325 (MoFA Netherlands 2008, 5, 71–74). The same year, the Gender Platform WO=MEN was founded. The platform signed the Pact of Schokland and the first NAP. For the duration of the first NAP, WO=MEN became the coordinator for civil society input at the request of its member organizations and the foreign ministry (WO=MEN Interview B). WO=MEN developed out of a coalition of CSOs – namely, Oxfam Novib, Hivos, Cordaid, and the Interkerkelijke Coördinatie Commissie Ontwikkelings-samenwerking (ICCO, Interchurch Coordination Commission for Development Aid) – with the goal of promoting girls' and women's empowerment and gender equality in Dutch foreign policy. More than 50 organizations and more than 125 individuals are members of the gender platform in the Netherlands today. WO=MEN's activities include, for example, coordinating lobbying activities, sharing information among members, and organizing events (WO=MEN nd).

Although the MoFA is the leading institution for implementing UNSCR 1325, all three NAPs have been developed together with and are signed by Dutch CSOs and knowledge institutions. WO=MEN, of which most signatory organizations are members, coordinates civil society input and organizes consultation meetings. The NAPs are officially described as an equal partnership between the different signatories. The first NAP was signed by 18 institutions, including the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, development and peace CSOs such as Oxfam Novib, and women's rights organizations such as the Women Peacemakers Program (WPP) (MoFA Netherlands 2008).

The second NAP was signed by more than 30 CSOs, including a number of diaspora organizations, such as Burundian Women for Peace and Development (MoFA Netherlands 2012). The second NAP was the first to provide funding for signatory organizations to implement WPS-related projects.

Since then, CSOs have had to sign the NAP to be eligible for funding. More than 70 CSOs signed the third NAP (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016). However, not all signatory organizations apply for or are successful in getting funding because of the application requirements, as discussed below. The inclusion of CSOs as signatories and linking this to funding is unusual in the international context and elevates them to more than consultation partners.

Indeed, the third Dutch NAP begins by emphasizing that it builds on the partnership between the state, civil society, and knowledge institutions:

> While respecting each other's roles and mandates, we believe that coordination and cooperation between government, knowledge institutions and civil society are mutually beneficial. The inclusive and participatory character of this plan is unique and in itself an excellent illustration of our commitment to realising our shared ambitions. (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 6)

The NAP goes on to note that "[o]ur partnership consists of a strong network of organisations in the Netherlands and all over the world" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 5). In practice, however, the partnership only includes Dutch organizations as direct beneficiaries of funding and participants in NAP making. Non-Dutch CSOs are only involved as partners in NAP-funded projects conducted by Dutch organizations, legitimating Dutch (civil society) expertise as superior and putting local organizations in a hierarchical student–teacher relationship.

While non-Dutch organizations were consulted for the fourth NAP (WO=MEN Interview B), they have less access and are dependent on Dutch organizations and their NAP-funded projects (CSO Interview C). In this way, the knowledge of majority-white CSOs is privileged over the knowledge of organizations on the ground, defining "who is a competent participant, which practices become acceptable and natural, and who should be in charge of putting them to work" (Martín de Almagro 2018, 396).

Moreover, the third Dutch NAP, like the two before it and most NAPs from the Global North, is outward looking, focused on "fixing others" (Shepherd 2016). It targets eight focus countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, the DRC, Iraq, Libya, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 45). Focus countries were introduced with the second NAP, which also included Burundi and Sudan but did not initially target Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen (MoFA Netherlands 2012, 17). With the unfolding of the so-called Arab Spring, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region was added. According to the third NAP, the focus countries are "countries in conflict or fragile states," "the focus of a Dutch policy," "countries in which signatories have sufficient capacity, local partners and relevant track record," and/or "countries in which the Netherlands participates in a multilateral civil and/or military mission" (Dutch NAP 1325

Partnership 2016, 45). As a civil society actor emphasized, however, the foreign ministry basically chose these countries based on its policy agenda (CSO Interview A).

NAP funding is thus restricted to actions in these places, which has significant consequences for the signatory organizations and their access to funding, as shown below. The selection of countries underscores how WPS is considered to be for specific Others, understood as conflict countries or "fragile states" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 45). Moreover, the list of countries clearly suggests that the Dutch NAP is informed by Dutch national security goals rather than women's needs. Relying on the "fragile states" discourse, popular in the Global North especially since 9/11 (Bilgin and Morton 2004), the NAP reduces the applicability of WPS to contexts of violent conflict that are of interest to Dutch national security.

This representation of the Other is underlined in the NAP by highlighting "societal and cultural inequalities and gender norms" as the "root causes" for conflict (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 10). Such a framing (while not unique to the Dutch NAP) not only reproduces racialized hierarchies in international security (Haastrup and Hagen 2020) but also ties WPS directly to the security concerns of the Dutch state, with a specific set of locations selected for intervention. The instrumental discourse reiterates the rationality that security in the Global South provides security in the Global North. It further rationalizes the need for the WPS agenda to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of security policies. Sustainability appears to replace notions of effectiveness, while it remains unclear how they differ. For example, the foreword states: "Including women in peace and security efforts is not only the right thing to do; it also makes these efforts more effective and leads to sustainable solutions. Without the inclusion of women, there will be no sustainable peace" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 4–5).

The visuals of the NAP reinforce the impression that the Dutch implementation of WPS is about teaching Others how to do "gender-equal" security, namely with a focus on the military sphere. The cover features a picture (taken by the CSO PAX (a peace organization in the Netherlands) as the footnote tells us) of mainly female soldiers from South Sudan (Figure 1). Moreover, the title and all headings in the NAP are written in the "stencil" font, a classic military font. Indeed, the Ministry of Defence is also the most active when it comes to implementing the NAP, besides the MoFA. While the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Justice and Security have also signed the NAP, only the Ministry of Defence has set out its own public action plan and an internal implementation plan (Taskforce MoFA Interview).

Although the NAP is meant for selected Others considered to be in need, the security that it aims to provide for these Others is broadly defined. The document recognizes that UNSCR 1325 has brought "a shift from the

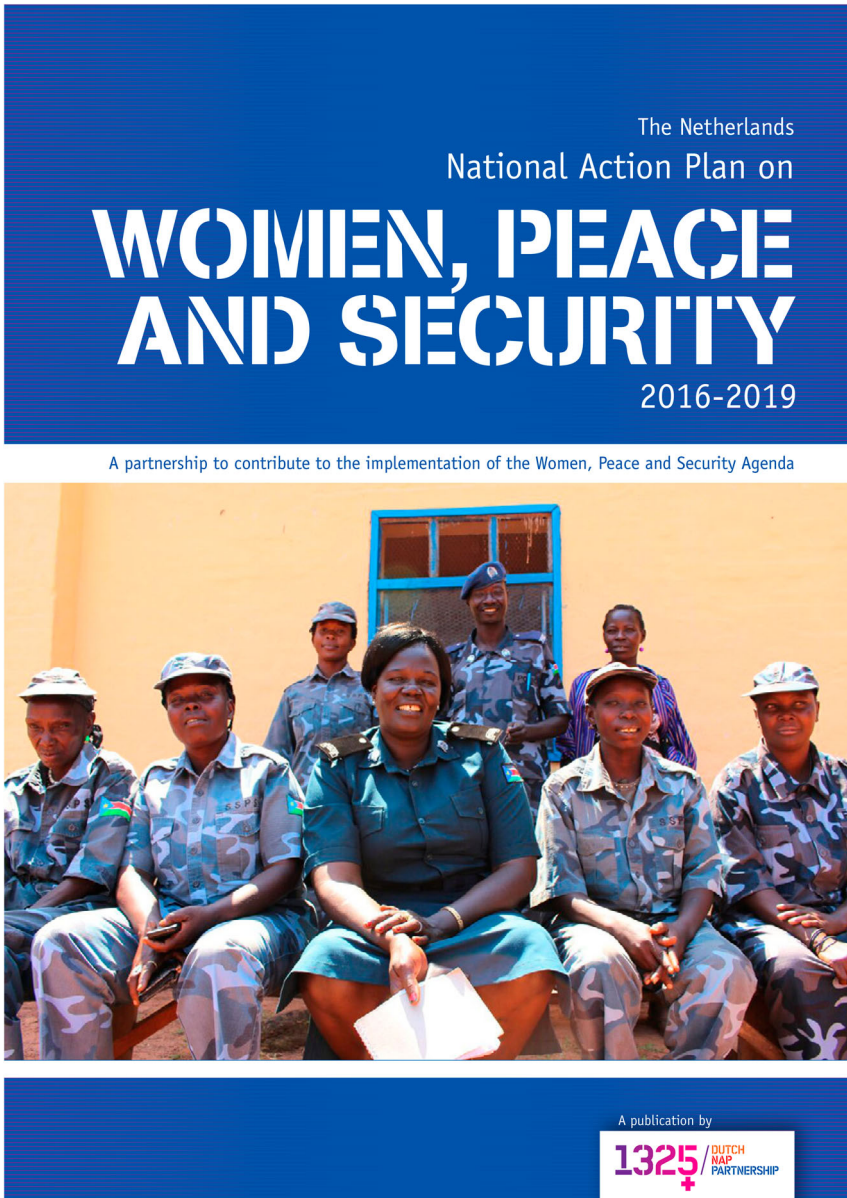**Figure 1.** Front cover of *The Netherlands National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2016–2019*.

previously dominant concept of national security towards a recognition of the importance of human security" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 8), although it only mentions human security one more time. Nevertheless, the NAP refers to "women's rights to education, health, land, and productive

assets and to participation, decision-making and leadership in village and community matters" as "strongly linked to women's security" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 12).

How the NAP understands gender and security is outlined in the "Theory of Change" (ToC), which is supposed to serve as a framework for implementing UNSCR 1325. The ToC tackles three different goals: the enhancement of protection, the reduction of harmful gender norms, and equal leverage in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief, and recovery. It does so on three different levels: capacity and resources, attitudes and beliefs, and law and policy. The NAP recognizes that WPS is about changing gender norms, including masculinities (see Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 19), and considers the insecurities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and refugees (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 12). All of these goals are to be pursued by local, national, regional, and international actors and involve men and boys (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 23).

However, the more detailed description of responsibilities shows that it is mostly Dutch CSOs that have to work on these goals, while the aim of promoting legal and policy changes is significantly weaker than the other elements (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 30–39). This implies that – in the logic of governing at a distance – the Dutch state shifts the responsibility to implement the WPS agenda to Dutch CSOs, and partly to non-Dutch civil society actors abroad who are strongly dependent on Dutch project leaders. Otherwise, the "NAP partnership" excludes the people for whom the NAP is made and deems their knowledge less valuable. As Haastrup and Hagen (2020, 136) write, "race matters in understanding Global North and Global South WPS knowledge and resource exchange."

Furthermore, the NAP takes up the goals of UNSCR 2242 on countering violent extremism (CVE) as "the international security regime aims to derive legitimizing benefits from the co-option of Women, Peace and Security and its operational framework with a focus on the 'inclusion' of women in CVE" (Parashar 2019, 8). The NAP follows the gendered and racialized representation (see Pratt 2013) of men abroad as terrorists and women as

> "early warners" who can help predict escalating violence and possible terrorist attacks, due to their knowledge and access to information in communities. As activists, teachers, peacekeepers, community leaders, politicians and role models, women can enhance human security and help prevent and counter violent extremism. (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 12–13)

This instrumentalizes women in the Global South for the security agenda of the Netherlands. As Parashar (2019, 836) writes, "the interface between WPS and CVE agendas only engender[s] further militarization and insecurities for women and other vulnerable sections of the population." Yet, it must be

noted that the document recognizes that women may also be terrorists, stating that "[w]omen are not a homogeneous group; they can themselves be 'terrorists, sympathisers, mobilisers, and perpetrators'" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 12). It further acknowledges that counter-terrorism activities "conducted in tandem with local women's organisations can jeopardize women's safety" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 13) and that counter-terrorism policies may create problems for women's organizations if they affect the financing of their work (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2016, 16). Despite these important reflections, the NAP assumes that states of the Global South are "being used as a safe harbour by terrorists" and are "trouble-makers" (Bilgin 2008, 11) that have to be fixed – by women. The integration of counter-terrorism goals in the NAP is in line with the selection of focus countries – for example, as places from which foreign fighters return – and underlines that the NAP is also about protecting Dutch security.

To summarize, while it ostensibly relies on a relatively extensive understanding of security and gender, the third Dutch NAP still reproduces the dominant rationality that the WPS agenda has to be tackled in the Global South based on the expertise of the Global North. What is more, through its selection of countries for intervention, the NAP subjugates the needs of security in these countries to those of the Netherlands. The following part scrutinizes the governmentality of NAP *making* and how it is marked by tensions, inclusions, and exclusions.

Dutch NAP making: inclusions and exclusions

As Wekker (2016, 113) notes, in the Netherlands, activist movements have been strongly dependent on government funding, of which the "downside … is that organizations may cease to exist when policy changes, which is what happened to the larger women's movement." This is exactly what we see in the context of NAP making.

The Dutch NAP has essentially been a funding instrument since the second NAP, whereas horizontal implementation within the MoFA and across the policies of other ministries has been lacking, which is unusual compared to NAPs elsewhere (Joachim and Schneiker 2012). The third NAP provided €16 million to its signatory organizations. Other departments within the MoFA have additional WPS-related funds, such as for diplomacy or donor cooperation, yet "we have been lacking in connecting these activities directly as MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] contributions to the NAP … We believe that horizontal implementation or WPS mainstreaming can be strengthened" (Taskforce MoFA Interview). Several of my interviewees from signatory organizations were critical of this sole focus on CSOs as implementers. Referring to the different ministries that are in fact also signatories, one said:

> You are asking us what we are doing. But what are the ministries doing? We never get a clear picture of that – the demand for clarity and accountability is pretty much one-sided. It made me feel regularly like civil society is being used as a cover. The government shifts the responsibility to implement the WPS agenda from the political sphere to civil society and, as such, it becomes "developmentalized." (CSO Interview B)

Such "governing at a distance" risks that "[s]tates may outsource service provision to (often internationally funded) civil society and thus may avoid a long-term integrated strategy for addressing gender justice gaps" (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2019, 8). It further indicates the low priority of WPS for Dutch foreign and security policy.

Nevertheless, Dutch civil society has influenced the NAP. WO=MEN organized regular consultation sessions with NAP signatories when drafting and implementing the first NAPs. WO=MEN also hosted civil society consultation meetings to write the third NAP and lobbied the ministry to adopt suggestions emerging from these meetings. For example, the ToC was the outcome of a collaborative writing process between civil society, knowledge institutions, the ministry, and a consulting firm (WO=MEN Interview A; WO=MEN Interview B). Other suggestions from civil society, however, such as focusing on a wider range of countries or considering the domestic application of the WPS agenda (for example, in the context of migration), did not make it into the third NAP, as several interviewees mentioned.[3] The dominant rationality that WPS is for specific "fragile" Others was upheld.

Although CSOs "co-wrote" and shaped the NAP, the relationship between civil society and the ministry was very difficult at the time of writing the NAP. In December 2016, an internal commission of the foreign ministry found the policy officer responsible for the development of the third NAP during 2015 and 2016 guilty of bullying, (sexual) harassment, intimidation, and abuse of power toward CSO employees (Boon 2018). This had a negative impact on the partnership; this policy officer dominated the agenda and sidelined more critical voices. He was moved to a different post but not fired. The ministry established a contact point where external organizations can file complaints regarding inappropriate behavior as a direct consequence of this case (Hendrickx 2018).

In 2016, the staff of the Taskforce changed, and a new policy officer responsible for the third NAP took up the position in 2017. Thereafter, the relationship between the ministry and WO=MEN improved. WO=MEN expected the MoFA to incorporate more of its advice in future funding instruments (WO=MEN Interview A). In addition to the contribution from its member organizations, WO=MEN receives funding for four years, outside the NAP budget, to work on WPS goals. Its coordinator is aware that this could compromise its monitoring function but is overall positive:

> So that is one of the things that we really put down online in our multi-annual plan and in our agreements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that we have a role as a watchdog. So we can also be a watchdog and watch the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and I think that works out pretty well. (WO=MEN Interview A)

Most signatories depend on governmental funds. While the MoFA and WO=MEN often describe the signatories as a "NAP community," emphasizing an equal partnership and common values and goals, that community is marked by asymmetrical power relationships and tensions. For instance, making civil society signatories and partners of state policies as a pre-condition for receiving financial support contradicts the idea that civil society monitors the state:

> [T]he whole thing that you are also a signatory makes me sometimes feel not at ease because what am I signing on to? I am signing on to the implementation of the plan that was not written by me. Yes, I provided some input, but eventually, if I wanted some funding, I had to sign. (CSO Interview C)

Although CSOs are also consulted for NAPs in other countries (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2019), they are not signatories and are able to stay more critical throughout the process (see Lee-Koo 2016). While the actors involved in the Dutch NAP critically reflect upon the dependencies in this "partnership," the risk of co-optation persists. Another interviewee said:

> I see it in a Gramscian way. It might have been better and more transparent if the government would just make its own NAP, and then we could fulfill our role as independent civil society in terms of being critical and monitoring it. Right now, I feel we are losing out as civil society, as those of us who are very critical end up being sidelined/marginalized, because the "partnership" thrives on consensus between civil society and the state – and having a radically different view is not seen as "constructive." (CSO Interview B)

The interviewee refers to a typical Dutch way of doing politics through finding consensus and compromise – "polderen"[4] (Wekker 2016, 10) – that risks suppressing critical voices while ostensibly providing inclusion. Indeed, one of those critical voices, the WPP, has been lost. Although the WPP was already involved in advocating for women's inclusion in peace-building during the Beijing conference (Beijing Platform for Action 1995) and was among the first organizations to specialize in internationally support-ing women's grassroots non-violent mobilizing and advocacy on the WPS agenda, it closed in 2017. The WPP was the only women's rights organization (except for diaspora women's organizations) that was able to receive funding under the third NAP. Nevertheless, the WPP explained in a press statement that the funding requirements of donors were no longer feasible,

> requiring minimum annual budgets that are unrealistic and unreachable for a middle-sized organization. We are not alone in this, as the vast majority of

most women's organizations around the globe fit in the categories "small" or "middle-sized." (WPP 2017)

The governing structure of NAP funding makes it especially difficult for small and medium-sized organizations, such as women's and diaspora organizations. This has to do with, first, the country focus that determines which organizations are actually eligible. In fact, the choice of countries was strongly contested. It excludes some diaspora organizations and forces others to shift their work to new places while turning away from organizations on the ground with whom they cooperated for a long time, bringing into question the NAP's goal of sustainability. As discussed above, the focus country approach limits the scope of the WPS agenda to places considered to be "fragile" and reveals that the Dutch state prioritizes the security of the Netherlands over that of people abroad, even when implementing UNSCR 1325.

Of course, the country selection also eliminates the flexibility to react to emerging crises, although this was, in the end, possible in the second NAP and is likely also decided on the basis of national security interests. Second, and relatedly, NAP funding has been given to eight consortia, one for each country, in which two to three organizations cooperate, with one CSO taking the lead. The consortia were led by seven large development organizations and one peace organization, and no women's rights or diaspora organizations headed any consortium. WPP and two diaspora organizations, the Support Trust for African Development (STAD) and Tosangana, participated in the consortia for South Sudan and the DRC, but they were essentially subcontractors in the programs (Herweijer 2019). The former director of WPP said:

> In recent years, WPP had to rely mostly on subcontracting to access Dutch government funding, whereas before, we always had direct access and always applied successfully – even when competing against big (I)NGOs [international NGOs], because of the quality of our work. Subcontracting was going against the way we worked because, as WPP, we firmly believed in developing our strategic plans bottom up. We always worked closely with women activists and movements from around the globe to develop a multi-annual agenda based on women's perspectives and needs and then went looking for funding. This allowed us to be innovative and relevant. As a subcontractor, you end up in a construct where agendas are often driven top down, with the women on the ground dangling at the end of the chain, where they run the biggest risks and receive only a limited proportion of the funding available. This way of working (projectization) also makes movement building very difficult. (CSO Interview B)

The fact that a women's rights organization such as WPP was unable to receive NAP funding, lost its influence on the agenda, and closed down as a consequence is illustrative of the dynamics at play. The competition for funding leads to the exclusion of small and medium-sized groups, often women's rights or diaspora groups with the knowledge to challenge

dominant security discourses and practices, while large development and peace organizations not specialized in UNSCR 1325 take over. As a result, the space for critical activist, radical, and grassroots feminist voices in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 decreases, and the subordination of the WPS agenda to state security goals is more likely to happen, as several interviewees warned (CSO Interview B; CSO Interview C). Similarly, small diaspora organizations that provided a lot of input to the NAP have hardly benefited from its budget and have been marginalized, even when part of consortia. The director of one diaspora organization said: "We need clearer criteria, a little bit [fairer] criteria because when you partner up with a big organization, then you fall under their own criteria, their own policy and then you'll find yourself treated unfairly" (CSO Interview D). Another interviewee explained: "As a small organization, you have to work extra hard. But we have the knowledge. We know the context. We are already working in conflict areas, and we accept that the understanding and way to look at things could differ" (CSO Interview E).

The cooperation with larger CSOs in a consortium was beneficial for diaspora organizations, and WO=MEN and the MoFA were supportive of including diaspora organizations in consortia and NAP funding. Yet, organizations also voiced concerns: "We are not sure whether they might change the focus countries and end the consortium with small organizations" (CSO Interview E). Overall, diaspora organizations play a smaller role in implementing the NAP. This may not be surprising as they are usually run by a handful of people in comparison to development and peace organizations with a staff of more than 100. Yet, women's and diaspora organizations are often more specialized in WPS and have stronger links to local actors, providing valuable knowledge. Their marginalization reinforces racial hierarchies in WPS policies.

The Gender Task Force at MoFA was aware that the funding structure tends to exclude women's and diaspora CSOs and in 2017 introduced one new funding stream for smaller projects, entitled Peace and Security for All (PS4All). PS4All has benefited women's organizations, but they are still obliged to come together in three consortia. This criterion has again raised criticism from CSOs. Moreover, the consortia combine projects in different countries with different approaches and topics (Herweijer 2019). WO=MEN was optimistic that the fourth NAP will also provide funds for small and medium-sized organizations:

> So what I feel is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been listening to that critique. And so that's also one of the reasons why we're really looking forward to the next funding framework because I really hope that they were able to … translate that critique and also our recommendations in their criteria for the funding. (WO=MEN Interview A)

Whether this will result in the substantive inclusion of women's rights and diaspora organizations in the fourth NAP still remains to be seen. The current partnership structure makes it difficult to render Dutch NAP knowledge less white and more inclusive.

It can be argued that the third Dutch NAP is mainly a funding instrument that induced competition between different organizations, prioritizing already privileged Dutch peace and development organizations but excluding women's and diaspora groups and neglecting civil society abroad. Currently, UNSCR 1325 is hardly mainstreamed horizontally across Dutch foreign and security policy, even less so in other policy fields. There are demands for the NAP to become a strategic policy document (WO=MEN Interview A). However, the position of the Gender Task Force within the Social Development Department in the ministry (MoFA Netherlands nd) makes it difficult for the action plan to create change in foreign and security policy more broadly. The WPS agenda has not changed the way in which the Netherlands does security in any substantial fashion. Although the NAP includes comprehensive understandings of security and gender, there is no broader reflection of whose security Dutch foreign and security policy is actually protecting or producing.

Conclusion

The Netherlands is what many consider a "leader" in the implementation of the WPS agenda (Joachim and Schneiker 2012, 531). It is at the end of its third NAP and has published a fourth. It has institutionalized the participation of civil society in making the NAP. Yet, this article has shown that even in a process centered on civil society, the state easily co-opts the WPS agenda for state-centric security goals; this is also because specific and mostly white Dutch civil society actors and their knowledge are included.

I began this article by discussing the feminist and postcolonial criticism of the WPS agenda, which has also pointed to the importance of civil society inclusion for challenging dominant and racialized security discourses and practices. I have contributed an analysis of NAP making in the Netherlands with a focus on the relationship between the state and civil society, and suggested understanding NAP making as governmentality, as it involves civil society actors in the governing of WPS. This perspective makes clearer how NAPs and their security understandings come about, making inclusions and exclusions of specific civil society groups and their knowledge visible.

The analysis of the Dutch NAP partnership and the policy documents that it produced has shown that, indeed, in comparison to other action plans of the Global North, the Dutch NAP conceptualizes security in more complex ways. However, it still builds on the assumption that UNSCR 1325 is for specific Others in the Global South and rationalizes this as contributing to

more effective and sustainable security. It fails to reflect critically on the role of Dutch foreign and security policy in enabling the lack of security and structural inequalities abroad. Moreover, through its choice of specific locations for intervention, it promotes certain security imperatives and not others, such as by co-opting the NAP for anti-radicalization and counter-terrorism goals.

Furthermore, the governing structure of the NAP has created competition between organizations over funding and has excluded women's and diaspora organizations, even making survival impossible for WPP, one of the most important women's organizations in this context. Although most interviewees were attentive to the risks of co-optation, smaller and more radical organizations (and their knowledge) have indeed been marginalized and with them the security needs of women and men abroad. Yet, many of the critical CSO actors try working within the given structure while also challenging parts of it for future NAPs. Research on the implementation of the WPS agenda must unpack how NAPs come about to understand how their governmentality constitutes their limitations in terms of their state-centered and racialized security understandings and distribution of funding.

Examining the collaboration between the state and civil society in the context of the Dutch NAP, I have found that such cooperation should be problematized more in the literature on NAPs but also beyond the context of the WPS agenda. The peace and development organizations privileged in Dutch NAP funding have, of course, previously served as "partners" of the Dutch state and project implementers in other fields, such as development or security. These continuities and dependencies across policy fields are worth studying, and underline how ambiguous and messy the relationship between the state and civil society is when they are governing together. Moreover, the literature on development policies has long pointed to their "projectization" as a feature of governing at a distance. This article has shown that this is relevant beyond development or human rights policies, such as in the security field. On the one hand, this might indicate that the WPS agenda is still not considered to be part of "real" security policy and thus relegated to civil society. On the other hand, we are also seeing a projectization in the context of military and defense policy, albeit involving private actors from the arms industry (Hoijtink and Muehlenhoff 2020). While this is, of course, a very different – and more problematic – case, it further underlines the need to unpack the governmentality of making and implementing policies. Only then can we envision and practice alternative forms of security.

Notes

1. The fourth Dutch NAP (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2020) was published in December 2020 and is not the focus of this study. I conducted my research in 2019.

2. The representative from WO=MEN was interviewed three times, the first time by Freija van Dijk, a student research assistant from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam involved at the beginning of this research project. Van Dijk also participated in the interview with the MoFA of the Netherlands. After these first interviews, it became clear that the relationship between the different actors in NAP making was the most interesting issue in the Dutch case. Thus, I conducted second and third interviews with WO=MEN.

3. The fourth Dutch NAP includes Dutch asylum policy under the pillar "protection" (Dutch NAP 1325 Partnership 2020, 27).

4. The "polder model" is part of Dutch consensus democracy, which is characterized by consultation processes between the state and social and economic actors with the goal of finding a compromise (see Hendriks and Toonen 2017).

Notes on contributor

Hanna L. Muehlenhoff is Assistant Professor of European Studies with a focus on "Europe in the World" at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the Netherlands. Her research is on security, militarism, and human rights promotion in Europe and the European Union. Her work engages with feminist, queer, postcolonial, and Foucauldian perspectives. Her monograph *EU Democracy Promotion and Governmentality* (2019) was published by Routledge. Her articles have appeared in *Politics*, the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, and elsewhere. She co-edited a special issue on gender in European Union (EU) external relations for the *Political Studies Review* (2020).

ORCID

Hanna L. Muehlenhoff http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3444-5011

Interviews

CSO Interview A. June 11, 2019.
CSO Interview B. August 15, 2019.
CSO Interview C. August 21, 2019.
CSO Interview D. September 20, 2019.
CSO Interview E. October 22, 2019.
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WO=MEN Interview A. August 20, 2019.
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