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A U S T R A L I A

**'You go far but no further': Applying a Gendered Lens to the Women
Peace and Security Agenda in Post-Conflict Liberia**

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Abstract

This thesis explores how the UN Women Peace and Security (WPS) policy, formalised in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and expanded in an additional eight resolutions, is developed and implemented at the global, national and local levels of political action. In particular, the thesis builds on the scholarly literature that demonstrates how the language of the resolutions and in particular feminist concepts of gender, can inhibit the transformative aspirations of the feminist project embodied in the production of the WPS policy. These aspirations centre on the notable achievement of placing gender on the international security agenda and the disruption of the male norm in international security discourse.

Recognising that various strands of feminism inform the text of the WPS policy (Pratt 2013), the central argument of this thesis contends that the way gender is constructed in WPS policy, at the global, national and local levels, can enable and constrain its practical outcomes within the post-conflict context. The thesis recognises the link between gender constructs and policy outcomes, theorising an alternative explanation for the slow implementation of the WPS agenda. It does this through applying the analytical tool of the three-legged gender stool where each leg of the stool represents a different gender perspective (*gender-as-equality, gender-as-difference, gender-as-diversity*) based upon the feminist equality/ difference debates and the emergence of a diversity/intersectional approach (Booth and Bennett 2002).

As an analytical tool, the gender stool demonstrates how sites of gender inequality are addressed in distinctive ways, depending on which gender perspective informs the individual policy clauses and the strategies for their implementation. It also recognises how the gender perspectives are interconnected, encouraging the view that the broader agenda for gender equality should be informed by a mix of gender perspectives within the context of country specific gender equality practice history (Booth and Bennett 2002). This thesis argues that the conceptual understanding that different gender perspectives shape the global WPS policy has real implications for its implementation in post-conflict settings where political, economic and social structures have been devastated, creating a window of opportunity to transform traditional inequality regimes (Meintjes, Turshen and Pillay 2001).

Fieldwork conducted in Liberia (2014) provides the post-conflict context to explore how different gender perspectives can both positively and negatively impact the WPS implementation outcomes at the local level. Dialogues with respondents provide insight into how 'everyday' experiences of peace and security in Liberia are shaped by the

construction of gender in the global WPS policy, national frameworks and local practice.

Within the post-conflict landscape, while traditional gender norms can be unsettled, change is constrained by a number of factors. In particular, the translation of global policy into local practice is impacted by the liberal peacebuilding project and donor-country agendas, which are layered on top of local notions of gender, creating a complex web of competing and contradictory perspectives and outcomes.

The gender stool analysis undertaken reveals that a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant at the global, national and local levels, supported by a *gender-as-equality* perspective, closely aligning to the strands of feminism that Pratt identifies in the production of UNSCR 1325 (2013: 773-774). Interestingly, the analysis reveals that while a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant at all three levels, the implications of focusing primarily on a difference perspective engenders diverse implementation outcomes depending on which level (global, national or local) is invoking that perspective.

Declaration by author

This thesis *is composed of my original work, and contains* no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

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Publications during candidature

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Finally, I wish to dedicate this thesis to the women and girls who fight every day for equality, justice and security. It is a fight that affects us all. It is a fight that must be won if humanity is to not only survive but more importantly thrive in the twenty-first century and beyond.

“We cannot succeed when half of us are held back” – Malala Yousafzai.

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List of Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
GEI	Gender Equality Index
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development (Liberia)
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-government organisation
NGOWG	NGO Working Group
PfA	Platform for Action (Beijing)
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding
WIIS	Women in International Security
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women Peace and Security

Chapter One: Gender, the Women Peace and Security Agenda and The Post-Conflict Peace

Introduction

[Only] when the Security Council finds it unthinkable to address a crisis without addressing women's rights, when humanitarian responders have full funding for their gender-specific services, when women grassroots leaders find their work fully funded and politically supported, when it is unimaginable that peace talks be held without women's full engagement, only then will the full potential of 1325 be realized (Alaa Murabit from Voice of Libyan Women, speaking at Open Debate on Women Peace and Security, 2015)

No country in the world today can boast that gender equality is a lived reality for their women (Global Gender Gap Report 2014). The Gender Equality Index (GEI), upon which the Global Gender Report is based, reflects the gap that exists between women and men in 136 countries based on four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. Conflict can widen this gap through disrupting social, political and economic structures. This gap is further impacted by the instability of a society transitioning from conflict to peace, reconstructing the institutions, structures and lives of those whose communities and families have been impacted by violent conflict.

Violent conflict tears the social fabric of a society apart. Social, political and economic relations are devastated. The structures of government, the infrastructure of society, the bonds of community and the lives of women and men, girls and boys are destroyed. Conversely, violent conflict sometimes gives rise to transformative roles for women through the undermining of gender stereotypes in both the public and private spheres, enabling women to step outside their traditional roles. Through their roles in combat, some women disrupt norms around women only being seen as victims of violence. Through their roles in peacebuilding, some women reap other dividends in the process of conflict transition, which can be consolidated in the post-conflict reconstruction, particularly in relation to addressing women's rights and needs in the post-conflict peace.

Women in post-conflict countries face a range of challenges in their 'everyday' lives. Firstly, pre-conflict norms embedded in oppressive gender relations reassert themselves, often in the context where women's lives have changed (Yuval-Davis 2008: 171; Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015: 175). Secondly, post-conflict brings specific challenges such as the increased number of female-headed households and the heightened insecurity that accompanies the return of combatants to impoverished and decimated communities (Basini 2013; MacKenzie 2009).

Feminist scholarship and activism has for decades focused on addressing issues of gender inequality, either as an end in itself or as a means to a broader social equality. Building upon these strong foundations as well as the outcomes of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which recognised the differential impact of conflict on women and girls, the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) on October 31, 2000. UNSCR 1325 brought together years of advocacy, supporting reports, research and networking to place women and girls on the international security agenda (Tryggestad 2009; Otto 2010; Shepherd 2008a).

This thematic resolution, addressing issues not directly dealt with previously within the UN Security Council, established the policy framework for the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. It “seeks to rectify the systematic exclusion of women from peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction” (Porter and Mundkur 2012: 37) through increasing their participation and representation. Since 2000, the WPS Agenda has expanded to encompass eight resolutions, National Action Plans on Women Peace and Security (1325 NAPs) and global indicators to track implementation (S/2010/173). Decades of women’s and feminist advocacy, activism and transnational organising are reflected in the WPS policy, marking it as a key international policy framework that seeks to bring gender into the security discourses during and after conflict.

The violence of war, the “rending [of] the fine fabric of everyday life, its interlaced economies, its material systems of care and support, its social networks, the roofs that shelter it” (Cockburn 2004: 35) continues well beyond the boundaries of war and into the peace. This is particularly evident in the violence that continues to be inflicted upon women, often rising in the aftermath of violent conflict. This ‘continuum of violence’ (Cockburn 1998), manifested in the troubling levels of violence against women, gives rise to questions about the effectiveness of implementing WPS policy within a post-conflict setting.

For example, despite sustaining ‘peace’ since 2003 and implementing a 1325 NAP, post-conflict Liberia continues to suffer from high levels of violence against women (GNWP 2011). These high levels of violence remain despite Liberia being held up as “the gender equality poster child within the international arena” (Jennings 2012: 38) and the implementation of a 1325 NAP reflecting “vast international support” and a “highly consultative, multi-stakeholder process.... epitomis[ing] the principles and intent of UNSCR 1325” (Porter and Mundkur 2012: 41). This outcome suggests that the gains

anticipated in terms of women's equality, peace and security from implementing the WPS Agenda in a post-conflict environment are contestable (Pitanguy 2011).

The WPS scholarship offers a range of critical debates around the progress of the implementation of the WPS policy. Some debates point to the absence of strong political will, defined accountability measures and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks (Westendorf 2010: 22; Barnes 2006: 2; Coomaraswamy et al 2015; Otto 2010: 113; UN Women 2012a; EPLO 2013; Anderlini and Tirman 2010) as indicators for the slower than hoped for implementation. Other debates focus on the scope of the WPS policy, tools of implementation and the WPS policy language as hampering the implementation progress (Shepherd 2008a; McLeod 2011; Pratt 2013). I also recognise the implementation site as a potential barrier. In particular, this thesis focuses on the instability of post-conflict reconstruction as framing the implementation of the WPS policy. In this thesis I look beyond these critiques of the implementation to examine an alternative explanation to understand the progress made, based on how gender is constructed in WPS policy.

This thesis investigates how the WPS Agenda has been advanced and is pertinent to the broader achievement of peace and security in post-conflict societies. In particular, it examines how gender is conceptualised in the design of WPS implementation strategies and how this might have an enabling or constraining impact on women's 'everyday' experiences of peace and security. I examine this through applying a 'gender stool' analysis. The gender stool consists of three legs which represent a different gender perspective. The three gender perspectives reflect the feminist debates around equality, difference and intersectionality, underpinned by different feminist theories. Each of these perspectives or legs of the gender stool, which I term *gender-as-equality*, *gender-as-difference* and *gender-as-diversity*, are viewed as interconnected rather than oppositional constructs of gender broadly captured under liberal, cultural/radical and post-colonial/black feminist theory. The gender stool analysis focuses on the interconnections between different constructs of gender that are evident in a policy document providing a cross-jurisdictional analysis of the global and local context. A gender stool analysis provides an alternative analytical frame to interrogate the connections between global and local policy with attendant implications for how 'the everyday' is thought about. While the post-conflict context presents the opportunity to address the root causes of conflict and the unequal power relations that underpin them, it also poses many challenges in

terms of 'everyday' insecurity, scarcity and survival where gender represents just one aspect of the unequal social relations that may compound insecurity.¹

It is because post-conflict societies are by their very nature built from the ruins left by war that it presents a valuable site for analysing how the global WPS policy is implemented and what impact it has on the 'everyday' lives of those who are left to rebuild. It is from within this post-conflict landscape that greater insight can be gained into the practices and mechanisms that shape the 'everyday' experiences of peace and security. This thesis focuses on post-conflict policy development and post-conflict Liberia presents as a suitable case study because it draws out key issues related to how the 'everyday' is defined, at the intersection of feminist and critical peace studies. The case study also examines how 'everyday' experiences of peace and security are shaped by the international, national and local mechanisms aimed at addressing gender inequality. Most importantly, it looks at both the global and local levels together, highlighting their connectedness in terms of the practical outcomes that are achievable when translating global policy into local practice.

Research Questions

This interest in the challenge of achieving 'everyday' peace and security for women in post-conflict societies through implementing global and local gender policy is further developed in this thesis and is guided by one broad and one narrow research question specifically revolving around the WPS Agenda. I do this through considering the broader global WPS policy and its implementation within a local post-conflict context by asking:

1. *How is gender constructed in the global WPS policy?*
2. *What is the enabling and constraining impact of these particular constructions of gender in WPS policy at the global, national and local levels?*

These questions arise out of a review of the relevant literature and will be addressed through reflections drawn from case study based research conducted for this project in post-conflict Liberia. Addressing the research questions and designing the research project is underpinned by a *feminist research ethic* (Ackerly and True 2008).

¹ When I use the term 'everyday', I am referring to the individual level of social interaction, as opposed to the structural and institutional levels. For example, when I mention 'everyday' insecurity, I am referring to the insecurity that individuals experience in their daily lives as opposed to structural or institutional insecurity.

Women Peace and Security – Policy and Debates

In answering the research questions posed in this thesis, it is first necessary to outline the intent of the WPS policy and the issues I perceive arise from the WPS scholarship and debates, especially in terms of how gender is understood in these debates.

Women Peace and Security – Policy

The UN Security Council has, since its inception in the aftermath of World War Two, been a bastion of international security discourse, set within a realist (masculine) paradigm. Shifts within this paradigm towards a human security focus has borne fruit for feminist activism in the later twentieth and early twenty-first century. This is realised by the positioning of the WPS Agenda within the policy frameworks of the Security Council recognising for the first time that women are central to international peace and security.

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 (2000), however, was not easy and its final form was developed after intense negotiations with key Member states. These negotiations required many compromises which are evident when comparing the broader feminist agenda covering such issues as the impact of militarism and the call for nuclear disarmament (Tryggestad 2009; Cockburn 2007; Cohn 2008; McLeod 2011) to the final language of UNSCR 1325 (Shepherd 2008b).

UNSCR 1325 created a space within the all too masculine structures of the UN Security Council for annual open debates and reports by the Secretary-General on the progress and challenges of implementing the WPS Agenda. It also created space for the adoption of a further seven WPS resolutions: UNSCRs 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015). These resolutions reflect the broad normative standards embodied in human rights, legal principles and humanitarian law (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011: 491). The subsequent resolutions both narrow and broaden the policy framework set out in UNSCR 1325. The central aim of the WPS Agenda to incorporate women's rights and gender perspectives into international peace and security can be traced through how each of the resolutions address the four WPS pillars.

The WPS policy framework has become organised around four WPS pillars: **Participation, Prevention, Protection** and **Relief and Recovery** (see 2007 System-wide Action Plan S/2007/567; Porter and Mundkur 2012: 36). All pillars focus on women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, with particular reference to “incorporat[ing] a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations” (UNSCR 1325 2000: Operational Paragraph (OP) 5). The WPS participation pillar calls for the increase in women’s

participation and representation at all levels of decision making and in all institutions related to conflict resolution and peace processes (UNSCR 1325). The WPS prevention pillar calls for the increase in the representation of women in institutions and mechanisms for the prevention of conflict (UNSCR 1325). This pillar has expanded to include the prevention of sexual violence as a key factor in maintaining peace and security (UNSCR 2106). The WPS protection pillar calls for the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), especially during armed conflict. The WPS relief and recovery pillar calls for the needs of women and girls during and after conflict (UNSCR 1325). In particular, it focuses on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), transitional justice and governance reforms.

Women Peace and Security – Debates

There is a growing body of feminist literature that examines many different aspects of the WPS policy including its scope, implementation tools, framing and capacity of those targeted. In particular, I examine these debates from the perspective of the post-conflict context only, though I note that the WPS policy is applicable to a variety of contexts including conflict and non-conflict. The WPS scholarship highlight the difficulties that arise when trying to translate global policy into national frameworks and local practice.

The challenges recognised in the literature arise in terms of increasing participation in peace processes and decision-making, preventing and responding to SGBV, strengthening accountability and monitoring and securing resources for initiatives to promote gender equality (UN Women 2009: 13-15; Moore 2008: 1; Otto 2010:106, 113; EPLO 2010, 2013; Anderlini and Tirman 2010; Miller, Pournik and Swaine 2014; Coomaraswamy et al 2015).

A number of factors are commonly identified in the literature to explain the challenges to progress of implementation including the lack of: accountability measures in the initial WPS policy framework; political will to meet WPS obligations; dedicated and ongoing budget resources; monitoring and evaluation frameworks; and a working understanding of the WPS Agenda at all levels (Otto 2010: 113; Barnes 2006: 2; Westendorf 2010: 22; Coomaraswamy et al 2015; George and Shepherd 2016; Anderlini and Tirman 2010: 3). The WPS literature can usefully be divided into four categories of debate, each engaging with and informing the ongoing challenges to implementing the WPS policy. I engage with these debates in detail in Chapter Two and briefly summarise them below.

The first category of debate focuses on the sufficiency of the WPS policy and what is missing from the policy framework. The second category of debate focuses on the

implementation tools and how the WPS policy is being translated from global policy into local actions. Two major strategies have been utilised to implement the WPS policy: mainstreaming gender and 1325 NAPs. The third category of debate focuses on the feminist gender literature and how different constructions of gender inform the WPS policy. The fourth category of debate centres on the transition from conflict to post-conflict, war to peace. I examine this literature from the perspective of the liberal peace debates to gain an understanding of how the transition from conflict to post-conflict can be viewed as a multi-layered and complex space/place, encompassing a range of international interventions and missions (Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011).

Engaging Further Lines of Enquiry – Gender, Post-Conflict and the ‘Everyday’

The debates in WPS scholarship engage with the perceived impacts of the WPS policy, its progress towards implementation and the challenges it incurs in addressing unequal gender relations within a post-conflict context. These debates, however, only provide a partial explanatory frame for the ongoing WPS implementation challenges. I identify two key lines of enquiry which form the basis of an alternative explanatory frame to understand the progress and outcomes of implementing the WPS policy. These two lines of enquiry are taken up in this thesis to answer the research questions and inform the thesis argument and research design.

The first line of enquiry that this thesis takes up addresses the shortcomings that arise around how WPS scholarship currently understands gender and how it engages with different gender perspectives. Some scholars acknowledge the limitations of WPS policy language around gender, while others identify that the WPS policy contains different feminist perspectives of gender based on different strands of feminist thinking (Pratt 2013; Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2013; Shepherd 2008a). For example, Pratt (2013) identifies that while the WPS policy contains liberal, cultural and radical feminist constructs of gender it lacks a focus on a post-colonial/black feminist construct.

Each of these strands of feminism are underpinned by different perspectives of gender and are reflective of the feminist debates around equality, difference and intersectionality. Liberal feminist theory is underpinned by an equality perspective of gender (*gender-as-equality*), where women strive to be placed on equal footing with men, focusing on their similarities (Squires 2005: 368). Cultural and radical feminist theory is underpinned by a difference perspective of gender (*gender-as-difference*), where women are celebrated for their differences from men (Squires 2005: 368). Post-colonial/black

feminist theory embraces an intersectional perspective of gender (*gender-as-diversity*), where gender is just one of a diverse range of intersecting identities (hooks 1981; Crenshaw 1989). Shepherd's (2008a) analysis of the language of the WPS policy supports this critique that the WPS policy contains different perspectives of gender informed by opposing feminist theories.

While this scholarship engages with the potential implications that different gender perspectives in the WPS policy may have on the practical outcomes of implementation, it perpetuates the common stance that views the gender perspectives that arise from different feminist theories as being oppositional (Hansen 2010: 17-27). For example, Pratt's call for a decisive shift away from those feminisms "that prioritize gender over other social relations of power" to "embrace feminisms that see gender as always constituted through and constitutive of race, sexuality, class and other relations of power in specific historical moments" (2013: 780), rests upon privileging one gender perspective (*gender-as-diversity*) over other gender perspectives (*gender-as-equality* and *gender-as-difference*). This oppositional stance tends to ignore the interconnections and links between the different gender perspectives that have evolved over the past half century.

Gender Stool Theoretical Framework

By proposing that these interconnections and links could be more usefully engaged to provide greater insight into how different gender perspectives enable and constrain WPS policy outcomes, I offer an alternative explanatory frame to those currently found in the WPS scholarship. Specifically, I develop a three-legged 'gender stool' analytical frame that engages with the interconnections and links between the different gender perspectives, recognising rather than ranking or judging them (Pratt 2013).

Each leg of the gender stool represents one of the three distinct gender perspectives advanced within feminist theory in relation to defining and addressing gender inequality. That is, there is an individual leg for a perspective of gender *as-equality*, *as-difference* and *as-diversity*. Within the gender stool analytical frame, the gender perspectives have an equivalent value, each addressing different aspects that inform the perpetuation of gender inequality within specific contexts. All co-exist as distinct yet connected perspectives (legs) of gender.

The integrity of the stool within a specific context rests on how well each of the legs are connected in terms of providing a stable platform from which to challenge unequal gender relations. The stability of the gender stool in relation to implementing WPS policy within a specific location is not reliant on all legs being equally engaged. Rather it is dependent on balancing the competing needs of socio-cultural, political and

economic factors alongside the equality practice history and the overarching goals of future equality practice *of a specific implementation site* (e.g. Liberia). This balancing act may require, for example, a greater focus on *gender-as-equality* if the legal frameworks supporting equality are lacking.

The emphasis placed on the individual legs of the stool will differ greatly between different implementation sites, highlighting the need to focus not only on the global WPS policy documents but also on the local context. The importance of recognising the need to situate the global WPS policy within the local context is further developed in the second line of enquiry that the review of the scholarship foregrounded within the critical peace studies literature.

The second line of enquiry that this thesis takes up builds on the application of a gender stool analytical tool through focusing on exposing how global policy can be assimilated and resisted at the local level of implementation and how the WPS policy can positively and negatively shift and be co-opted within a post-conflict landscape. In particular, it recognises the need to look at both the global and local levels together, something that a lot of WPS work tends not to do. In focusing on the connections between the global and local that is enabled by the gender stool analysis, there are also implications for how we think about the ‘everyday’, particularly the local ‘everyday’ peace and security concerns that arise in a post-conflict context.

A common starting point for engaging with notions of the ‘everyday’ and the ‘local’ in the post-conflict landscape is from the perspective of the liberal peace debates. Within this scholarship, the notion of the ‘local’ is debated as a critique and site of resistance, as well as a site of friction between global and local notions of peace (Richmond 2008, 2009a, 2010a; Richmond and Mitchell 2012; Donias 2012; Björkdahl 2012; George 2016).

In order to more fully understand the implications for the ‘everyday’ peace and security of women and girls enabled and constrained through implementing the global WPS policy into local practice, it is necessary to engage with a notion of the ‘everyday’ that captures the complexities of daily life in a post-conflict setting. For this purpose I draw strongly on the work of Roberts (2011). Roberts focuses on the post-conflict space of extremes where the “everyday is concerned with matters that secure the individual from routine, day-to-day contingencies” as opposed to how security is imagined and privileged in peacebuilding (2011: 412). That is, it takes a bottom up approach to defining how individuals populate the ‘everyday’ and how day-to-day lived reality shapes insecurity.

Strengthening Roberts notion of the ‘everyday’ and providing a much needed

feminist lens to his critical peace studies lens is the scholarship of Björkdahl and Ivan (2015), George (2016) and McLeod (2015). This scholarship focuses on the tensions that arise and how notions of the local shift through resistance and co-optation as well as the application of a feminist lens to the notion of hybridity and the interactions between local and international actors. This scholarship on the 'everyday' and 'local' provides a much needed context specific lens to the analysis of the impact and progress of the WPS policy implementation when applying the gender stool analytical frame. Such a context specific application of the gender stool, recognises that "gender, identity, expectations and norms" are "at the very root of what constitutes and creates security and insecurity for both women and men" (Handrahan 2004: 442). It is from within this feminist frame that I locate notions of the 'everyday' and the 'local' in terms of implementing the WPS Agenda.

The focus on the connections between the global and the local that are drawn out through the gender stool analysis and the implications for how the 'everyday' is conceptualised are drawn together through a case study on post-conflict Liberia. Post-conflict Liberia poses a suitable and unique case to study the WPS policy implementation as it draws out the key issues related to the 'everyday' and the global and the local context at the intersection of feminist and critical peace studies. There is a growing interest and scholarship at this intersection and this thesis makes a contribution to this literature.

Applying a Feminist Lens to Post-Conflict Liberia

The choice of post-conflict Liberia as the case study site in this thesis is based on a range of factors. As noted above, post-conflict Liberia presents as a suitable case to study the key issues related to the 'everyday' and the connections between the global and local WPS policy implementation. Liberia is particularly suitable due to its current international reputation as being the UN poster child for gender equality (Jennings 2012: 38).

Liberia's reputation is based on the strong stance of the Liberian government in terms of gender equality, led by the first female elected President of an African country, Noble Peace Prize winning Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2006 to present). Madam Johnson Sirleaf had previously been assisted in completing an assessment of UNSCR 1325 for the UN (Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf 2002). Further, the development of a 1325 NAP (2009), implementation of a National Gender Policy (2009) and a 1325 Secretariat in the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD), is underpinned by a gender equality social change agenda (Jennings 2012). All provide further evidence that there is positive political backing for implementing the WPS Agenda in this context. Based on this

evidence Liberia presents as a unique case for studying the success of implementing the WPS Agenda in a post-conflict context.

Fieldwork was undertaken in Liberia during the period 28 March to 20 April 2014, where a variety of data was collected. The data collected included a number of key documents, policies and programs as well as conversational dialogues and unstructured observations. I conducted a content analysis and gender stool analysis on the global WPS policy, Liberian 1325 NAP and fieldwork data. These analyses enable a comparison of how gender is constructed in the WPS policy at the global, national and local levels and the continuities and discontinuities that arise in the translation of the global WPS policy into local practice.

My analysis privileges the testimony of respondents. This allows me to contextualise and contrast the analysis of the WPS Agenda related documents and the impact of its implementation at the local level. Over the course of my fieldwork in Liberia, I conducted a series of individual dialogues with forty-eight respondents representing UN agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs, government and the private sector. In addition to personal dialogues I also collected data through unstructured observations, mostly consisting of personal observations and conversations while staying in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia.

The choice of a post-conflict case study site enforced some limitations on my research. Due to security considerations, which were addressed within my fieldwork safety plan, travel outside of Monrovia was always going to be difficult. With the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus coinciding with my arrival in Liberia, health safety considerations further impacted my movements in and around Monrovia, foreclosing travel outside of Monrovia. While this restricted the pool of respondents I had access to, those I did engage with had extensive experience both as 'local' rural women and working closely with 'local' rural women, within the conflict and post-conflict periods.

The case study method and analytical tools employed are all underpinned by a *feminist research ethic* (Ackerly and True 2008). This ethic guides and informs how I approach the subject matter and the development of the case study methods I deploy to investigate the experiences of implementing the WPS Agenda in a post-conflict context.

The underpinning of my research by feminist methodologies requires the central positioning of gender in the research design. That is, gender needs to be positioned within an epistemological frame in order to disclose how gender is understood within the differing feminist theories. I draw on Haraway's articulation of 'situated knowledges' which not only takes account of the knowledge that women's experiences embody, it also

recognises that such knowledge is situated within particular socio-historical contexts and therefore, can only ever be partial (1988). Using Haraway's 'situated knowledges' as my epistemological frame embodies "partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology" (1988: 584).

Thesis Arguments and Research Design

Based on the two lines of enquiry explored above and underpinned by a case study in Liberia and a 'situated knowledges' feminist epistemological frame, I contend that understanding how gender is constructed in the global WPS policy, in national plans and in local practice assists in more broadly explaining the difficulties encountered when implementing the WPS Agenda within post-conflict societies. Focusing on how gender is constructed in WPS policy opens up new lines of enquiry into the continuing challenges to engender implementation outcomes as well as highlighting further options to reduce those challenges.

In this thesis I argue that the way gender is constructed in the WPS policy, either *as-equality*, *as-difference* or *as-diversity* at the global, national and local levels, each of which are the legs of my gender stool approach, can both enable and constrain its practical outcomes within a post-conflict context. I recognise the link between gender constructs and policy outcomes, theorising an alternative explanation for the challenges that continue to hamper the implementation of the WPS agenda.

I apply a gender stool analysis at the global, national and local levels to reveal how gender equality policies and practices are addressed in distinctive ways, depending on which gender perspective informs the individual policy clauses and the strategies for their implementation. I also utilise the gender stool to highlight the interconnectedness of the differing gender perspectives, encouraging the view that the broader agenda for gender equality should be informed by a variety of gender perspectives, not predominately by one perspective. That is, within a single policy framework, such as the WPS Agenda, the mix of gender perspectives can both enable and restrict the outcomes possible from its implementation. As noted by Pratt (2013), the WPS policy reflects liberal (*gender-as-equality*), cultural (*gender-as-difference*) and radical (*gender-as-difference*) feminist theory but lacks a post-colonial/black feminist theory (*gender-as-diversity* perspective).

Conceptually therefore, the WPS policy looks to address sites of gender inequality through levelling the playing field to allow women and men to be recognised as equals while also promoting, where required, affirmative action so women can be recognised as

women, celebrating those attributes which make them different from men. That is, it reflects both a *gender-as-equality* and *gender-as-difference* perspective at the international level. Based on an assessment of the WPS policy, there is a predominant focus on a *gender-as-difference* perspective.

I argue that the predominance of a single gender perspective undermines the extent to which WPS policy can ever achieve practical outcomes which challenge unequal gender relations. This occurs due to the relative neglect of the other gender perspectives which ignores the interconnectedness of the three perspectives within a broader agenda for addressing unequal gender relations. I develop this argument by examining the implementation of the WPS Agenda in post-conflict Liberia.

This conceptual understanding of how different gender perspectives permeate the WPS policy, I contend, has real implications for its implementation in post-conflict settings where the political, economic and social structures have been devastated. While the post-conflict period can create a window of opportunity to transform traditional inequality regimes (Meintjes, Turshen and Pillay 2001), the opportunities are framed within the policies implemented and actions taken to address gender inequality.

In advancing this argument, I do not attribute all the difficulties of implementing the WPS Agenda to the application of a particular gender perspective. Many other factors such as resource and capability constraints are also applicable. While these constraints may be viewed independently of the difficulties that arise from particular perspectives of gender, they too are gendered. That is, how gender is understood influences the allocation of scarce resources and the strategies to address capability constraints. So while I do not attribute all the difficulties of implementing the WPS Agenda to the application and neglect of particular gender perspectives, specific gender perspectives are implicated in how other constraints are managed. Such conceptual constraints do produce material constraints in practice.

Key Findings

In this thesis I utilise a case study method to focus on a single implementation of the WPS Agenda, examining how the WPS policy reflects particular gender perspectives at the global, national and local levels. I do this to assess how different gender perspectives shape the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS policy. This analysis gives rise to a number of key findings around how the global WPS policy is translated into local practice, providing an alternative explanation for the persistent challenges to implementation.

A review of the literature reveals that while there has been extensive review and evaluation of the WPS policy and its implementation, challenges to implementation persist and progress remains slow (Coomaraswamy et al 2015). This led me to pursue the line of enquiry around the link between how gender is constructed in the global WPS policy, national frameworks and local practice within a post-conflict context.

I identified three critical constructions of gender (*gender-as-equality*, *gender-as-difference* and *gender-as-diversity*) which I represent in the three legs of the gender stool framework. In conducting a gender stool analysis of the global WPS policy I found that it is predominantly underpinned by a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The dominance of this perspective foreshadows the lesser focus on a *gender-as-equality* perspective and lack of focus on a *gender-as-diversity* perspective. While other frames exist, the dominant frame at the global level reflects a 'women's issues' frame portraying women as victims in international peace and security discourse, which subsequently limits women's agency (Dharmapuri 2011; Otto 2010: 108; El-Bushra 2000: 135; Puechguirbal 2010: 180; Porter and Mundkur 2012: 79; Shepherd 2008a; Puechguirbal 2008; Pratt 2013).

The gender stool analysis of the Liberian 1325 NAP returned a similar finding, predominantly reflecting a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The predominance of the *difference* perspective was more pronounced at the national level, particularly in terms of the global WPS participation pillar. This reflected the focus at a national level on programs and empowerment schemes targeted only at women. Further differences also arose in terms of translating the four global WPS pillars into the four WPS Liberian pillars. At the national level, the global WPS pillars were interpreted in ways that both reinforced and contested their global understanding, reflecting the nuances that occur across the global-national divide in translating a global policy into national plans. For example, the Liberian 1325 NAP participation and empowerment pillar encompasses the global WPS prevention pillar, while the Liberian prevention pillar focuses solely on prevention of sexual violence, aligning to the global WPS protection pillar.

The gender stool analysis of the fieldwork data, reflecting my respondents' interpretation of how the WPS policy has impacted Liberian women at the local level, also found that a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant. However, the implications for the predominance of a *difference* approach to implementation to some extent contradicted the global and national analysis. Where a *difference* approach at the global and national levels tended to limit and restrict the outcomes for women, such an approach at the local level, *when initiated by local women, for local women*, tended to enable better outcomes. This contradiction complicates my initial argument that states

that different gender perspectives enable and constrain the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS policy.

Similar to how Tripp explains that political success of equality and difference approaches to gender depends “on the dominant understandings and framing of difference within the broader society” (2016: 320), my own findings echo this view. They show that implementation outcomes of the WPS Agenda are not solely based on understandings of gender in the global policy. These understandings can be adjusted when it is localised in post-conflict societies firstly by the gender equality practice history that underpins the development of a 1325 NAP and gender mainstreaming frameworks and secondly by ‘everyday’ understandings of gender in local community settings. In the gender stool analysis I show how different gender perspectives shape practical outcomes. The analysis also points towards contrary outcomes in terms of whether those gender perspectives arise within global policy, national plan or local practice.

Overall, the key findings of this thesis reveal that at the global, national and local levels, a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant. At the global and national levels, such predominance at the expense of both a *gender-as-equality* and *gender-as-diversity* perspectives tends to constrain the outcomes of implementation. It can marginalise, if not silence, the voices of communities of ‘everyday’ women and men in the perpetuation of inequality, conflict and violence, thereby misdirecting efforts to address these phenomena at the local level.

This misdirection and marginalisation can be resisted through the actions of local communities negotiating the ‘everyday’ spaces of the post-conflict peace. For example, it was women from communities receiving awareness training that asked for their men to be included in programs, so that men too could become aware of women’s rights and the challenges they face, in order to become part of the solution. This supports the finding that at the local level, more enabling outcomes are possible where actions are initiated within local communities of women, for the benefit of local women. While these initiatives are more enabling than global and national ones, they are still somewhat constrained through the lack of engagement with *equality* and *diversity* perspectives. These key findings provide an alternative explanation for the persistent challenges to the progress of WPS policy implementation, even in places like Liberia which is held up as the UN poster child for gender equality (Jennings 2012: 38).

Underpinning these key findings is the gender stool analytical tool. The gender stool brings the three key gender perspectives (equality, difference and diversity) into conversation with each other, rather than viewing them as oppositional. This is an

innovative way of conceptualising WPS policy development, as noted in the key findings above. Furthermore, it requires that the global and local levels be brought together within a single analysis, something that has not been standard practice in assessing the outcomes of implementing the WPS policy.

Original Contribution

In this thesis I explore the challenge laid down in UNSCR 2122 which recognises that “without a significant implementation shift, women and women’s perspectives will continue to be underrepresented in conflict prevention, resolution, protection and peacebuilding for the foreseeable future” (2013: OP15). To answer this challenge, I propose a “significant implementation shift” through reconsidering the relationship between the WPS Agenda, gender and the ‘local’ within a post-conflict environment. I base this reconsideration on exploring how the construction of gender in the global WPS policy, national plans and local implementation enables and constrains the practical outcomes of the WPS Agenda.

Understanding how different gender perspectives impact upon the outcomes possible from implementing the WPS Agenda, contributes an alternative explanation for the challenges that are impeding implementation progress. Further, the construction of gender in WPS policy has a different impact, depending on whether it forms part of the global policy, national plans or local implementation. For example, at the local level, the *gender-as-difference* perspective can engender greater positive outcomes if it is locally initiated and locally focused when compared to global or national initiatives that may appear to some stakeholders as externally imposed.

I develop this understanding of the impact of different gender perspectives by undertaking a gender stool analysis on the global, national and local policy, plans and practice. The gender stool analysis maps the relationship between the different gender perspectives as they are constructed at each level, identifying which perspectives are predominant. It is the predominance of a single gender perspective in the absence of attention to the other gender perspectives, I contend, that offers an alternative explanatory frame for the challenges that impede progress towards WPS policy implementation.

Overview of the Thesis – Chapter Outline

The chapters that follow bring together the theoretical and empirical elements of my research on the implementation of the WPS Agenda in post-conflict Liberia. My research

centres on how the WPS Agenda is implemented in relation to challenging unequal gender relations. The thesis is divided into eight chapters, including the current one.

Chapter Two engages with the literature that informs and supports the research question and the arguments made by my research. I begin by exploring the literature and documents that set up the framework for implementing the WPS policy. From this foundation I review the debates related to the WPS literature to understand the challenges and slow progress of implementation.

Chapter Three details the methodology, the methods and fieldwork I engage with in my thesis. An underpinning *feminist research ethic* (Ackerly and True 2008) informs how the methods engage the data at each stage. This is reflected in the review of the literature and the content and gender stool analysis of the case study data. The embedding of the research within a feminist methodology also shapes how I respond to the many ethical challenges that are inherent in conducting fieldwork on gender equality in a post-conflict, male-dominated society (Fuest 2008; Jennings 2012).

The rest of the thesis is divided into two parts. Part One, encompassing Chapter Four is titled: Global Policy and Practice, while Part Two, encompassing Chapters Five, Six and Seven is titled: National Frameworks and Local Practice – Liberian Case Study. After a brief historical background on the origins of the WPS policy, Chapter Four provides an analysis of the global WPS policy. The analysis is structured around the four global WPS pillars of participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery. The content analysis describes the scope of each of the pillars, while the gender stool analysis maps out the mix of gender perspectives evident in each pillar.

Chapter Five provides the historical background to the case study. It examines the positioning of the diverse experiences of Liberian women and how these underpin the inequality and injustices they still face in their 'everyday' communities. This positioning is examined through an historical narrative of Liberian women's relations, past and present with the ruling power authority (State). This narrative draws set the background context for the following chapters which assess the national plans and local implementation of the WPS policy.

Chapter Six turns to the national level with an analysis of the gender equality practice history of Liberia and the Liberian 1325 NAP. The analysis of the gender equality practice history is structured around the different policies, institutions, events and laws that shape the production of the Liberian 1325 NAP. The analysis of the Liberian 1325 NAP centres on the four global WPS pillars, in line with the analysis conducted in Chapter Four.

Chapter Seven engages extensively with the fieldwork data. It examines several key themes that arise from the data, structured within the frame of the four global WPS pillars. The themes that arise at the local level include non-government organisations/civil society organisations (NGOs/CSOs), awareness raising, security, justice, empowerment and local peace and security initiatives. These themes are aligned to the four global WPS pillars to assess the impact of their implementation at the local level.

Chapter Eight pulls together the threads from the theory and the case study findings to examine possibilities for challenging unequal gender relations through recognising how different gender perspectives enable and constrain the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda in a post-conflict environment. It highlights the consequences and subsequent limitations and contradictions that adhere to the implementation of the WPS Agenda that predominately reflects a *gender-as-difference* perspective at the global, national and local levels.

In conclusion, I contend that the impact of focusing more predominately on one gender perspective (*gender-as-difference*) over the other two (*gender-as-equality*, *gender-as-diversity*), has real consequences in terms of what can be achieved strategically and operationally in implementing the WPS Agenda within the post-conflict context. The rest of this thesis outlines what those consequences are and provides a possible way forward to maximise the potential of implementing the WPS Agenda in post-conflict landscapes to challenge unequal gender relations.

Chapter Two: Framing Women in International Peace and Security

Introduction

Not until the hierarchical social relations, including gender relations, that have been hidden by realism's frequently depersonalized discourse are brought to light can we begin to construct a language of national security that speaks out of the multiple experiences of both women and men (Tickner 1995: 66).

The position of women within international peace and security, within conflict-affected contexts and as subjects of international agendas around human rights has been the focus of feminist literature for decades. "Where are the women?" (Enloe 1990) has been a common feminist catchphrase. Even when we try to bring women into the discourses around international security, challenges remain. While the WPS Agenda is specifically about women, most international policy and practice is not. My research is informed by this feminist literature, focusing on the impact and progress towards implementation of the WPS Agenda within the post-conflict landscape.

The policy framework for the WPS Agenda is set up in UNSCR 1325 (2000) and supplemented by seven subsequent WPS resolutions. In the decade and half since its adoption, 65 Member states have implemented the WPS Agenda through the development of 1325 NAPs. One of the major criticisms of the WPS Agenda, however, has been its lack of impact and slow implementation (Swaine 2009: 411; Aroussi 2011; Charlesworth and Chinkin 2006; Coomaraswamy et al 2015).

I explore the various explanations offered in the literature around the challenges that have led to the slow progress towards implementation of the WPS policy. Specifically, I explore how the implementation of the WPS Agenda is shaped and informed by the scope of the resolutions, the tools of implementation and construction of gender within the post-conflict landscape. From this engagement with the literature I develop two research questions which address the gaps inherent in the critiques, stretching, extending and building upon the wealth of critical literature that informs this chapter and this thesis.

Gendering International Peace and Security – Where are the women?

In this chapter, I frame the WPS Agenda and feminist activism for peace and security in terms of the Enloe's classic question "Where are the women?" (1990). "Where are the women?" is a central concern, question and demand that feminists make through their activism and academic work. Feminist activism at the transnational, national and local levels engages with sites of gender inequality and women's responses to and survival of

the 'everyday' lived reality of that inequality. Through activism and scholarship, women/gender are placed at the centre in order to achieve outcomes that directly or indirectly address the burdens of gender inequality through viewing global politics from the margins and focusing on ending gender subordination (Tickner 1992).

Gender plays a central role in feminist theorising, embracing social constructionist meanings of femininity and masculinity (the exaggerated basis of sex differences) as opposed to (biological) sex which represents the physiological differences between male and female bodies (McCann and Kim 2010: 14). In the 1970s, feminists took this initial articulation of gender as "socially constructed" to conduct analysis and studies to reinforce its basis in social life (see Oakley 1972; Rubin 1975).

As feminist theory became more complex so too did the notion of what constituted gender, leading Joan Scott to redefine gender as "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and ... a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (1986: 1067-1068). Peterson's definition of gender reflects its basic constitution in social constructionist terms:

Gender refers not to anatomical or biological distinctions but to the social construction, which is always culturally specific, of masculine and feminine as hierarchical and oppositional categories. Symbols, theories, practices, institutions, and, of course, individuals are gendered, meaning that their characteristics can be associated with, or construed as manifestations of, masculinity or femininity (Peterson 1998: 41 quoted in Alison 2009: 9).

Peterson's definition is reflective of the relational and situational construction of gender (Alison 2009: 9). That is, the meaning of gender is dependent upon the specific time and space/place and can reflect different meanings at different times and in different spaces/places (Tripp 2000: 649). This is important when using gender as a central focal point of research as this reminds us of the context specific nature of gender analysis and the need for generalisability to be done carefully.

Following the work of Björkdahl and Selimovic, this is particularly pertinent in my thesis as they demonstrate "post-conflict as a gendered time and space/[place]" (2015: 168-9), giving rise to enabling and disabling spaces for women. For example, the transition from conflict to post-conflict typically sees a shift from enabling non-stereotypical gendered roles, to the return of more disabling stereotypical roles (Yuval-Davis 2008: 171; Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015: 175). Conflict poses many disabling spaces for women, as evidenced in the use of rape as a feature of conflict related violence (Davies and True: 2015), but in the midst of conflict, women sometimes find empowerment in occupying spaces of work and responsibility formerly held by their men.

Similarly, the post-conflict time and space often brings with it a continuation if not an increase in the prevalence of gender-based violence during conflict (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015: 175). In situations of post-conflict, constructions of gender in policy and understandings of gender in practice can have material impacts on outcomes for gender equality (Pratt 2013; Tripp 2016: 320).

In terms of my thesis, the working definition of gender used by some UN agencies, including UN Women provides an appropriate and valid starting point to examine how a social constructionist notion of gender informs international peace and security and its flexibility in terms of embracing context specific time and space/place connotations. The definition of gender used by the UN, the key international organisation in terms of international peace and security, states that gender encompasses:

the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm> accessed 03 Nov 2014).

The UN definition emphasises that the differences attributed to women and to men are socially constructed differences and that those differences need to be placed within the context of the relations between women and men and also in the context of other socio-cultural factors such as class, ethnicity and religion. This is consistent with Peterson's definition and also reflects a relational and situated construction.

Applying a feminist lens to international peace and security, the WPS Agenda can be viewed as a prime example of the centring of women/gender in international peace and security. While the WPS Agenda provides a concrete milestone for asking the question "where are the women in international peace and security?", the groundwork for recognising the impact of war and its aftermath on women's security can be traced back to the 1975 UN World Conference on Women held in Mexico. This first world conference on women produced a World Plan of Action setting out guidelines encompassing an agenda for rights, development and peace, reflective of the primary concerns of women from the West, East and South.

This period also saw the declaration of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985) foregrounding the growth of a diverse and transnational women's movement (Bunch and Reilly 1994: 3). In particular, this decade saw the rise of activism and lobbying around women's human rights and saw the inaugural *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence* (1991), marking the number of days between the International Day Against Violence Against Women (November 25) and the International Human Rights Day (December 10) (Bunch and Reilly 1994: 4).

The decade also encompassed two more UN World Conferences. The second UN World Conference on Women (1980) held in Copenhagen reviewed the 1975 plan, while the third conference in Nairobi in 1985 set in place concrete measures for its implementation (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women#beijing> accessed 15 January 2015).

During this time, increasing attention was paid to the impact of conflict on women, particularly with reference to the scourge of the 'new wars' (Kaldor 2007). These so-called 'new wars' saw the alarming increase in the reported use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and the high numbers of non-combatant deaths and trauma suffered. This was particularly evident in the wars that devastated the former countries of Yugoslavia (Bassiouni and McCormick 1996; Park 2007).

In June 1993, the "Women's Rights as Human Rights" campaign made it onto the agenda of the UN Conference on Human Rights, providing an important platform for furthering the cause of gender equality (Bunch and Reilly 1994). This increased attention on the ongoing work to concretise the measures arising from the first three UN World Conferences on Women, which was expanded and capitalised on at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The Beijing conference delivered a progressive and ambitious agenda for women's rights and empowerment, signifying a substantial turning point for the global agenda for gender equality (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women#beijing> accessed on 15 January 2015).

As part of this ambitious agenda, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing PfA) (UN Doc: A/52/231) included a chapter on "Women and Armed Conflict" (Chapter IV.E), which, along with an array of other documents and events, can be directly linked to the production of the WPS Agenda. The groundwork for converting the groundswell around the impact of armed conflict on women into a thematic resolution on women, peace and security took centre stage in 1998 starting with the debates at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In 2000, while president of

the Security Council, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury delivered an International Women's Day speech centred on "equality, development, peace and the need for women's urgent involvement in these matters" (Hill, Aboitiz and Poehlman-Doumbouya 2003: 1257). This opened the door for campaigning by the Women and Armed Conflict caucus and lobbying by the newly formed NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security (NGOWG on WPS) for a Security Council debate and resolution (Cohn 2004: 4).

After months of behind the scenes lobbying and information gathering and dissemination, the first open session debate on women, peace and security occurred in September 2000, consisting of over 40 speeches (<http://www.peacewomen.org/>). This open debate brought together women from conflict zones all over the world with Security Council members and provided them a space to testify about how conflict had impacted their lives. The success of this debate became enshrined on October 31, 2000 when UNSCR 1325 was unanimously adopted by the Security Council, forming the cornerstone resolution and policy framework for the WPS Agenda. UNSCR 1325 sets out a policy framework for implementation of the central aim of the WPS Agenda, to incorporate women's rights and a gender perspective into international peace and security, reflecting the broad normative standards embodied in human rights, legal principles and humanitarian law (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011: 491).

WPS Policy – Framework and Resolutions

As at the end of 2015, the WPS Agenda consists of eight Security Council resolutions: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015). The primary document that sets out the WPS policy framework is UNSCR 1325, strengthened and at times weakened by the subsequent resolutions through increasing and clarifying the pillars and developing action plans and indicators. The WPS policy framework is reported and implemented through four pillars:

Participation, Prevention, Protection and Relief and Recovery, which are reflected in the official assessments and tracking documentation (UN Women 2012b; Miller, Pourink and Swaine 2014: 25; Porter and Mundkur 2012: 36).

These four WPS pillars focus on women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, with particular reference to "incorporat[ing] a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations" (UNSCR 1325 2000: Operational Paragraph (OP) 5). While I explore the roots and development of each of the four WPS pillars in the discussion below separately, the four WPS pillars do not work in isolation to each other but rather are interconnected. Unintended consequences can arise when the pillars of the WPS

Agenda are not considered as part of a single integrated strategy. This can also occur when individual WPS resolutions are considered in isolation to each other. To facilitate a more integrated examination of the WPS pillars across the entire WPS Agenda, I incorporate not only their roots in UNSCR 1325 but also their development through subsequent resolutions.

WPS Pillar One - Participation

The WPS participation pillar, covered in UNSCR 1325 OPs 1-5, 8, 15 and 16, calls on Member states and the UN to increase participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making and in all institutions related to conflict resolution and peace processes. The resolution stresses “the importance of [women’s] equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution” (UNSCR 1325 2000: Preamble). The UN is called upon to increase women special representatives and expand the role of women in field-based operations. It is also called upon to support and educate Member states on involving more women in peacekeeping and peace-building activities.

The participation pillar was relatively neglected in the follow-up resolutions of UNSCRs 1820, 1888 and 1960 which all nodded in the direction of supporting previous participation clauses, though subsumed within a protectionist frame. In 2013, UNSCRs 2106 and 2122 turned the spotlight back on women’s participation. UNSCR 2106 touched on elements of participation through calling for an increase in women’s participation in measures designed to address sexual violence (OP 1, 5, 11, 14, 16). Of more significance, UNSCR 2122 aims to strengthen women’s participation and leadership in decision making (power) structures at all levels and within local, national, regional and international contexts, as well as in conflict resolution and peacebuilding (OP 1, 4, 7-9, 14).

UNSCR 2242 (2015) aims to further strengthen women’s participation. This resolution consolidates and reiterates the key evidential links between women’s participation and sustainable peace and security, building upon recent studies (Coomaraswamy et al 2015). Apart from focusing on new targets for female peacekeepers and aspiring to increase the number of senior women leaders in peace and security decision-making, the latest resolution shines the spotlight on training mediators on the impact of inclusive processes (UN Women response to UNSCR 2242). It also introduces a new tool “Global Acceleration Instrument on Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Engagement” to assist the implementation of the WPS Agenda and

allow donors to track progress against gender targets (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP 16).

WPS Pillar Two - Prevention

The WPS prevention pillar, covered in UNSCR 1325 OP 1, aims to increase the representation of women in institutions and mechanisms for the prevention of conflict by Member states. This pillar has received the least attention, often being interpreted as prevention of gender-based violence. This lack of focus on the prevention of conflict aspect has meant that the involvement of women in prevention mechanisms and processes has not been a priority of WPS Agenda implementations.

UNSCRs 2106, 2122 and 2242 provided additional clarity on the prevention pillar. UNSCR 2106 recognises that a focus on prevention of sexual violence may contribute to maintaining peace and security and reduce the length of conflict (OP 1). UNSCR 2122 aims to expand the role of women in peacebuilding, prevention of conflict and in the prevention of sexual violence in conflict through their participation (Preamble, OP 1). These two resolutions formalised the interpretation of many Member states, as reflected in their 1325 NAPs (see Liberian 1325 NAP) that the prevention pillar also extends to prevention of sexual violence. UNSCR 2242 notes the link between the sustainability of peace and the involvement of women in prevention of conflict and the need to invest in women's involvement in these areas (Preamble). It also specifically references the increased representation of women in conflict prevention mechanisms and institutions (OP 1). The focus of the prevention pillar is also broadened to take account of the important role of women in countering terrorism, violent extremism and illicit transfer of small arms (OP 13, 15).

WPS Pillar Three - Protection

The WPS protection pillar, covered in UNSCR 1325 OPs 6 to 12, calls on the UN to educate Member states on the importance of protecting women's rights in peace operations. All parties involved in conflict are to respect and protect the human rights of women and the laws pertaining to their protection. The protection pillar is centred on the recognition that women and girls need protection in terms of upholding their human and legal rights as well as protection against gender-based violence (Kassahun 2015). References to gender-based violence are outlined in two OPs. In particular, UNSCR 1325 “[c]alls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence” (OP 10) while “[e]mphasis[ing] the responsibility of all States to put an end to and to prosecute those responsible for ... crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls” (OP 11).

The protection pillar has been specifically addressed through the adoption of UNSCRs 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106. These UNSCRs resulted from increasing international attention and pressure of transnational organisations calling for greater protection in terms of violence against women. In particular, recognition in international law of rape as a weapon of war and as a crime against humanity opened up the space for the WPS resolutions to broach the topic of gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations (see the Rome Statute and International Criminal Court).

UNSCR 1960 develops the protection pillar through expanding, in particular, the sexual violence provisions, culminating in the naming and shaming of those suspected/responsible for forms of sexual violence in armed conflict and aims to measure the impacts of conflict-related sexual violence (OP3, 8). Resolutions 1820, 1888 and 1960 tend to view women as objects to be protected or secured, rather than as active participative agents, strengthening the protectionist framing of women in the WPS agenda.

UNSCR 2106, however, moves towards recognising women as active agents whose participation in prevention and protection responses are important in combating the prevalence of sexual violence (OP1). It also aims to strengthen the purpose of UNSCRs 1888 and 1960 in terms of deployment of Women Protection Advisors and targeting sanctions (OP 7, 13).

WPS Pillar Four – Relief and Recovery

The WPS relief and recovery pillar, covered in UNSCR 1325 OPs 7 to 9, 13 and 17, involves focusing on the priorities of women and girls during and especially after conflict. These issues include demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), transitional justice, governance reforms covering internally displaced persons, SGBV survivors, ex-combatants, refugees and returnees (UN Women 2012b). In particular, the relief and recovery pillar “[e]ncourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents” (OP 13). This pillar has a strong focus on gender equality, ensuring that transitional and reconstruction processes and institutions are gender responsive.

UNSCR 1889 strengthens the relief and recovery pillar through calling on the UN to develop a set of indicators to serve as a common reporting platform (OP 17). It also calls for the collection, analysis and assessment of data on the impact of conflict and the needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations (OPs 5, 6). This strengthening of the policy framework can be interpreted as an attempt to increase accountability of Member

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states to implement the WPS Agenda. It also broadens the scope to include the needs of women and girls as subjects in conflict (agents of empowerment), not merely objects of sexual violence.

UNSCR 2106 provides a focus on sexual violence in the post-conflict situation, calling for more systematic monitoring of abuses (OP5) as well as increasing women's participation in key relief and recovery institutions (OP 16). UNSCR 2122 further emphasises the need to address obstacles to institutions and mechanisms around justice, security and health as part of the post-conflict recovery operations (OP 10, 11). UNSCR 2242, following on from the broader focus of more recent resolutions, looks to link all the institution and nation building operations back to the increased involvement of women, especially increasing access to justice and ending impunity (OP 1, 14).

Towards a Comprehensive Framework

The WPS policy, as outlined through the four WPS pillars offers an evolving agenda for addressing the needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. The WPS Agenda serves to create and establish goals, agendas and targets. The achievement of these goals, agendas and targets is reliant upon the will of the UN and Member states to enact them. In addition to the resolutions, there are also annual debates which keep the WPS Agenda alive and relevant. The impacts this policy has had and the progress made towards its implementation by Member states is the subject of a growing body of feminist scholarly and grey literature.²

WPS Policy – Debates

There is a wealth of literature that engages with the global WPS policy and its implementation within national contexts. There is also a growing literature examining the concrete impacts of implementation at the local level. The debates within this literature can be usefully divided into four categories.

WPS Debates – Sufficiency of WPS Policy

The first category of debate focuses on the scope of the WPS policy, particularly on what was missing from the text of UNSCR 1325. To a certain extent the weaknesses in the scope that these debates critique has been addressed through the adoption of subsequent resolutions which have stretched and clarified the scope of the WPS policy over the last fifteen years. In addition, annual reports on women peace and security have identified ongoing issues with the scope and draws attention to the need to

² Grey literature applies to the raft of reports and policy briefs completed by government organisations, non-government organisations and other non-academic organisations and bodies.

address those issues (see S/PRST/2014/21; S/2014/693; S/2015/716).

There are a number of key critiques encompassed within this category. The first is the lack of accountability measures in the initial WPS policy framework (Otto 2010: 113; Barnes 2006: 2). While the four WPS pillars provide the framework for national implementation, there were no measures to hold Member states accountable to meeting WPS obligations under UNSCR 1325. This critique has been addressed by the call for 1325 NAPs to aid implementation, affirmed in various resolutions and statements by the president of the Security Council on women peace and security (UNSC 2002; UNSC 2004) as well as directly in UNSCRs 1889 and 1960. These supporting documents and resolutions have set up a framework to report progress and provides a mechanism for civil society to hold governments accountable to their obligations.

The second critique is the location of the WPS policy under Chapter VI (non-coercive) as opposed to Chapter VII (coercive) measures (Tryggestad 2009:544).³ The impact of the WPS resolutions' location under non-coercive measures has been judged by some to add to the issues around holding Member states accountable to meeting their WPS obligations. In practice, this has been overcome in post-conflict situations by mentioning the obligations of UNSCR 1325 within the body of subsequent Chapter VII resolutions effectively mandating its application in specific contexts covered within those resolutions. For example, the resolution setting up the UN Mission in Liberia, UNSCR 1509 (2003), specifically mentions UNSCR 1325.

A third critique is related to the need to focus more on the participation and prevention (of conflict) pillars, which were relatively neglected in the initial follow up resolutions that focused on the protection pillar. This need was specifically addressed through the adoption of UNSCRs 2106, 2122 and 2242, as noted above.

The strengthening of the WPS policy framework and pillars has partially addressed the key critiques and led to an increase in the number of Member states implementing the WPS policy through developing 1325 NAPs. This strengthening, however, has not necessarily resulted in the anticipated increase in impact and progress. The continued focus on the WPS Agenda through annual meetings and debates and the ongoing strengthening of the WPS policy through new resolutions has ensured that while progress at the national and local levels may be slow, global pressure is continuing to be applied.

³ Chapter VI relates to peaceful settlement of disputes. The UNSC can issue resolutions under Chapter VI, however, this does not have power to make them enforceable. Chapter VII sets out powers to maintain peace, including the use of military and non-military action to coerce compliance.

The rate of change experienced in terms of global focus, national implementation and local outcomes, when viewed solely through the existing debates of the scope of the WPS policy, offers a partial explanation for the uncertain impact of the WPS Agenda and the halting progress of this agenda since 2000. Viewing the debates around the scope of the WPS policy through the gender stool lens I apply in this thesis changes the focus of the critiques outlined above. Primarily it would shift the focus of the debate to examining how the construction of gender in the initial scoping of the WPS policy impacts on the practical outcomes achievable in terms of stipulating accountability measures, its location under non-coercive measures and the focus on the protection pillar, to the detriment of the participation and prevention pillars.

WPS Debates – Implementation Tools

A second category of debate focuses on how the global WPS policy has been implemented. There are two major strategies pursued by the UN in conjunction with Member states to implement the WPS Agenda: a mainstreaming gender approach or the development of specific 1325 National Action Plans or NAPs. Both of these strategies have been used, either separately or together to implement the WPS Agenda in Member states. For example, Germany has maintained that it has already mainstreamed the intent of the WPS Agenda into its governance structures and does not need a separate 1325 NAP (Miller, Pournik and Swaine 2014: 16), whereas Liberia has utilised both a broad gender equality social change agenda (Jennings 2012) and a 1325 NAP (2009) to meet its obligations.

Gender mainstreaming was specifically called for in the Beijing PfA (1995) and has been a central policy of the UN since 1997 (set out in ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions E/1997/L.30, 14 July 1997). The development of UNSCR 1325 could be seen as extending this mainstreaming project by bringing considerations of gender into the security realm for the first time. The progress of gender mainstreaming throughout the UN has been uneven and slow and its incorporation into Security Council matters has been sporadic at best (Cohn 2004).

While gender mainstreaming has been the official policy of many governments and international organisations since the mid-1990s, few have been able to implement it successfully and thus increasingly negative critiques have arisen. On one side of the debate, gender mainstreaming is looked at as a solution that, if implemented fully, will lead to gender equality.

Youngs recognises gender mainstreaming as a site reflective of the main aims of feminist International Relations, namely "that gender is central to social dynamics from

local to global levels" (2008: 693). She contends that gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a process that challenges the idea of gender neutrality in practice (Youngs 2008: 694). This is an important qualifier and one that is not necessarily reflected in either the attempted implementation of gender mainstreaming or the critiques of such implementations. The impact of gender mainstreaming within the UN alone, according to Youngs, has been to firm up the notion of unequal power relations among men and women and our understanding of it (Youngs 2008: 696).

Gender mainstreaming within the UN, however, is presented as non-political where the monopoly of power held by men remains unchallenged (Puechguirbal 2010: 172). There are many challenges in posing gender mainstreaming from within an international security frame (Whitworth 2004) in terms of what it has to do and the potential it has to make change. Gender mainstreaming is a site of struggle between the pressures of changing patriarchal cultures and the forces that protect and perpetuate them (Youngs 2008: 700), representing a process that is ongoing and contestable.

On the other side of the debate, there are many dissenting voices focused on the "obvious" failures to successfully implement gender mainstreaming (Walby 2005; Carey 2001: 61-63). One of the major criticisms with mainstreaming the WPS policy is that the pillars themselves can be "diluted or become too 'elastic'" (George and Shepherd 2016). For example, mainstreaming the increased participation of women within existing security frameworks may increase the number of women entering security sector organisations but fail to address issues such as gender discrimination within these organisations or on the other hand also recognise the importance of women's participation in peace processes at the highest levels.

Similarly, while post-conflict processes of reconstruction such as DDR are "given a gloss of gender mainstreaming" they are not transformed in ways that will deliver dividends to women (Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011: 20). This is evidenced in approaches to DDR that take an 'add women and stir' approach by tacking on a women component to existing DDR programs. This is evidenced, for example by programs that expect women to resume familial and domestic responsibilities rather than public roles with authority, despite some having experience as combat leaders (MacKenzie 2009). These types of solutions do not contest the underpinning structural inequalities between women and men. Under this argument, gender mainstreaming effectively "serves to cloak a more problematic approach of avoiding a systematic engagement with the causes and structures of women's inequality" (Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011: 13).

While the rise of transnational women's networks and gender policy

entrepreneurs within global institutions⁴ has led to the relatively quick passage of gender mainstreaming into normative discourse (True 2003), it has always been a contested concept and practice (Walby 2005). Disagreement about definitions, interpretations and implementations abound with as many variations as there have been implementations. Gender mainstreaming is but one tool in achieving the greater project of gender equality, however, it is neither the ultimate panacea nor the valueless crucible.

Subsequent WPS resolutions have also strengthened the need to mainstream a gender perspective in all areas of peace operations, including within the UN itself and peacekeeping missions (UNSCR 2242). While re-emphasised in nearly all subsequent resolutions, a major finding the Global Study into the implementation of UNSCR 1325 was the lack of “whole-of-UN” thinking around WPS issues and its lack of integration (mainstreaming) within the Security Council itself (Coomaraswamy et al 2015: 322-45; George and Shepherd 2016). This affirms that the critique of gender mainstreaming has some explanatory power in terms of the impact and progress of implementing the WPS policy.

As such, gender mainstreaming can be viewed as a strategy to make gender related concerns resonate across all policy frameworks. A more specific articulation of policy seeking to localise the WPS Agenda, however, is the 1325 NAP. The use of 1325 NAPs was first introduced in 2002 (S/PRST/2002/32) and has been continually reinforced by the Security Council (example see S/PRST/2004/40) as a means of increasing the accountability and political will of Member states to implement the WPS Agenda. The usefulness of 1325 NAPs as a mechanism to be seen to be achieving UNSCR 1325, however, is the subject of debate. While some argue that the 1325 NAPs, while not ideal, provide a good starting point for holding Member states to account for meeting their obligations under the WPS Agenda, while others argue they have little practical impact, representing mere word lacking action (Westendorf 2010; EPLO 2013).

Regardless of how they are viewed, 65 Member states have implemented 1325 NAPs with the addition of four Regional 1325 NAPs. This number has accelerated in recent years with the passing of the tenth and fifteenth anniversaries of UNSCR 1325 and the fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Beijing PfA. To assist in the uptake of the 1325 NAPs and as a tool to learn from past implementations, there are various best practice guides and toolkits to assist Member states to implement plans (WILPF 2013; WIIS 2014; UN-INSTRAW 2006; WANEP 2012). Another strategy is to utilise ‘twinning’ where two countries collaborate to develop and/or implement a 1325 NAP

⁴ See especially the adoption of gender mainstreaming in the context of the European Union.

(TT-SSC 2010).⁵

The 1325 NAP primarily creates opportunities to address the WPS pillars and identify priorities, actions and resources to implement the WPS Agenda. The 1325 NAP, among other things, aids in the translation of a global policy mechanism into a national strategic policy and plan. As slow implementation has been long recognised by the UN as a fundamental issue with the WPS Agenda, the 1325 NAP is seen as a means of closing the gaps in both domestic and foreign policy obligations (Swaine 2009: 411). Those Member states that did implement early are already onto their second or third iteration of the 1325 NAP, bringing to bear some of the lessons learnt from earlier versions. For example, the initial United Kingdom 1325 NAP was developed in 2006, revised in 2010 with further revisions in 2012 and another reiteration in 2014, however, issues around the recognition of Northern Ireland remain unaddressed.

The guidelines for implementing the 1325 NAP as a fulfilment of the obligations of the WPS Agenda arise out of the critiques, assessments and evaluations of implementation attempts by Member states (Lynes and Torry 2005; EPLO 2010; Anderlini and Tirman 2010). They provide guidelines on how to address the key critiques of lack of political will, resources and accountability. The guides provide detailed steps and recommendations to increase the possibility of overcoming the challenges and barriers to successfully implement a 1325 NAP (WANEP 2012; WILPF 2013). For example, the West African Network for Peace (WANEP) guideline offers the following recommendations for moving 1325 NAPs from paper to action: a dedicated budget, development of a set of indicators, identifying specific outcomes, setting time frames and plan period, advocacy and lobbying and a monitoring and evaluation plan and structure (WANEP 2012: 18). In the Women's International League For Peace (WILPF) guide, similar recommendations for operationalising the 1325 NAP are given, including the need for timelines, specific roles, coordination and financial allocation (WILPF 2013: 10-11).

The Global Study on implementing UNSCR 1325⁶ (Coomaraswamy et al 2015) also highlighted similar issues with implementing WPS policy, affirming that these issues have not been adequately addressed through subsequent resolutions nor better practice guides. While the 1325 NAPs are aimed at providing greater transparency and accountability for Member states to meet their obligations under the WPS Agenda

⁵ For example, a twinning arrangement was set up between Northern Ireland, Timor-Leste and Liberia.

⁶ The Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, requested under UNSCR 2122 was commissioned to identify the gaps and challenges, as well as emerging trends and priorities for action to shape future action and practice.

(Swaine 2009: 413), the Global Study found that the outcomes of the 1325 NAPs are compromised by a lack of focus on ensuring sufficient financial resources are budgeted and allocated to ensure full implementation of strategies (Coomaraswamy et al 2015: 368-391). Further, a lack of monitoring and evaluation processes also continues to compromise the implementation outcomes (2015: 241). Both of these key issues identified in the Global Study are recommended within the guidelines for best practice implementation. This suggests that the issues around finance and monitoring do not arise from the lack of recognition of the implications of their non-inclusion in 1325 NAPs.

A review of the literature critiquing the 1325 NAP offers similar results to that of gender mainstreaming. That is, it affirms that the debates of 1325 NAPs has some explanatory power in terms of helping us to understand the halting implementation of the WPS policy. Overall, the difficulties that undermine the two implementation strategies provide a partial explanation for the uneven and uncertain impact of the WPS policy nationally and internationally. When combined with the first category of debates finding around how the scope of the WPS policy also provides some explanation of its halting progress, this explanatory power is increased.

Viewing the debates around the implementation tools of the WPS policy through the gender stool lens provides a stronger critique of gender mainstreaming and 1325 NAPs. Firstly, it builds on the work of Booth and Bennett (2002) in the area of gender policies in the European Union, where they applied a similar analytical frame. Broadening this frame to assess gender mainstreaming efforts more generally would provide a more nuanced assessment of its less than successful track record. Similarly, assessments of the 1325 NAPs would be strengthened through understanding how the gender language both enables and constrains practical outcomes.

WPS Debates – Gender

How is gender conceptualised in WPS policy and in the implementation strategies that are devised to support this policy framework? My contention in this thesis is that this question is helpful, although often not given adequate attention in feminist deliberation on the WPS Agenda generally. Before examining the literature that specifically addresses such questions, however, it is helpful to begin the discussion by examining the general feminist scholarship focussed on debates about gender, equality, difference and intersectionality, which gives rise to three distinct gender perspectives.

The first gender perspective focusses on *gender-as-equality*. This perspective reflects feminist liberal/socialist theory where success is defined as women and men being treated as equals (the same), within the existing mainstream. By focusing on

integrating women into existing structures and putting them on equal footing with men, a *gender-as-equality* perspective provides the basic and necessary legal/equality frame to start addressing gender discrimination (Squires 2005: 368; Booth and Bennett 2002: 434-435). Laws that ensure women have the legal right to nominate as candidates for political elections are an example of a *gender-as-equality* policy, where the focus is on women gaining the same rights as men (Tripp 2016: 318).

Proponents of *gender-as-equality* view gender differences as giving rise to sexism and prefer to focus on the commonalities between women and men to establish equality, bringing them under a common measure (Fraser 1997: 100). The aim is to gain a more inclusive and just social order through rejecting the inferiority that is considered synonymous when a gender difference concept is used (Squires 1999: 117). This inferiority revolves around the denigration of women because of their inability to contest for recognition in the public space, which is more valued than recognition in the private sphere. While this approach recognises that femininity and female values are socially constructed, it does not contest the naturalness or dominance of male values as the norm. In essence, an equality strategy looks to remove discrimination and establish a level playing field, enhancing opportunities for women to compete, albeit in a male dominated world.

The second gender perspective reflects a *gender-as-difference* position, influenced by feminist radical/cultural theory. Here feminist success is defined when women's difference is recognised within a restructured policy framework and given value rather than marginalised. That is, women are recognised because of their difference from men, sharpening the focus on their contributions as women, bringing "distinct female perspectives and moralities into the polity" (Tripp 2016: 318). *Gender-as-difference* can be viewed as deepening the equality agenda. It recognises that a level playing field cannot be created just by removing barriers. For example, cultural feminists celebrate feminine traits that have traditionally been devalued such as caring and nonviolence and wish to reinvest these things with power.

Affirmative action is also needed to accelerate the process. By focusing on the differences between women and men and to a lesser extent between women and between men, *gender-as-difference* recognises women's marginalised voices in order to change the agenda and the mainstream (Squires 2005: 368). This change is grounded in the notion that women have a distinct and unique view that offers an alternative to the male norm (Tripp 2016).

The *gender-as-difference* framework also focuses on delivering positive action outcomes including equality of outcomes and separate institutional structures, such as committees on women's affairs (Booth and Bennett 2002: 434-435), allowing for the setting of agendas but not the transformation of gendered structures. Further, *gender-as-difference* privileges gender as the primary site of oppression over other sites of inequality such as religion, class and ethnicity. Examples of policies utilising *gender-as-difference* include the promotion of gender quotas based on women bringing different qualities and perspectives to representation.

Proponents of *gender-as-difference* view the denial of gender difference as "repress[ing] women's authentic nature" (Squires 1999: 118). The aim is to gain a more inclusive and just social order through recognising "women's specificity and embody female as well as (or perhaps instead of) male values" (Squires 1999: 118). While this may be seen as affirming women as nurturing and more peaceful, it also reflects resistance to the liberal social structures which devalue these attributes.

The third gender perspective of *gender-as-diversity* reflects the intersectional theory of hooks (1981) and Crenshaw (1989) as well as post-colonial and southern feminist theory. This work has identified a tendency towards homogenous generalisation in Western feminism. It argued for a decentring of the feminist focus on gender inequality and more recognition of the diverse and intersecting inequalities that are also generated for women as a result of their ethnicity, religion and class. It focuses on delivering gender sensitive policy analysis which is responsive to difference and manages diversity (Booth and Bennett 2002: 434-435), thereby creating opportunities to transform the gendered structures that perpetuate social inequality. Unlike *gender-as-difference*, *gender-as-diversity* does not privilege gender over other sites of inequality. An example of policies utilising *gender-as-diversity* include policies that are sensitive to the differing needs of women and girls, men and boys from different religious and ethnic groups within refugee and displaced persons camps. This does not, however, discount the strategic prioritising of women within these intersections (Spivak 1988). The focus of such policies is on how intricately linked oppressions are integrated as opposed to merely adding multiple identities (Tripp 2016: 319). The complexity that arises at the intersections of multiple oppressions, such as ethnicity, religion and class requires a multi-focal lens that recognises the multiplicity that arises from being a particular woman or a particular man.

Gender-as-diversity views the debates between equality and difference as being mired “within parameters of debate constructed according to patriarchal⁷ norms” (Squires 1999: 123). This requires the displacement of the binary oppositions and the “either/or politics” at the root of the equality/difference debate. The aim is to gain a more inclusive and just social order through displacing the hierarchal structures of the social order, recognising the multitude of differences and focusing on deconstructing the very centres that a difference gender concept places women in (Squires 1999: 124). Further, as *gender-as-diversity* is grounded in the valuing of difference equally, its looks to displace the binary oppositions of male/female within the frame of multiple intersecting sites of difference.

Each of the three gender perspectives address unequal gender relations differently, leading to different policies, actions and outcomes. According to Squires, addressing unequal gender relations can incorporate inclusion strategies (*gender-as-equality*), which focus on placing women within the current structures (2005: 368). They can incorporate reversal strategies (*gender-as-difference*), which focus on changing structures to place women at the centre (2005: 368). They can also incorporate strategies which displace the dichotomous binary relations of gender as they intersect other sites of unequal relations (*gender-as-diversity*), deconstructing hierarchal structures (2005: 368).

There are also complex interplays between the different gender perspectives, underpinned by differing historical experiences (Tripp 2016: 319). Gender can be understood as either equality or difference or diversity. In some contexts, these understandings may reflect on “historical experiences [of] colonialism, slavery, and post-colonial politicization of ethnic difference” (Tripp 2016: 308). These conditions can influence how far there is potential for embracing a diversity perspective. These complex interplays and connections between equality, difference and diversity informs the development of the three-legged gender stool as an analytical tool to assess the prevalence of each of these perspectives at the global, national and local level of WPS policy and practice.

My examination of how gender is constructed in the global WPS policy is informed by the above discussion of the three gender perspectives. I contend that this type of analytical focus further extends analysis of the factors that influence WPS implementation. As noted earlier, the UN takes a social constructionist view of gender. This view can encompass all three gender perspectives, however, due to the nature of women’s exclusion, there has been a tendency to focus primarily on gaining equality

⁷ The use of patriarchal here refers to how society is structured around the privileging of male over female.

through equal access (*equality*) and gaining recognition through positive action (*difference*). Two key consequences of equality and difference gender perspectives include the focus on women and/or its conflation with gender and the homogenisation of women as a group. These two consequences are commonly cited among scholars who focus on the concept of gender in WPS policy as a form of critique.

Critics commonly interpret the text of the global WPS policy as conflating women with gender, failing to address *relations* between women and men (see Otto 2010; El-Bushra 2000). A major implication of this focus on women is the framing of the WPS Agenda as a “women’s issue” as opposed to framing it more broadly under “gender relations” (Dharmapuri 2011). Further, it leads to the emergence of essentialist notions of “women” which leave the male norm in international security discourse uncontested (Cohn, Kinsella and Gibbings 2004; GAPS UK 2007).

Many critiques of the WPS Agenda have lamented this turn to essentialist notions of women. Essentialist notions of women as peacemakers or pacifists obscures the roles that women play as combatants and aggressors and denies their agency and the survival tactics women deploy (Otto 2010: 108; El-Bushra 2000: 135; Utas 2005; Puechguirbal 2010: 180; Gibbings 2004; Cohn 2008; Shepherd 2008a). These essentialist notions have also been used to define women as being valued functionally as “untapped resources”, not subjects with rights (Cohn 2004: 16; Gibbings 2011: 529). Further, the conflation of gender with biological women frames the violation of only ‘women and girls’ bodies as sites of violence (Shepherd 2011: 507). The resulting normalisation of the term “gender” from a radical perspective into a problem-solving tool, foregrounds the issues that arise when feminist ideas and concepts are co-opted and in the process lose their political force (Whitworth 2004: 139). That is, when gender is conflated with women, it leaves uncontested how gender is constituted as a power relation, where the male norm is dominant.

This co-optation and selective engagement of feminist ideas provides a strong critique of the failure of WPS policy implementation, focusing on the silences that subsequently arise. These silences initially included a lack of reference to addressing structural causes of women's inequality, failure to mention disarmament, lack of any anti-war language, exclusion of violence against men and boys and the lack of contestation of militarism (McLeod 2011: 602; Otto 2010: 106-108; Cohn 2008: 194-200; Cockburn 2007: 147-15; Cohn 2004: 12-13; Gibbings 2004: 5-6). The strengthening of the WPS policy over the last fifteen years has seen some of these silences addressed; (see for example UNSCR 2242 and Coomaraswamy et al 2015).

However, the construction of gender in the expanded WPS policy discourses has not been unshackled from the dominant focus upon the experiences of women.

This lack of engagement with the underlying concepts that inform and perpetuate gender inequality reflects the failure of WPS policy means that this framework contributes in its own way to the ongoing marginalising and silencing discussions of structural inequalities at all levels in global politics (Al-Ali and Pratt 2009: 18). Such an embrace would require the “radical reconsideration of how the world is currently constituted” (McLeod 2015: 64). This not only limits how gender equality can be conceptualised, it also forecloses discussion on how the social order is gendered, due to the conflation of gender with women and its use of the 'protection of vulnerable women' frame, as reinforced through subsequent WPS resolutions (see UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106).

The 'protection of vulnerable women' frame, as expressed through violence against women discourses, provides a major focus for women's experiences of conflict and further informs the conflated gender-women nexus. Hence, this focus on violence has been a two-edged sword. Firstly, it deepens our understanding of the continuum of violence in time, in place and in scale (Cockburn 2012: 256), linking violence in peacetime to escalating violence during conflict to further increases in post-conflict. Secondly, it reduces agency and perpetuates the old social order, focusing on women as victims requiring militarised masculine protection (Otto 2010; Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015; Coomaraswamy et al 2015; Puechguirbal 2008). This revitalisation of the protective stereotype is epitomised in UNSCR 1820, which rather than challenging the myths or the stigma of victimhood, marginalises women's active participation (Otto 2010: 116-117). The work of Shepherd has been particularly enlightening in this area of gender and violence.

Shepherd provides a poststructural analysis of the concepts of gender and violence as they are situated within the discourses of (gender) violence and international (security) broadly and within the specific context of UNSCR 1325, showing how the language disavows transformative possibilities (Shepherd 2008a). Shepherd's work reflects that during the development and (re)production of UNSCR 1325, the language limited its transformability due to its conflation of gender with women and violence with armed conflict or as specifically gendered, ignoring structural violence and violence perpetrated by women (Shepherd 2008a). Shepherd proposes a shift away from focusing on difference between the genders as a starting point for gender analysis, as it obscures the (re)production of such difference (Shepherd 2008a: 48).

Pratt (2013) takes the analysis of gender within WPS policy a step further in her assessment of the WPS policy through a post-colonial feminist lens. Pratt begins by tracing the genealogy of UNSCR 1325 through various strands of feminist thought, aligning closely to the equality and difference perspectives I discussed above, highlighting that black/postcolonial understandings (more closely aligned to a diversity perspective) of women, peace and war are missing (2013: 774; El-Saadawi 1980). She then applies the postcolonial lens to UNSCR 1325 to reveal the consequences of utilising strands of feminist thinking that privilege gender over all other social relations of power (2013: 780).

Focusing on how gender is constructed in UNSCR 1325, Pratt persuasively demonstrates that “1325 privileges gender above race, class or other significant relations of power in understanding women’s experiences and responses to conflict” (2013: 774), leading to tensions and contradictions between women being recognised as agents of peacebuilding as well as vulnerable targets of violence. The consequences this gives rise to, Pratt explains, is that women’s agency is harnessed in ways that excludes voices of some women who do not “subscribe” to WPS logic and creating a backlash against women’s agency (2013: 780).

The gender critique outlined above offers a more compelling though still only partial explanation of the impact and progress of the WPS policy. It is compelling in that it reveals that how gender is constructed and understood forecloses on outcomes that are not possible with the current perspectives evident in the WPS policy. For example, as gender is privileged over other relations of power and gender itself is conflated with women, the global WPS policy forecloses on the opportunity to transform unequal gender relations. This is so because such a transformation would require the examination of gender as a social and cultural construct, recognising equality, difference AND diversity. Combining the gender critique with the preceding critiques provides a valuable theoretical pathway for exploring the impacts of progress of the WPS policy.

Viewing the above debates around gender in the WPS policy through the gender stool challenges the focus of viewing different gender perspectives in oppositional terms. By breaking down the barriers that the feminist scholarship builds around different theoretical notions of gender (equality, difference, intersectionality), the gender stool treats these different notions of gender as interlinked and supportive legs of the gender stool. The stool is strengthened by utilising all three legs to varying degrees within specific contexts that take account of existing socio-cultural, economic and political structures. By anchoring the three gender perspectives to the equality practice history

within a specific space/place, the gender stool provides a contextualised analysis of how the different gender perspective can enable and restrict outcomes of global policy at the local level.

WPS Debates – Post-Conflict Transitions

All three critiques can be strengthened, however, by anchoring the analysis within time and space/place. That is, the scope of the resolutions, their implementation tools and the concept of gender are all time and space/place specific, as different time/space/place configurations, such as conflict, post-conflict and peace, will yield different results. In light of the feminist scholarship that shines a light on the continuum that exists between the conflict and post-conflict period as posing equal sorts of risks for women (Cockburn 1998; Enloe 1983, 2000; Moser and Clark 2001; Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011), I focus on the significance of the post-conflict moment for the implementation of the WPS policy.

The post-conflict period offers a multi-layered and complex space/place. It typically encompasses a range of international interventions and missions which range in nature from humanitarian and state building to reconstruction and peacekeeping (Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011). These interventions usually involve the international community bringing in “its own organisational, cultural, and national identities, preferences, and masculinities into the process” (Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011: 86), regardless of the typology of intervention. This complicates an already disparate landscape of devastated, ineffective and shattered political, legal, economic and social infrastructure.

The post-conflict experience is gendered, usually referencing the period after the cessation of sanctioned violence by predominantly male combatants (Handrahan 2004: 429). The dominant (male) paradigms through which war, peace and post-conflict are perceived focus on the type of violence perpetrated by (male) combatants, drawing a distinction between ‘official’ conflict and ‘everyday’ violence and is reflective of the dominant male power systems embedded within the State (Handrahan 2004: 430; Cockburn and Zarkov 2002). This periodisation and demarcation between conflict, peace and post-conflict reconstruction provides a very male-oriented perception of the ‘formal’ procedures that must be ‘named’ in order to activate the international and national processes that shape the post-conflict context. This naming is masculinised as it triggers responses based on male experiences of violence which sees ‘sanctioned’ violence as separate and distinct from ‘everyday’ violence. This neglects women’s experiences of violence as a continuum where the difference between ‘sanctioned’ and ‘everyday’ violence is more nuanced and less obvious.

When such a distinction is drawn it obscures the links between ‘official’ conflict and ‘everyday’ violence (either in the pre-conflict or post-conflict context). Studies conducted by feminist scholars reveals that violence is a common denominator in women’s lives during non-conflict and conflict periods (see Elshtain 1987; Enloe 1983, 2000; Moser and Clark 2001; Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011). Focusing on violence as a product of conflict renders invisible the ‘everyday’ insecurity experienced by women during periods of peace and post-conflict reconstruction, as noted in gendered analyses in many post-conflict contexts (Cockburn 1998, 2007).

During the period following conflict there is a likelihood of increasing violence against women in the form of trafficking, transactional sex due to economic necessity and sexual violence (Handrahan 2014: 434). These experiences of violence and insecurity arise from a number of factors including the return of soldiers, the destruction of economic and social infrastructure and the power vacuum that often accompanies the end of ‘official’ conflict (Meintjes, Turshen and Pillay 2001).

For this reason, the post-conflict context that informs the impact and progress of WPS policy is defined as and is based on a feminist interpretation of women’s (in)security in the aftermath of ‘official’ conflict. Utilising a feminist paradigm allows for the ‘everyday’ lived experiences of post-conflict to be analysed, contesting the dominant paradigm that views incidents of violence during this phase to be “minimal” (Handrahan 2004: 430). By contesting the either/or phrasing of the conflict/peace/post-conflict periodisation, I follow in the feminist tradition of critically examining how women’s lives do not necessarily map onto the conventional trajectory of transitions from conflict to peace to post-conflict reconstruction. This mirrors Cockburn’s analytical insight into the violence of war and its aftermath as constituting part of a ‘continuum of violence’ that women experience (1998: 80). Feminists have long recognised that due to the presence of gender inequality from the local to global level (Handrahan 2004: 431), that women’s experiences of ‘everyday’ life are shaped by the varying degrees of violence against women, whether in a period of non-conflict, conflict, peace or post-conflict (Ni Aolain, Haynes and Cahn 2011: 21).

A feminist analysis moves beyond the linear progression suggested by the ‘official’ discourses of war and peace, where the post-conflict reconstruction is the ultimate (positive) outcome of engaging in conflict. Rather, a feminist analysis focuses on the depth of violence experienced by women as a marker of the discourses of ‘everyday’ violence and insecurity during ‘official’ peace. This provides access to the relations that are playing out below the surface of transition from ‘official’ conflict to ‘official’ peace and post-conflict reconstruction. It also focuses on the experiences of ‘everyday’ life (status,

identity, rights and power) that rarely reflects such a linear progression or the overt positivity suggested by the change from conflict to peace.

This has implications for the implementation of the WPS policy in the post-conflict context and how gender is understood. As McLeod explains:

the very way in which UNSCR 1325 is translated on the ground by local and international actors depends upon their configuration of conflict and post-conflict, a perspective in part forged out of personal and political narratives of war experience (McLeod 2015: 65).

McLeod uses a case study of small arms and light weapons in domestic violence to highlight “how diverse and personal-political war experiences configure ‘gender security’ in a certain way” (2015: 55). This is insightful and builds on the feminist scholarship interacting with critical peacebuilding concepts to bring to light the complexities that underpin a feminist notion of gender.

This focus on the post-conflict environment also necessitates a closer look at the ‘everyday’ and the ‘local’ from the perspective of the liberal peace debates. Debates around the liberal peace have arisen with the main tension focusing on the processes of peacebuilding that arise from “adherence to the normative elements of liberal internationalism and an emerging commitment to local ownership ... defined substantively as the principle that local actors and constituencies within the post-conflict state must play a leading role” (Donais 2012: 31). This leads to the tension between an “outside-in process” of mainstream liberal peacebuilding and the “inside-out vision” which advocates for peace to be “rooted in the values and culture of the post-conflict state ... [and] *produced by locals themselves*” (Donais 2012: 32). It is at the juncture of such tensions that the WPS Agenda implementation projects are situated, highlighting the need to engage the ‘local’ as part of the process (inside-out) and not just as targets (outside-in).

While the WPS Agenda is an international obligation on UN Member states, it requires operationalisation within the local (national) context. Implementation into the local context often equates to operationalising the WPS resolutions from a national perspective through 1325 NAPs and mainstreaming into governance structures. Unintended consequences can arise from this conflation of the national and local levels in terms of the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda. The consequences arise due to the inadequate engagement with and/or representation of the lives of ‘everyday’ women and men, girls and boys in ‘local’ post-conflict communities, in the strategies and programs that operationalise the WPS Agenda.

Addressing the issues of conflating the national and local levels requires the recognition of the ‘local’ beneficiaries of the WPS Agenda as subjects of the post-conflict

peace as opposed to the object of yet another internationally imposed agenda (Donais 2012: 31).⁸ The need to separate the local from the national is important as it is only through successfully implementing the WPS Agenda within the local context, that its intent and purpose can be fulfilled in terms of challenging unequal gender relations.

Wessells (2009) explains that the local context is particularly important in a post-conflict setting as it is necessary “to convert a culture of war into a culture of peace” (350). The local context within a post-conflict setting is the local community as it is at this level that “war and violence become normalised and woven into the fabric of daily life” (Wessells 2009: 349). The local turn in peacebuilding literature specifically speaks to this need to examine the juncture between the ‘everyday’, the ‘local’ and post-conflict contexts.

Notions of the ‘everyday’ and the ‘local’ in the post-conflict context have been used as a critique and site of resistance to the liberal peacebuilding project and have been explored by numerous scholars from De Certeau’s ‘everyday’ tactics (1984), Mac Ginty’s location of ‘indigeneity’ (2008), Richmond’s work on the ‘everyday’ and the ‘local-local’ (2008; 2009b; 2010b), Jabri’s ‘everyday security’ (2007), Roberts’ call for local legitimacy in the ‘everyday’ (2011) and McLeod’s (2015) feminist analysis of hybridity, among many others.

Within the peacebuilding literature, I am specifically interested in the debates that engage with the notions of the ‘local’ and the ‘everyday’, viewed through the lens of the local turns. In short, the first local turn (1990s), led by Lederach emphasised the need to empower local actors as the only legitimate builders of sustainable peace through reconciliation, with limited support from outsiders. In this critique of the liberal peacebuilding, while the local is emphasised in terms of agency and empowerment, they are at risk of being co-opted, thereby neutralising their ability to resist the interventionist peacebuilding logic (Paffenholz 2015: 860; Mac Ginty 2008).

The second local turn, arising from the failures of peace and state building in Afghanistan and Iraq, emphasises how the local resists the international liberal peacebuilding agenda and in doing so, creates hybrid and post-liberal orders that undermine the liberal peacebuilding project as potential spoilers (Paffenholz 2015: 859-860; also see Richmond 2008, 2009b, 2010b; Jabri 2007; Mac Ginty 2008; Roberts 2011). In this critique of the liberal peacebuilding, there is a call for the refocus on the ‘everyday’ as a site of the peace as well as the need to listen to ‘oppressed’ voices. This

⁸ Also see scholarship of Richmond (2009b, 2009c, 2010b); Mac Ginty (2008); Roberts (2011); Boege, Brown and Clements (2009).

has fostered a raft of hybrid and alternative ways of peacebuilding set in contrast to the liberal peacebuilding model (Paffenholz 2015: 861; Boege, Brown and Clements 2009).

While the local turns in peacebuilding have brought the tensions between the local and international into plain view and problematises the post-conflict landscape as a site for implementing liberal peacebuilding, it is necessary to examine what this looks like in terms of the impact of the WPS policy and its progress towards implementation. A starting point is Paffenholz's (2015) critical analysis of the problems and contradictions that currently plague the local turn in peacebuilding. Underpinning her critique is the tendency to essentialise the local-international dichotomy whereby the agency of actors in both categories is ignored (Paffenholz 2015: 862). Viewing the local and the international through a binary lens ignores the diversity of the 'everyday' where the local (and the international) can be further split along the lines of power relations arising from gender, ethnicity, religion and class, even when warnings not to romanticise the local are given (Paffenholz 2015: 862; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2015: 770; McLeod 2015).

Within this literature, Richmond theorises that the 'everyday' is an alternative site of knowledge for peacebuilding (2009: 571). Richmond utilises a concept of the 'local-local' (2008) to encompass communities and individuals, in all their diversity, who constitute political society, one that is often hidden behind an international liberal notion of 'the Local' (NGOs/civil society). Richmond and Mitchell (2012) follow up this contestation of the norms of peace and conflict through the notion of "everyday peace/s" based on hybrid forms of local-neo/liberal peace. They theorise and analyse various sites of interface between the neo/liberal peace project and the local, centred on the notion of the 'everyday', as discussed by De Certeau (Richmond and Mitchell 2012; Richmond 2008).

This notion of the 'everyday' is nothing new to feminist scholars and activists as it is in the 'everyday' lived experiences of women that the force and strength of feminist theorising and praxis has been located for many decades. Richmond and Mitchell (2012) theorise that beyond the reality of a 'failed' liberal peace, which is the common explanatory frame for its less than full implementation, there are "everyday peace/s". These "everyday peace/s" are born from the foundational pillars of the liberal peace, manipulated and altered by the local 'everyday' into a hybrid form of peace that reflects and changes the local and the international (Richmond and Mitchell 2012: 35). Rather than thinking in terms of neo/liberal peace, they theorise the international intervention of peacebuilding as being post-liberal, thereby removing the constraints of 'success' never achieved under neo/liberal peace and acknowledging the important and vital interaction with the local 'everyday' forms of resistance, resolution and notions of peace.

As noted by Paffenholz, however, the hybrid forms of peace tend to fail to critically analyse the local, which can lead to undermining local governance structures and excluding women and other minorities (2015: 863; Chopra 2009). Hence, Richmond's preoccupation with developing a critique of the liberal peace can be viewed as coming at the expense of fully capturing the practices of the 'local-local'. In other words, the negativity involved in critiquing the failing liberal peace project tends to take precedence over capturing and engaging with the diversity of the actual practices embedded in the 'everyday' 'local-local'.

Richmond's invocation of the 'everyday' is very much based on its intersection with the liberal peacebuilding project rather than as a separate identity (Richmond 2008, 2010), leaving his notion of the 'everyday' to appear "somewhat utopian, being seemingly devoid of conflict and contention among the constituent locals" (Donais 2012: 36). As noted by Berents (2013), Richmond's "focus on theoretical claims of hybridity and resistance elide the actual bodies present in such interactions, and the power structures which shape them" (69). Further, from a feminist perspective, the question "where are the women?" is not even asked, let alone answered.

Moving beyond the hybridity and representations of Richmond, engaging a more nuanced and complex 'everyday' and 'local', is the work of Roberts (2011), reflecting de Certeau's (1984) strategies and tactics. By centring the needs of the 'local' that generate "internal, local legitimacy, which in turn is a key to stability and peace" (Roberts 2011:411), Roberts offers an alternative notion of the 'everyday' and the 'local'. The 'everyday' that Roberts invokes focuses on the post-conflict space of extremes where the "everyday is concerned with matters that secure the individual from routine, day-to-day contingencies" as opposed to how security is imagined and privileged in peacebuilding (2011: 412). Further, Robert's 'everyday' is populated by the poverty, the challenges and the pervasiveness of insecurity by those whose daily tactics of survival are embedded within a local community context as opposed to broader and disconnected liberal institutionalisation of a fragile State (2011: 412).

Within a post-conflict setting, the 'everyday' is represented in "the routines of life that empower people to manage their existence to the best of their abilities without reference to the formal regulation of the private sphere by the biopolitical state" (Roberts 2011: 413). The mechanisms of the 'everyday', what Roberts refers to as 'common social exchange' (CSE) reflect a myriad of networks based on practicality, legitimacy, loyalty, necessity, sustenance and unequal power relations that permeate 'everyday' survival (2011: 413-414). This location of the 'everyday' provides a broader, deeper more

engaged vision of the 'everyday' and the 'local' that populate the post-conflict landscape of the WPS Agenda. It is where unequal gender relations are reproduced and the location where they can be challenged through the practical implementation of the WPS Agenda.

Viewing the 'everyday' and the 'local' from a situated and bottom up perspective can contest how practical outcomes are assessed. This is evidenced by Heathershaw in his work around peacebuilding in Tajikistan (2008). Heathershaw explores the ways that the local context is imposed upon peacebuilding at the same time that peacebuilding is imposed on the local context. That is, while international programs can feed local governance and elites, their control over international representations of the local are lost (Heathershaw 2008: 347). Heathershaw's findings reinforce the contestation and tensions that exist between the liberal peace and the 'local' and how re-appropriation and resistance is a two-way process. While the liberal peace can shape representations of the local, the local can resist and reinscribe the liberal peace.

All this discussion so far, however, still fails to engage with a feminist notion of gender. Reference to 'people' and 'individuals' glosses over the very real gendered fractures and differences that permeate the terrain of the 'local' and the 'everyday'. A growing body of literature is addressing this gap between critical peacebuilding and feminist scholarship (George 2016; Björkdahl and Ivan 2015; McLeod 2015). McLeod in particular critiques hybridity as rarely being conceptualised in a feminist way (2015: 49).

The feminist perspective applied by McLeod offers a nuanced explanation of power relations as evident between local and international power actors (2015: 50). McLeod states that hybridity "highlights local and international intensities" allowing for the recognition of "the diversity of locals and internationals" (2015: 51). McLeod's (2015) critique of hybridity in critical peacebuilding literature recognises that a feminist gender lens applied to critical peacebuilding results in deeper and more textualised understandings of the hybridity favoured by scholars to explain the interactions between local and international actors (2015: 49). This essentially links back into how WPS policy impacts the 'everyday' experiences of peace and security in a post-conflict landscape as "local and international interactions shape the very understandings of gender" (McLeod 2015: 64) that arise from implementation and enable and constrain practical outcomes.

The above engagement of the scholarship around the post-conflict environment and the liberal peace agenda reveals the tensions that arise when trying to engage the 'local' through international interventions. Implementing the WPS policy in national and local contexts can be viewed as one such form of international intervention, also open to resistance and hybridisation in unexpected ways. It also highlights the need to examine

how the construction of gender in the global WPS policy is assimilated and resisted at the national and local levels of implementation, shifting and co-opting its original intentions.

Posing a Critical Alternative – Embracing Gender Perspectives

The review of the literature above engages with the perceived impacts of the WPS Agenda, its progress towards implementation and the challenges it incurs in addressing unequal gender relations within a post-conflict context. The review offers a number of different critiques. While together they present compelling evidence addressing the impacts and progress of the global WPS policy in national and local settings, they only provide a partial explanation.

The gender stool analysis developed in this thesis, I contend, provides a different lens through which to view these debates, deepening the critiques and at times challenging them. The gender stool analysis places greater emphasis on whether the subsequent resolutions, implementation tools and language of the global WPS policy and its national and local implementation reinforce the gender perspectives reflected in UNSCR 1325 or whether they are expanded to encompass additional perspectives.

In terms of the first category of debates, the gender stool would analytically assess how the seven subsequent resolutions have reinforced or expanded the gender perspectives evident in UNSCR 1325. Such an analysis would assess the strength of subsequent resolutions to address weaknesses in scope based on whether they reinforced the mix of gender perspectives evident in the four WPS pillars of UNSCR 1325 or whether they changed the mix. Changing the mix of gender perspectives, I contend, can impact the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS policy.

Similarly, applying the gender stool analysis to the second category of debate on the implementation tools challenges the usefulness of these tools in terms of reflecting a changing mix of gender perspectives that adapt to the context of implementation.

Applying the gender stool analysis to the third category of debate on how gender is constructed in the WPS policy also challenges the key focus of the critiques. While this category of debate focuses on different constructions of gender and the work of Pratt (2013) highlights how the WPS policy implementation practice reinscribes gender, race and sex, leading to a reduction in women's agency, it situates the different gender perspectives in opposition to each other. The gender stool analysis on the other hand recognises the links and interdependencies of the gender perspectives, rather than favouring one over another.

The gender stool analysis, similar to the existing WPS debates is also bolstered

by anchoring it within the peacebuilding literature, exploring notions of the 'everyday' and the 'local' within a post-conflict context to assign a specific time and space/place to the critiques of the WPS policy. This examination provides context around the tensions that arise in translating global policy into local practice when encapsulated within the broader liberal peacebuilding project. Viewing the WPS policy implementation in terms of liberal peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts reveals the ways the policy can be resisted and hybridised. This supports the opening up of further lines of enquiry exploring how the construction of gender in the global WPS policy is assimilated and resisted at the national and local levels of implementation, as well as the negative and positive shifts and co-optations of the original intentions of the WPS policy. Finally, it also highlights the important links between the global and local in terms of the diversity of factors that influence the translation of global policy into local practice.

Based on the debates noted above and in particular the explanatory power suggested by the gender critique, I have formulated the following research questions: *How is gender constructed in the global WPS policy?* and *What is the enabling and constraining impact of these particular constructions of gender in WPS policy at global, national and local levels?* I utilise a case study of Liberia to further articulate the impacts at a national and local level, anchoring the research within a post-conflict place.

These questions build on the compelling work of many feminist scholars but particularly on the work of Pratt (2013). It takes as its starting point Pratt's compelling argument that how gender is conceptualised in WPS policy constrains the outcomes of women's agency. Building on these solid foundations, I analytically assess the different constructions of gender evident in the WPS policy, using a three-legged gender stool analytical tool. The gender stool represents the three distinct gender perspectives reflected in the debates around equality, difference and intersectionality. I use the gender stool to map the global WPS policy against the different gender perspectives (legs). In order to understand how these constructs of gender may be resisted and co-opted at the national and local levels when implemented within a post-conflict context, I apply the gender stool analysis to the Liberian 1325 NAP and fieldwork conducted in Liberia (2014). The gender stool analysis can be viewed as an additional category of critique which is based on and arises from the debates reviewed above.

Conclusions

The WPS policy framework is situated at the juncture of the 'new wars' and the feminist, peace and women's advocacy at the end of the twentieth century. It's production can be

traced back to the first UN Conference on Women in Mexico through to the latest resolution adopted. Each of the four WPS pillars feature in various key resolutions that have extended, stretched and narrowed the original WPS policy framework.

A review of the literature critiquing the WPS policy impact and progress towards implementation revealed a substantive line of enquiry which I expand on as the focal point of my thesis. Arising from the partiality of the explanatory frames of the WPS debates, this thesis develops a line of enquiry that offers to provide deeper insight into the impact and progress of the WPS policy. Focusing on the three distinct gender perspectives (equality, difference and diversity), this line of enquiry analyses how gender is constructed in the WPS policy at the global, national and local levels within a post-conflict context, identifying not only which gender perspectives are predominant but also how they are co-opted and resisted as global policy is translated into local practice. I apply this analysis to the post-conflict country of Liberia, which offers a multitude of international intervention types, including the use of both implementation tools of a 1325 NAP and gender mainstreaming through governance structures. In the next chapter I discuss the underpinning feminist methodology and case study methods I utilise before proceeding with the analysis of the WPS policy at the global, national and local levels.

Chapter Three: Feminist Methodology and Case Study Methods

Introduction

The human agency of the researcher remains a critical level of moral action in interpreting and representing differences, even if our moral selves are themselves socially constituted. How researchers contribute to the negotiation of research relationships, and how they conceive power, difference and 'othering', affects the representations of actualities and experiences that they produce as knowledge, and their own accountability for this knowledge (Ramazanolu and Holland 2002: 24).

In this thesis I investigate the proposition that how gender is constructed in the WPS policy enables and constrains the implementation outcomes at the global, national and local levels. I draw on various sources to explore this idea and qualitatively evaluate it by interpreting data I collect during fieldwork in post-conflict Liberia. This chapter outlines the methodological framing of my research, recognising the value of feminist methodologies as a way of engaging with the 'everyday' experiences of women in post-conflict settings. First I situate my research within the feminist approach of Haraway's 'situated knowledges' (1988). Second I explore the fieldwork process and engage with the ethical challenges that arise when researching women's experiences of peace and security within the post-conflict landscape.

In particular, I utilise a case study method to investigate the local post-conflict context. I apply an empirical lens to the post-conflict country of Liberia to examine the outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda. My case study utilises a single case design based on a unique case type (Yin 2009). As part of the case study, I collect data in relation to key documents such as the WPS policy and the Liberian 1325 NAP. I also conduct fieldwork in post-conflict Liberia (28 March to 20 April 2014).

Underpinned by a feminist research ethic (Ackerly and True 2008), I apply three distinct types of analysis to the data collections around the WPS policy, Liberian 1325 NAP and fieldwork. I undertake a document analysis of the WPS policy and Liberian 1325 NAP. I also conduct a thematic analysis of the interview data gathered through in-country fieldwork in post-conflict Liberia. A gender stool analysis is then applied to the content and thematic analysis outcomes to reveal which gender perspectives are reflected at the global, national and local levels. All of the analysis is structured using the global WPS pillars.

Conducting Feminist Research

In conducting feminist research, it is important to have a guide or understanding of how such research is different from and contests the norm. At its very heart, feminist research requires that the world as we know it is reconstituted with gender placed at its centre (McLeod 2015). The guide that underpins my journey through this feminist research project is loosely based around the framework offered by Ackerly and True (2008) in their *feminist research ethic*.

Ackerly and True's *feminist research ethic* is centred around four elements that the researcher is to be attentive to throughout the research process, repetitively coming back and reflecting on how these elements interact and are implicated throughout the research process. The four elements are being attentive to "(1) the power of knowledge, and more profoundly, of epistemology, (2) boundaries, marginalisation, and silences, (3) relationships and their power differentials, and (4) our own situatedness as researchers" (Ackerly and True 2008: 695). I use these four elements to guide my research process rather than police it, as a touchstone not a millstone.

I use the *feminist research ethic* as a touchstone, firstly, in exploring the feminist knowledge that supports the privileging of women's experiences. Secondly, I use it to ensure awareness of how boundaries can marginalise the research, the researcher and the subject. Being attentive to various forms of boundaries that are located between disciplines, between researchers, between researcher and subject as well as among research subjects (Ackerly and True 2008: 697) complicates the research in ways that ensures that it does not perpetuate the exclusions made visible through such attentiveness. Thirdly, I use it to recognise the power dynamics that are embedded in the network of relationships that need to be maintained throughout the research project. The network of relationships that are interwoven into the research process are grounded in power dynamics that must be acknowledged and engaged. This is particularly important as my major research method entails conducting dialogues with respondents within a country that has emerged from a violent and traumatic conflict. Attentiveness to relationships, in this sense, manifests itself in the process of determining what questions to ask, of whom, where and how.

It also requires being attentive to the tensions that arise from the 'outsider'/'insider' dynamic. These tensions mirror those that arise between international advocacy and local movements. As Tripp (2006) explains, these tensions include hubris, disregard of the local context, a 'rescue' mentality and distancing from the 'other'. By acknowledging these

tensions and being attentive to how they can manifest in interactions with respondents and through observations, the researcher is in a state of preparedness to react if they arise.

Fourthly, the *feminist research ethic* requires “the researcher to situate herself within the three preceding power dynamics – of epistemology, boundaries, and human relations – and to attend to these as a matter of methodology” (Ackerly and True 2008: 698). In practice this means placing a high priority and value on self-reflection. Reflexivity plays an important role in my research design, through the choices made and in attending to the power dynamics that inform my choices around which ways of knowing I privilege, which boundaries I cross and how I interact with my research. In particular, these reflections played a major role in ensuring my attentiveness to the tensions that arose around the ‘outsider’/‘insider’ dynamic. These choices and my reflexivity in attending to those choices are reflected throughout my thesis.

Feminist Ways of Knowing

The politics of feminism imply a general intention of sharing knowledge of what women actually do and do not have in common, and how their lives could be ‘better’, despite methodological and theoretical divergence between feminists. This gives feminist research the potential for using conflicting understandings productively and pragmatically in making alliances across differences (Ramazanolu and Holland 2002: 24).

While my research project is guided by a feminist research ethic, it is also a project underpinned by feminist theory. While feminist theory is quite fragmented and diverse, at its core is the ideal that women should not be oppressed because of their gender (Lorber 2010), leading to the focus of much feminist work on eliminating sites of gender inequality. How gender inequality is perpetuated, what constitutes a site of inequality and how it should be eliminated are all open to contestation, depending on the stream and type of feminism being espoused as well as the politics underpinning it (Tickner 2001: 11).

While the concept of gender remains contested, feminist research requires the central positioning of *gender* in the research design. That is, gender needs to be positioned within an epistemological frame in order to disclose how gender is understood within the differing feminist theories. Different feminist theories understand gender in different ways and are underpinned by different notions of how knowledge is produced (ontologies) (McCann and Kim 2010; Lorber 2010). This is highlighted in Chapter Two where I outlined three distinct gender perspectives (*as-equality*, *as-difference* and *as-*

diversity) which I contend are particularly informative in relation to implementing the WPS policy.

The contested nature of gender and its various underlying conceptualisations or theories leads to the first challenge in the research process: *identifying an epistemological frame*. In addressing this challenge, I am guided by the feminist research ethic which understands that the naming of an epistemological frame is only temporary. The very act of naming such a frame immediately places boundaries around the research and its possible outcomes (Ackerly and True 2008).

Having acknowledged such limitations, the identification of my epistemological frame is influenced by my desire to understand the collective impact of the WPS policy on women's experiences of peace and security. I was particularly drawn to Haraway's articulation of 'situated knowledges' which not only takes account of the knowledge that women's experiences embody, it also recognises that such knowledge is situated within particular socio-historical contexts and therefore, can only ever be partial (Haraway 1988).

This dual understanding of women's experiences, crossing the boundaries between two distinct epistemological approaches epitomises the second element of the feminist research ethic of being attentive to boundaries, marginalisation and silences (Ackerly and True 2008). While I could have adopted a standpoint approach which privileges women's experiences through "real living embodied bodies" (Hansen 2010: 22; Hartsock 1983; Narayan 1989; Hills Collins 1990; Ingraham 1994), it leaves the underlying power relations uncontested (McCann and Kim 2010: 311). Similarly, while I could have adopted a post-structuralist approach, which focuses on uncovering silences and engaging with the power relations that shape experiences, it does so by recognising that there are no authentic experiences, removing grounds for feminist agency (McCann and Kim 2010: 304; Hestford and Kozol 2001; Hartsock 1990 163-164; Moya 2001; Hansen 2010: 24; Tripp 2016).

Haraway's concept of situated knowledges on the other hand, combines these two feminist approaches, avoiding the extremes of each. Arising from a critique of Harding's (1986) use of standpoint theory, Haraway seeks to escape the quagmire of relativism while also rebuffing Harding's move to rely on standpoint theory. She does this by turning to the metaphor of vision. Haraway invokes a vision metaphor as it "can be good for avoiding binary oppositions" (1988: 581), such as those embedded in positivism's omniscient observer (all-seeing) and relativism's view from nowhere (1988: 584). Haraway's alternative is to advocate "views from somewhere" (1988: 590) embodying

“partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology” (1988: 584).

This view from somewhere situates knowledge at the level of communities, not isolated individuals, joining together multiple “partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position” (Haraway 1988: 590). Adopting situated knowledges as my epistemological frame impacts on every facet of this research project. It impacts on how I answer the research questions in terms of my approach to collecting and interpreting data. It impacts on how I engage with my respondents through the research process. Rather than structuring the research around a set of pre-formed questions, I engage in open conversational dialogues situated in the specificity of post-conflict moment and how this shapes experiences of ‘everyday’ life. Rather than privileging the standpoint of individual respondents or reducing their words to discourses of femininity, masculinity, violence, security and peace, I link the conversations of these multi-dimensional, contradictory and complexly situated observers into a collective view of women’s peace and security in post-conflict Liberia. I am guided on this feminist journey by the feminist research ethic which time and again resituates my work around self-reflection, relationships, boundaries and the power relations that inform them.

Reflecting on Experiences of Peace and Security: Ethical Research

Self-reflection is a critical activity of feminist research and can be viewed as a way of doing ethics. Ethics plays an important role in research projects that directly engage with respondents, especially when those respondents are situated within insecure and fragile environments. Prior to conducting the fieldwork and engaging with research respondents, I reflected on the potential of my research to adversely impact my respondents’ safety and well-being, as well as my own. These considerations were framed in terms of conducting ethical research.

Throughout the research process, before, during and after fieldwork in Liberia, I reflect ethical considerations through respecting the social, economic, political and cultural positioning of Liberians and their government, as well as international stakeholders. I make every effort to ensure the safety and integrity of respondents and stakeholders associated with the project. Sensitivity to past conflict and awareness of the continuing fallout of that conflict, as reflected in the high levels of gender insecurity, inform the research and underpin all interactions.

Institutionally-required questions such as how do I address informed consent, confidentiality and privacy, data collection security and storage, psychological/ mental

stress/distress and discomfort to respondents and researchers around sensitive dialogues were initially addressed prior to and became the basis for self-reflection during fieldwork. My self-reflection during the fieldwork phase of my work developed substantially as the weeks and dialogues increased in number.

Early in the fieldwork, I actively and consciously set aside time at the end of each day to reflect on the dialogues I had conducted that day and the observations I had made. As time passed and I held more dialogues, I started to reflect on how the different groups of actors I engaged with both conformed and resisted the roles they were assigned as respondents in my research project and how I conformed and resisted their expectations of a researcher.

For example, several sessions started out with respondents displaying resistance to the research process, reflected through conversations around strict time limits or initially short, curt responses. These reactions, I soon discovered were based on their perceptions of an international researcher. Once the sessions started, however, their perceptions of me as a researcher asking set questions and busily recording answers were not confirmed. With this realisation, they started to open up and more fully engage with me. Being self-conscious of the impression I was making and understanding that both the respondents and the researchers bring pre-conceived ideas into the sessions, I adjusted my behaviour according to the situation and put strategies in place to break down those barriers. In the dialogue sessions I often reached out across the divides of difference using the 'commonality of experience' of gender oppression as a means of framing conversations around 'everyday' experiences of inequality upon which to base further discussions of experiences of peace and security and how they manifest through gender inequality (Tripp 2006).

The daily self-reflection exercises assisted me to identify very quickly situations where either my own or the respondents' pre-conceived notions may interfere with the research and I adjusted my behaviour accordingly. Through the process of actively applying a *feminist research ethic* (Ackerly and True 2009), these ethical issues were meaningfully engaged and negotiated as part of the research process. It often led to some rich and intriguing dialogues and the sharing of stories which provided a deeper understanding of the conditions that many women and girls face every day in societies marred by violence. The process of self-reflection therefore, changed my own positionality in relation to how I approached the dialogue sessions with respondents and my interpretation of the lasting impacts that violent conflict has on the post-conflict 'everyday'.

Tools of Analysis and Methods of Research

The thesis addresses the research questions in three distinct parts, as mirrored in the structure. The first relates to global policy and practice, the second to national frameworks and practice, while the third relates to local approaches and practice. A number of analytical tools are used including content, thematic and gender stool analysis to analyse the global, national and local levels. Further, a case study method is applied to anchor the research within a post-conflict setting.

Content Analysis – Global WPS Policy, Liberian 1325 NAP

The purpose of the content analysis is to analyse a set of documents to understand the roots of their development and production. This understanding informs the research questions through contextualising the global WPS policy and the 1325 NAPs within a specific genealogy. The output of this analysis forms the basis of the gender stool analysis which maps the mix of gender perspectives that are evident in the policy/plan. The content analysis I conduct goes beyond the mere counting of the number of times that a word turns up in a text. Rather, it lends itself to a more discursive/ constructivist model.

A discursive/constructivist content analysis focuses on the language and how its use in different contexts informs its interpretation (Rapley 2007: 2). The language itself is analysed along with the context within which it is produced. For example, the context of the adoption of each resolutions forms an essential part of the analysis of those resolutions in terms of understanding how gender is constructed in the policy. There are two distinct sets of documents that are subject to a content analysis.

The first set comprise the global WPS policy. As noted previously, the global WPS policy consists of UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242. The policy is further split between the four WPS pillars: participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery. In terms of the development of the WPS policy, the key document analysed is Chapter IV.E “Women and Armed Conflict” of the Beijing PfA (1995).

The second set comprises the Liberian 1325 NAP (2009) and supporting documents. The Liberian 1325 NAP provides the frame for analysis in terms of assessing how gender has been understood in the translation of the WPS Agenda into a national level plan of action. Other documents, policies and programs provide the historical context for the production of the Liberian 1325 NAP. These documents form the gender

equality practice history in Liberia. The analysis of the Liberian 1325 NAP focuses on several key elements including alignment to the global WPS pillars.

The output of the content analysis, structured using the four WPS pillars is further analysed using the gender stool analytical tool. That is, the content is mapped using the typology of the three gender perspectives represented. The gender stool analytical tool is developed from the core argument of the thesis that contends how gender is constructed in the global WPS policy enables and constrains implementation outcomes.

Gender Stool Analysis – Interlinking Gender Perspectives

The gender stool analysis is applied to the output of the content analysis, namely the global WPS policy and the Liberian 1325 NAP. It is also applied to the output of the thematic analysis of the fieldwork data. Due to the shifting focus of the output of the content and thematic analysis, moving from the global down to the local, the four WPS pillars are used to frame the gender stool analysis.

The gender stool provides an analytical frame that engages with, rather than ignores, the interconnections and links between the different gender perspectives that have evolved in feminist theorising over the past half century. Each leg of the stool represents one of the three distinct gender perspectives advanced within feminist theory in relation to defining and addressing gender inequality. That is, there is an individual leg for a perspective of gender *as-equality*, *as-difference* and *as-diversity*. The integrity of the stool within a specific context rests on how well each of the legs are connected in terms of providing a stable platform from which to challenge unequal gender relations.

The stability of the gender stool is not reliant on all legs being equally engaged. Rather it is dependent on balancing the competing needs of socio-cultural, political and economic factors alongside the equality practice history and the overarching goals of future equality practice. This balancing act may require, for example, a greater focus on *gender-as-equality* if the legal frameworks supporting equality are lacking. The emphasis placed on the individual legs of the stool will differ greatly between different implementation sites, highlighting the need to focus not only on the global WPS policy documents but also on the local context. This ties directly back to my concern with Haraway's 'situated knowledges' (1988) which embraces the partiality of knowledge while simultaneously recognising its situated existence.

The use of the three-legged stool metaphor is not new to theorising around gender. Booth and Bennett (2002) apply the notion of the 'three-legged equality stool' to the delivery of gender equality policies. Specifically, they refer to the three interconnected and linked approaches of delivering gender equality policies, namely an equal treatment

perspective (*equality*), a women's perspective (*difference*) and a gender perspective (*relational differences*) (Booth and Bennett 2002: 432). Booth and Bennett (2002) suggest that all three are present in the history of equality policies and should be understood as three legs of the one (equality) stool. This application of the three-legged stool metaphor focuses on 'equality' practices within specific European contexts, showing how different policies have been implemented at different times, reflecting strategies and actions to address gender inequality.

While there are similarities between the Booth and Bennett's equality stool and the gender stool I develop, there are also differences. The key difference revolves around the scope of the legs. Each of the legs of the gender stool represents a gender perspective not merely a strategy to address gender inequality. As noted in table 3-1, each leg/perspective consists of objectives, indicators and a key focus. These will be used to assist in assessing each of the four WPS pillars at the global, national and local levels.

Table 3-1 Gender Perspectives – Objectives, Indicators and Focus

Equality	
Objective	Equal rights – women and men (individualism): including equality of opportunities, statutory/mandatory responses, women and men are treated as equal (gender neutral), and redistribute resources
Key Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No focus on gender. 2. Homogenisation of women as a group. 3. Adding women to policy rather than contesting the premise of the policy. 4. Ignores systemic discrimination.
Key Focus	Focus on women as equal to men.
Difference	
Objective	Positive action – reverse marginalisation of women (essentialism): including equality of outcomes, separate institutional provision, women only, female gendered identity, and recognition of women’s difference
Key Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflating women and gender. 2. Excluding men from process/solution. 3. Homogenisation of women as a group. 4. Privileging gender over other identities.
Key Focus	Focus on women in their difference from men.
Diversity	
Objective	Valuing difference, respecting diversity – intersecting identities (pluralism): including relational differences, multiple sites of subordination and oppression and displace equality/difference debate, redistribution and recognition based on plurality of identities (treated as whole person, not just gendered identity).
Key Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on gender rather than women. 2. Engages with men as men are essential to change. 3. Focus on systemic and structural inequality. 4. Focus on multiple sites of inequality, not only gender inequality.
Key Focus	Focus on women AND men in all their diversity.

The gender stool analysis is visually displayed through bar charts which quantify the degree to which equality, difference and diversity perspectives are evident in the analysis undertaken. The charts provide both a visual representation of the mix of gender

perspectives predominant within a WPS pillar as well as a comparative mix between the global, national and local levels in the case study of Liberia.

The gender stool analysis serves two purposes. First, it provides insight into how different perspectives of gender shape policies and strategies that are aimed at addressing gender inequality. Second, it highlights that these different gender perspectives also enable and constrain the implementation outcomes of the WPS Agenda. This analysis, however, must be placed within the specific context of its implementation. This broader analysis is undertaken as part of the case study.

Case Study Method – Design, Site, Limitations, Data

Researching how a global policy is translated into national plans and local outcomes necessitates the use of methods that are able to capture the nuances of such practice. In order to capture these nuances, I chose the case study method. I also chose to conduct fieldwork as part of the case study as it provides for a deeper engagement with the perceived outcomes from a global, national and local perspective through conversational dialogues and unstructured observations. A case study that encompasses a fieldwork element allows the researcher to engage with a raft of actors and organisations, opinions and experiences not elsewhere captured in the literature.

According to Yin, case study research is most appropriate where “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is asked about a contemporary set of events, over which a researcher has little or no control” (Yin 2009: 14; 2014). My research questions focus on how gender is constructed in the global WPS Agenda and within the context of a post-conflict implementation, explaining why these constructs of gender are enabling and constraining. Further, my research project is situated in a contemporary situation, making it appropriate to utilise a case study method.

The use of a case study can be seen as illuminating “a decision or set of decisions, why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result” (Schramm 1971 in Yin 1989: 22-23). Meyer warns researchers, however, that they need to be clear about the purpose of carrying out the study and their interpretations of the case study (Meyer 2001: 349). As noted, my purpose is based around investigating the construction of gender at the global and its impacts at the national and local levels as reflected through policy and ‘everyday’ experiences of peace and security. I interpret my case study as an example of how different gender perspectives enable and constrain implementation outcomes of the WPS Agenda.

Case Study Design – Single Case

The context of the research influences the choice of case study design, as does other variables such as time available to conduct fieldwork. As my research studies the implementation of the WPS Agenda within the post-conflict context and due to the time and resource constraints associated with conducting fieldwork, I chose a single case design as opposed to a multiple case design. There are a number of rationales for choosing a single case design over multiple cases. These rationales revolve around the classification of the case as either a critical case, extreme/ unique case, representative/typical case, revelatory case or longitudinal case (Yin 2009: 47). In terms of investigating the implementation of the WPS Agenda, I decided that a single case would offer a comprehensive focus on the key questions around how the WPS Agenda implementation has been experienced in terms of ongoing peace and security. This choice is supported by the rationale that a single case study does not mean the study of a single phenomenon. Rather, a single case study design involves a “multitude of qualitative-interpretative, within-case ‘observations’ reflecting patterns of interaction, organisational practices, social relations, routines, actions, and so on” (Yanow et al 2009: 4 quoted in Marsh and Stoker 2010: 256).

The use of a single case does have challenges related to the generalisability. Flyvbjerg (2006) provides a defence to this claim by stating that "formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated" (Flyvbjerg 2006: 228). Ruddin (2006) and Stake (2010) both defend similar positions vis-a-vis the generalisability of case studies. Similarly, I recognise that the limitations of utilising a single case design are only limitations in so far as it detracts from providing a universally applicable set of findings. This is not necessarily viewed as a limitation when measured against the argument that context specific factors are crucial when translating global policy into local practice.

To provide a deeper, richer and more diverse study within a single case design, I chose to utilise an embedded units of analysis design. Embedded units of analysis encompasses the use of multiple elements, variables and/or events within the context of the whole case. For example, within a case based on a single school, teachers, students and parents can make up multiple units of analysis within that single case design. The choice of embedded units of analysis allows for multiplicity and complexity that has traditionally been thought beyond the scope of the single case study (see Lieberman 1991, 1994).

One of the pitfalls of utilising embedded units of analysis is that often the analysis

does not return to the larger unit of analysis (Yin 2009: 47). Similar to the convergence of evidence around a central fact (Yin 2009: 114-117), the multiple units of analysis need to converge in order to strengthen findings at the case level. In order to overcome this pitfall, I ensure that the multiple units of analysis are analysed not only from the individual unit level (global, national, local), but also from a case level (country).

Case Study Site – Liberia, West Africa

Having decided on an embedded unit of analysis single case design, the choice of an appropriate case study site required careful consideration. Numerous factors were considered. The first set of factors considers accessibility and safety. As the focus of my research is on implementing the WPS policy in post-conflict settings, it was necessary to locate my case study in a country that was not only classified as post-conflict, but was also a country that was considered 'safe' to conduct fieldwork. These criteria reduced the number of possible locations down to a handful.

The second set of factors considers accessibility to resources and fitness for purpose. Key to undertaking the analysis was the availability of documents relating to WPS related policies of the government and the ability to interact with key stakeholders during the fieldwork phase. Also key to the purpose of my research was a country that not only had a positive attitude to implementing gender equality policies and programs, but one that had actively sought to develop and implement a 1325 NAP. This is an important indicator of political will and government support for the WPS policy.

Using these factors to assess the available case study sites, I chose post-conflict Liberia. Liberia offers the unique case of a post-conflict country that, on the surface at least, presents as breaking down the common barrier of lack of political will in relation to implementing the WPS Agenda. This is achieved through the mandated strong stance of the Liberian government in terms of gender equality, led by the first female elected President of an African country, Noble Peace Prize winning Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2006 to present). Further, the development of a 1325 NAP (2009), implementation of a National Gender Policy (2009) and a 1325 Secretariat within the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD), is underpinned by a broad gender equality social change agenda (Jennings 2012).

Together these elements provide further evidence that there is positive political backing for implementing the WPS Agenda in this context. In addition, within the international community, Liberia is often held up as the poster-child for gender equality (Moran 2004) and its 1325 NAP is held up as a good example of the combination of strong international support and extensive local consultation (Porter and Mundkur 2012:

41).

Case Study – Limitations

The choice of a post-conflict case study site enforced some limitations on my research, however. Security considerations were utmost in my planned travel movements and were foreshadowed in the Fieldwork Safety Plan I completed prior to travel. While most situations were covered in this plan, the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus when I arrived in Liberia was unforeseeable. The increased health safety concerns that arose due to the outbreak of this virus in a country where the health infrastructure was inadequate to manage the more routine, day-to-day health issues of the population, impacted on my research in various ways.

The biggest impact was on the restrictions imposed on my movements outside the capital city of Monrovia. As a result of being confined to Monrovia, with travel outside the capital foreclosed by the health crisis, I was restricted from visiting rural communities. This limitation required me to reflect on the purpose of my research to understand how this would impact on the design of my fieldwork. In the course of sharing my concerns with my sponsor and also with other respondents, I was able to engage with a number of respondents whose identity is closely linked to their rural upbringing before and during the conflict. While they currently reside in Monrovia, their experiences of rural life and their ongoing connections to their rural communities provided a form of dialogue around rural impacts, even though I was unable to witness these impacts myself.

The civil war saw a large number of rural Liberians displaced from the countryside into the capital and over a decade on, this diversity of Liberians is still represented within the capital. Further, the priority of the majority of the organisations and respondents I engaged with was the 'local' women and girls who were still very much isolated and vulnerable within rural settings. As a result, I was able to focus specifically on rural impacts in those dialogues based on the experiences of the respondents personally, in addition to the experiences gathered from an organisational perspective.

Thematic Analysis: Conversational Dialogues and Observation Data

Having decided to collect data through conversational dialogues and observations, it was necessary to identify an appropriate method to analyse the data. The analysis I chose is informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2012) descriptive articulation of Thematic Analysis. Braun and Clarke state that while many researchers inherently, implicitly and explicitly utilise some version of thematic analysis, it is rarely acknowledged by researchers (2006: 77). Their intention in setting out a road map for doing thematic

analysis is not to be restrictive but rather to give greater access to its use. I use their roadmap as a guide to develop a three phase approach to undertaking the thematic analysis, table 3-2 below.

Table 3-2 Three Phases of Thematic Analysis (adapted from six phases of Braun and Clarke 2006: 87)

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Description of the Process</i>
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Interviews were transcribed through repeated listening to recorded data. Non-recorded data were transcribed as soon as possible post-collection. All transcripts were read and re-read. Initial ideas, thoughts and questions were noted.
2. Generating initial codes and searching for themes	In plain short phrases, interesting features of the data were systematically coded for each dialogue (individual), each group of dialogues (organisation type) and as a whole (case level), placing data under each code. This was completed for both dialogues and unstructured observations separately and together. These codes were then sorted into initial themes which are overarching concepts relating to a number of codes. See Table 3-3.
3. Refining themes and applying to analysis of WPS policy	Initial themes were further refined and aligned to the four global WPS pillars to conduct content and gender stool analysis (Chapter Seven). See Table 7-1.

Table 3-2 above summarises how I apply a three phase thematic analysis to the conversational dialogues and unstructured observations arising from my Liberian fieldwork. Phase One involves undertaking the conversational dialogues and the subsequent transcription of recordings. Phase Two involves the assigning of document numbers and coding of the transcripts. Documents numbers were assigned sequentially (D1, D2, etc.) starting with the first interview transcribed. This document number was matched with the sequential numbering assigned per person (each person in the interview sessions was assigned a number) or observation, combined with a code for the type of dialogue. The code for the type of dialogue is outlined in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Coding of Dialogues

Type of Respondent	Code
Local NGO	L
International NGO/UN	I
Private/Observation	O

Based on table 3-3, the coding L1 D4 refers to the first local NGO respondent and the fourth document transcribed.

The transcripts that have been coded as a document included the written notes from dialogues, as well as my unstructured observations. The initial coding of transcripts produced a list of 25 codes which were then grouped into eleven initial themes. The themes that emerge from the data reflect the concerns of respondents around structures and institutions and how they interact with individuals and communities. The documents arising from the conversational dialogues did not form part of the content analysis. The content analysis outlined above was only applied to the global and national documents and policies covered in Chapters Four and Six.

Table 3-4 sets out the initial themes and codes that arose from Phase Two of the thematic analysis.

Table 3-4: Phase Two – Initial Themes and Initial Codes

Initial Themes	Initial Codes
Security Sector Reform – gender-related policies	Building capacity of Security Sector Gender mainstreaming in Security Sector Recruitment and retention of female LNP officers Women in cross border trade, vulnerable and inspiring
Rule of Law – institutions	Sexual gender based violence prevalence against small children Rule of law
Access to Justice	Access to justice, particularly in rural areas
Women’s Rights Awareness	Awareness raising of women’s rights Follow up of awareness and support for changes
Sexual and Gender-based Violence	Sexual and gender-based violence prevention, protection and awareness
Governance Structures	Decentralizing government structure Women in politics Access to communication
Community Based Approaches	Holistic approach to community work programs Peace Hut as community building Need to localise outreach programs Collaboration
Implementation of Liberian 1325 NAP	Women Peace and Security UNMIL OGA integral to provision of support to take account of gender and 1325
Local Engagement and Ownership	High level of dependency in programs and no real ownership Traditions need to be examined and alternatives given Engaging the youth as leaders of tomorrow Local Ownership and engagement
Microfinance	Schemes for economic empowerment
Liberian Women’s Movement	Progression of Women’s movement since elections (2005, 2011)

Table 3-4 above demonstrates how the 25 codes that arose from the transcripts of dialogues and unstructured observations were grouped into eleven themes. Each of these themes represents links between the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Liberia and the 'everyday' experiences of peace and security reflected in the case data. I further refine these linkages in Phase Three of the thematic analysis to reduce the eleven initial themes outlined above down to seven primary themes and align them to the four global WPS pillars, as outlined in Chapter Seven, Table 7-1.

As my thesis is a single researcher project, working through the steps provides a depth of engagement with the data that is only possible from deep immersion. While this allows for a consistent and holistic coding and analysis, it does raise the issue of validity and reliability. Due to the nature of the research and how the data collected is utilised to support, inform and challenge other forms of data collected through literature review and document analysis, this issue is minimised as the research output does not rely only on the data as coded and analysed as part of the fieldwork phase. To provide some level of coder reliability/validity, I re-coded the fieldwork data several months after the initial coding exercise, in addition to the numerous reiterations of coding that formed part of the formal coding exercise. Further, the combination and integration of the literature review, content analysis, gender stool analysis and fieldwork data into the findings of the thesis can be viewed as mitigating the validity and reliability issues that arise where reliance is placed on data from a single source.

In the Field: Fieldwork in Liberia March/April 2015

Conversational Dialogues

Prior to embarking on the fieldwork, I collated a list of contacts in Liberia. This list initially took shape based on research around which actors play a key role in delivering on women, peace and security in Liberia at the international, national, regional and local levels. I approached each of these contacts advising them of my research and proposed dates of fieldwork. This initial contact also outlined my research methodology.

From this list of initial contacts and the correspondence it generated, I was able to forge a number of collaborative relationships that assisted and guided the conduct of my fieldwork. The most important relationship was forged with The Khana Group. The Khana Group is a social impact advisory firm, primarily working in West Africa. The Managing Director, Mr Taa Wongbe offered both logistical and personal support, before, during and after my fieldwork in Liberia including providing a letter of introduction which allowed me to obtain an entry visa.

Based on the relationships I formed prior to leaving for Liberia, I was able to start the fieldwork component of my research almost immediately. I consolidated these relationships and built new ones as I interacted with each respondent and organisation. The number of respondents and the variety of organisations I engaged with represent a spread of government, International NGOs, local NGOs/CSOs and private organisations as well as a diverse range of local Liberian and international respondents. Table 3-5 below summaries the number of organisations and respondents that were formally engaged as part of the research.

Table 3-5: Interview Breakdown by Organisation Type and Respondents

Organisation Type	Number of Respondents	Gender	How Initiated:
Government	9	7 female 2 male	Sponsor Organisation
United Nations (Mission and Agencies)	5	3 female 2 male	Personal
INGO	10	6 female 4 male	Personal
NGO	13	13 female 2 male	Personal and local recommendations
Private Sector	9	2 female 7 male	Sponsor Organisation
TOTAL	46	31 female 17 male	

As Table 3-5 shows, most of the dialogues arose from personal efforts and recommendations. My sponsor organisation was instrumental in providing a safe place to organise and manage my fieldwork and a representative accompanied me for most of the local NGO dialogues.

The conversational dialogues centred around reflections on WPS in Liberia. These discussions did not limit the interpretation of WPS to the words of the WPS resolutions or the implementation of the Liberian 1325 NAP. As the researcher, I stepped back from interpreting what I thought of as WPS and was led by the respondents understanding of WPS in the context of their work and their experiences.

Unstructured Observations

Unstructured observations undertaken while in Liberia consisted of numerous interactions. They ranged from casual conversations and discussions with Liberian women and men, to 'off the record' discussions where respondents agreed to discuss their experiences to assist in providing background context for my research. They also consisted of attending and presenting at a large workshop for NGOs, attending meetings with local groups and contributing to outcomes, day-to-day observations from living in Monrovia, interacting with local and international communities, travelling by car and by foot around the capital and engaging in 'everyday' transactions such as buying food, going to restaurants and attending public events.

These observations were actively documented in a journal and verbal consent to include them in my data collection was obtained, where possible, bearing in mind that the number of people involved exceeded one hundred, representing hundreds of individual interactions documented in over two dozen journal entries. In *all* interactions, the nature of my research and my purpose for being in Liberia was openly acknowledged and discussed and my interest in recording my observations as part of my research was never hidden. I found that everyone I engaged with were open and willing to share their opinions and observations on topics such as gender equality, rates of violence and the shortcomings of the international aid and government programs.

Unstructured observations, unlike interviews allows for an "investigation of context and process in an ongoing rather than episodic manner" (McKechnie 2008: 908). Treating these unstructured observations as data provides for a loose comparison to the conversational dialogues conducted, allowing for further reflection on what was 'officially' being said by insiders and what I observed as an outsider in day-to-day interactions (McKechnie 2008: 908). It is noted, however, that access to this outsider's perspective is mediated through my personal perceptions and worldviews. Together, the richness of data collected from both conversational dialogues and unstructured observations complements and strengthens the data gathered from the existing literature and key documents, policies and programs.

Fields of Vision: Dynamics of Doing Fieldwork

Embarking on fieldwork offers great potential for research outcomes but it can also present challenges. While some of these challenges can be anticipated and planned for, others arise due to unforeseen circumstances and require a flexible and reflexive response. Gaining consent from respondents in most instances posed no challenge,

however, there were a few instances where the respondent chose to give verbal consent only. Regardless of whether consent was verbal or written, all respondents were given a copy of the consent form (Appendix 1).

As part of the consent form, permission was also sought to digitally record the conversation. In most cases, those who gave written consent also consented to have them recorded. Respecting the limitations and restrictions that a number of respondents were subject to, some were not digitally recorded and verbal consent to participate was accepted as sufficient. In all cases where only verbal consent was obtained, no digital recording was made. Where recordings were not obtained, I took more extensive notes during the session and as soon as practicable, I transcribed my written notes. In particular, it was determined in consultation with my contact that the dialogues with government employees be approached more casually and not be recorded. The richness of the data collected from these dialogues supported this decision and in lieu of recording, extensive notes were taken and these were more fully transcribed immediately after to reduce the loss of content and context.

I travelled to each respondent's premises, providing me with further opportunities to interact with a variety of aspects of daily life in Liberia. All respondents were supportive of my intention not to individually identify them or their organisations in the research project, as specifically noted in the consent forms. As such, I have anonymised the sources of the fieldwork data throughout the thesis.

In engaging in conversational dialogues, I was conscious of the different types of relationships that my research required me to be attentive to (Ackerly and True 2008). First, I was attentive to the need to build relationships of trust with my respondents quickly, due to the limited time available. Second, I also had to be attentive to the relationships that already existed between my respondents, within their organisations and between their organisations. This is important in a location like Monrovia where the respondents I engaged with work closely together and in competition to each other on a daily basis. Being attentive to these relationships had certain implications for how I proceeded with the planned dialogues, some of which were unforeseeable prior to the fieldwork.

The first implication manifested in the type of data I planned to collect while on location in Liberia. It was not my intention to directly engage with my respondent's experiences of the traumatic and violent civil war that ended in 2003 but rather focus on how these experiences impact their sense of in/security in post-conflict Liberia. My concern with the types of dialogues I was interested in was informed by my

(over)attentiveness to the relationship between myself as researcher and my respondents and my core ethical belief that my research should do no harm nor further traumatise respondents. While I recognised that both my fieldwork in Liberia and the work conducted around the WPS Agenda were framed within the context of the Liberian Civil War, my (over)attentiveness to relationships initially restricted my ability to anticipate all the ways in which this frame was implicated through the responses that were possible from the respondents.

For example, the stories that were shared with me drew the conversation time and again back to the continuation of violence against women from the conflict through to post-conflict period. The physical and psychological trauma suffered by many during the war continue to shape their 'everyday' realities such as the ongoing lack of access to health and legal remedies to assist ease the burdens they continued to suffer. Rather than shy away from these conversations but being careful not to directly engage in them unless first broached by my respondents, I was able to recognise the openings these dialogues offered me to gain deeper insight into the impacts of insecurity in post-conflict communities.

These openings allowed me to more fully explore the interconnections between the present insecurity (violence) of post-conflict Liberia and the prior violent conflict (civil war). The insights that were gained from reflecting on these relationships (between myself and the respondents and between conflict and post-conflict) lead to the key finding that the implementation of the WPS Agenda has to be attentive to 'everyday' experiences of insecurity and how social inequalities, injustices and lack of engagement with the 'local' community are interconnected in complex and reinforcing ways. To be attentive to the intersections of justice, inequality and the 'everyday' requires both respecting and engaging with the 'local' community, an intersection that runs throughout the findings chapters of this thesis.

Conclusion: Experiencing Peace and Security as Feminist Research

In this chapter I have outlined the methodology and methods that my research is embedded in. I apply the *feminist research ethic* as a guide to the research process as a whole and to its constitutive parts, ensuring that the attentiveness to epistemology, boundaries, relationships and situatedness of the researcher is considered at all phases of the research. This attentiveness to self-reflection and challenging of the research data and process provides for a robust and well-rounded methodology and practice of research that strengthens the research findings, outputs and outcomes.

I draw on Haraway's 'situated knowledges' to underpin my research. My choice of analytical tools and methods is situated within this feminist foundation. I explain how the content, thematic and gender stool analysis examines the key documents and data to understand how the various gender perspectives that permeate the WPS policy enable and constrain the implementation outcomes.

My choice of case study method underpins these analytical tools, based on a number of factors, the primary being to apply an empirical lens to the implementation of the WPS policy. The purpose of carrying out a single site case study is to provide a contextualised understanding of how the WPS Agenda is implemented within a specific post-conflict location in order to explore local experiences of peace and security. My choice of post-conflict Liberia was based on a number of intersecting factors that together present Liberia as a unique case to study the implementation of the WPS Agenda, particularly in terms of national support.

The remainder of this thesis is structured around applying the analytical tools and case study method to the case of Liberia. In Part 1, I undertake the content and gender stool analysis of the global WPS policy. In Part 2, I set up the case study of Liberia with the historical positioning of Liberia women from pre-settlement times through to the post-conflict period. Next I conduct a content analysis encompassing a mapping of the equality practice history of Liberia before performing a gender stool analysis of the Liberian 1325 NAP. Finally I subject the thematic analysis of the fieldwork data to a gender stool analysis, exposing the implications for practice and the impacts of the WPS policy on the experiences of peace and security in Liberia.

PART 1: GLOBAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

Chapter Four: Gender Stool Analysis – Global Level – WPS Policy

Introduction

In this chapter I undertake the analysis of the global WPS policy and practice. Specifically, this chapter focuses on the global WPS policy encompassed within the eight Security Council resolutions of the WPS Agenda: UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242. As noted in Chapter Two, the historical grounding of the WPS policy reaches back over thirty years to the first UN Conference on Women in Mexico (1975). For the purposes of analysis, however, I have focused on the most recent substantive event that directly informs the production of the first WPS resolution, Chapter IV.E “Women and Armed Conflict” of the Beijing PfA (1995). While I recognise that there are a lot of documents that could be alternatively used to point to production of UNSCR 1325 (see Shepherd 2008), the Beijing PfA incorporates this broader historical genealogy. I analyse the continuities and discontinuities between Chapter IV.E and the initial WPS policy framework set out in UNSCR 1325 to gain insight into the origins of the WPS policy and the constraints imposed on its production. In so doing, I highlight the process of negotiation required to translate the ambitious feminist plan of action into a Security Council resolution and international policy.

I analyse the global WPS policy through the four WPS pillars: participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery to understand the content of the policy. I then apply a gender stool analysis to the output of this narrative. The gender stool analysis filters the intent of the WPS pillars through the lens of the different gender perspectives. These gender perspectives, I argue, enable and constrain the implementation outcomes of the WPS policy. The first step in testing this argument is to map out which gender perspectives are evident in the global WPS policy and their implications on potential outcomes.

Historical Precedents of WPS Policy

Looking back at the Beijing PfA and specifically Chapter IV.E, it becomes immediately apparent that the historical positioning of the WPS Agenda is much broader and more far-reaching in scope than the words contained in UNSCR 1325. The words of UNSCR 1325 are negotiated and reflective of the language acceptable to the Security Council at the time of its adoption (Puechguirbal 2010; Tryggestad 2009; McLeod 2011). Focusing

solely on the words of UNSCR 1325 therefore, may lead to a false assessment of the purpose of the WPS Agenda as it ignores the historical context of its production. As Enloe (2005) notes, this limitation of the words of UNSCR 1325 is based on misunderstanding the:

genuinely radical understanding that informed the feminist analysis undergirding 1325. That feminist understanding is that patriarchy – in all its varied guises, camouflaged, khaki clad and pin-striped – is a principal cause both of the outbreak of violent societal conflicts and of the international community’s frequent failures in providing long-term resolution to those violent conflicts (Enloe 2005: 281).

The inclusion of Chapter IV.E in the Beijing PfA highlights the critique of patriarchy and the need to directly address it through deconstructing militarism and promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution (Beijing PfA 1995: 52-61). Throughout Chapter IV.E, there is a strong undertone that requires not only general notions of equality between women and men as “peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development” (Beijing PfA 1995: 52) but a notion of equality as equal participation and equal representation of women, particularly in all decision-making bodies, at all levels. This is reflective of a *gender-as-equality* perspective. The decision-making bodies specifically mentioned include “national and international institutions which may make or influence policy with regard to matters related to peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy and related activities and in all stages of peace mediation and negotiations” (Beijing PfA 1995: 55).

The Beijing PfA not only calls for the inclusion of women and the recognition of the experiences of women (*gender-as-difference*), it also calls for the rethinking and restructuring of the very power structures (patriarchy) that perpetuate the subordination of all women (Beijing PfA 1995: 53). It calls for consideration of the continuing high expenditures on military and armaments in the face of the huge costs of humanitarian crises that are often a result of military campaigns (Beijing PfA 1995: 55-56). These calls for action can be viewed as displacing social relations based on domination and the valuing of hierarchies of difference. That is, the dismantling of patriarchy as the primary system structuring power relations that results in gender oppression (*gender-as-difference*).

The policy framework of UNSCR 1325 reflects the feminist underpinnings of the Beijing PfA outlined above to varying degrees. For example, UNSCR 1325 is closely aligned to the wording in the Beijing PfA in relation to increasing women’s participation and representation at all levels of decision-making and in all institutions related to conflict resolution and peace processes. Noticeably absent, however, is the stronger wording

found in the Beijing PfA around aiming for a gender balance in judicial roles, in institutional bodies, as well as within the more substantive concerns of fostering cultures of peace and non-violent conflict resolution processes. This watering down of the terms of the Beijing PfA, by not engaging the stronger language around gender balance, reveals the types of negotiations and settlements that were necessary to gain support for the adoption of a resolution by a group (Security Council) whose past record barely recognised the existence of women in the field of international peace and security (Puechguirbal 2010; Tryggestad 2009). It also has implications for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 which has struggled to see a substantive shift in the gender balance. It should be noted, however, that the Beijing PfA itself went through a similar process of stringent negotiation before the final language was settled upon.

Further differences arise around how the diversity of women and their circumstances are represented. The Beijing PfA allows for a diversity of women, women as refugees, as displaced persons and as agents, recognising that different situations require different solutions, but especially, that they all deserve equal access and treatment (Beijing PfA 1995: 59-60). The focus in UNSCR 1325, while taking account of the different positioning of women as refugees and as displaced persons, falls short of ascribing to them agency to the extent that it is called for in the Beijing PfA. Once again, this watering down of the terms of the Beijing PfA is revelatory in terms of the accommodations that are necessary when challenging widely accepted norms that relegate women to the margins, as weak and to be protected by men (Puechguirbal 2010). The Beijing PfA calls on the international community and national governments to provide protection and assist in upholding women's and human rights. Within this context, it also recognises women's capabilities and their need to be part of the processes and decision making that not only structure the situations they find themselves in, but also focuses on the structures involved in resolving those situations.

An examination of the subsequent resolutions and actions that strengthen (and weaken) the policy framework of the WPS Agenda similarly reveals that the words of those documents are shaped and limited by their historical context. An example of this are the similarities and differences between UNSCRs 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009). While both of these resolutions were adopted during periods when the US held the presidency of the Security Council and both deal with sexual violence against women, the differences between them reflects the change from the Bush Administration to the Obama Administration and their positioning of gender (Otto 2010: 112). That is, in UNSCR 1820, women are viewed as vulnerable and victims requiring protection, while in UNSCR 1888,

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women are viewed as agents who are able to be empowered to resist the structural inequality that shapes the violence perpetrated against them. Rather than being the helpless, vulnerable victims of violence, women are portrayed as active agents in the fight against impunity and prevention of conflict.

This draws more firmly on the stance adopted in the Beijing PfA (1995), confirming the longevity of its notions and how a shift in the policy environment can provide further opportunities to broaden and deepen the WPS Agenda. This has been further witnessed in the recent turn towards recognising the need to engage in dialogue around militarism and structural inequality and the need to broaden the focus on how women participate and not just on increasing numbers of women (see UNSCR 2242; Coomaraswamy et al 2015).

Looking at the Beijing PfA in terms of how its construction of gender has informed the WPS policy, it is evident that it reflects a number of different gender perspectives. Specifically, it is heavily grounded in a *gender-as-equality* perspective as revealed through the clauses that focus on women's equal access and equal treatment. Similarly, it has some grounding in a *gender-as-difference* perspective recognising the need to promote women's difference as a site of resistance and a site of contestation of the norms of international peace and security. The extent to which this grounding in equality and difference is also reflected in the global WPS policy will be analysed in the next section.

Global WPS Policy – WPS Pillar Analysis

The global WPS policy covers eight Security Council resolutions articulated through four WPS pillars. Table 4-1 below summarises the key resolution clauses pertinent to each of the WPS pillars. The mapping of the resolution clauses to WPS pillars is not definitive, but represents my interpretation of the clauses. This mapping is based on a review of the literature, including various reports and evaluations that have similarly grouped the operative paragraphs by themes (see Butler, Mader and Kean 2010). Rather than classify clauses as wholly participation or wholly prevention, my interpretation and classification of the clauses allowed for a multiple entries. For example clause 1 of UNSCR 1325 is classified as both participation and prevention while clause 8 is classified as both participation, protection and relief and recovery.

Table 4-1 Mapping of WPS Pillars to Resolution Clauses

Resolutions (UNSCR)	Participation	Prevention	Protection	Relief and Recovery
1325 (2000)	1-4, 8, 15	1	6, 8, 9-11, 14, 15	5-13, 16, 17
1820 (2008)	8, 12	12	1-11	3, 4, 6-10, 13, 15
1888 (2009)	14, 16, 18, 19, 27, 28	-	1-13, 15, 17, 18, 20-26	3, 6-13, 16-19, 21, 25, 26
1889 (2009)	1, 4-6, 8-11, 14-19	-	2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 16	1, 3, 4, 8-10, 12-15, 19
1960 (2010)	12, 13, 15	-	1-5, 7-9, 11, 14, 16	11, 13
2106 (2013)	1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16	-	1-3, 5-7, 10-15, 17, 18, 21	2, 3, 5, 7-9, 16, 18-21
2122 (2013)	1, 4, 6-9, 14	7	5, 12, 13	1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10, 11
2242 (2015)	1-5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15	1, 11-13, 15	2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14-16	2-4, 14, 15
Total Clauses/ Percentage	56 25%	8 4%	85 38%	73 33%

As is evident in table 4-1, the protection pillar has received the most sustained focus over the last fifteen years, while the prevention of conflict pillar has received the least. A noticeable shift in focus is discernible in the last two resolutions (UNSCRs 2122 and 2242) with their primary focus on engaging with strengthening the participation, prevention and relief and recovery pillars. It should be noted that the relief and recovery pillar includes all references to post-conflict circumstances and as such has received a lot of attention, especially in terms of strengthening the rule of law, security and justice reforms, DDR, peacekeeping and recovery frameworks. The majority of paragraphs referring to relief and recovery also refer to other pillars, highlighting the integrated nature of the pillars. In the rest of this section I analyse each of these pillars individually.

Firstly I undertake a content analysis examining the key clauses of the global WPS pillars. Secondly I apply the gender stool analysis to the content of each of the pillars in terms of the three perspectives of gender *-as-equality*, *-as-difference* and *-as-diversity*.

This analysis provides evidence of how gender is constructed in each pillar and highlights the potential constraints for global actors. The implications of such constructs on national and local actors is discussed under the relevant sections in the Chapter Six (national) and Chapter Seven (local).

WPS Pillar One: Participation – Content Analysis

The participation pillar set up in UNSCR 1325, while built on as part of all subsequent resolutions, received the most comprehensive strengthening in UNSCRs 1889 and 2242. The participation pillar primarily focuses on women's participation in all areas of peace operations, security, conflict prevention and resolution and in all levels of decision-making (UNSCR 1325).

Examining the actual words used to focus on women's participation reveals that in most cases the focus is on increasing the number of women participants (as a group) in relation to the number of overall male (legitimate) participants in peace operations and in decision-making roles. This is demonstrated across all resolutions with little deviation until most recently (see UNSCR 2242) where greater emphasis is placed on the barriers to the inclusion of women, recognising that access to participate requires more than a policy pronouncement. Examples of how women's increased participation has evolved (and not) in the WPS policy include:

Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict (UNSCR 1325 2000: OP 1).

Urges the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster (UNSCR 1325 2000: OP 3).

Urges Member States, international and regional organisations to take further measures to improve women's participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post-conflict planning and peacebuilding (UNSCR 1889 2009: OP1).

... *encourages* those supporting peace processes to facilitate women's meaningful inclusion in negotiating parties' delegations to peace talks... (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP1).

Welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to prioritize the appointment of more women in senior United Nations leadership positions, bearing in mind a cross-geographical representation and in accordance with existing relevant rules and regulations governing administrative and budgetary issues, and *encourages* him to review the obstacles preventing women's recruitment, and professional advancement, *further welcomes* efforts to incentivize greater numbers of women in

militaries and police deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and *calls upon* the Secretary-General to initiate, in collaboration with Member States, a revised strategy, within existing resources, to double the numbers of women in military and police contingents of UN peacekeeping operations over the next five years (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP 8).

As the above excerpts illustrate, the focus of the participation pillar is primarily on increasing the numbers of women in a variety of roles such as in peace negotiating teams, in decision-making, as special representatives and in peacekeeping across international, national and local levels. The purpose behind increasing numbers is closely linked to women gaining access to address historic barriers to entry. Consequently, there has been no sustained critique in the policy, until recently, of how the institutions or mechanisms to which equal access is being sought are themselves gendered. That is, the male norm within the security institutions and peace mechanisms remains uncontested (Otto 2010).

This inadequacy in the WPS policy has been foregrounded in UNSCR 2242 OP 8 (above). UNSCR 2242 calls attention to measures to be taken to address gendered barriers to women's inclusion within the UN. While it goes some way to filling the gaping hole in the WPS policy around this issue, it forecloses on providing a sustainable solution through leaving unchallenged "existing rules and regulations."

Further, in promoting equal access and equality, the only attempt made to differentiate which women should participate is in terms of their location (international/national/local) or in some cases their qualifications (military/peacekeeping/mediators). This tends to promote gender neutrality and the dogged pursuit of gender balance (as equal numbers), neither of which adequately challenge the legitimacy of how these categories are defined. That is, it doesn't look at what underpinning norms shape 'who' is considered a legitimate participant. Such a process would exclude those women who are not considered 'legitimate' based on their lack of opportunity to access such roles or their contestation that those roles are legitimate avenues for pursuing a feminist agenda. Pratt recognises this in her work as women whose voices are marginalised due to their refusal to "subscribe" to WPS logic (Pratt 2013: 780).

WPS Pillar One: Participation – Gender Stool Analysis

Based on the content analysis above, the objective of the participation pillar aligns most closely with a *gender-as-equality* perspective through its primary focus on increasing the participation and representation of women across the spectrum of conflict and peace related processes and institutions. The resolutions centre the participation efforts on the notion of equality in terms of numbers and gaining equal access to resources, to positions

and to institutions. As noted in the preambles to the resolutions, reference is consistently made to women's "equal" and "full" participation.

The objectives also, to a certain extent enable and foreshadow a *gender-as-difference* perspective in terms of those participation strategies which focus solely on women's economic or political empowerment. These strategies are usually articulated at the implementation stage and are rarely captured at the global policy level due to their specificity. These are best assessed at the implementation stage where national and local specific factors should be included (see Chapters Six and Seven).

The key focus of the participation pillar is on 'women as equal to men'. This is demonstrated in the excerpts outlined above, where the increase in numbers of women in military, peacekeeping and decision-making roles are all predicated on viewing women and men as being equal to the task of those roles. It does not, for example, advocate that women will perform those roles differently, just that they should have equal access and equal opportunities to participate.

Several consequences can arise from such a focus. For example, the calling for an increase in the number of women in military and peacekeeping roles does not challenge the gendered nature of military or peacekeeping interventions and institutions. Their inclusion, particularly in peacekeeping roles is viewed in terms of encouraging 'other women' to report acts of violence, not to confront the gendered barriers that stop women feeling comfortable reporting such violence to male peacekeepers/security sector officers.

Such a construction leaves the gendered nature of institutions and policies uncontested, merely adding women to existing structures (add women and stir approach). An example of this is evidenced in UNSCR 2242, where it calls attention to barriers restricting women's access to take up opportunities within the UN, but addresses these issues specifically within the constraints of "existing rules and regulations" (OP 8), thereby leaving uncontested their gendered construction and impact.

In summary, the participation pillar exhibits a combination of indicators that confirm the predominance of a *gender-as-equality* perspective as well as enabling *gender-as-difference* implementation strategies. Impacts, both positive and negative, arise from this predominance for global actors. While opportunities for some women are foreshadowed in the resolutions, these opportunities are restricted to a small subset of women. The lack of recognition of the barriers which impede women accessing and converting these opportunities, due to uncontested gendered structures, can materially impact on the outcomes that are possible and probable.

WPS Pillar Two: Prevention – Content Analysis

The prevention pillar set up in UNSCR 1325 has been strengthened in a few subsequent resolutions (UNSCRs 1820 and 2122) and somewhat broadened in UNSCR 2242, where it now encompasses references to preventing terrorism and small arms transfers. These provisions in relation to the prevention pillar can be summarised as requiring an increase in “the representation of women in national, regional, and international institutions, in mechanisms for conflict prevention (1325, OP1), and in conflict prevention dialogues (1820, OP12)” (Butler, Mader and Kean 2010: 16).

Examining the actual words used to focus on women’s roles in relation to conflict prevention reveals a similar typology to the participation clauses. That is, the prevention mechanisms and dialogues focus on increasing participation and representation of women as a key strategy, as noted in the following clauses, the WPS resolutions:

Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict (UNSCR 1325 2000: OP 1; 2242 2015: OP 1).

Urges the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys to invite women to participate in discussions pertinent to the prevention and resolution of conflict ... (UNSCR 1820 2008: OP12).

Recognizes the continuing need to increase women’s participation and the consideration of gender-related issues in all discussions pertinent to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict (UNSCR 2122 2013: 7).

Urges Member States and requests relevant United Nations entities, including CTED [Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Director] within its existing mandate and in collaboration with UN-Women, to conduct and gather gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women’s human rights and women’s organizations, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses, and to ensure United Nations monitoring and assessment mechanisms and processes mandated to prevent and respond to violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, have the necessary gender expertise... (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP 12).

Urges Member States and the United Nations system to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women’s organizations in developing strategies to counter [prevent] terrorism and violent extremism ... (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP 13).

Encourages empowering women, including through capacity-building efforts, as appropriate, to participate in the design and implementation of efforts related to the prevention, combating and eradication of the illicit transfer, and the destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons ... (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP 15).

As the above excerpts illustrate, the prevention pillar utilises a participation strategy to open the doors to women's involvement in conflict prevention processes. These processes may include formal peace processes involving the international community, prevention strategies encompassing negotiating a peace agreement, as well as transitional arrangements and reconstruction processes (Otto 2010). Similar to the participation pillar, while the preamble of a number of resolutions recognises that women's experiences will contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international security and peace outcomes, women's inclusion is focused on their equal status with men, not their differences from them. This can negate the usefulness of the policy as it fails to recognise the gendered barriers to women's inclusion in conflict prevention processes.

The expansion of the prevention pillar into the arena of terrorism, violent extremism and small arms transfer is a telling point on the shifting focus of women's peace and security concerns. It also opens the door a little further, recognising the need to include women in all areas of international security. It is too early to assess whether this broadening of the prevention pillar will have any substantive impact on how women's inclusion may be more usefully constructed, bearing in mind the particular groups of women such a task would entail engaging.

WPS Pillar Two: Prevention – Gender Stool Analysis

Based on the content analysis above, the objective of the prevention pillar closely aligns with a *gender-as-equality* perspective through its primary focus on increasing the participation and representation of women in mechanisms and institutions to prevent conflict. While not extensively nor comprehensively covered in the various resolutions, the prevention theme is centred on a notion of equality in terms of inclusion and gaining access to resources, roles and institutions.

The key focus of the prevention pillar also reflects a *gender-as-equality* perspective through its focus on 'women as equal to men'. This is demonstrated where women's participation and inclusion is predicated on their historic exclusion. Similar to the participation pillar, the prevention pillar's focus is on giving women equal access to institutions and processes that have traditionally only been accessible to men and a small number of women. The focus is not on ensuring that once given access, women are able to convert equal opportunities into equality of outcomes.

The classification of the prevention pillar as predominately reflecting a *gender-as-equality* perspective is unsurprisingly the same classification as the participation pillar, due to the main strategy of including women in prevention tasks is to increase their

participation. This is further reinforced as 90% of the resolution clauses that relate to prevention also relate to participation. As such, the discussion for the most part outlined in the previous section can also be applied here. In lieu of repetition, I only discuss prevention specific examples of implications for global actors that have not already been discussed.

Drawing on the one clause that does not directly relate to participation as a strategy for increasing women's roles in prevention of conflict (UNSCR 2242 OP 12), it is evident from close examination that it reflects a *gender-as-difference* perspective. This is apparent through the focus on "gender-sensitive research and data collection" to understand "the drivers of radicalization for women" and the "impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations" (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP 12). According to Table 3-1 (Chapter 3), this reflects the objective and key focus of a *gender-as-difference* perspective including recognising and valuing women's different perspectives and experiences of conflict. The actual impacts of this apparent shift from an equality to a difference focus within the prevention pillar are as yet unknown, however, for the purposes of this analysis, the equality focus remains predominant. This shift also allows for a possible focus on *gender-as-diversity* recognising that some women may be more susceptible to vulnerability due to other intersecting factors.

In summary, the prevention pillar exhibits a combination of indicators that confirm the predominance of a *gender-as-equality* perspective though there has been a recent shift to recognise a *gender-as-difference* perspective. As with the participation pillar, both positive and negative impacts accrue for global actors. The restrictions on women participating in conflict prevention processes far outweigh the opportunities that the WPS policy creates when almost exclusively addressed through a *gender-as-equality* lens. As previously mentioned, the lack of recognition of the barriers that impede women accessing and converting these opportunities, due to uncontested gendered structures, can materially impact on the possible and probable outcomes.

WPS Pillar Three: Protection – Content Analysis

The protection pillar set up in UNSCR 1325 has received extensive strengthening, elaboration and attention over the last fifteen years, particularly in UNSCRs 1820, 1888 and 1960. The primary focus of the protection pillar is on securitising women's and girls' rights and safety in international law, with specific provisions around sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Examining the actual words used in the protection pillar reveals dialogues and tensions ranging from recognising women as victims in need of protection, the need for

men to provide bodily protection (peacekeepers, military police), the adoption of special provisions to address the consequences of women's victimhood and to protect women from themselves as well as engaging women as agents to assist with formulating solutions to the violations of their rights. The following examples demonstrate the range of these dialogues and tensions where the WPS resolutions:

Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians (UNSCR 1325 2000: OP 9).

Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict (UNSCR 1325 2000: OP 10).

Stresses that sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security, *affirms* in this regard that effective steps to prevent and respond to such acts of sexual violence can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and *expresses its readiness*, when considering situations on the agenda of the Council, to, where necessary, adopt appropriate steps to address widespread or systematic sexual violence (UNSCR 1820 2008: OP 1; UNSCR 1888 2009: OP 1; UNSCR 1960 2010: OP 1).

Calls upon the Secretary-General to identify and take the appropriate measures to deploy rapidly a team of experts to situations of particular concern with respect to sexual violence in armed conflict, working through the United Nations presence on the ground and with the consent of the host government, to assist national authorities to strengthen the rule of law (UNSCR 1888 2009: OP 8).

... calls upon Member States to further integrate the women, peace and security agenda into their strategic plans such as national action plans and other planning frameworks, with sufficient resources, including implementation of relevant obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, through broad consultation, including with civil society, in particular women's organizations ... (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP 2).

...calls upon Member States, United Nations entities, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations to take into consideration the specific impact of conflict and post-conflict environments on women's and girls' security, mobility, education, economic activity and opportunities, to mitigate the risk of women from becoming active players in the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons (UNSCR 2242 2015: OP15).

As the above excerpts illustrate, the protection pillar utilises different strategies to those noted in both the participation and prevention pillars. There is still a focus on women but it is more in terms of foregrounding their difference from men, particularly in

terms to their vulnerability to violence (from men). The protection frame has been shifting over the last few resolutions, gradually recognising that while women and girls are victims of extreme violence during and after conflict, they do not need to be defined by that violence. Rather, they can and should actively participate in devising solutions to address such violence.

The provisions around the protection pillar, unlike the participation and prevention pillars, lacks a focus on 'women as equal to men'. It focuses on women because they are different and recognises that this difference marks them as being vulnerable to violence and targets in conflict. The focus on women is also to understand their needs as they differ from men's needs, both during and after conflict.

WPS Pillar Three: Protection Gender Stool Analysis

Based on the content analysis above, the objective of the protection pillar in the majority of the clauses aligns to a *gender-as-difference* perspective, providing frameworks and resources to address the specific needs of women, especially as victims of sexual violence and infringements of their rights under international law. It does this through recognising that in order for women to achieve an equality of outcomes, they need more than just access to laws to protect them, they need separate provisions to ensure they are able to gain that access.

The protection pillar sets up separate provisions so that those responsible are held accountable to existing international law, as opposed to setting up those laws or enabling women to have equal access to those laws. The ability of the provisions to hold perpetrators accountable has been the source of much debate and censure (GNWP 2013; LSE Pro Bono Matters 2015). The continued battle to end impunity is evidenced in every WPS resolution and every WPS presidential statement of the Security Council, attesting to the reality that the provisions in WPS policy are not translating into positive outcomes on the ground in the form of successful prosecutions (UN News Centre 2010; Coomaraswamy et al 2015).

Further, the provisions provide for the protection of women and girls due to their inherent vulnerability as women and girls while men are implicitly framed, but never named, in terms of being the source of protection while also being perpetrators of the violence. This leaves uncontested the male norm in international security where it is assumed that militarised protection and the perpetration of violence against women is the domain of men (Otto 2006).

The key focus of the protection pillar then, is to recognise women's and girls' different needs and different experiences of conflict and post-conflict, in order to build

frameworks and responses that will address those differences. In addressing these issues, the protection pillar relies on recognising the special needs of women and girls who are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation *because they are women*. A very specific vulnerable female gendered identity is the central tenet of the protection pillar, taking precedence over other intersecting identities based on religion, ethnicity or socio-economic status, even though these factors may make some women more vulnerable than others.

There is a marginal emphasis on *gender-as-equality*, reflected in the focus on increasing women's participation in the security institutions and mechanisms. This focus crosses over with the participation pillar. This reinforces the need to understand the WPS pillars not as being mutually exclusive but rather generally being mutually supportive.

In summary, the protection pillar exhibits a combination of indicators that confirms the predominance of a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The predominance of a difference gender perspective is demonstrated in the focus on building a protectionist frame to address violence against women, particularly during armed conflict and in abuses of women's rights under international law (Kassahun 2015; Otto 2010; Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015; Coomaraswamy et al 2015). Positive and negative impacts arise from this focus on difference. A protectionist frame, while assisting in setting up structures does little to equip women with the tools to survive the aftermath. Focusing on women's vulnerability subsequently frames men as either perpetrators or protectors, leaving the potential for partnerships and alliances between women and men unfulfilled. Complementing this focus on difference, there is a marginal focus on a *gender-as-equality* perspective evidenced through increasing women's participation in the male dominated and defined security sector.

WPS Pillar Four: Relief and Recovery – Content Analysis

The relief and recovery pillar set out in UNSCR 1325 has been more or less consistently strengthened by subsequent resolutions, working mostly through the other three pillars within a post-conflict setting. Anchoring the relief and recovery pillar within the post-conflict setting necessarily gives rise to many cross-over provisions. This demonstrates the connections between the four WPS pillars and the need to take an integrated approach. This is evidenced by the use of the strategy of 'increasing women's participation' throughout all the WPS pillars.

Specifically, the relief and recovery pillar focuses on priorities of women and girls encompassing DDR, SSR, transitional justice, governance reforms covering internally displaced persons, SGBV survivors, ex-combatants, refugees and returnees (UN Women 101

2012b). This pillar has a strong focus on ensuring that transitional and reconstruction processes and institutions are gender responsive. Specific examples of this pillar include:

Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents (UNSCR 1325 2000: OP 13).

Notes the link between sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and HIV infection, and the disproportionate burden of HIV and AIDS on women and girls as a persistent obstacle and challenge to gender equality; and *urges* United Nations entities, Member States and donors to support the development and strengthening of capacities of national health systems and civil society networks in order to provide sustainable assistance to women and girls living with or affected by HIV and AIDS in armed conflict and post-conflict situations (UNSCR 2106 2013: OP 20).

Stresses the need for continued efforts to address obstacles in women's access to justice in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through gender responsive legal, judicial and security sector reform and other mechanisms; (UNSCR 2122 2013: OP10).

Urges all parties concerned, including Member States, United Nations entities and financial institutions, to support the development and strengthening of the capacities of national institutions, in particular of judicial and health systems, and of local civil society networks in order to provide sustainable assistance to women and girls affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations;(UNSCR 2122 2013: OP 11).

As the above excerpts illustrate, the relief and recovery pillar utilises similar strategies to the protection pillar, focusing on the different needs of women and girls. The primary focus of the strategies under this pillar tend more towards recognition of the differences between women and men, girls and boys in situations of conflict and post-conflict as opposed to increasing participation and representation.

For example, when UNSCR 2122 stresses the need to address the obstacles to women gaining access to justice, it focuses on how being gendered female creates barriers to justice as opposed to ensuring women have the same access to justice as men. Similarly, the provision in UNSCR 2106 on women's experiences of living with HIV/AIDS in conflict and post-conflict situations is premised on their differing experiences from men also living with HIV/AIDS in those circumstances. This focus on difference is particularly evident in provisions for sustainable assistance to women from UN entities to national institutions and local practices (UNSCR 2122).

WPS Pillar Four: Relief and Recovery – Gender Stool Analysis

Based on the content analysis above, the objective of the relief and recovery pillar in the majority of the clauses aligns to providing frameworks and resources to address the

specific needs of women and girls in the post-conflict setting. It does this through recognising that in order for women to achieve an equality of outcomes, they need more than just access to the same mechanisms as men, they need special provision in terms of positive action to recognise their different needs. This reflects a *gender-as-difference* perspective.

The relief and recovery pillar sets up those separate provisions so that women's and girls' needs are taken into account when programs and frameworks around governance, security and justice are being developed in the aftermath of conflict. For example, provisions to ensure the specific needs of female ex-combatants are considered in planning DDR programs highlights a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The basis for such provision is that women require more than just equal access to DDR programs (*gender-as-equality*), as the content of such programs are based on male experiences of war and therefore do not meet the needs of women (Basini 2013; MacKenzie 2009). A *gender-as-difference* perspective suggests that these programs need to be adjusted to fully account for the experiences of women and girls to gain an equality of outcomes, not merely equal opportunities.

The key focus of the relief and recovery pillar is to recognise that women and girls have different needs that should be considered in operations in the aftermath of conflict. In addressing these needs, special provisions may need to be made, such as separate processing of female ex-combatants or special access to health and child care facilities. The focus is primarily on women and girls only, in order to reverse the marginalisation of women in mainstream (male) relief and recovery mechanisms. While this addresses some of the more obvious disruptive positionings that women adopt during conflict, such as taking up arms, it does not fully engage with the diversity of women's experiences within peace and combat roles (Utas 2005; Ala 2006; Manchanda 2005; MacKenzie 2009). For example, Utas discusses:

young females in the Liberian Civil War as active agents who alternatively use different tactics in their attempt to cope with the challenges and exploit the opportunities provided by the conditions produced by the civil war. [She theorises] how agency is manifest and deployed across the full range of women's wartime experiences. [And] explores the ways in which self-representations of victimhood and empowerment alike represent different "agency tactics", available to and alternatively deployed under different circumstances and in different social contexts to women in war zones (2005: 406).

In addition to the strong focus on difference, there is a marginal focus on *gender-as-equality*. This is reflected in those cross over provisions which focus on increasing women's participation in post-conflict and recovery institutions and mechanisms.

In summary, the relief and recovery pillar exhibits a combination of indicators that confirms the predominance of a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The predominance of a difference gender perspective is demonstrated in the focus on building into and attaching to mainstream mechanisms and functions the different needs of women and girls, primarily to reverse their previous marginalisation. The positive and negative impacts of focusing on difference are similar to the protection frame where women's difference forecloses the potential to build partnerships and alliances across lines of gender. It also potentially relinquishes the opportunity to bridge divides of religious, ethnic, socio-cultural, economic and political identities.

Reconciling Global Policy and Practice

The above analysis of the four WPS pillars in terms of their content and how they reflect different perspectives of gender answers the feminist inquiry of "Where are the women?" (Enloe 1990). As demonstrated above, women have been included in international peace and security as victims and as agents, as women who require special provisions to reverse their historic marginalisation, as being vulnerable and requiring protection from men because they are women and because they have different needs associated with their experiences of armed conflict and its aftermath. The analysis also demonstrates that women have been included at the policy level of international peace and security, specifically through eight Security Council resolutions.

Chart 4-1 summarises the analysis to demonstrate which gender perspectives are evident in the WPS pillars and in what combinations. For each WPS pillar, the three gender perspectives are assessed in terms of whether there is a strong, some or marginal focus. A strong rating indicates that over half of the clauses in a WPS pillar are reflective of a single gender perspective. A rating of some is indicative of between one and three quarters of the clauses reflecting a single gender perspective while a marginal focus is set at below one quarter. These assessments are weighted according to table 4-1, giving an overall ratio of perspectives and pillars. Appendix 2 sets out the raw score ratings for the gender stool analysis for the global, national and local levels.

Chart 4-1 Summary of Gender Stool Analysis – Global Level

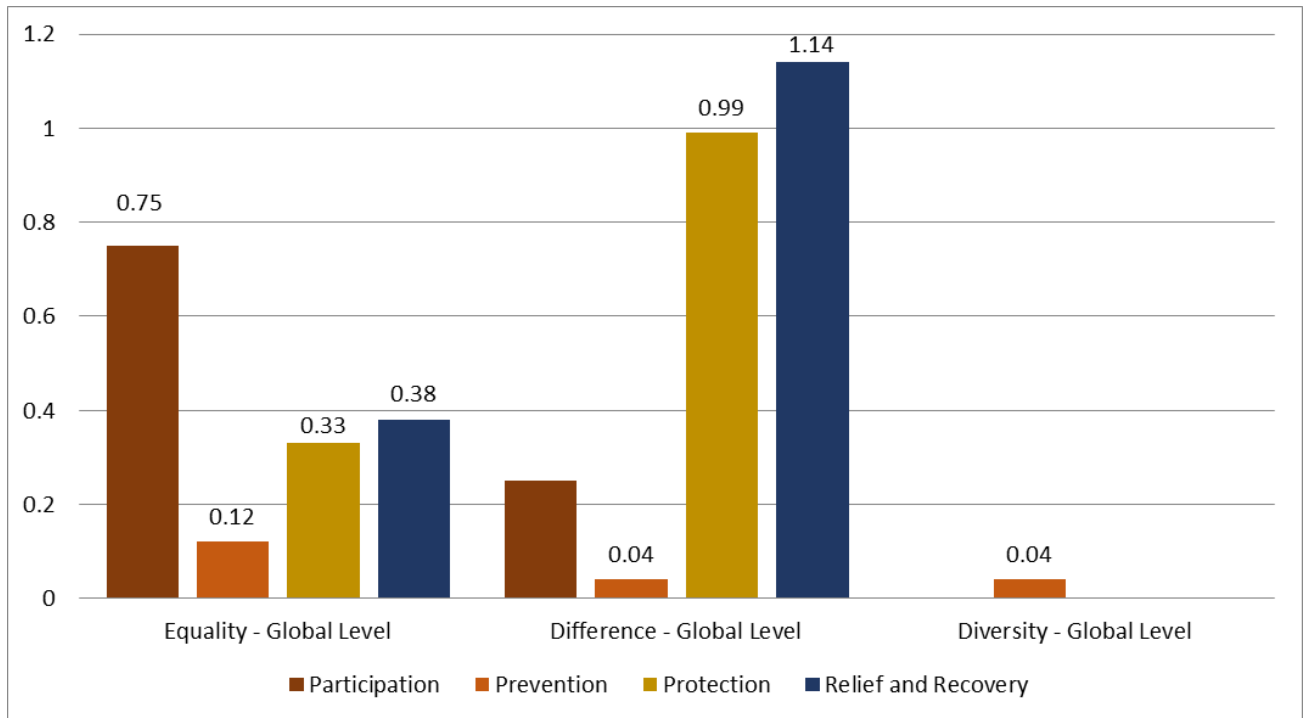


Chart 4-1 graphically represents the gender stool analysis at the global level. Firstly it reveals that a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant. Secondly it reveals that this predominance is primarily reflected in the protection and relief and recovery pillars. Thirdly the analysis reflects that provisions focused on women and men accessing equal rights and equal opportunities are more likely to be associated with participation and prevention strategies. Conversely, those that focus on reversing the marginalisation of women and focus on achieving equality of outcomes are more likely to be associated with protection and relief and recovery strategies. The analysis also highlights that a *gender-as-diversity* perspective is lacking in the global WPS policy. This lack of engagement with a *gender-as-diversity* perspective at the global level can have implications at the national and local levels by marginalising the various diverse factors that impact its practical application when only equality and difference perspectives are present.

This analysis is supported by the body of literature that specifically engages with how the language of the WPS policy limits its transformative potential (Shepherd 2008a; Pratt 2013). In particular, Shepherd's (2008a) analysis points to failures in the implementation of 1325 conducive of the language used within the resolution due to the meanings attached to the concepts of gender and violence. Shepherd argues that gender is essentialised throughout UNSCR 1325, only referring to 'women' while violence is seen as armed conflict or specifically gendered, ignoring the existence of violence performed

by women or structural violence. These limitations on the concepts disavow the possibility of transformative outcomes from 1325 and have led to failures to fully implement the WPS policy (Shepherd 2008a). The gender stool analysis I have undertaken supports the work of Shepherd in terms of how the concept of gender can impact on the implementation of the WPS policy and further extends it to explore in what ways this enables and constrains practical implementation outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the global WPS policy and how it has set the playing field for its implementation by Member states. The four WPS pillars of participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery have been used to structure both a content and gender stool analysis of the provisions of the eight WPS resolutions. The analysis revealed the multiple ways that the different pillars addressed the differential impact of conflict on women and girls.

The analysis concluded that taken as a whole, the global WPS policy constructs gender in a number of ways, however, a difference gender perspective is predominant. The implications of this predominance at the global level was discussed in terms of limitations to what the policy addresses and how actors at the global level may be adversely impacted by the strong focus on women in their difference to men, leaving uncontested the male norm in international security discourse.

Having noted these results, the question remains, however, as to what the recognition of women's and girls' differential needs in international policy has gained in terms of their 'everyday' lives in communities marred by conflict and its aftermath. To further address this matter, the remainder of this thesis focuses on the case study of Liberia to examine the impacts of implementing a global WPS policy that is predominantly underpinned by a *gender-as-difference* perspective.

PART 2: CASE STUDY – LIBERIA

Chapter Five: Case Study: Liberian Women, Peace and Security – An Historical Background

Introduction

This chapter provides an historical background to the case study of post-conflict Liberia, the UN poster child for gender equality within a post-conflict context (Jennings 2012: 38). I utilise a case study in my research to apply an empirical lens to the global WPS policy implementation. Firstly, I apply it to understand how gender is constructed in the national implementation of the global WPS policy in a specific post-conflict location. Secondly, I apply it to gain insight into how different gender perspectives in global policies, implemented through national plans, impact on challenging unequal gender relations within post-conflict society. Specifically, I examine the positioning of the diverse experiences of Liberian women and how these underpin the inequality they still face in their 'everyday' lives within the post-conflict landscape. The social and historical dynamics discussed in this chapter directly impact on the gender stool analysis undertaken in the following chapters as it provides the foundations upon which the gender equality practice history is laid.

Historically, women in Liberia were primarily divided based on their ethnicity and religion. In the pre-colonial period, traditional divides ran along religious lines between African traditional religion and Islam. In the post-colonial landscape, these divisions extended along ethnic lines and geographic location as well as adding another dimension to the religious divide with the arrival of Christianity.

The civil war that ran over two periods from 1989 to 1997 and 1999 to 2003 arose from the broader oppression by the State of the Indigenous population. The effects of the civil war were devastating for Liberia and resulted in the mass displacement of large numbers of rural women, men and children primarily to the capital of Monrovia and to neighbouring African countries and further abroad. The bridging of the physical barriers between rural and urban women contributed to their unification for peace across traditional lines of division as did their pursuit of a common agenda to end the violence (Tripp 2015). This history of Liberian women helps explain the implementation of the WPS Agenda in the post-conflict landscape of Liberia.

Historical Background

Thus began in a tangible way, the work of founding an African State with republican politics, slave psychology, caste privileges, Christian religion and western civilisation (Brown 1941: 10).

Traditionally, Liberian ruling society has been highly patriarchal, with the clear male domination of political, public and economic life complicated by ethnic and class factors (Karnaga 1923). Within this patriarchal domain, however, certain women at certain times were accorded power due to the highly gendered roles associated with both pre- and post-colonial society, centred on leadership in political tribal structures (Moran 1989). The history of Liberia is one that spans from pre-colonial tribal society to an oppressive colonial society, to civil war through to reconstruction. This history is still a source of contestation and conflict today (Liberian TRC Volume Two 2009: 14).

Much of the history written about Liberia begins in 1822 with the arrival of the returning slaves, as the root causes of modern day issues in Liberia are generally traced back to this period of 'black colonialism' (Fuest 2008). The history of pre-Liberian society is thought to at least date back to the twelfth century or earlier, though there is no authoritative account of this (Dunn-Marcos et al 2005: 5). Migration into the pre-Liberia landscape is known to have occurred in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, partially due to political turmoil and partly for arable land, with the first recorded European contact occurring around the same time (Dunn-Marcos et al 2005: 6).

From an historical perspective, the position of Liberia's women has been one of open negotiation with the ruling power (tribal then State), within a society where the assertion of difference enabled a minority ruling elite to subjugate the diversity of the majority. That is, the Settlers structured the governance of the State based on a colonial model where the only difference that mattered was between Settler and Indigenous. Any engagement with the diversity that existed within the Indigenous population revolved around cementing Settler power and reducing resistance through co-opting existing local governance structures and practices (Holm 2013; Richards 2005).

This diversity is shaped by the intersection of the pre-colonial history of the Grain Coast region of West Africa and the settlement of ex-slaves in West Africa in the early nineteenth century. The area chosen by the American Colonisation Society (ACS) to set up a colony in West Africa was already occupied by numerous Indigenous tribes representing over a dozen separate and distinct ethno linguistic groups.

These ethno linguistic groups from pre-colonial times can be grouped into four ethnic clusters: *Kwa* (Bassa, Belle, dey, Grebo, Krahn, Kru and Sapo); *Mande-Fe* (Gbandi, Gio/Dan, Kpelle, Loma, Mano/Ma and Mende); *Mande-Tan* (Mandingo and Vai) and *Mel* (Gola and Kissi) (Dunn-Marcos et al 2005: 3). There were two major governing structures that split along geographic lines.

In the Northwestern region, while there were no states, there existed two pan ethnic secret societies: *Poro* (for men) and *Sande* (for women) (Dunn-Marcos et al 2005; Fuest 2008; Moran 1989). These two secret societies in effect united the tribes under the authority of the elders, when necessary, though most of the time each tribe was self-sufficient.

In the Southeastern region a different governance structure was utilised called the '*cephalous*' which maintained a system of dispersed leadership through Clans or Chiefdoms consisting of peoples of a particular ancestry. For example, a single ancestral line would provide the pool of men to be considered for Clan Chief and other leadership roles. The southeast consisted of "more decentralized, egalitarian societies" (Richards et al 2005: 16) where leadership was based on competition among "rival big men". The less stratified tribes of the southeast promoted leaders only in time of crisis and then returned to the status quo (Liberian TRC Volume Three 2009: 7).

Living within both these regional areas yet always considered outsiders are the Mandingo ethnic group. The Mandingo are said to have come to Liberia in the fifteenth century and as 'late comers' have never been assimilated into Liberian tribal society for numerous reasons, primary among them being their religious beliefs. The Mandingo were traders from the Middle East and brought with them the teachings of Islam. While not all those who identify as Mandingo are Muslim, they have for centuries been associated with and judged by others, as being Muslim and strangers.

Tensions have existed between the Mandingo and other African ethnic groups for centuries. This did not stop the Mandingo from being welcomed into the local clan structures through the practice of autochthony. As Neumann explains, autochthony refers to the "underlying settlement, marriage and interaction between different tribes" (2013: 169). Under this system, marriage is a key political and social institution that not only cements alliances with existing tribes and newcomers, it also defines those relations for generations. This is reflected in the uncle-nephew relationship which is predicated on the position of the group giving and receiving the "wife" (Neumann 2013: 169). Through this practice of offering daughters for marriage, newcomers (strangers) are brought into the land owning group through relations of uncle-nephew (Neumann 2013: 169). At the core

of the uncle-nephew relationship are women. It is through the giving and receiving of women as wives that such relations are prefaced, even though the emphasis of the relationship is along patrilineal lines.

Though access to land forms part of this relationship, land is held by the Indigenous community and power and social hierarchy flows through the traditional practice of the oldest family being known as "*the owner of the land*" (Massing 1970 cited in Neumann 2013: 170). For those who move to new communities, as the Mandingo has done in various regions throughout Liberia, payment of a fee to farm the land is required. This relationship to the land shaped their position within that community for generations, with descendants of such "newcomers" to the community being called "strangers" (Schwab and Harley 1947, 163, 170 cited in Neumann 2013: 170). This title of "stranger" still attaches to the Mandingo in many rural communities today and has been a root cause of local tensions and violence which was exacerbated during the civil war.

The practices of the Mandingo in accepting local wives but forbidding their own daughters and sisters from marrying into local tribes shaped the relations between Mandingo and other Indigenous tribes throughout Liberia. The Mandingo have for centuries maintained a "distinctive and distant social identity" while still claiming Liberian citizenship (Richards et al 2005: 5). This was achieved through Mandingo men "marrying local women but preventing Mandingo women from marrying out of the group" (Richards et al 2005: 5).

The status of the Mandingo in uncle-nephew relations was crucial to their ability to interact with the various communities scattered throughout the areas where the Mandingo settled and gave them access to build their trading empires. These empires were initially focused on long distance trading throughout West Africa to other Mandingo groups. The focus later shifted to trading with the interior of Liberia, creating essential trade routes for the incoming Americo-Liberian Settlers (Neumann 2013: 179).

While the Mandingo came into relations with the existing Indigenous groups, they also maintained a level of detachment through their broader West African identity, especially with modern day Guinea (Richards et al 2005: 5), as opposed to the many differing ethnic identities of other African groups. Along with this broader identity base was the association of the Mandingo with Islam. While the Mandingo migrated to the coastal and Hinterland areas of Liberia and were accepted within uncle-nephew relations, they remained separate in many ways because of their religion (Neumann 2013).

Interethnic rivalries long marked the landscape of Liberia prior to the arrival of the settlers, based around competition to control trade routes. The major rivalries, which still

mark modern Liberian society, were between the Mandingo and Gola groups (Dunn-Marcos et al 2006: 7). The Mandingo group is closely associated with the establishment of Islam in West Africa, while the Gola group has established custodianship over the African secret societies of the *Poró* (men) and *Sande* (women). The tensions between these groups were at their height when the settlers arrived on the coastal shores of the Grain Coast in 1822.

The colony set up by the ACS consisted of freed African slaves from North America (Americo-Liberians)⁹ and Africans seized from captured slave ships (Congos). The divide between this expanded group of Americo-Liberians (Settlers) and various Indigenous tribes, however, continued to become more defined. The distinction between women in these groups, while essential to their status, identity, rights and power, was never officially recognised by the administration of the settlement nor the subsequent government of the Republic of Liberia. The lack of recognition of their differences combined with the lack of recognition of Indigenous tribes, structured the hierarchy of Liberian society from the early nineteenth century through to the present day. This hierarchy has been described as follows:

...the status divisions among the Liberians eventually evolved into a hierarchical caste system with four distinct orders. At the top were the Americo-Liberian officials, consisting largely of light-complexioned people of mixed Black and White ancestry. They were followed by darker skinned Americo-Liberians, consisting mostly of laborers and small farmers. Then came the recaptives [Congos], the Africans who had been rescued by the U.S. Navy while aboard U.S.-bound slave ships and brought to Liberia. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the indigenous African Liberians (Holm 2013: 11).

The distinctions between the classifications of settlers diminished over time, encompassed by the term Americo-Liberian and extended to include “children of marriages and informal liaisons between Americo-Liberian and indigenous Liberians and indigenous Liberian children raised by Americo-Liberian families [wardship]” (Dunn-Marcos et al 2005: 2). The distinction between the groups of settlers and Indigenous tribes became more prominent over time (Holm 2013: 11; Dunn-Marcos et al 2005: 11). This demarcation was recognised by the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a leading cause of the tensions that eventually led to the civil wars (Volume Three 2009).

Underpinning this demarcation was the pre-colonial practice of mutual exclusion which shaped Muslim/non-Muslim relations for hundreds of years restricting the extent to

⁹ The term Americo-Liberian has been used to represent all Settlers and their descendants. This ruling elite has historically represented no more than 5% of the total population.

which incorporation into the local power and social structures was possible. In the northwest, the secret societies did not allow non-believers to take part and as such, any Muslims in the community were excluded from the local political sphere (Holm 2013; Neumann 2013; Richards et al 2005). This separation from local governance combined with the network of trading routes and essential knowledge of the local environment saw the Mandingo targeted for early alliances with the Settlers. While the Settlers restricted their activities initially to the coastal areas, defending their fledging settlement against ongoing conflict with various Indigenous groups, they needed access to the Mandingo trading routes to sustain the settlement. It also provided a further dimension to the religious divide which had already formed. The Christian Settlers did not recognise Islam nor traditional African religion. In 1847 the Republic of Liberia was founded as a Christian nation, despite the majority of the people living within its borders being non-Christian.

The domination of the Settlers was solidified through “the institutions they created, such as the churches, judiciary, business associations, and other clubs and societies, notable [among them] the Grand Lodge of Freemasons” (Liberian TRC Volume Three 2009: 4; Dunn et al 2006). The institutions installed by the Settlers reflected their American heritage and are also reflective of other sites of colonisation imposing foreign structures and hierarchies. The benefits that accrue to colonisers were also present in Liberia, similar to other parts of Africa where political control translated into “benefits of personal enrichment, upward social mobility and domination” (Pajibo 2008: 8).

The Settlers’ hegemony over the territory of Liberia was not without violent opposition nor did it extend much beyond coastal areas into the interior. Even this small imprint ignited many vicious and deadly battles with Indigenous groups sparking over 90 deadly conflicts recorded between the period 1821 to 1944 (Liberian TRC Volume Two 2009: 108). In 1847 the Republic of Liberia was officially formed under the governance of the Settlers. Two Liberias emerged within one territory: one for the Settlers and the other for the Indigenous (Liberian TRC Volume Two 2009: 111).

By the end of the century the ruling True Whig Party moved to quell the unrest needing to gain greater control over the internal territories else face encroachment from the neighbouring British and French colonies. In order to do so, they needed to better engage with the Mandingo traders which also meant they needed to appease the Gola chiefs who were opposed to any increase in the Mandingo’s status (Holm 2013: 12). This involved co-opting local leaders and systems of governance, creating a rural elite, a system of indirect rule and a “neopartrimonial indirect rule” (Holm 2013: 12; Boas and Hatloy 2008: 37).

The enforcement and entrenchment of these power hierarchies were formalised through the Rules and Regulations Governing the Hinterland of Liberia (1907, 1912) (Hinterland Laws) that differentiated the legal positioning of Settlers from Indigenous peoples. These Hinterland Laws, first introduced as a form of controlling the hinterland areas through indirect rule under President Barclay in 1907 relied upon traditional ruling structures which were co-opted by the government (www.globalsecurity.org, accessed 23 December 2014). The Hinterland laws relied on Indigenous tribal and governance structures to control and discipline the Indigenous population. The former Clan Chiefs became the enforcers of government policy. This further entrenched the Settler/ Indigenous power hierarchy.

The ruling political True Whig party exploited the traditional systems of marriage and labour to virtually enslave the Indigenous youth through State sponsored Indigenous chiefs (Holm 2013: 13). Exploitation occurred through the traditional marriage systems that required the man to pay 'bridewealth'. This generally required young men to work as farm labourers to 'Big men' in order to earn enough (Holm 2013: 4). Further exploitation by 'Big men' was achieved through them encouraging their (multiple) wives to sleep with young men with the view of converting the fines that were applied by the courts in "women damages" cases to labour service (Richards et al 2005: 17). This system exploited both young men and women, representing social, economic and political systems of structural violence (Holm 2013: 13).

The indirect rule that prevailed throughout the hinterland regions left the majority of the State underdeveloped, with little or no infrastructure or services available outside their centres of power, located at strategic coastal points (Liberian TRC Volume Two 2009). The Second World War and the increased importance of West Africa to the U.S.A. brought about a major shift in the ability of the ruling party to control the movement of Indigenous Liberians from the interior. It was during the 1940s that a change of policy to accommodate Indigenous Liberians into the State began as they started making their way to the coastal areas looking for work and opportunities. By the 1950s Indigenous Liberians were finally given the right to vote and they started to filter into positions within the government (Liberian TRC Volume Two 2009; Holm 2013; Dunn et al 2006).

Throughout the history of the Republic of Liberia, the majority of the population had been excluded from power by the minority ruling elite. Opportunities to advance in society were extremely limited with animosity fostered between groups for over a century. Tensions continued to rise, especially in the rural areas of Liberia where the disenfranchised majority served the ruling elite under a system that was little more than

'legal' slavery where "free but impoverished men found themselves working as farm labourers for elder 'Big Men' in an effort to earn money to pay bridewealth" (Holm 2013: 13). In 1979, President Tolbert, whose family had a monopoly on rice production, attempted to raise the price of rice putting it beyond the reach of the majority of the population (Holm 2013: 4). This resulted in widespread rioting.

The 1979 Rice Riots opened the way for the military coup d'état on April 12 1980 led by Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, an Indigenous Liberian. President Tolbert was assassinated and 13 leading officials were tried and publicly executed (Dunn-Marcos et al 2006: 16). In the streets of Monrovia people were singing "Country women born soldier, Congo woman born rogue" celebrating the first Indigenous President of Liberia (Dunn-Marcos et al 2006: 16). The outcome of Doe's coup and formal election in 1985 was nothing to celebrate, however. His presidency saw a reign of terror, oppression, corruption and human rights abuses all supported by the influx of his own Krahn ethnic group into the military and appointment of Mandingos to ensure economic support (Holm 14-14; Dunn-Marcos et al 2006: 17). Further ethnic tensions were raised when in retaliation for an attempted coup by Quiwonkpa, hundreds of Indigenous Gio and Mano Liberians were killed and 160,000 displaced.

Doe's pro-Western and pro-United States stance saw an influx of aid in exchange for assistance as a Cold War ally. At the end of the Cold War, this aid dried up, weakening Doe's presidency (Dunn-Marcos et al 2006:16). During his time in power, rather than uniting the Indigenous peoples of Liberia as they relatively had been in opposition to the Americo-Liberian ruling elite, Doe managed to spark the beginning of a new era of ethnic relations, one that soon became bathed in blood. On December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor led an invasion that would spark the beginning of 14 years of violent civil war.

Liberia – Where were the Women?

Powerful men accumulated women and controlled and redistributed women's sexual and reproductive services to establish political alliances and to win clients (Fuest 2008: 206).

In the previous section I broadly outlined the historical background leading up the Liberian civil wars (1989 -1997 and 1999 - 2003). As a recounting of the historical antecedents of the Liberian civil wars, it has much in common with other documented histories of war and violent conflict, particularly with regards to what it is missing: women. Rather than try and 'add women' to the official historical narratives, however, I have developed a

connected yet separate narrative to answer Enloe's question "where are the women?" The decision to do so weighed heavily on my conscience. On the one hand, the historical narrative from a viewpoint of authenticity should incorporate women's lives and experiences as they endured those events side by side with the men whose actions form the structure of such accounts. On the other hand, women's perspectives and experiences of those events are distinct and unique and deserve their own space to be retold not through (his)tory but through (her)story.

The historical analysis of women in Liberian society that follows is based on the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Volume Three, *Women and the Conflict* with additional insight from historical and anthropological accounts. The Liberian TRC report uses the gendered nature of conflict as a backdrop to present "the gender dimension of the Liberian conflict, the status of women before and during the war, gender specific experience of the conflict with special attention to the direct experiences of women and girls" (Liberian TRC Volume Three 2009: 3). In positioning the women of Liberia in their historical context, however, it is first necessary to understand the diversity of Liberian women.

This differential positioning of Liberian women within the social, economic and political hierarchy has not only shaped their relations with Liberian men for nearly two centuries, it has also greatly impacted their relations with each other. The categorisation I utilise aligns closely with the documented major cleavages within Liberian society as a whole and reflects the distinct separation between Settler and Indigenous groups (Liberian TRC Volume Two 2009: 120; Holm 2013).

From within this hierarchy, three distinct groups of Liberian women emerge. The first group is represented by Indigenous Liberian women who are 'native', poor, rural and generally uneducated. A second group is represented by the Mandingo whose late arrival around fifteenth century and their religious beliefs (Islam), set them apart as 'strangers' and 'outsiders' in relation to the other Indigenous groups of West Africa (Fuest 2008). The Mandingo women category represents a cleavage long established within the Indigenous African groups that existed prior to and were reinforced by the Settler society of the early nineteenth century. The third group is represented by 'elite' women who are educated and generally urban Americo-Liberian (Morris 2005: i).

These sub-classifications are not a semantic move but rather reflect the very real consequences and impacts that have been experienced by Liberian women throughout history. Liberian women have been historically and still are divided economically, socially and politically, one group considered 'elite', one 'native' and the other 'strangers' (Moran

and Pitcher 2004: 509).

It was not until the civil war (1989 – 1997) and later the LURD and MODEL insurgency (1999 – 2003)¹⁰ that the violence inflicted on all Liberian women, regardless of their status, bridged these divides in the fight to bring an end to the conflict (Morris 2005: 33). Tripp suggests that this bridging was facilitated by how difference is viewed in the African context, where women's push to depoliticise difference (ethnic/religious) opens a pathway to unite for peace across those differences (2016: 309; 2009). Undoubtedly, the context in which difference is framed in African societies contributed to the breaking down of ethnic and religious divides, however, it was the sustained and extreme violence of the civil wars that proved the catalyst for Liberian women to unite for peace. To understand the significance of the united women's front that emerged during the civil war, it is first necessary to understand their historical divides.

Indigenous Liberian Women – Rural/Uneducated/Native/Traditional

The Indigenous Liberian women category includes the original tribes already residing in the West African territory claimed by the Settlers. In the early nineteenth century, as the ACS was preparing to re-patriate African slaves from North America back to Africa, the Indigenous tribes of Liberia were busy living, trading, farming and warring. As noted above there were two distinct governance groups in pre-colonial Liberia. These two distinct structures in the Northwestern and Southeastern regions shaped Indigenous women's status, identity, rights and power.

Despite the differences between the two styles of governance followed in the different regions, the positioning of women was similar. While neither region could boast that Indigenous African women were equal to Indigenous African men, they held various positions of power and were able, to some degree, to exert their power as respected members of their communities. In the *Sande* society, women were able to “play the male game” in their control over junior dependents (including men), while also controlling the productive and reproductive capacities of young women and girls (Fuest 2008: 207, 220). This control extended to the practice of female genital circumcision (FGC), a practice that is solely the province of women.

The practice of FGC forms part of the ‘bush schools’ that educates girls and young women on the skills of being a woman in their traditional culture, such as cooking and

¹⁰ This second phase of the Liberian conflict is separated from the first phase of civil war based on the first phase ending with a peace agreement in 1996 and the second phase of the conflict arising from several factions opposing Taylor's ‘legitimate’ presidency (1997 – 2003). LURD represent the Liberians United for Reconstruction and Development forces while MODEL represent the Movement for Democracy in Liberia forces.

child-rearing (Morris 2005: 20). In addition to the power that women could gain through membership of the *Sande* they also gained a measure of power through their agricultural labour. Their labour was highly valued and essential to the continuing survival and future of the tribes. This value was reflected in the practice of bridewealth. This practice required the groom to pay instalments to the bride's family over an extended period of time (Liberian TRC Volume Three 2009: 8). Many stories of power wielded by women in political leadership positions have been handed down through oral history, with one particular example of Kpelle (women's) chief Suakoko who acted as a peacemaker between Kpelle chiefs and government forces around the turn of the twentieth century (Fuest 2008: 207).

In the Southeastern region, similar access to power and respect was available through the institution of women's chiefs and women's councils, which interacted with men's chiefs and councils. There are a series of checks and balances between the parallel systems with the women's chief *blo nyene* holding veto power over decisions made in the men's council (Moran 1989: 453). Beyond the sexual division of labour, common through all tribes, among the Southeastern Grebo tribe this division of labour also manifested in other aspects of social life such as "ritual dancing, the practice of witchcraft and divination, in which there are women's and men's specialities" (Moran 1989: 453).

As Moran explores in her study of the Grebo people, women have a level of economic independence from their husbands, with both working together for the welfare of their family but maintaining "separate lines of productive work" and control over the surplus that each accrued (1989: 454). Rather than setting up a notion of gender as complementary opposites, Moran interprets gender in Grebo society as:

women and men seem[ing] to constitute different orders of human beings. For example, Grebo men are often referred to as warriors (*gbo*), but this does not relegate women to the category of 'nonwarriors.' Grebo women are also referred to as warriors in a variety of contexts, particularly those regarding suffering and danger, such as childbirth (Moran 1989: 454).

Indigenous women were also an important and essential link to gaining and maintaining power. While they played an important role in the secret sphere, as noted above, they also played an important role in the public sphere. While leadership in Indigenous groups was fluid within the bounds of genealogy and achievements within society, the number of wives a potential leader had was also used as a criterion for leadership (Neumann 2013: 170). Marriage in Liberia was a key political and social institution which not only shaped relations between different tribes it also shaped relations

and power within tribes. The practice of polygyny therefore, was a common practice, based on a patrilocal system whereby the bride would relocate to the husband's compound. The status of the bride's family was directly linked to who she married. While the power incentives that once sustained the wider practice of polygyny have reduced in recent times, it is still considered relevant within some rural communities, despite its illegal status. The following extract from a respondent highlights how women are linked to the status of men within local power structures:

Even today, it is not unusual for polygyny to be practised by rural communities, as a sign of status. In one case, it was relayed to me that the town chief had 26 wives. This situation added to the power of the chief as the more wives, the more family ties and the more land that could be cultivated by those family members. Attaching one's family to the town chief through marriage is a common source of increasing one's own power and so a 13 year daughter may be offered to the town chief to raise the position of her family (Respondent I3, D1, March/April 2014).

The traditional powers that women held as part of Indigenous society, however, must not be mistaken as being gender neutral. Underpinning gender relations is the symbolic and ritual differentiation of the social roles of women and men, reflecting a complementarity of roles (Richards et al 2005: 16), with few exceptions. As noted above, Indigenous women were valued for their productive and reproductive labour, specifically harnessed through the practice of polygyny. The productive labour of many wives was utilised for farming and non-domestic work, complementing "the work of male slaves" (Jones 1983 quoted in Richards et al 2005: 17). Similarly, their reproductive labour was utilised to cement political alliances and through the encouragement of wives to entice young men to bring about "woman damage" cases where hefty fines were more often than not converted into "free" (male) labour indentured to her husband.

While the power exerted by Indigenous women did not amount to equality with Indigenous men and reflected gendered social norms, it did offer the ability to control some aspects of their lives at various points. This traditional form of control, however, has been diluted and undermined over the past century through the impact of the new power hierarchies enforced through the Hinterland Laws, the civilising Christian mission and the political modernising of the twentieth century. Similar to other experiences throughout the African continent, "the coming of monotheist religions like Islam and Christianity undermined the political importance of women leaders" (Tripp 2010: 240).

First, the Hinterland Laws created local elites that were effectively sponsored by the State, reinforcing gerontocratic (age-based) control over traditional labour and marriage systems which resulted in domestic slavery of the youth (Richards 2005: 4). The

League of Nations in 1930 went so far as to sanction the President of Liberia to limit the powers of the Hinterland chiefs due to its unfair and discriminatory practices that accorded to domestic slavery (Richards et al 2005: 3).

Further, the State-based system of indirect rule tended to ignore the key role that women played in maintaining these traditional systems and instead promoted the rule of a few Indigenous men effectively shifting the balance of power between the male and female governance structures. The State sponsored chiefs co-opted the traditional practices, reducing the traditional power that Indigenous women were able to exert over the youth.

Second, the civilising Christian mission created a distinct and decisive separation between those Indigenous women who remained closely tied to their roots ('native') and those who embraced and were accorded a status of 'civilised' through education, learning the English language and conversion to Christianity (Neumann 2013). The impact of the spread of Christianity throughout the landscape previously divided between the majority traditional African religions and Islam is most clearly demonstrated in relation to access to education. Access to education for Indigenous women and girls was a privilege that came with a price. Education, other than through 'bush schools' of the *Sande* society were run by Christian missionaries and required conversion to the Christian faith. Through conversion and education 'native' women were able to gain the label of 'civilised' or 'kwi' (Neumann 2013). The conversion to 'civilised' status tended to reduce women's access to traditional power roles, particularly through membership of the *Sande*, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse through the loosening of traditional community ties (Liberian TRC Volume Three 2009: 10).

Thirdly, political modernising started in earnest during the presidency of William V. S. Tubman (1944-1971) who enacted the Open Door Policy based on a new economic policy of foreign investment (Holm 2013: 13; Dennis 2006:1). This period of access to foreign investment in exchange for natural resources enabled a period of growth without development, where development was bounded by the location of those loyal to the ruling True Whig party and all wealth flowed through the Executive Mansion (Holm 2013: 6).

Further modernising was enacted through the Unification Policy which brought about the possibility of greater social integration. These moves extended the right to vote to Indigenous Liberians, though it contained a property qualification that few could meet. These modernising changes did little to improve the 'everyday' lives of Indigenous Liberian women who remained in the interior (rural) regions. Money and power flowed exclusively through the ruling elite and those loyal to the True Whig party. Having been

disempowered by the ruling party (State) through rules and regulations which were enforced through their own Indigenous governance structures, traditional (rural) Indigenous Liberian women were further isolated through the reinforcement and perpetuation of their separation from other Liberian women (non-traditional, civilised, urban, Americo-Liberian).

The divide that for so long separated Indigenous Liberian women not only from Americo-Liberian women but also from their sisters who were raised to the status of 'civilised' was reinforced by their differential treatment at the hands of the State. While rural Indigenous Liberian women continued to be subject to unequal and unjust laws and customs, which restricted their rights to own land or control their re/productive labour, Mandingo women straddled a middle ground.

Mandingo – Muslim/Foreigner/Stranger/Other

The second division of women in Liberia relates to one particular Indigenous ethnic group, the Mandingo. This division existed in the pre-colonial period and was reinforced and fostered by the Settlers, culminating in the vicious backlash the Mandingo experienced against during the civil war. Relations between the Mandingo and other Indigenous groups in the rural areas are an ongoing source of tension in the post-conflict landscape (Richards et al 2005; Fuest 2010).

The historical and ongoing tense relations between the Mandingo ethnic group and other Indigenous groups has been particularly isolating for Mandingo women in rural areas. As noted above, the Mandingo were restricted from holding local governance positions due mostly to their status as "strangers", reinforced by their religious associations with Islam. Mandingo women therefore, had no access to the traditional power base of Indigenous women such as membership of the *Sande* or alliances through marriage. Only Mandingo men were free to marry into local ethnic groups to make alliances and gain access to land. Mandingo women were required and in many places are still required, to marry within their own ethnic group, thereby maintaining their isolation from other Indigenous women (Richards et al 2005: 5).

The advantages gained by Mandingo men through their alliances and marriage with other Indigenous groups or through political support of the ruling elite, restricted rather than enabled Mandingo women's interactions with other Liberian women. The restrictions around marriages of Mandingo women underpin their isolation from other Liberian women as marriage in Liberian society is a key political and social institution. While Mandingo men have been able to consolidate on the opportunities that marriage into other Indigenous ethnic groups could gain, including in a few cases assimilation into

local governance institutions such as the *Poros* (Konneh 1996: 145), Mandingo women were isolated and confined within the limits of their own ethnic group. The conflation of the Mandingo ethnic group with Islam further reinforced and perpetuated their separateness, their “foreigner” status that persists into the twenty-first century, regardless that Muslims are not restricted to this one ethnic group and that not all Mandingo are Muslims. This conflation had dire ramifications for Mandingo women and men during the civil war and it still fuels tensions in many communities struggling to rebuild in their lives in the aftermath of such devastation (Konneh 1996).

A major challenge to unity in Liberia after the first civil war (1989 – 1996) was the continued perception that Mandingo are outsiders, marked by difference based on the “exclusive character of family-based Mandingo trade networks and by their active role as proselytizers for Islam” (Konneh 1996: 150). In the ten years that have followed the end of the second civil war (1997 – 2003) this difference and the underlying tensions between Mandingo (outsiders) and other Indigenous groups (rightful owners) remains. A common point of tension is land ownership which has resulted in many Mandingo being unable to return to their former compounds, especially in areas such as Loma County where the civil war provided a thin veil to enact vengeance through targeted violence and confiscation of property (Fuest 2010).

While relations between the Mandingo, other Indigenous groups and the Settler elite has always reflected a complex web of insider/outsider connections, it has been a gendered relationship. These relations have variously brought power, wealth and influence for the Mandingo men, however, they have tended to reinforce Mandingo women’s isolation from the broader community of Liberian women. With their inability to marry into local Indigenous or Settler families, Mandingo women’s bodies became the vessels for maintaining the Muslim faith through bringing up their children as Muslims (Konneh 1992: 53, 159). This “one-way street” of Mandingo marriage has reinforced Mandingo women’s isolation while fostering resentment and tension with other Indigenous groups (Freeman 1991).

Americo-Liberian Women – Urban/Educated/Elite/Non-Traditional

The third division of women in Liberia is the Americo-Liberian women. While Indigenous Liberian women were omitted from the society set up by the early Settlers, the Americo-Liberian women were confined to its margins. Due to their ‘elite’ status, Americo-Liberian women had greater access to political, social and economic opportunities that were never accorded to Indigenous Liberian women. Not dissimilar to Indigenous Liberian women, Americo-Liberian women’s status in society revolved around gendered roles such as

homemaking and child-rearing. While the majority of Indigenous women derived informal power from their role in agricultural production, with some deriving power from their roles in the Indigenous governance structures, an Americo-Liberian woman's power was derived mostly from her domestic role.

Americo-Liberian women were accorded some status under the statutory law system that ruled the 'elite' population. The women Settlers of the nineteenth century were accorded quite progressive rights and agency including the right to buy and sell land, initiate divorce, appeal to the legislature, bring legal suits and enter contracts (Fuest 2008: 207). Americo-Liberian women gained suffrage in 1946 (several years before Indigenous women and men) and from the 1950s began to hold key ministerial offices and high level positions in the government. It was during the Tubman era (1943 – 1971) that educated Liberian women were encouraged to participate in the political arena. A leading example was Mrs Angie Brooks-Randolph who was Ambassador to the UN and President of the UN's 24th General Assembly in 1969.

Americo-Liberian women also held positions as Ministers and as high government officials (Morris 2005). Indigenous Liberian women did not have access to such high positions, primarily due to their lack of education but also due to their status. This increase in the participation of women in political office, however, needs to be set against the motivation to reduce opportunities for including educated Indigenous Liberian men. It was preferable to have educated Americo-Liberians, regardless of gender, hold positions of power (Fuest 2008: 208). This reflects and confirms the status of Americo-Liberian women within pre-civil war Liberian society as being just one rung down from Americo-Liberian men but above all Indigenous Liberians.

Americo-Liberian women, however, regardless of their high status and identity with greater rights were still subject to dependency on male relatives during the pre-civil war period. This was due primarily to Liberian society being "androcentric and patriarchal" (Liberian TRC Volume Three 2009: 10). This dependency is reflected in the need for women to remain respectful in their gendered roles, never questioning and never challenging the norms of 'elite' society (Jennings 2012). While Indigenous Liberian women were able to maintain a level of respect through their highly valued agricultural roles and positions within Indigenous governance systems, Americo-Liberian women, when they were admitted into leadership positions, were considered "honorary men" (Liberian TRC Volume Three 2009).

While formal education placed Americo-Liberian women above other uneducated Liberian women, prior to the civil war it never accorded women the status of equality with

men. It did, however, reinforce the divide between Americo-Liberian women and Indigenous Liberian women and shaped not only the life course of Liberian women in pre-civil war Liberia, it also shaped their choices during the war as it still shapes the choices open to them in post-conflict Liberia.

Civil War Period – 1989 to 2003

Beginning as early as 1980 with Samuel Doe's military coup, Americo-Liberian women and Indigenous women started to collaborate and close the gaps that had divided them, demanding participation and recognition during the period of the first Indigenous leader (Clarke 2013: 16). Doe's presidency, with its increase in the politicisation of ethnicity and the violence used to police it, was only the precursor to what happened after 1989. In 1989, Doe's sergeant during the 1980 coup, Charles Taylor deposed Doe in a bloody coup. This triggered the outbreak of the first phase of the civil war (1989 – 1996). Charles Taylor's government fostered a greater split along ethno-political lines, increasing the divides in Liberian society beyond the previous Americo-Liberian/Indigenous Liberian status divide. In deposing Doe's presidency, Taylor invoked his ethnic identity (Grebe) and vilified Doe's supporters (Krahn) and the Mandingo, whose essential role supporting the ruling authority of Doe brought them into deadly conflict with Taylor.

The civil wars in Liberia saw not one but multiple warring parties enter the fray. In the first civil war, Prince Johnson split off from Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to head his own forces, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) which captured and executed President Doe in 1990 (Dunn et al 2006: 17). In all, around seven major factions were vying for control of the government and natural resources, splintered along tribal and ethnic lines (Holm 2013: 17; Dunn et al 2006: 17).

The signing of the Abuja Peace Accord in 1996 saw a shaky end to the war, leading to the landslide presidential victory the following year for Charles Taylor. It was a short lived peace with open conflict returning in 1999 with a militia group Liberians for United Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), consisting primarily of Mandingo grounded in Lofa County and backed by the Guinean Government. LURD forces started engaging the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and by 2000, they controlled around 80% of the countryside (Holm 2013: 18). The AFL and LURD fought each other, both committing human rights atrocities and engaging child soldiers (Holm 2013: 18). By 2003, another group, affiliated with LURD, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) formed in Cote d'Ivoire, gaining support from refugees in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, originally from the counties of Grand Gedeh, Sinoe and Grand Kru in the southeast. While MODEL

initially emerged as a splinter group of LURD, it emerged as a counter to the Mandingo dominance of LURD (Kaihko 2015: 259).

Throughout the civil wars, a common thread running through all fighting forces was the indiscriminate, widespread and devastating violence inflicted on women. Hundreds of thousands of rural Liberians were displaced, hundreds of thousands more were killed or mutilated. A large portion of the fighting, killing and maiming was along ethnic lines, fostered firstly by the Americo-Liberian administrations and heightened by the Doe and Taylor presidencies. This shift in politics along ethnic lines, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of rural Liberians and the increase in violence against women provided the platform for unification of Liberia's women, in the name of peace.

Impact of Civil Wars – Making Connections, Bridging Divides

The Liberian civil war played a crucial role in that women came to a self-realisation of their potential, based not only on the heroic role they exhibited by protecting, feeding, and caring for their families, but also the gender-based-violence they all suffered together regardless of their social positions during the war. This energized their determination to unify (Madam Kandakai, Former Deputy Minister of Liberian Ministry of Gender and Development quoted in Morris 2005: 50).

It took a vicious and deadly civil war to disrupt these gendered relations that the ruling authority of Liberia had established over Liberian women. Finally, the bonds that separated them were weakened by the deadly conflict, allowing Liberian women to unite for a common cause, regardless of their differing status, identity, rights and power (Tripp et al 2009, 2016). That is, they were able to transcend their differences due to their unity in supporting a common agenda around violence (Tripp 2016: 316; 2015: 94).

As noted above, the life course of women in Liberia has always been framed by their status and identity within three divisive and exclusionary political, economic and social classifications: Americo-Liberian, Indigenous and Mandingo. This chasm that existed between the groups was fed by government policy which promoted one group of women over others, broadening the divide between women and minimising opportunities to unite. Most cross-cultural contact was restricted to the domain of Christian groups resident in regional centres and small towns, consolidating on the 'missionisation' aims of earlier generations, which brought 'native' and 'elite' women into collaborative relationships (Moran and Pitcher 2004: 509).

The earliest form of women's leadership and organising was based along status lines. Within the Indigenous interior, women leaders emerged through organisations and roles such as the *Sande* in the northern parts and women's chief *blo nyene* in the

southern parts (Moran 1989: 453). Women's leadership in elite society by Americo-Liberian and *kwi* women arose from the 1950s with women filling key positions in government ministries and international posts (see Tripp 2015: 90).

Organisations based on membership tied to patronage networks of the Americo-Liberian elite under President Tubman (Tripp 2015: 94) arose alongside the rise in women's leadership. These organisations initially supported the roles of women in society but turned towards broader issues of human rights abuses after the coup d'état in 1980. President Doe disbanded many women's organisations as a reaction to their advocacy "to end human rights abuses" (Tripp 2015: 94). Up until 1980, women were restricted in building bridges as there was no catalyst to unite. With the politicisation of ethnic identity under Doe and Taylor this changed and we witness women building bridges within the survival context of civil war and in advocating for peace (Tripp 2016: 308).

The civil war initiated by Charles Taylor in 1989 that took hold during the 1990s, sparked a revival of women's organising, this time cutting across status lines. For the most part, women's organising for peace was primarily based in Monrovia and led by educated 'elite' women, particularly in the first phase of the conflict (1989 – 1996), extending to humanitarian relief, mediation, conflict-resolution, prayer, support and communicating across community and ethnic lines (Mama and Okazawa-Rey 2012: 114; Tripp 2015).

Liberian women started mobilising across lines of division in 1994 with the Liberian Women's Initiative (LWI). Prior to this time women's organising was mostly around relief activities (Tripp, Casimiro and Kwesiga 2008: 206). By 1994, women were organising and mobilising across a common agenda to raise awareness and gain international support for the plight of their country (Tripp, Casimiro and Kwesiga 2008: 206-208). The LWI connected with rural communities under siege, bringing together all sides of the conflict to talk. The LWI crossed status and identity lines, their ranks "composed of women from all walks of life, regardless of their ethnic, religious, educational or socio-economic background" (UNISTRAW 2009: 7) to unite for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, recognising that only by uniting the women would an end to the war be possible (Tripp 2015, 2016). They engaged directly with combatants, trying to persuade them to stop the killing and they:

talked to them [leaders of the warring factions]. They are children to us, and we wanted this fighting to stop. We, the women, bear that pain. So we begged them – Kromah, Boley, Taylor – at different times (Annie Saydee quoted in Badmus 2009: 827).

In addition to the LWI, other organisations¹¹ also worked towards providing training, advocacy, support and demonstrations for peace, reaching out and setting aside class and newly promoted ethnic differences with a single vision for achieving peace (Moran and Pitcher 2004: 507; Tripp 2016, 2015). Women were able to organise on a greater scale than prior to the civil war due to the high number of internally displaced women from the hinterland converging on Monrovia, as noted by Colonel Isatu Bah Kenneth:

it now became easier for leaders such as ourselves to be able to mobilize all categories of women, being rural or urban, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, to fight against gender based violence and discrimination that were being levied on women regardless of status (Morris 2005: 33).

During the second phase of the conflict (2000 – 2003), a regional women’s peace network organisation, the Mano River Union Women for Peace Network (MARWOPNET) was formed to broker peace between the countries of West Africa that had been drawn into the broader conflict. Like the other Liberian-based organisations mentioned above, this was led by elite women (Morris 2005). Their status as elite women from the countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea aided their mission to bring the leaders of each country to the peace table. Another key organisation that was involved in mass demonstrations to advocate for peace was the Women in Peace-Building Network (WIPNET), which comprised 38 women’s organisations, representing all levels of Liberian society. It is notable that WIPNET utilised UNSCR 1325 to create their own resolutions to advocate for women’s representation in the peace processes (Morris 2005: 38). This second phase of the war in particular, due to the focused opposition to Taylor’s presidency and the increasing violence which now included LURD and MODEL forces, led to a renewed united front from Liberian women encompassing all faiths and classes (Badmus 2009: 828).

An example of the extent of unification of the women’s movement is reflected in the establishment of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. This group resulted from the collaboration of WIPNET and LMWO, bringing together the combined weight of the Christian and Muslim communities, as dramatically documented in the movie “Pray the Devil Back to Hell” (2008). Based on a history of division along religious lines, where for centuries Muslims remained outsiders, this unification of Christian and Muslim women was extraordinary and highlights the strength of purpose and will of Liberian women to

¹¹ Other organisations included the Concerned Women of Liberia (CWL), the Federation of Liberian Women (FLW), the Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL), Women’s Peace Initiative (WPI), Liberian Muslim Women’s Organisation (LMWO) and the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL).

bring peace to their country and their ability to build bridges across difference based on a common agenda (Tripp 2016). It also showcases that despite division and exclusion, the historical promoting of one group over other groups can be overcome to unite for the future survival of a nation by women using their gendered authority to bring the warring factions together to mediate, time and again (Tripp 2015: 157).

The women of this movement were instrumental in bringing about the peace talks in Accra in 2003, raising international attention to the plight of Liberian women and ensuring that a peace settlement was reached, even though they were not officially a negotiating party (Moran and Pitcher 2004; Tripp 2015). These women continued to influence the men through their relentlessness and tenacity to stop the violence and refusing to accept anything less than peace from the negotiations (Gbowee and Mithers 2011). In the words of Sheikh Kafumba F. Konneh:

To see women that bore you in the womb sitting down in the sun, the whole day, hungry, not eating ... now that has an impact. The warring factions, the politicians, and the civil society – the international community ... all saw it as a great impact on the [peace] process (Press 2010: 25).

While the majority of well-known and documented women's organising during the war were those led by educated 'elite' women, other women from rural farmers to urban women were also involved in collective grassroots activity. While little is documented, these women attended to the more mundane aspects of day to day survival including innovative solutions to making the most out of relief foods, as documented in the *Liberian Civil War Recipes* (Moran and Pitcher 2004: 508).

The overwhelming devastation and violence that was inflicted on all Liberians and their traumatic experiences of ongoing hyper-insecurity during the civil war, however, while not necessarily altering all gendered roles, did erode the traditional divide between women based on their status and identity.

Conclusion

The historical background detailed in this chapter reveals the relationship between the State of Liberia and Liberian women, regardless of their status, identity, rights or power, as one of negotiation. My aim in this chapter was not to analyse the antecedents to the civil war in an effort to understand its course or volatility. Rather, my aim was examine Liberian history through a gender lens aiming to understand how women were impacted by various events and the politics of the power holders. Further, the social and historical dynamics discussed above provide the context for gender stool analysis undertaken in the following chapters.

This chapter maps the narrative of war and peace in relation to Liberian women's lives. The depth of violence inflicted against Liberian women has varied throughout this narrative, reflecting intersecting factors such as location, status and identity. Always present, however, are the violent relations that shape women's 'everyday' lives: the ruling class's patriarchal parochialism. These violent relations are revealed through Liberian women's experiences of insecurity during periods of war and peace.

The civil war not only shattered the political and economic structures of Liberian society. It also shattered the historical status divide that kept Liberian women isolated from each other. From this violent ending of historical divisions, Liberian women recognised and seized the opportunity for a new beginning. Liberian women built bridges across religious and ethnic lines of difference, uniting for a cause to end the violent conflict that engulfed their 'everyday' existence. The years of Liberian women independently enduring the fluctuating violent insecurity of 'everyday' life, during periods of war and peace was arrested with the words "Liberian women have had enough!" (*Pray the Devil Back to Hell* 2008). While the violent insecurity of the final days of the war and the fledging beginnings of peace took shape, the Liberian women stood together, building bridges of peace. This unification of the women of Liberia is just one of the factors that led me to select Liberia as the case study for my research project.

This chapter also demonstrates that the unity that arose from the violence of conflict is a complex unity, however, arising from the local level, manifested in the 'everyday' lives of Liberian women. During the period of violent conflict, a focus on women as women, as mothers, as daughters, as aunties and as wives, as opposed to religious women, ethnic women and Christian women provided the materials to build the bridges to cross the divides that separated Liberian women for centuries.

In the absence of that conflict, however, these divides need to be engaged with, not merely glossed over by a focus on women's (as a group) difference from men. That is, the power and solidarity that a focus on gender difference can provide during periods of violent conflict, as evidenced in Liberia and elsewhere (Tripp 2015, 2016), may not necessarily exhibit the same unifying characteristics in the aftermath. This is a theme that I explore further in the next Chapter, which looks at the post-conflict period of Liberian history and the continuing march towards gender equality.

Chapter Six: Gender Stool Analysis – National Level – WPS Policy in Liberia

Introduction

Against the historical background set out in the previous chapter, I now turn to the international agendas and national frameworks that address gender inequality in Liberia. The structure and purpose of this chapter aligns with Chapter Four where I analysed the global WPS policy and practice, through the four global WPS pillars of participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery.

I examine the gender equality practice history of Liberia, focusing specifically on the period since the end of the civil war in 2003. This history reflects both strong gains and missed opportunities to further gender equality. Five examples are analysed, including the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), legislation (Inheritance Act 2002 and the Rape Amendment Act 2005), post-war elections (2005) and the Government of Liberia's gender policies. Each of these examples are linked to the WPS in Liberia either as incorporating direct responses to the WPS policy (UNMIL), coopted as a response to WPS policy (gender polices) or as foundational documents that set the context of implementing the WPS in Liberia (legislation).

I also conduct an analysis of the national implementation of the global WPS policy as contained in the Liberian 1325 NAP. A gender stool analysis is applied to both the Liberian gender equality practice history and the 1325 NAP and then compared to map the shifting understandings of gender (McLeod 2015).

I discuss the implications for national practice and policy, set against the contention by Jennings (2012) that the Government of Liberia is pursuing a gender equality social change agenda underpinned by a *gender-as-difference* perspective. Jennings' evidence of a gender difference approach by the Government of Liberia is compared and contrasted to the gender stool analysis of the gender equality practice history and the Liberian 1325 NAP. This analysis highlights the importance of taking account of the national context in WPS implementations as the gender outcomes are informed not only by the global policy but also the national equality practice. Finally I compare and contrast the global and national levels of the WPS policy.

WPS Policy in Liberia – Historical Precedents

United Nations Mission and Agencies in Liberia - 2003 to ongoing

Liberia welcomed the main contingent of UNMIL¹² international peacekeepers in October 2003.¹³ UNMIL was one of the first UN Missions to benefit from the adoption of UNSCR 1325. UNSCR 1509 (2003) setting up UNMIL directly references UNSCR 1325. Further, a senior gender adviser position was set up as part of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to coordinate efforts to implement gender mainstreaming throughout the mission as well as support gender mainstreaming in civil society and in the government of Liberia (<http://www.unmil.unmissions.org/>). This focus on gender in UNMIL has remained ongoing as reflected in various follow up resolutions such as UNSCR 2066 (2012):

Requests UNMIL to continue to support the participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, including in decision making roles in post-conflict governance institutions, appointed and elected in Liberia, within existing resources (OP 11).

In addition to UNMIL, the UN is represented in Liberia by 17 agencies including UN Women, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Utilising the Delivering as One¹⁴ framework, all UN agencies work within an Integrated Mission context where the Head of UNMIL is also the Coordinator of the UN in Liberia (<http://www.unliberia.org>). This has implications for the gender equality practice as gender is also mainstreamed throughout the UN agencies in terms of delivering programs. This is in contrast to previous scenarios where UN Women delivered the vast majority of gender/women related programs (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014).

The role of UN Women has changed with the shift to the Delivering as One framework. A key change is the ability to leverage off the strengths of other UN Agencies in delivering gender related programs. For example, the issue of SGBV is led by UNFPA, while women's participation in elections and political participation is led by UNDP. This leveraging of other UN Agency strengths enables UN Women to focus on their strengths

¹² Prior to the formal deployment of peacekeepers under UNMIL, peacekeepers were deployed as part of ECOMIL, which represented the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Mission in Liberia

¹³ The planned pull out of UNMIL is still being deliberating on, though December 2016 is being considered, after 13 years.

¹⁴ The Delivering as One (DaO) initiative is the UN aid effectiveness strategy, responding to the global reform process to increase the effectiveness of aid, broadly encompassing the reform process started in 2005 with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness through to the 2010 Hanoi Inter-Governmental Meeting.

in the areas of peace and security, as noted by a key international respondent:

We are delivering as one country as a UN including the mission meaning we have one program that all agencies are working together to implement. We have delineated where our advantages are and where our programs are contributing to that (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014).

The UN Country Team also self-selected to commit to women, peace and security post-conflict financing. A commitment was made by the UN in Liberia to dedicate 15% of the entire UN program budget (not just the security budget) towards women and the WPS Agenda, whether that be for economic recovery or access to natural resources or participation (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014).

The other major UN entity in Liberia to focus on gender, as opposed to leading key programs and activities based on broader objectives, is the Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA) within UNMIL. According to a key international respondent:

the sole mandate of the office is to help the mission implement the Security Council Resolution 1325. We do this through advisory, capacity building, advocacy and also through supporting the ongoing national processes at various levels, whether policy making, law making or programs/plans to ensure that the issues of gender and 1325 are duly considered in those processes (Respondent I5 D3, March/April 2014).

The OGA is a central focal point that operates with both the government and UNMIL to ensure policy documents, joint programs and ongoing initiatives/special projects reflect an appropriate “gender mix” and issues of gender and women’s empowerment are properly addressed (Respondent I5 D3, March/April 2014). The OGA is responsible for ensuring that all sections of UNMIL (such as UNPOL) and all operations (for example reforms of security sector) take gender into account. This is in addition to gender support and advice provided to the Liberian government’s security sector, justice and governance reforms. An example of the work undertaken is the setting of gender quotas and development of gender policies in the Liberian security sector (Respondent I5 D3, March/April 2014). They are also assisting the government deliver on reforms that will see certain elements of governance decentralised and enhancing decision making capacity and capability at the county level.

The Delivering as One framework reflects both a *gender-as-equality* and *gender-as-difference* perspective through its ongoing support and oversight of gender mainstreaming within the governance institutions of Liberia and also through its own programs embracing women’s economic and political empowerment. To a lesser extent, it also reflects a *gender-as-diversity* perspective through its focus on the decentralisation reforms and recognising the divides that still exist around ethnic, religious and urban/rural

factors. For example, the decentralisation initiative is premised on embracing the diversity of Liberian's lives, devolving decision making to the local level. The gender equality practice promoted by the UN attempts to balance all three legs of the gender stool, within the post-conflict Liberian context. Its ability to effectively deliver, however, is hampered by a number of factors.

These factors include the pressures of delivering services and aid within a system that relies on donor funding and reflects the impacts of under-resourcing (Tripp 2015: 105-106). They also include the contextual nuances that arise within post-conflict societies which are expected to embrace wholeheartedly the guidance (demands) of the donor led international community towards goals of democracy, justice and rule of law.

My research engages directly with this issue, acknowledging the importance of understanding not only how gender is constructed in global policy but how this is translated at the national level and reflected in practical outcomes at the local level that may be enabling or constraining in terms of women's 'everyday' experiences of peace and security. The UN's mission in Liberia provides an example of a direct response to the WPS policy, through its establishment of a special gender advisor position to the Special Representative and through the work of key units (OGA) and agencies (UNWomen, among others). The next few examples provide evidence of how new laws and a new government impacted on the equality practice history, laying the foundations for the introduction of the Liberian 1325 NAP in 2009.

Inheritance Law Act 2003

The historical divisions between Liberian women, as noted in Chapter Five, permeate all facets of 'everyday' life in Liberia. One of the greatest historical divisions noted is between Indigenous women, Mandingo women and Americo-Liberian women, based on ethnic and religious identities. The bridging of these divides created space for a united women's movement in Liberia. This movement not only contributed to the peace that was achieved in 2003 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana but also throughout the 14 long years of civil conflict that preceded the CPA (see Tripp 2015: 78-113; 155-166). After peace was declared, this united front was further utilised to lobby for and gain legislative changes focused on breaking down the barriers between Liberian women in relation to customary and statutory marriages (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014). The intent of the Inheritance Law 2003 is to equalise the rights of women married under customary law and statutory law. It was a major breakthrough for Indigenous women, particularly in rural areas who before the war

were considered the property of male relatives (Tripp 2015: 111). As noted by a local respondent from a professional women's organisation:

... women got together and went to the Legislature and the House of Representatives and got this law passed. The same rights that a woman married statutor[il]ly, married in a church, the same right must be given to a woman who is living in slum (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014).

The significance of this change and how it has added to the gender equality practice history is best highlighted through examining some of the key sections of the Inheritance Act 2003.

Firstly, Section 2.1 sets out that “[a]ll customary marriages shall be legal within this Republic, and the rights, duties and liabilities of the statutory wife shall likewise be accorded to all customary wives.” More specifically, Section 3.4 makes it unlawful to require the compulsory marriage of a widow to a kin of her late customary husband. The removal of the differential treatment of women in customary marriages compared to statutory marriages breaks down one of the key barriers that kept Liberian women apart and proved to be a rallying point to bring them together in the immediate aftermath of the civil war:

So we got together and said ‘No!’ [to rural women being property]. Our sisters are being treated unfairly so what do we do? Let us look into this law that says if a man is married to a woman she becomes a property to the family of the man after he dies. She ... marry one of the brothers in the family because she doesn't want to leave children and go (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014).

Secondly, Section 2.2 relates to the prohibition of the recovery of dowry (bridewealth). The prohibition of dowry recovery increases the security of women from being set aside and returned to her family in disgrace by her husband. This is a recognised source of insecurity for customary wives where they are returned to their families after they have served their purpose in raising children, so their husbands can demand their dowry back (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014). The dowry referred to here is the same bride-wealth payment mentioned in Chapter Five where the local elites use the inability of young men to pay it as a way of gaining indentured labour (Holm 2013: 13). The removal of this barrier can also be seen as reducing the distance between women married under customary and statutory law, uniting Liberian women in the fight for women's rights:

Even before the war they had their tradition and whenever a man pays a dowry and woman gets old, send her back to the family and demand dowry back. This law says ‘No, you cannot demand your dowry back. You have had her from the time she was young and now she is old. Who will marry her? She wait for you and

have children for you and then you want to take her back? Oh no!' (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014).

Lastly, in addition to according widow dower rights (Section 3.2), the Inheritance Act 2003 also specifically addresses issues over land as property. In Section 2.3, "immediately upon marriage, the customary wife shall be entitled to one-third of her husband's property personal or real and vice versa regardless whether or not he/she helped him/her to acquire said property. Real property encompasses land." This is a major improvement on the previous situation where access to land for Indigenous Liberian women was greatly restricted, but now, "when the husband dies we have property, you have 1/3 like civilised women until die" (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014).

The changes instigated by the Inheritance Act 2003 ensured that all women, regardless of their status in terms of customary/statutory marriage, are treated as equals. The words of the legislation clearly reflects a *gender-as-equality* perspective, deliberately setting aside the differences between women and the diversity of other factors such as location, religion and ethnicity, to create a law that focuses on bringing them equality before the law. It equalises the differential treatment of women in their relations with men (spouses) giving women, regardless of their status, equal rights (relative to other women) before the law in terms of inheritance. It does this through eliminating the differences between inheritance practices of customary and statutory marriages.

By equalising the rights of women without questioning the basis for the difference, however, the systemic discrimination faced by customary wives is glossed over and effectively marital status is depoliticised as well as by default other status markers such as ethnicity, religion and location. This de-politicisation marginalises the impact that practices of inheritance have in terms of perpetuating gender inequality. It also highlights how a focus on a *gender-as-equality* perspective can ignore systemic discrimination, especially where it is applied to remove difference without contesting the power structures that perpetuate and legitimate the practice. For example, while all women now have the same rights vis-à-vis property (one-third), those rights are still not equal to men.

This focus on equality to eliminate difference and diversity as opposed to embracing them, is reflected in the practical application of the legislation, which I contend leads to a disconnect between the intent of the legislation and the 'everyday' experiences of it at the local level. The consequences of this disconnect between the intent and practical application are highlighted in Liberia's 2009 CEDAW report. The Liberian CEDAW report states that the Inheritance Act 2003 "put an end to the identification of

women as chattel, placed rural women on an equal footing with urban women and [gave] ... rural women the opportunity to own property, whether bought during or before marriage” (CEDAW/C/SR.901, 2009: 8). It was further reported, however, that “[c]ustomary norms and practices continue to limit women’s access to land because the allocation of land and its utilization in communities is still greatly influenced by chiefs and elders, who are mostly men” (FCI 2011: 7). CEDAW also noted this lack of translation of rights into actions in its response: “despite the enactment of the Inheritance Law in 2003, traditional customs restricts women, mostly in rural areas, from exercising their right to independently own property” (CEDAW/C/LBR/Q/6 2009: 5).

The CEDAW report and the responses to it highlight how the focus on equality in the Inheritance Law to the exclusion of difference and diversity in its application, impacts on its practical outcomes. The application of the law is undermined by the lack of attention paid to applying a *gender-as-difference* and a *gender-as-diversity* perspective at the local community level. That is, it fails to take account of how differences and other intersecting factors impact on its practical outcomes. This lack of attention to difference and intersecting factors forecloses on opportunities to reverse and where possible deconstruct the traditional practices that shape differences based on gender, ethnicity, religion and location. It also forecloses on the opportunity to uncover how traditional practice has evolved and why some women reinforce those practices.

Recognising and redressing these structures of power is required to fully implement the intent of the legislation, to equalise women’s experiences of marriage *because of* gender differences and diversity, not despite them. This is required as the issues noted above are not merely failures of policy diffusion, they are failures of the policy itself.

Taking difference and diversity into account would open up for contestation the power structures and hierarchies that have traditionally separated Liberian women based on their status as either ‘civilised’ or ‘native’. This status marker, imposed on all Liberian women was dealt an all but fatal blow during the civil war, directly leading to the passing of laws such as the Inheritance Act 2003. It did not, however, breakdown those structures which have traditionally reinforced and perpetuated discrimination based on gender and status, nor did it contest the discrimination that already existed for women in statutory marriages whose rights have never been equal to those of men. The Inheritance Act 2003 therefore, is an example of how erasing some differences to equalise the rights of women vis-à-vis men can ignore and normalise differences between women and men.

The Rape Law¹⁵ 2005

The second law in relation to the gender equality practice history is the Rape Law (2005). It represents a fundamental shift in how crimes, such as rape and gender-based violence are recognised and prosecuted in Liberia. Rape was recognised by the Liberian Supreme Court as early as 1898 though it “was difficult to define and prove” (Kalwinski 2007: 145). The Penal Code also included a rape law, however, the majority of cases were heard by the customary law system as traditionally the majority of Liberians access the customary rather than the statutory system (Kalwinski 2007: 145).

Under customary law, rape is dealt with through the palava hut process which is a traditional mediatory and dialogic process. The process differs between Mende-speaking groups in the north, western and central areas compared to Kwa-speaking groups in the south and the east (Pajibo 2008: 18). Rape among the Kwa-speaking groups is a secret matter. The identity of the victim is protected, while the perpetrator is deemed guilty and forbidden from attending the proceedings (Pajibo 2008: 20). If the family of the victim accepts the apology of the clan of the perpetrator, restitution is a fine including such items as “a he-goat, a black rooster, 50 pounds of rice and three gallons of palm oil” (Pajibo 2008: 20) while the ongoing medical needs of the victim are taken care of by the perpetrator’s family.

In the Mende-speaking areas, the palava hut process does not directly involve the families, rather disputes are heard by traditional leaders or zoes. In cases of rape a female zoe leads the process calling a meeting and instigating an investigation (Pajibo 2008: 22). Justice under this process consists of a fine and sometimes “the rapist is made to marry his victim” (Pajibo 2008: 22).

The Rape Law 2005 strengthens the legal framework around defining and prosecuting rape cases and also extends the scope of victims and consequences applicable. Firstly, it broadens the definition of rape to include male and female victims. This change shifts the previous understanding of the law which was only applicable to women victims. It can be seen as reflecting a *gender-as-equality* perspective as it recognises that men as well as women may be victims of rape.

Secondly, it provides for a differentiated sentencing scheme designating that certain types of rape (first degree felony rape) are capital offences, which are nonbailable. Second degree felony rape carries a sentence of up to 10 years. This change recognises

¹⁵ The formal title for this legislation is “An Act to Amend the New Penal Code Chapter 14 Sections 14.70 and 14.71 and to Provide for Gang Rape”, approved December 29, 2005 and enacted by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly of the Liberia National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia.

that not all rape offences should be treated equally. Some offences, such as those committed against minors should be treated as more serious than other types of rape. This recognition that differences exist between the impact of rape on minors (girls and boys) and on adults (women and men), reflects a marginal focus on a *gender-as-diversity* perspective, advocating special treatment based primarily on differences within gender categories of women and men based on age and more complex issues around consent with adults.

While this law is a breakthrough in terms of upgrading the offence of rape, it does not go so far as to specifically recognise domestic violence and rape within marriage.¹⁶ The inability to address these very serious gender-based violence issues is reflective of how marriage is currently not recognised as a site of gender inequality in Liberia. The lack of focus on violence that occurs within the bonds of marriage perpetuates the traditional male-dominance within the family (Jennings 2012). Without addressing gender-based violence within intimate partner relations, the Rape Law 2005 still truncates the justice available to victims based on inequality within gender relations (Bernstein 2013).

Similar to the Inheritance Act 2003, the Rape Law 2005 predominantly reflects a *gender-as-equality* perspective. It strengthens the legal framework in relation to SGBV perpetuated against women and men. In this way it intends to give equal access and status before the law in terms of victims of SGBV. It also reflects a marginal focus on a *gender-as-diversity* perspective in terms of differential sentences of some offences based on the age of the victim. The law fails to take account of, however, the relations between perpetrator and victim. That is, the Rape Law 2005 does not recognise domestic violence and rape within marriage, nor other factors that reinforce and perpetuate the violence. This highlights the neglect of a stronger focus on *gender-as-diversity* where key factors in shaping access to services and support to report SGBV crimes such as religion, ethnicity, marital status and location, are not considered. This is reflected in the low prosecution rate and the reserving of rape cases to the statutory system (explored in more detail in Chapter Seven), where capacity constraints and access issues in terms of distance and costs negate positive outcomes (Medie 2013;Tripp 2016).

Post-War Elections 2005

Another important element of the gender equality practice history in post-conflict Liberia is the post-war elections of 2005. In the period between the influx of international donors and organisations at the end of the conflict in 2003 and the first free elections in 2005,

¹⁶ A separate Domestic Violence Bill was passed in 2014 in recognition of the weaknesses of the Rape Law 2005 in relation to intimate partner violence.

women's groups mobilised other women to register to vote in the elections, many for the first time (Tripp 2015: 109, 207). One local respondent, herself heavily involved in this process, explained that in the lead up to the 2005 elections women's organisations mobilised a massive effort to harness the untapped potential of female voters:

People were not enthusiastic about going to vote. And so people had laid back attitude and we say 'No!' We can't sit here, we need to elect someone who can lead this country and not just rule this country. And so we go in the market places and hand-pick women and ask if registered to vote because you cannot vote if you are not registered. So we started taking people from the communities to the churches, to the mosques, to the market places. We went ... everywhere, the street corners, everywhere we met you. Where you sell your food, someone would remain by your food and do cooking while you were taken to register. If you washing your clothes, some people will wash your clothes while you go register. Or cutting grass or anything you are doing, we will do your work while someone takes you to the voter registration centre. And come to realise we register at this time over 7,000 voters (Respondent L4 D6, March/April 2014).

The process of registering *female* voters in 2005 reflects all three gender perspectives. Women were targeted on the premise that they had an equal right to vote in the upcoming elections, alongside men. Women were targeted in their difference from men, to assist them utilise their equal right with men to vote. They were also targeted across lines of diversity, recognising the many differences that mark women's 'everyday' lives.

The election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2005 as president has been assessed as resulting from a combination of existing female authority within indigenous and local political structures, national history of female authority at State level and the transformation capacities due to war (Moran 2012: 54). It can be considered the "latest example in a long line of Liberian women leaders at multiple levels from local and indigenous to elites to national office-holders" (Moran 2012: 54).

Even with more female voters registered than male voters in 2005 and the election of a female president, the overall results for women's representation in parliament have been less promising. With the inability of the interim government to set up a quota system for women in parliament prior to the election (either a *gender-as-equality* measure where used to remove barriers to equalise the playing field or *gender-as-difference* measure where seen as promoting women's unique voice) and without an adequate understanding of the local conditions under which women candidates are campaigning (*gender-as-difference* measure), the results were dismal, though not wholly unexpected, as one local respondent lamented:

In the 2005 electoral process over 100 plus women contested but among the 100, only 4 became elected. Why? Because there was cash violence. If I walk into the community to talk, let's say I had a community forum and I spoke to them and they agree that they will support me. Then the man comes in with a lot of money, he comes in and starts handing cash around. This is a poverty stricken community, and sometimes the vote is sold and you are belly-driven, because of that, anything can take that [vote] away. And supposed to rely on them [voters] but can't rely on them 'cause it is now that I [the voter] need it [cash], not tomorrow (Respondent L4 D6, March/April 2014).

This comment highlights how neglecting a *gender-as-diversity* perspective can lead to unbalanced and unintended outcomes. In this case, the strategies to increase women's access to the existing political system in terms of having an equal say through registration and increasing the number of women candidates were undermined by the lack of attention paid to the gendered nature of the political system and other intersecting factors that hamper women's political empowerment. Such attention would see strategies to address the differences between male and female candidates based on their relative positions within the social hierarchy of Liberia as well as strategies to address how voting behaviours intersect with social, cultural, economic and political factors. Such factors include the traditional practices where local leaders (Town Chief) influence the voting behaviours of villagers and male relatives (husbands, brothers, nephews) influence voting behaviours of family members (Respondent I6 D13 , March/April 2014).

To shift these entrenched behaviours, one international organization I spoke with engaged a theatre group and enrolled local actors to work interactively with rural communities, respecting culture and opening up spaces for safe debates. Adequate policy responses addressing these types of factors are difficult to develop as evidenced in Pacific Island countries (Zetlin and Palmieri 2014: 11-12). This should not, however, deter the effort to include such factors in policy responses.

The lack of women elected in 2005, despite the presidency being won by a woman showcases that a primary focus on *gender-as-equality* with some focus on *gender-as-difference* is not sufficient to break down the barriers faced by budding women politicians. *Gender-as-equality* strategies focus on equality of opportunity to vote and run for office, while a focus on difference assists in converting the equality of opportunities into equality of outcomes, however, neither breaks down the barriers imposed by gendered political structures.

The election of a female president in 2005 reflected the desire of a population looking towards a future that sharply broke with a past filled with violence and corruption. Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf not only offered a change from the male hegemony over

political power, she also came with the strong backing of the international community. This backing was gained based on her experience as a former minister in Liberia and her work within the international realm for the UN (see Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf 2002).

Images of the 'powerful mother' (Van Allen 2006) of pre-war kinship-based political relations and the 'iron Lady' or essentially sexless 'modern' technocrat were invoked in the campaign of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, fusing separate discourses of political authority (Moran 2012). Her election also reflects the trend of:

Women's marginalization from politics and their outsider status [which makes] them attractive contenders for power as the ends of conflicts open up new political spaces. Their shared exclusion has given them a common agenda and capacity for being remarkably broad-based regardless of partisanship, ethnicity, religion, or other factors (Tripp, Casimiro and Kwesiga 2008: 215-216).

Despite the election of a female president and the appointment of female Ministers to key portfolios (for example police and finance), the halls of power in Liberia are still gendered male. While the election of a female president broke down barriers, it did so without transforming the political landscape and without instigating a gendered political reform. This is not wholly unexpected when measured against the broader landscape of the history of Liberian women in official and leadership roles at the international, national and local levels and within traditional roles (see Tripp 2015: 90-93; Moran 1989; 2005).

Government of Liberia – Policies and Programs

The Government of Liberia has instigated numerous policies and programs since 2005 which are focused on the addressing the gender imbalance. There have been a number of laws, policies and programs which have been amended or newly instituted to reflect the government's strong stance on addressing gender inequality. Some of the key ones that reflect a *gender-as-difference* perspective include the National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2006), the Gender-Based Violence Unit, the Policy on Girl Child Education (2006), the Gender Policy of the Liberia National Police and the Social Welfare Policy (2008).

One key policy/strategy that reflects both an equality and difference gender perspective is the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) 'Lift Liberia' (2008-2011) which provides the template for lifting Liberia out of poverty. The development of the PRS involved extensive consultation which "solicited and incorporated individual contributions from ministries and agencies, the Legislature, the Judiciary, donors, civil society, the private sector and the population more generally" (PRS 2008: 41). Due to the nature of the subject matter of the PRS, both women and men were extensively engaged. While there is some focus placed on women and poverty (*gender-as-difference*), gender is

predominantly viewed as equality, ensuring women are included in all measures and outcomes for poverty reduction rather than being singled out.

Another key policy is the Liberian National Gender Policy (NGP) represents the government's strong commitment "to gender equality as a means of maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice and promoting development in the country" (Liberian NGP 2009: 9). It recommends:

that gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting should be adopted as a development approach and shall inform the economic reform agenda, medium and long term development planning, value re-orientation, social transformation and other development initiatives of Government (Liberian NGP 2009: 9).

The Liberian NGP therefore, is the standard by which the Liberian Government intends to set the future direction for moving the country forward, beyond the reconstruction phase into the development phase of the post-conflict recovery.

Other programs have been implemented as joint programs with the UN, including the UN Joint Program on Gender Equality and Women Economic Empowerment (JP GEWEE), the UN Joint Programme for Employment and the Empowerment of Young Women and Men (JPYEE), the UN Joint programme on Food Security and Nutrition (JP FSN) and the UN Joint programme to prevent and Respond to Sexual and Gender Based Violence. Each of these programs have a strong emphasis on targeting women and girls.

At the national level, while the majority of documents and programs reflect *gender-as-difference* perspective, others such as the PRS reflect a strong *gender-as-equality* perspective. This supports my contention that different gender perspectives can be reflected within a single document as well as between a raft of gender equality programs, enabling and limiting their collective and individual practical outcomes. It is the overall map of these individual plans and strategies that can inform future practice and provide insight into current outcomes.

Summary of WPS Policy in Liberia – Historical Precedents

The Liberian gender equality practice history since 2003 displays a distinct shift from a primary focus on *gender-as-equality* to a *gender-as-difference* perspective. This shift occurred after the first post-war elections held in 2005. In 2005, the first elected female head of state for an African country, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took office as President of the Republic of Liberia.

In the period prior to the first post-war elections, a raft of measures, laws and policies were instigated by the interim transitional government of Liberia and UNMIL. These actions primarily reflected a *gender-as-equality* perspective, though as noted

above it also engages *gender-as-difference* strategies. After the Johnson Sirleaf government took office, the policies and actions that followed saw a shift towards a *gender-as-difference* perspective, while still maintaining some focus on *gender-as-equality*.

The discussion in the previous sections clearly demonstrates that the gender equality practice in post-conflict Liberia, has to varying degrees, reflected a mix of gender perspectives. Specifically, an equality gender perspective is reflected in the comprehensive framework developed to address equality before the law and increase participation of women in the security sector. A difference gender perspective is reflected through numerous programs and policies targeted specifically at women and for women, as reflected in the raft of measures introduced by the Johnson Sirleaf government in a move to value women’s contributions to peace and economic prosperity. A diversity gender perspective is marginally reflected through a focus on intersecting identities, as noted in the shift to decentralise governance structures and increase autonomy in the counties. Some programs and policies, such as the Rape Law (2005) and the PRS (2008-2011) reflect a mix of gender perspectives. This mix and spread of gender perspectives is mapped in Chart 6-1. Each entity, document or policy described above in the equality practice history is mapped to equality, difference and diversity perspectives in the bar chart below.

Chart 6-1 Map of Gender Equality History Practice

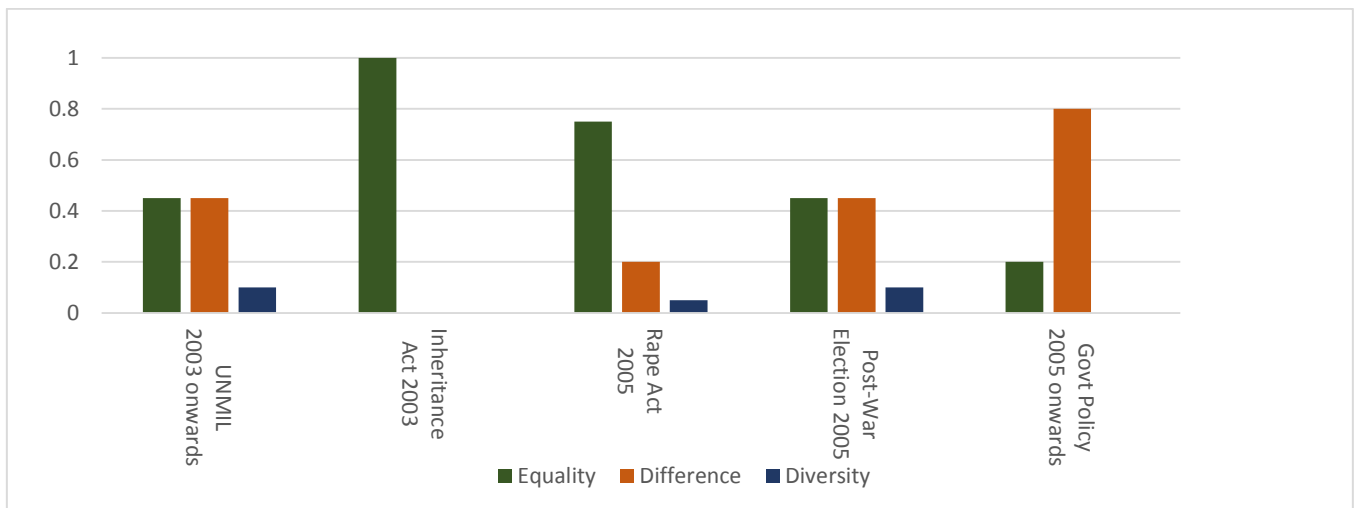


Chart 6-1 reveals how different gender perspectives have informed various gender equality mechanisms in the post-conflict landscape. It reveals that in the period 2003 to 2005, the primary gender equality practice reflected a *gender-as-equality* perspective.

The shift to a focus on *gender-as-difference* was instigated by the first elected government of post-conflict Liberia through the policies and programs that Jennings (2012) has coined as pursuing a 'gender equality social change agenda'. There are practical implications that arise from the mix of equality, difference and diversity gender perspectives reflected in chart 6-1.

Firstly, both *gender-as-equality* and *gender-as-difference* tend to view women as a homogenous group with a focus on strategies designed to impact "women" though with different emphasis on how women's contributions are viewed. That is, under an equality strategy women contribute equally with men based on the male norm whereas under a difference strategy, the uniqueness of women (their difference) is privileged as an alternative to the male norm. In either case, viewing women as homogenous is contested in Chapter Five, which discusses the various intersecting factors impacting Liberian women's ability to access the social, political, legal and economic opportunities made available by the different measures, policies and programs noted in the gender equality practice history outlined above.

Secondly, the focus primarily on *gender-as-equality* in legislation can shift the gaze away from the systemic discrimination inherent in the practices the legal changes are designed to address. For example, while the Inheritance Act 2003 sought to equalise provisions for inheritance of property for all Liberian women, it failed to contest the discrimination in these practices that exists between women and men. Similarly, the gender policies supported by UNMIL while increasing the number of women entering the security sector fail to address the systemic discrimination within the sector that shapes future opportunities.

Thirdly, the shift to a *gender-as-difference* perspective in the policies of the Government of Liberia has primarily been focused on re-dressing the gender imbalance through focusing on women only. This has the potential to create a gendered backlash due to the lack of engagement with men in particular and gender relations in general. Jennings suggests that such a backlash has been evidenced in Liberia where her research found "that the propensity for resistance and backlash exists strongly among Liberian men" (2012: 294) in relation to the continued focus on women in the social change agenda.

The major policy of the Government of Liberia's social change agenda is the Liberian 1325 NAP (2009), which I examine in the following section. The gender equality practice history of post-conflict Liberia discussed above informs, shapes and frames the development of the Liberian 1325 NAP, alongside the global WPS policy discourses

discussed in Chapter Four. The gender equality practice history is broader in scope than the WPS policy. The WPS policy is largely focused on the UN system itself, however, as the practical implementation of the WPS policy at the national and local level is shaped by the existing gender equality practice history, there is greater scope for WPS to shape gender outcomes at all levels.

WPS Policy in Liberia - 1325 National Action Plan

The LNAP complements initiatives such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the GOL [Government of Liberia]/UN joint programmes already in place, focusing on additional and specific actions needed to promote and advance the inclusion of women in all processes that affect their peace and security, foster gender equality and gender mainstreaming and ultimately, promote sustainable development (Liberian 1325 NAP 2009: 8).

The Liberian 1325 NAP was developed in 2009 as part of the broader landscape of gender equality initiatives of the Government of Liberia. The 1325 NAP recognises the priority of ‘monitoring and impact evaluation’ including an:

Observatory comprised of women’s groups and other NGOs, the existing 1325 National Steering Committee (NSC) and a Technical Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force comprised of technical experts from Government Ministries and Agencies. ... At the county level, monitoring and evaluation will be the responsibility of the Gender County Coordinators and the County Support Teams (Liberian 1325 NAP 2009: 9).

Further, the Liberian 1325 NAP sets out its focus and timeline as applying to an implementation at the “local, national and sub-regional levels over four years” (2009: 12). At the time of my fieldwork in 2014, the Liberian 1325 was due for official review, however, it had not yet been funded or scoped.

The Liberian 1325 NAP is framed by the global WPS policy, specifically UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 and has four national WPS pillars: Protection, Prevention, Participation and Empowerment, and Promotion. These national WPS pillars are split into ten Strategic Issues each of which are operationalised through Priority Areas (37), Outputs (146) and Indicators (234). Table 6-1 below sets out the four national WPS pillars and the ten strategic issues.

Table 6-1 Liberian 1325 NAP Framework

<p>Pillar One – PROTECTION The protection of women and girls from all types of violence including sexual and gender-based violence.</p>
<p>Strategic Issue 1 – <i>Provide psycho-social and trauma counselling to women and girls.</i></p>
<p>Strategic Issue 2 – <i>Protect the rights and strengthen security for women and girls</i></p>
<p>Strategic Issue 3 – <i>Increase access to quality health education for women and girls with a specific emphasis on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.</i></p>
<p>Pillar Two – PREVENTION The prevention of all types of violence against women and girls including against rape and systematic rape, trafficking and other human rights abuses incorporates one main strategic issue..</p>
<p>Strategic Issue 4 – <i>Prevent all types of violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence.</i></p>
<p>Pillar Three – PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT Promote women’s full participation in all conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict recovery processes at community, county, national and sub-regional levels.</p>
<p>Strategic Issue 5 – <i>Promote women’s full participation in all conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict recovery processes.</i></p>
<p>Strategic Issue 6 – <i>Empower women through increased access to housing and natural resources and strengthen their participation in the management of the environment.</i></p>
<p>Pillar Four – PROMOTION Develop and implement strategies to ensure that the implementation of the LNAP is fully and sustainably resourced..</p>
<p>Strategic Issue 7 – <i>Promote the involvement of women’s groups in the implementation of the LNAP and advocate for increased access to resources for both the Government and women’s groups.</i></p>
<p>Strategic Issue 8 – <i>Promote the participation of girls in conflict prevention, early warning, peace security and post-conflict recovery issues through education and training.</i></p>
<p>Strategic Issue 9 – <i>Enhance the technical and institutional capacities of governmental and civil society actors, including women’s groups to effectively implement the LNAP.</i></p>
<p>Strategic Issue 10 – <i>Promote the full involvement of governmental and civil society actors, including women’s groups in the monitoring and evaluation of the LNAP.</i></p>

As attested to in table 6-1 and taking into account the priority areas, outputs and indicators, the Liberian 1325 NAP provides a comprehensive framework to implement the global WPS policy. The four Liberian WPS pillars are based on the global WPS pillars though they do not directly correlate. For example, the Liberian pillars do not include a relief and recovery pillar, partly due to it being a post-conflict country, though it does have

a promotion pillar based on strategies to promote the implementation of the plan. The promotion pillar is primarily focused on how to operationalise the plan within the context of post-conflict Liberia. This level of detail is not appropriate at the global level as national operationalisation of the WPS policy needs to be specific to the varying contexts experienced in different implementation sites.

These key differences align to the nuances that occur across the global-national divide. To overcome the issues with the misalignment across the global-national divide of the WPS pillars, I focus on the strategic issue and priority area levels in my analysis. This allows me to directly compare the resolution clauses mapped to the global WPS pillars (chart 4-1) with the strategies in the Liberian 1325 NAP.

The other important caveat is that due to the timing of the Liberian 1325 NAP, it only specifically reflects UNSCRs 1325 and 1820. As such, the content and gender stool analysis that follows will focus primarily on these two resolutions as being representative of the four global WPS pillars.

WPS Pillar One: Participation – Content Analysis

As noted in Chapter Four, the global WPS participation pillar is primarily focused on increasing the number of women in a variety of roles with the purpose of addressing historic inequality, primarily in terms of breaking down barriers to entry. These objectives are addressed in a number of the Liberian WPS pillars, strategic issues and priority areas. While the Liberian 1325 NAP has a pillar specifically on participation and empowerment, the strategies that address participation are also located in the other Liberian WPS pillars (see Liberian WPS promotion pillar).

When compared to the global WPS participation pillar, the Liberian 1325 NAP takes a narrow view focusing primarily on OPs 1 and 8 (UNSCR 1325) and OP 12 (UNSCR 1820). Examining the actual words used to focus on women's participation reveals that the Liberian 1325 NAP ranges from reviewing policies to be more inclusive of women, expanding and redesigning training programs to include women and incorporate gender awareness, the promotion of women's economic empowerment, increasing the numbers of women in the security sector and increasing participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. It also encompasses increasing access to resources, education, leadership, youth peace clubs and media as well as involving women's groups in the implementation and evaluation of the Liberian WPS commitments, all designed to increase participation and promote women's representation and empowerment (Liberian 1325 NAP 2009). Examples of the strategies in the Liberian 1325 NAP relating to the global WPS participation pillar include:

Recruitment, retention and promotion of women within the SSI sector: Government continues the recruitment, promotion and retention drive to gender mainstream the sector through increased sensitization and awareness-raising among the population (Strategic Issue 2, Priority Area 1.4).

Sensitization of the population: on the importance and benefits of women's participation in the security sector (Strategic Issue 2, Priority Area 1.5).

Security policy frameworks are assessed and reformed to ensure women's full participation in the security sector and the implementation of the national security strategy to protect women's rights and ensure their security (Strategic Issue 2, Priority Area 1).

Policies governing women's access to cross-border trade policies to be strengthened and implemented across the region... Codes of Conduct, Complaint mechanisms and Women's Cross-Border Trade Union developed in Liberia strengthened, implemented and replicated across Mano River Union (Strategic Issue 5, Priority Area 1.2).

Train women in specialized skills to prepare them for work in traditionally male dominated labour markets (Strategic Issue 6, Priority Area 2).

Initiate and expand economic empowerment programmes for women including the provision of support to female farmers and entrepreneurs (Strategic Issue 6, Priority Area 3.1).

Government develops policies to promote women's access to loans, credit lines guarantees including reviewing repayment terms and accessibility to financial resources generally (Strategic Issue 6, Priority Area 3.2).

As the above excerpts illustrate, the focus of the global WPS participation pillar as translated in the Liberian 1325 NAP presents a sustained emphasis on a range of socio-economic identities, based on the productive capacities and capabilities of Liberian women. There is a very strong focus on women and girls, providing opportunities and spaces for them to convert their participation in society into practical outcomes, primarily through economic empowerment. The strategies addressing women's increased participation and empowerment do not reference men nor how such a shift to strengthen women's economic power might have unintended and sometimes violent consequences (Jennings 2012; Bacchi 2000).

The predominate identity marker is women's socio-economic status, while other identity markers such as religion and ethnicity are not engaged with, even though they impact on the socio-economic status certain women can achieve (see Chapter Five).

WPS Pillar One: Participation – Gender Stool Analysis

As demonstrated in the content analysis above, the objective of the strategies in the Liberian 1325 NAP that focus on the global WPS participation pillar closely aligns to a mixture of *gender-as-equality* and *gender-as-difference* perspectives. This is foreshadowed in the analysis of the global WPS participation pillar in Chapter Four where I noted it enabled a *gender-as-difference* perspective in terms of those participation strategies which focus solely on women's economic and political empowerment. This split focus between addressing women's participation through either increasing recruitment for security sector organisations or through economic empowerment schemes is evident throughout the Liberian 1325 NAP.

Firstly, the focus on increasing numbers in the security sector through specific recruitment and retention policies and the sensitising of the population to the benefit of having a gender inclusive security sector are evidence of a focus on breaking down barriers to enable women's equal participation. The policies and programs do not contest the gendered militarised structure of these organisations, nor do they engage with the systemic discrimination that underpin such masculinist institutions (Enloe 2000; Beijing PfA 1995; Cohn 2008; Cockburn 2007). These *gender-as-equality* type strategies, while addressing barriers to entry may have the unintended consequence of placing some women in positions that increase their insecurity, by failing to address institutionalised sexism (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

Secondly, the focus on women's socio-economic status in terms of increasing participation and economic empowerment schemes reflects a *gender-as-difference* perspective in relation to men and a marginal *gender-as-diversity* perspective in relation to other women. It also glosses over the complexity of other identity markers that influence and shape Liberian women's productive capacities and capabilities, such as religion, ethnicity, and disability. To provide further clarity, consider the following example from the Liberian 1325 NAP:

Table 6-2 Example from Liberian 1325 NAP

Strategic Issue 6	Priority Area 3	Output	Indicator
<i>Empower women through increased access to housing and natural resources and strengthen their participation in the management of the environment</i>	Enhancement of women's participation: in natural resources management and environmental protection	Community women involved in protection and management of forestry, mineral and other natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of women living in forest and mineral resource rich areas that participate in protection and management of forestry and natural resources from FDA and EPA records. - Number of women participating in the mining and logging industries.

At the priority level, the above example looks broadly at the task of increasing the participation of women in natural resource management. At the output level, the example focuses on “community women”, women who represent the local context in terms of managing their environment. At the indicator level the focus is on both “women living in forest and mineral resource rich areas” and “women participating in the mining and logging industries”, bringing together two distinct groups of women based on the location of their communities within the forested landscape of rural Liberia. The location of these communities is then linked to a constructed socio-economic identity for women within them. That is, it looks at participation in terms of the role of women within various (economic) communities but not at how these economic communities are further shaped and impacted by other local power relations such as religion, ethnicity and disability. These power relations shape the local governance structures of rural Liberia and can both enable and hinder access to economic opportunities, particularly in areas where the tensions over access to natural resources has shaped past conflict and tensions among different ethnic groups within local communities still remain (Neumann 2013).

This view of women falls under a *gender-as-difference* perspective as it focuses only on women and also marginally reflects a *gender-as-diversity* perspective as it only stresses differences between women based on their socio-economic status. The lack of specificity in terms of the diversity of Liberian women glosses over other deeply felt and ever present cleavages that exist in Liberian society, especially around ethnicity and religion. These cleavages have a tendency to shape local power relations and can impede progress on challenging unequal gender relations as they impact on numerous

identities that intersect gender (Neumann 2013; Moran 1989, 2004).

In summary, the participation pillar as it is translated into the Liberian 1325 NAP exhibits indicators of a *gender-as-equality* perspective in its focus on increasing the number of female security sector personnel, a *gender-as-difference* perspective in its economic empowerment schemes and a marginal focus on a *gender-as-diversity* perspective in its focus on women's socio-economic status. The key focus of the various participation related strategies in Liberia reflects both women gaining equal access to roles on par with men and positive action programs aimed at empowering women economically. This is demonstrated by the recruitment drive and gender policies in the security sector institutions and the economic empowerment schemes such as micro-credit for women.

The greater focus and attention in the Liberian 1325 NAP is on economic empowerment therefore, a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant. This mix creates both positive and negative impacts for how the national frameworks construct an ideal local actor (woman) that is gendered female though lacks depth in terms of other intersecting identities. While some women are able to access the opportunities offered by the recruitment and economic schemes, some are silently left behind, restricted by other intersecting factors that shape their 'everyday' lives due to the privileging of gender over other sites of inequality and discrimination.

WPS Pillar Two: Prevention – Content Analysis

The global WPS prevention pillar is primarily focused on increasing participation and representation of women in prevention mechanisms and dialogues. While the Liberian 1325 NAP has a prevention pillar it is solely related to violence against women. The clauses included in the Liberian 1325 NAP that directly align to the global WPS prevention pillar are OP1 (UNSCR 1325) and OP12 (UNSCR 1820). Examples of strategies that support the prevention element in the Liberian 1325 NAP include:

Revitalize the Traditional non- Aggression Pacts: Revitalize the traditional nonaggression pacts developed within the countries in the region and include women (Strategic Issue 5, Priority Area 1.1).

Harmonization and simplification of existing regional conflict prevention frameworks: Simplification and dissemination of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) and harmonization of the pillar on women, peace and security with LNAP. Simplified version of the ECPF used as an advocacy tool to facilitate the implementation of LNAP and women's involvement in conflict prevention and early warning systems in Liberia and across the region (Strategic Issue 5, Priority Area 1.3)

Research and document best practices of Liberia women in peace building and conflict prevention (Strategic Issue 5, Priority Area 3).

Succession planning for girls including education and training of girls at all levels for participation and promotion in peace and conflict prevention activities (Strategic Issue 8, Priority Area 2).

Participation of girls in peace building, conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery issues [through] formation and empowerment of peace clubs for girls established in junior high and secondary schools (Strategic Issue 8, Priority Area 3).

Consistent with the global WPS prevention pillar, the Liberian strategies on prevention utilise a participation strategy to open the doors to women's involvement in conflict prevention processes and to ensure those processes are gender sensitive. Similar to the analysis above more generally around participation and empowerment, there is a very strong focus on women and girls, providing opportunities and spaces for them to convert their participation in society into practical outcomes, primarily through involvement in conflict prevention training and institutions.

A notable difference, however, is the shift away from a focus on socio-economic status of women in the prevention strategies. Rather, the prevention strategies focus more on the ethnic identity of women within local, national and regional communities as demonstrated in the output to priority area 1.1 (quoted above), where “[o]ther mechanisms [to be] developed to prevent conflict and promote peace between ethnic groups in Liberia” (Liberian 1325 NAP 2009: 31).

The broader focus on regional security is unsurprising given the history of the Mano River Union¹⁷ (MRU) region. This focus can be seen as a positive reassertion back into the politics of the regional organisations after a period of negative associations during the civil war period. These negative associations specifically relate to the cross-border support and reach of the warlords who devastated Liberia drawing her neighbours into the conflict or supporting violent revolts throughout the region. Charles Taylor in particular fostered the spread of violence and conflict across the region, leading to his conviction in the Special Court for Sierra Leone for war crimes and crimes against humanity in April 2012 (see <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/briefing-papers/trial-charles-taylor-special-court-sierra-leone-appeal-judgment>). It also recognises that the Liberian 1325 NAP is implemented within the regional West African context and as such, regional security needs should be considered in terms of women's peace and security. This was evident during the civil war period where the whole region was impacted by Liberia's

¹⁷ The Mano River Union countries include Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

internal conflict morphing into regional instability (Conciliation Resources 2012: 10-15).

Only one output in the Liberian 1325 NAP references the ethnic tensions that exacerbated and prolonged the 14 year civil war in Liberia. Ethnic identity is not, however, engaged with in terms of the challenges that it poses to women trying to access empowerment opportunities, awareness programs or justice. In other words, it is not recognised as an intersecting factor that underpins and shapes the ability of women to convert opportunities for equality into equality outcomes.

WPS Pillar Two: Prevention – Gender Stool Analysis

As demonstrated in the content analysis above, the strategies around conflict prevention focus on women’s participation and ensuring that sensitisation of their participation is also pursued. This reflects a *gender-as-equality* perspective where women’s inclusion and equal treatment is called for through indicators such as “greater number of women involved in conflict prevention and early warning systems” (Strategic Issue 5, Priority Area 1.3).

The shift to recognise the importance of ethnic identity suggests a move away from an equality perspective towards a diversity perspective, recognising that women have a unique perspective to conflict prevention. This is achieved through shining the light on the differences that shape ‘everyday’ community life within Liberia and most importantly, within the MRU region that are primarily based on ethnic identity. This does not amount to a full embracement of a diversity perspective, however, as it does not equally value the differences that arise from intersecting identities, nor does it engage with the multiplicity of those identities. For example, while ethnicity is privileged along with gender, no mention is made of other sites of inequality that arise in rural settings such as the linking of local governance structures to religion, particularly in the northwest (Moran 1989).

In summary, the prevention pillar as it is translated into the Liberian 1325 NAP exhibits indicators of both a *gender-as-equality* perspective in its focus on increasing women’s participation in conflict prevention mechanisms and a shift towards a *gender-as-diversity* perspective in its recognition of ethnicity as an important site of tension between groups of Liberians and the broader regional stability. The key focus of the various prevention related strategies in Liberia reflects both women gaining equal access to roles on par with men as well as promoting women’s inclusion as being legitimate. The focus on ethnic tensions displays a diversity strategy to ensure that these tensions are not ignored in the broader regional security framework.

WPS Pillar Three: Protection – Content Analysis

The global WPS protection pillar primarily focuses on fortifying women's and girls' rights and safety in international law, with specific provisions around SGBV. The equivalent provisions are translated in the Liberian 1325 NAP through a focus on OPs 8, 10 and 11 (UNSCR 1325) and OPs 4 and 13 (UNSCR 1820).

Examining the actual words used to focus on women's protection and prevention from violence reveals strategies ranging from developing policies and training around psychosocial and trauma management for women and men as well as for prevention of violence against women, constructing and resourcing of medical facilities, economic empowerment for vulnerable women, development and strengthening of security sector policy frameworks and judicial review, building capacity of county gender officers and establishing safe houses for GBV survivors. Examples of the strategies in the Liberian 1325 NAP include:

Capacity Building: Build local capacities of women and men within communities to provide psycho-social and trauma management counseling and training in coherence with activities, outcomes and outputs already in place in the National GBV Action Plan and the GOL/UN Joint Plan (Strategic Issue 1, Priority Area 1.1).

Economic empowerment for vulnerable and traumatized women and men (Strategic Issue 1, Priority Area 4).

Review and revise Codes of Conduct: Review gender-blind Codes of Conducts and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) of SSIs to ensure compliance with UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820, the National Gender Policy, the PRS, the GBV National Action Plan and the Liberia National Action Plan (LNAP) (Strategic Issue 2, Priority Area 1.2).

The Justice System: Review, revise and harmonize policies and systems including gender blind codes of conducts underpinning the statutory and traditional justice systems. Strengthen and enhance collaboration between the MoJ and the Judiciary (Strategic Issue 2, Priority Area 3).

Rehabilitation of GBV perpetrators: Standardized programmes designed, consulted and approved to rehabilitate perpetrators of GBV and other forms of violence against women (Strategic Issue 4, Priority Area 2.3).

As the above excerpts illustrate, there is a very broad application of the global WPS protection pillar in the Liberian 1325 NAP. This is particularly interesting considering that the Liberian 1325 NAP is only based on UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 and therefore does not encompass the later additions and strengthening of the protection pillar. The strategies are not restricted to women only, nor are they restricted to a women-as-victims frame. The translation of the global protection frame into the Liberian context displays

significant shifts in focus, when assessed against the global WPS protection pillar set out in UNSCR 1325 and 1820.

The Liberian 1325 NAP can be viewed as foreshadowing the later shifts in the global WPS policy to start viewing women as agents within the protection pillar, embracing strategies that are aimed at empowering women to overcome trauma and circumstance, not just providing protection from violence. It also deviates from the global WPS protection pillar by including provisions to address perpetrators of gender-based violence. This shifts the frame from viewing men as perpetrators to one that takes rehabilitation and reconciliation seriously.

The strategies in the Liberian 1325 NAP highlight the ongoing issues in Liberia around SGBV and the need to provide a raft of services and infrastructure to manage the consequences that arise. While the focus is primarily on women survivors of SGBV, there is also recognition of the role that men can play, both as service providers in terms of health provision, protection and as 'rehabilitated' perpetrators. Rather than viewing all men as either protectors or perpetrators, the Liberian 1325 NAP engages a third alternative of the 'rehabilitated' offender. This opens the door to broadening the responses possible at the local level, where this third identity may provide an alternative means to address violence against women.

WPS Pillar Three: Protection – Gender Stool Analysis

As demonstrated in the content analysis, the strategies around the protection pillar are diverse, engaging and contradictory. On the one hand, it proposes solutions that move beyond a 'women-as-victims' frame, while on the other hand, it reinforces that frame. In terms of assigning a gender perspective, the strategies provide a mixture of both equality and difference perspectives, often within a single priority area. For example, a key priority area that demonstrates an equality perspective is the economic empowerment schemes for both men and women who have been traumatised (Strategic Issue 1, Priority Area 4). This would appear to accord equal treatment and opportunity to women and men as survivors of trauma. However, both the outputs and indicators for this priority area only reference women:

Output - Traumatized and vulnerable women such as the demobilized and war widows are empowered through skills training, micro-credit and loan facilities.

Indicator 1 - Number of traumatized and vulnerable women with access to skills training, micro-credit and loan facilities.

Indicator 2 - Number of traumatized and vulnerable women provided plots of land and follow-up support.

The output and indicators clearly reflect a *gender-as-difference* perspective,

focusing on and tracking performance in relation to women only. While the priority area embraces an equality perspective, the overall strategy is classified as reflecting a difference perspective because of the emphasis placed on 'women only' in the measurement of its performance.

It is therefore necessary to look more closely at the other strategies that include men to determine whether they too slide from equality to difference. Men are referenced in terms of capacity building to receive training alongside women, particularly in the provision of psycho-social and trauma management counselling (Strategic Issue 1, Priority Area 1.1). The outputs and indicators for this priority area do reflect targets for men, though there is a greater focus on women. While both men and women are the targets of the training, women alone are targeted as potential trainers. This reflects a greater harmonisation of the equality and difference perspectives where strategies to increase equality of opportunity and those that promote positive action are implemented side by side to enhance the overall outcomes.

The other area where men are mentioned is in relation to rehabilitation of GBV perpetrators (Strategic Issue 4, Priority Area 2.3). The priority area reflects a focus on men only (as opposed to a women only focus of the other priority areas) as perpetrators, engaging with the dichotomous women-as-victims/men-as-perpetrators violence frame. This is reflective of a *gender-as-difference* perspective, with the focus reversed falling squarely on men's roles as perpetrators. The outputs focus on constructing centres and programs to deliver rehabilitation services for men. Apart from being an important strategy in terms of dealing with the other side of violence against women, it also displays a very progressive and proactive stance in terms of attacking head on the issues of such violence. This further strengthens the focus on men's difference from women in terms of their violent natures. While there are legal penalties in place in Liberia for GBV (see Rape Act 2005), this priority area recognises that rehabilitation needs to be considered as an option rather than only incarceration. In terms of this priority area, the focus on a difference gender perspective, albeit reversed, is reinforced in the outputs and is measured against indicators focused only on men.

The other primary focus of the protection pillar is on the gender policies within the security and judicial sectors. These policies are viewed as enablers to changing the internal culture of these institutions which have long excluded women and marginalised their different security and justice needs. The focus on adopting gender policies is a *gender-as-equality* strategy as it is focused on removing the barriers to women's equal access and participation. Focusing only on policies as opposed to contesting the

gendered institutional structures to which they apply, however, limits the impact and effect these policies have in terms of women gaining practical equality.

Policies have been introduced into the Liberian National Police (LNP), who in 2013 achieved a 17.3% women in their ranks, a fall from 20% in 2012 (GNWP 2013; Respondent L1 D5, March/April 2014). The impact of these gender policies and other policies to reduce barriers to entry, however, have not translated into women officers gaining equality of outcomes, as evidenced through the lack of women in leadership (GNWP 2011; Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014). While still not achieving the 20% target, more distressing is that “there is no significant difference in female representation at the lower, intermediate or senior level of the police” (GNWP 2013: 83).

In summary, the protection pillar reflects a strong emphasis on a *gender-as-difference* perspective, albeit one that has the flexibility to turn the critical gaze on men as well. There is also some focus on *gender-as-equality* either as a companion strategy to reinforcing and supporting a *gender-as-difference* strategy, or as a singular strategy focused on introducing gender policies.

WPS Pillar Four: Relief and Recovery – Content Analysis

The global WPS relief and recovery pillar primarily focuses on gender equality, ensuring that transitional and reconstruction processes and institutions are gender responsive. As the relief and recovery pillar is the broadest global WPS pillar, encompassing all activities in the post-conflict landscape, it is necessarily applicable to a broad range of strategies in a 1325 NAP set in a post-conflict setting. Within the Liberian 1325 NAP, unsurprisingly, there is no relief and recovery pillar as the whole NAP is framed within the post-conflict recovery.

All the strategies in the Liberian 1325 NAP are necessarily relevant to the relief and recovery pillar as each of them are developed and designed to be implemented in a post-conflict setting. In this analysis therefore, I will focus on those priority areas that look at specific recovery mechanisms such as DDR, SSR and transitional justice. Specific examples include:

Economic empowerment for vulnerable and traumatized women and men ... such as the demobilized and war widows... (Strategic Issue 1, Priority Area 4).

Capacity of the justice sector and the judiciary strengthened: to deliver better access to justice for women and girls ... (Strategic Issue 2, Priority Area 3.2).

Transitional and gender justice: Government commits to, and implements the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to ensure access to gender justice and reparations for women and girls but no impunity nor amnesty for perpetrators (Strategic Issue 2, Priority Area 4).

Health education policy: Review, revise and develop health education policy that promotes access to quality health education for women and girls with a special emphasis on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS (Strategic Issue 3, Priority Area 1).

Empowerment of women and girls including those living with HIV/AIDS: Opportunities are created to empower, include, advance and promote women and girls living with, or caring for those living with HIV/AIDS (Strategic Issue 3, Priority Area 3).

As the above excerpts illustrate, the focus of the relief and recovery pillar as it is translated throughout the Liberian 1325 NAP is to highlight the national issues of post-conflict recovery and provide strategies to move forward by strengthening institutional capacity and capability and address issues specific to women in the aftermath of conflict. Consistent with the global formulation, the national translation of the relief and recovery pillar stretches across all WPS policy pillars.

The range of strategies engages with increasing women's participation and representation, empowerment schemes and also specialist health provision. The breadth of post-conflict recovery mechanisms covered in the Liberian 1325 NAP reflect the intention of the global WPS policy to create gender sensitive post-conflict recovery spaces.

The relief and recovery strategies all focus on women in order to highlight their different needs during the period of recovery and the requirement to take their needs into account in the mechanisms and institutions of the State, during the transition out of the conflict. The strategies remain quite broad and sweeping, offering little more than a direction to pursue but not necessarily adequate and well-defined tools with which to achieve those aims.

WPS Pillar Four: Relief and Recovery – Gender Stool Analysis

As demonstrated above, the objective of the relief and recovery pillar underpins the entire Liberian 1325 NAP and the transition of the post-conflict recovery. The focus of this pillar, as noted above and by other pillars, is primarily on women, particularly in their difference from men but also to recognise their equal status. In terms of the post-conflict processes addressed in the Liberian 1325 NAP around increasing the capacity of the justice sector, the focus on increasing women's access to justice and ensuring gender justice is achieved in relation to war related crimes, a *gender-as-difference* perspective is reflected.

Taking such a perspective highlights the marginalisation of women in terms of gaining justice, especially in terms of conflict related violence but also their traditional marginalisation in accessing the justice system. Such a perspective, however, glosses

over the broader access to justice issues faced by the majority of Liberians, both women and men alike, especially those located in rural areas of the country. The dual justice system that currently prevails in Liberia is inadequate not only in addressing the needs of women and girls, but also in addressing the justice needs of all rural Liberians (Isser, Lubkemann and N'Tow 2009). Delivering better access to justice for women and girls therefore, needs to be considered within the broader landscape of issues around the overall lack of capacity for Liberians to gain justice. This also reflects “a fundamental criticism levied against efforts to promote access to justice ... [where] the extensive focus on top-down and state-centric initiatives in which international aid assistance is given largely to government legal institutions” (Porter and Mundkur 2012: 75).

The other key strategies under the relief and recovery pillar are related to women's and girls' health issues. These strategies reflect a *gender-as-difference* perspective through their focus on women and girls' specific needs and issues around reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. While the strategies target a key area of insecurity for women, the focus only on women tends to frame the debate in terms of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS as being 'women's issues'. It fails to contest the role that men play in ensuring women's reproductive health and protection in terms of HIV/AIDS. Focusing on women's different needs, in isolation to also focusing on how those different needs are framed within traditional gendered societal norms around women's caring role and their subordinate role to men, forecloses on opportunities to breakdown those gendered norms.

This in effect perpetuates the cycle of devaluing women because they are women, requiring more specific strategies to address the consequences of the underpinning gender norms. This is one of the unintended consequences that can arise from a *gender-as-difference* perspective that can offset the primary gains made through positive action strategies. The overall impact of these types of consequences is dependent upon the local contexts into which they are implemented as well as the presence of other strategies that may address other aspects of the equality agenda.

In summary, the relief and recovery pillar emphasises a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The specific strategies analysed for this pillar also need to be supplemented and considered against the whole Liberian 1325 NAP as all the strategies are encompassed within the global WPS relief and recovery pillar as applied within a post-conflict setting. As such, there is also a focus on *gender-as-equality* strategies within this pillar. The implications arising from the lack of focus on all three perspectives and integrating the approach to justice is reflected in how taking a difference perspective

precludes the ability to address the diversity of issues around accessing justice within a dual legal system, where issues of gender and location need to be considered together. Taking a such a stance is an example of how a *gender-as-diversity* perspective can impact on practical outcomes through improving access to justice not only as a gendered issue but also as a rural/urban issue.

Summary of WPS Policy in Liberia – 1325 National Action Plan

The above analysis of the four global WPS pillars in terms of how they have been translated into the Liberian 1325 NAP addresses the feminist inquiry of “Where are the women?” (Enloe 1990) in Liberia. As demonstrated above, women have been included in the Liberian 1325 NAP variously as victims and agents, as requiring special provision and equal access, as being vulnerable and as requiring protection during periods of heightened violence in the aftermath of conflict. There has also been a focus on reversing the singular gaze on men as either perpetrators or protectors, opening up a third category of ‘rehabilitated’ offender. The Liberian 1325 NAP also reflects the shift from an equality to a difference perspective in terms of the application of the participation pillar to empowering women. Chart 6-2 summarises how each of the pillars reflect a mix of gender perspectives at the national level in Liberia.

Chart 6-2 WPS Policy Gender Stool Analysis – National Level (Liberia)

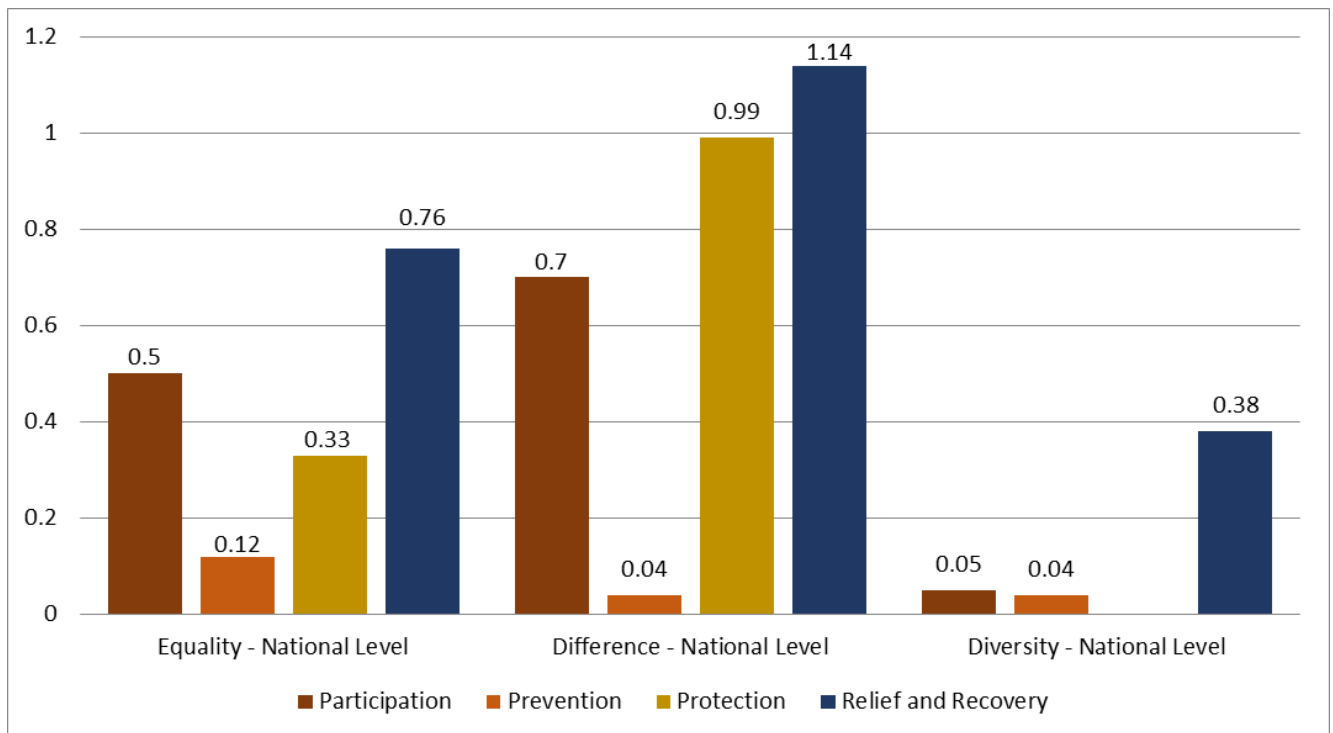


Chart 6-2 reveals that at the national level, there is a stronger focus on *gender-as-*

difference, particularly in the participation and relief and recovery pillars. The protection pillar is split evenly between equality and difference. Both the prevention and relief and recovery pillars display a mix of all three gender perspectives though the overall emphasis on prevention is minimal. While the individual mix of perspectives has been discussed above and will be compared and contrasted to the global level in the following section, in this section I will analyse the shift from an equality to a difference perspective between the gender equality practice history and the Liberian 1325 NAP. Chart 6-3 below maps the comparative position as at the implementation of the Liberian 1325 NAP in 2009.

Chart 6-3 Comparative Gender Stool Analysis – National Level



Chart 6-3 above reveals that there has been a shift from a predominant *gender-as-equality* perspective to a *gender-as-difference* perspective. This is in line with the shift evidenced in Chart 6-1 from the early period of reconstruction where the legal frameworks were strengthened (Inheritance Law, Rape Law, UNMIL) to the positive action focus of the post-war elections and first elected government of Liberia. As there was a noticeable shift occurring prior to the launch of the Liberian 1325 NAP, some of the focus on a difference perspective in the plan can be attributed to the gender equality practice history of the post-conflict period, strengthening the predominate difference focus of the global WPS policy.

The shift from an equality focus to a difference focus occurred around the first post-war elections. While UNMIL was fairly evenly balanced between equality and difference prior to this, the lead up to and election of the first female president saw a

sharp turn in the focus on difference strategies to address the gender imbalance across the social, cultural, economic and political spheres, particularly in relation to the joint programs between the UN and the government (for example see UN Joint Program on Gender Equality and Women Economic Empowerment).

Jennings (2012) suggests that the consequences she noted in her study of the socio-psychological impacts on men of the purposive 'gender equality social change agenda' adopted by the Government of Liberia reflect this shift to a difference perspective. Jennings specifically claims in her work that the gender equality social change agenda in Liberia aligns to a reversal strategy in terms of gender mainstreaming typology (2012: 40; Squires 2005: 369). This reversal strategy is linked to the *gender-as-difference* perspective. A reversal gender mainstreaming strategy focuses on reversing the entrenched institutional (male) focus within existing structures, moving towards incorporating women and gender (*as-difference*) perspectives into those institutions (Squires 2005: 369).

Jennings' respondents note consequences such as men losing their dignity, recognition and women's respect resulting in a sense of loss and powerlessness (2012: 181, 175) which she cites as evidence of a reversal strategy. Further, Jennings depicts the change in attitude and demeanour of Liberian women as being "forceful, arrogant, competitive, disrespectful and boisterous towards men" (2012: 175) as also supporting the negative consequences of adopting a reversal strategy that focuses only on women, ignoring men.

These consequences noted by Jennings, however, could just as easily be interpreted as aligning to an inclusion strategy (Squires 2005: 368), reflecting a *gender-as-equality* perspective. An inclusion strategy focuses on integrating women into existing (male-dominated) structures, levelling the playing field and addressing gender discrimination, enhancing opportunities for women to compete against men (Booth and Bennett 2002: 434-435; Tripp 2016). The consequences noted by Jennings are reflective of the masculinisation that can arise from pursuing a *gender-as-equality* strategy to the extent that it is based on women's ability to emulate the male norm, where women display traditional masculine traits such as arrogance and competitiveness.

A *gender-as-difference* strategy, on the other hand, would reflect an opening of more space to incorporate women's caring and nurturing proclivities in decision-making and not merely taking on the traits of their male counterparts (Tripp 2016: 318). It would reflect the essence of women's difference from men offering a different and unique perspective and way of being. This is demonstrated clearly in Liberian women's use of

emotion and passion during the peace negotiations (Tripp 2015: 164). The primary difference therefore, is that under an equality strategy, the normative policy structures remain uncontested reflecting traditional masculine norms whereas under a difference strategy, the policy framework is restructured to value women's contributions and reflect alternative feminine norms.

Jennings notes that Liberian men in her study view the gender equality social change agenda as purely focusing on women, "who now compete with men for power, control and social recognition" (Jennings 2012: 183). The negative impacts noted are felt within families, within communities and throughout the country where social relations become the new battleground with the costs increasingly aligned to rising domestic violence and where divorce is seen as the price to be paid for gender equality (Jennings 2012: 160-169). Overall, Jennings' work outlines how women have gained access to power through displaying masculine traits which she interprets as highlighting the machinations of a reversal strategy.

The policies and actions that underpin Jennings' study offer strong support for a reversal strategy (*gender-as-difference*) however, the consequences noted by her respondents strongly supports an inclusion strategy (*gender-as-equality*). In other words, the evidence Jennings presents supports a more nuanced and complex interpretation of the gender equality social change agenda in Liberia as reflecting a combination of equality and difference perspectives and reversal and inclusion gender mainstreaming strategies. On the one hand, women are being promoted in order to level the playing field to compete with men within the existing policy frameworks, particularly in the government sector. On the other hand, women are being valued for their contributions to maintaining peace and growing the economy, working alongside men in restructured frameworks that value women's contributions.

Based on my analysis of Jennings work, there is evidence of a shift from an equality perspective to a difference perspective, however, the magnitude of the shift is contestable based on the above interpretation of her findings. This confirms the usefulness of using the analytical frame of the gender stool to understand how the different gender perspectives engender both positive and negative consequences.

My own research takes a different focus and lens than Jennings work, focusing on the nuances between the different gender perspectives to better understand how such perspectives, when expressed in international policy and national frameworks enables and constrains practical outcomes at the local level.

Reconciling Global and National Gender Policy

Having noted that the Liberian 1325 NAP reflects a gender equality practice history that has shifted from an equality to a difference focus, I now reconcile the outcomes of the gender stool analysis at the national level back to the global level.

Chart 6-4 summarises the comparative gender stool analysis reflecting the shift in emphasis of each gender perspective in the translation of the global WPS pillars into the Liberian 1325 NAP.

Chart 6-4 Comparative Gender Stool Analysis – Global and National Level

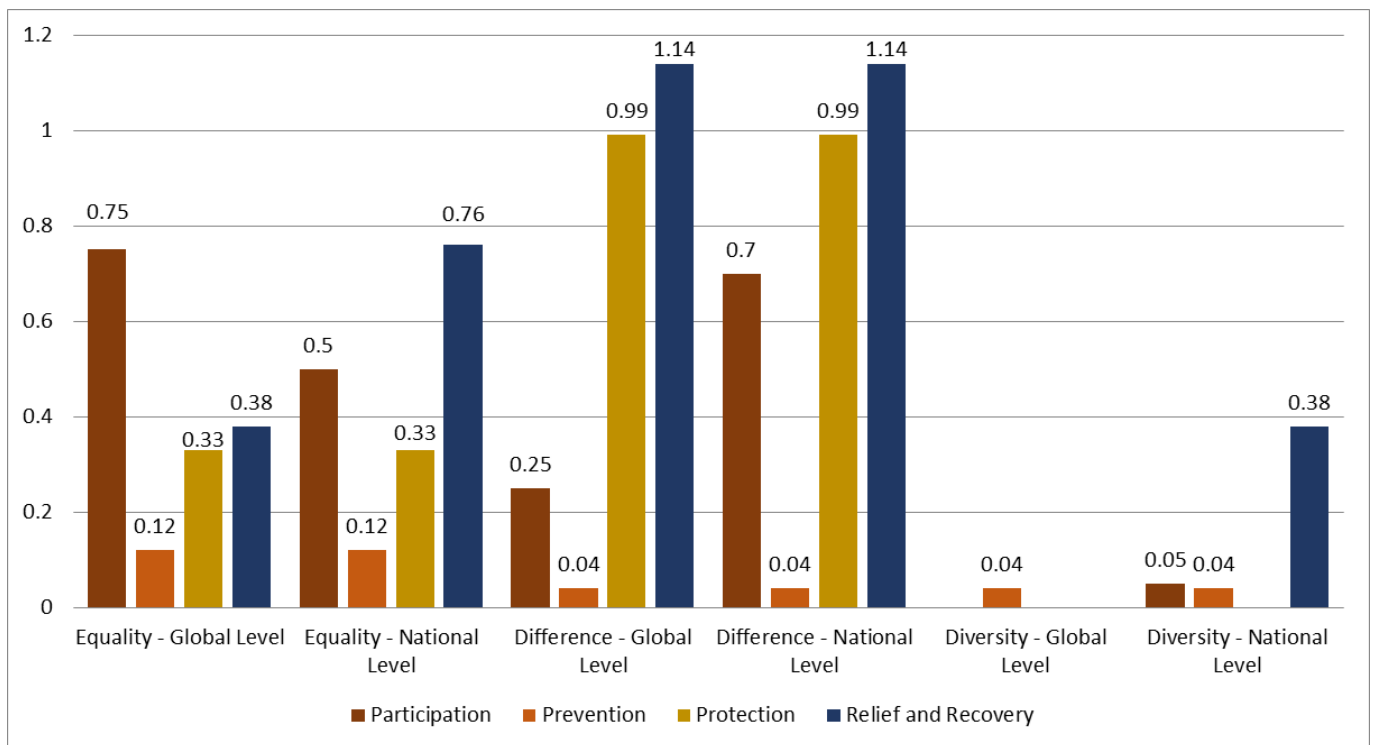


Chart 6-4 highlights firstly that at a national level a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant. Secondly it reveals that this predominance is similar to the global level and is primarily reflected in the protection and relief and recovery pillars. Thirdly it reveals that both *gender-as-equality* and *gender-as-diversity* perspectives are emphasised to a greater degree than at the global level.

The gender stool analysis of the translation of the global WPS pillars into the Liberian 1325 NAP reflects a focus on women accessing equal rights and equal opportunities within the prevention strategies. Conversely, those that focus on reversing the marginalisation of women and focus on achieving equality of outcomes are more likely to be associated with participation, protection and relief and recovery strategies. All

pillars exhibit a mix of strategies encompassing equality and difference gender perspectives and some also nod towards diversity. This displays the connectedness of the three gender perspectives as being complementary yet distinct in their application.

The overall emphasis of the Liberian 1325 NAP foregrounds a gender difference approach to implementing the global WPS policy, supported by equality strategies. The implications of this emphasis are reflected in the following chapter where the experiences of peace and security at the local level are analysed, based on fieldwork undertaken in Liberia. Further, the evaluations of the 1325 NAPs, including the Liberian 1325 NAP by such organisations as the Civil Society Monitoring Reports (GNWP) and UN Women reinforce the difference approach through the measures they utilise (see UN Women 2012a). For example, the GNWP monitoring reports focus on women only measures, reinforcing the difference strategies. This results in the measurements being presented within a difference frame which glosses over the consequences of focusing only on women (2011, 2012, 2013).

The national level analysis reveals both continuities and discontinuities with the global level analysis as displayed in Chart 6-4. Reconciling the gender stool analysis at the national level back to the global level reveals that both emphasise a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The national level reflects a greater emphasis on a *gender-as-equality* perspective. This is evidenced through the strong supporting equality framework initially set up in the equality practice history which provided a strong equality foundation for the Liberian 1325 NAP. Targets to increase women's participation in the security sector are an example of an equality strategy.

In particular, a predominant identity marker reflected in the plan is socio-economic status, while other important markers of identity/status such as ethnicity and religion receive marginal consideration in some priority areas, even though they heavily impact on the attainment of a certain socio-economic statuses within local communities. This assessment of the content of the Liberian 1325 NAP reflects the strong *gender-as-equality* foundations of the gender equality practice history and its subsequent shift towards a *gender-as-difference* perspective after 2005.

This changed ratio of gender perspectives from the global to the national level in conjunction with the different split of WPS pillars represents the translation of global policy into national plans. The relative focus of each of the pillars remains consistent between the global and national levels, with the exception noted in Chapter Four where it is acknowledged that the participation pillar at the national and local levels will likely encompass a more pronounced focus on a difference perspective.

Conclusion

The analysis undertaken in this chapter looked at the equality practice history of post-conflict Liberia to understand how this practice influenced the production of the Liberian 1325 NAP. This history displayed a shift in the emphasis of gender equality projects from a *gender-as-equality* to a *gender-as-difference* perspective, with minimal tendency to move towards a *gender-as-diversity* perspective.

The analysis of the Liberian 1325 NAP using the global WPS pillars revealed that while confined to UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 and only focused on a subset of clauses, it often applied them in strategies that extended beyond the original scope set down in the WPS policy. In some cases it foreshadowed the extensions made through subsequent WPS resolutions but in other cases it engaged concepts that were peculiar to the context of Liberia.

The Liberian 1325 NAP I argue, should be viewed as being productive both of its country specific gender equality practice history as well as the production of the global WPS policy. Viewing the Liberian 1325 NAP from this perspective provides greater insight into why certain gender constructs are reflected in its strategies. For instance, as noted in the analysis, the Liberian 1325 NAP foreshadows the shift in global policy towards recognising women as agents in the protection pillar. It also embraces strategies that focus on SGBV in the context of national and local experiences, broadening the victim/perpetrator dichotomy to include an alternative category: 'rehabilitated offender'. These shifts evidenced within the Liberian 1325 NAP preceded shifts in the global policy and reflects how context specific gender equality practice histories also inform the different constructions of gender at the national level.

In comparison to the global analysis, the national analysis maintained a predominant difference approach, extending both an equality and diversity focus. This assessment is not surprising considering that, taken as a whole, the dominant focus of the global WPS policy is on women and girls consistent with a *gender-as-difference* perspective. Such a focus at the global, supported by a stronger focus on difference at the national level, however, may have unintended consequences in terms of the implementation outcomes at the local level. These unintended consequences are foreshadowed by the specific focus of some priority areas in the Liberian 1325 NAP on particular identities and limited constructions of the diversity of Liberian women. What those consequences look like in terms of the 'everyday' experiences of peace and security in local communities is explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven: Gender Stool Analysis – Local Level – Local Initiatives of Women Peace and Security

Introduction

Local responses to global and national policy initiatives are shaped by a number of factors. Within the post-conflict environment these factors are further complicated by the process of reconstructing a society after violent conflict. Factors such as reforms of the security sector, justice institutions, rule of law and governance figure prominently as does the process of reconciliation and reparations for the trauma inflicted during and after conflict. The WPS policy offers a framework through which ongoing peace and reconstruction processes can be made more responsive to the needs of women and girls within the post-conflict space. As noted in previous chapters, this responsiveness at the global and national levels has been predominantly underpinned by a *gender-as-difference* perspective with a focus on women's difference from men, reversing women's marginalisation and supporting positive action.

At the global policy level, the four WPS pillars provide a frame under which numerous strategies and actions align to address gender inequality by focusing primarily on women's differences from men. At the national level these pillars are adjusted to reflect national priorities and context, as shown in the Liberian 1325 NAP. In this chapter I turn the spotlight on how global and national WPS initiatives impact on women and gender relations at the local level. That is, I focus on the translation of the global WPS policy into the local 'everyday' practices of peace and security in Liberia

The fieldwork data is subjected to a gender stool analysis to gain insight into how different perspectives of gender shape and constrain the outcomes noted at the local level from implementing the WPS policy. I further analyse the similarities and contradictions that arise when comparing internationally-led, nationally-led and locally-led initiatives and how perspectives of gender are implicated through the impacts these initiatives have at the local level.

Making Connections - WPS Pillars, 1325 NAP and Local Themes

This section maps the interview responses back to the global WPS pillars. The thematic and gender stool analysis of these responses showcase how the WPS policy has been translated on the ground in Liberia. The variations noted in Chapter Six between the Liberian WPS pillars and the global WPS pillars reflect the adjustments required to translate global policy into the national context. A similar exercise is also evident in the

translation of the national WPS policy into local practice. These adjustments reflect the necessary contextualisation required to operationalise the global WPS policy into specific post-conflict settings.

As noted in Chapter Three, I applied a three phase thematic analysis to the fieldwork dialogues and observations, adapted from the work of Braun and Clark (2006). Briefly, phase one involves transcribing the fieldwork and noting down ideas, thoughts and questions that the data highlights. Phase two involves coding the transcripts and developing initial themes. Phase three entails refining the themes and aligning them to the four global WPS pillars. This refinement and alignment is used as the basis of the local level content analysis.

In order to allow for consistency in comparing the global, national and local levels, I map the themes that arose from the fieldwork dialogues and observations against global WPS pillars as these pillars are used in Chapters Four and Six in the content and gender stool analysis. Table 7-1 maps the initial themes that arose from the thematic analysis (phase two) to primary themes based on alignment to the four global WPS pillars.

Table 7-1 Themes Mapped to Pillars

Initial Themes	Global WPS Pillars	Primary Themes
Women’s rights awareness	Participation	Awareness Raising
Liberian women’s movement	Participation	Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)
Implementation of Liberian 1325 NAP	Participation	Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)
Governance structures	Participation	Political Empowerment
Microfinance	Participation	Economic Empowerment
Community-based approaches	Prevention Relief and Recovery	Local Peace and Security
Local engagement and ownership	Prevention Relief and Recovery	Local Peace and Security
Security Sector Reform – gender-related policies	Participation	Security
Rule of Law – institutions	Protection	Security
Access to Justice	Protection	Justice
Sexual and Gender Based Violence	Protection	Justice

Table 7-1 reveals that the fieldwork data aligns to all four WPS pillars. Of particular note and reflecting the nuances of translating global policy into local practice is the combining of the prevention and relief and recovery WPS pillars. These two pillars are addressed together, revealing the interconnectedness of prevention and recovery mechanisms at the local level.

According to Table 7-1, the WPS participation pillar encompasses five themes. These themes cover the ongoing role of the Liberian women's movement, women's rights, economic and political empowerment and security sector policies. The WPS protection pillar encompasses the range of measures at the national level focused on building and remediating new and existing security and judicial institutions. The WPS prevention and relief and recovery pillars focus mostly on local initiatives to address local peace and security matters.

Each of these themes is explored through the fieldwork data, foregrounding how the global WPS pillars are translated into local practice and the positive and negative impacts they produce. These impacts are further analysed using the gender stool to uncover which gender perspectives are evident and which are predominant.

WPS Pillar One: Participation – Content Analysis of Local Themes

The global WPS participation pillar is primarily focused on increasing the number of women in a variety of roles with the purpose of addressing historic inequality, primarily in terms of breaking down barriers to entry. The Liberian 1325 NAP reflects this pillar through gender inclusive policies, the promotion of women's economic empowerment, increasing the numbers of women in the security sector and increasing participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. At the local level, the global WPS participation pillar is primarily reflected in the role of NGOs/CSOs, awareness raising, empowerment (economic and political) and security policies.

Non-Government Organisations/Civil Society Organisations – Role and Purpose

As noted in previous chapters, the Liberian women's movement was pivotal to uniting women across the divide of ethnicity and religion, to bring an end to the violent conflict that for too long shaped, and in many ways still shapes the 'everyday' lives of Liberian women and men. After the peace accord was signed, the women's movement continued to assert a strong influence on the transition from conflict to post-conflict and rallied to pass laws such as the Inheritance Act 2003 and the Rape Law Act 2005, to assist Liberian women's legal rights.

The Liberian women's movement, both during and after the conflict provided the

back bone of the progress made towards addressing unequal gender relations. However, subsequent to the post-war 2005 elections, the unity of the women's movement in Liberia began to wane. The reasons for this are numerous, but the one point all respondents agree on is that the unity of the various women's organisations markedly changed after the 2005 elections, despite the solidarity displayed in the 2011 elections, which saw the re-election of Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president. As one respondent explains:

The women's movement in Liberia was very active during the conflict. They were all united for one cause. I think after 2005 national election not so much. There has been a lot of infighting and no unity of the movement. Maybe the focus on 2011 elections was to get back the Presidency and the focus not on other women, more focused on 'we want our president back' but no longer term focus (Respondent I5 D3, 3 April 2014).

One of the defining reasons for this change is reflected by the fundamental shift in how women relate to each other in the transition from conflict to post-conflict. While tensions always existed in the women's movement (Tripp 2015: 100-101), with the scarcity of resources combined with the violence and hyper-insecurity of 'everyday' survival during conflict, these tensions were kept in check. Women in Liberia were able to unite through a focus on a common agenda relating to "violence, land, political power, and other concerns that transcended difference" (Tripp 2016: 320), achieving remarkable outcomes with little funding. Tripp (2016; 2015) identifies how African women build alliances across ethnicity due to their common experiences particularly in times of conflict. However, in times of peace, the foundations of these bridges are eroded as tensions reduce and difference once more becomes a tangible obstacle pushing back against women's unity.

During the post-conflict peace, instead of fighting for peace and women's 'everyday' survival, the women who have remained either in the NGO, CSO or government sector are fighting each other to gain funds to survive the peace they fought so hard for. As such, this shift is centred on the availability of donor funding and a change in focus towards "development, advocacy, and interest representation" (Tripp 2015: 108) resulting in increasing pressure on those points of tension:

Currently, the women's movement is not strong in Liberia, very disjointed. It's very difficult to get them to come together. [During the war they came together] with one goal and very little funding. I think funding has ruined them. I think funding has caused a lot of competition. There is a lot of competition for international recognition and they've lost their connection to the average Liberian woman. For the most part, not all but many of them. Many of them are quite disconnected and the women's groups ... less about an actual objective.... There are very few of the

organisations that have maintained a strong core focusing on one thing (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014).

The notion that the availability of donor funding can actually splinter rather than unite the work of many women's organisations, as alluded to above, provides interesting insight into the local/international dynamic of the women's movement during reconstruction. On the one hand, the introduction of donor funding targeted at raising awareness of women's rights, strengthening women's voices and reaching out to tackle the prevalent gender inequality is a huge leap in the right direction when reconstructing a society based on equality and equal participation. On the other hand, the availability of donor funding is dependent upon recipients meeting often stringent reporting requirements and strict guidelines on how the money is to be spent, limiting opportunities and creating competition putting under pressure the underlying tensions.

While governments and organisations who have signed The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) have committed to improve aid effectiveness, primarily through capacity building and prioritising local (partner country) agendas and ownership, there are still a large number of donor organisations who provide aid outside of these principles, primarily to the local NGOs that make up the majority of the women's organisations. This leaves these local NGOs and women's organisations to negotiate their way through the maze of donor agendas and priorities which has led to organisations running to the money as opposed to focusing on their own agendas and strengths, as noted above (Tripp 2015: 208). This situation is exacerbated by the substantial increase in the number of women's organisations during the reconstruction period (Fuest 2010). This has occurred partly due to the tremendous need and partly due to the funding available to "women's projects". In the words of one local respondent:

Serious, serious problems working with some of these [new] groups [on joint project]. Some of these [new] groups all they wanted was money. They [project owner] just hand pick people you don't even know, you don't even know them so how do you follow up? When projects come they get a lot of the money, a big chunk. So you who doing the work, follow up with community, go spending sleepless nights, tirelessly going, your life is risked in the darkness making sure the community people are involved. We don't get that kind of money and so you do as saying goes 'You go far but no further' (Respondent L4 D6, April 2014).

Based on this evidence and supported by other respondent accounts which point to "internal conflict within the movement" (Respondent L7 D7, 2 April 2014) the women's movement in Liberia has to some extent lost its way and its primary purpose (GNWP 2011). The unity required to bring about the end of the war, register women voters and

install a female president appears to have cracked under the financial pressure of maintaining a movement through the reconstruction period where gaining donor funding is the primary focus for day to day survival. It also reflects the loss of unity across the status divide where traditional women from rural towns and villages find themselves once again alienated and disadvantaged by the very structures that they overcame during the war to be recognised by their non-traditional urban sisters (Tripp 2015).

The disunity evident in the post-conflict reconstruction period has its foundations, however, within the seemingly effortless unity that arose during the conflict period (Decker 2016: 332). Class divides were very much evident within the movement where the 'educated elite' mingled with the 'indigenous poor' to overcome suspicion and distrust (Gbowee and Mithers 2011: 144). The differences that had traditionally kept the women apart did not suddenly disappear. Rather, the women were able to unite despite their differences due to the commonality of the unending violence that impacted them all.

Tripp (2000) has noted various patterns that are indicative of the tendency of African women's movements to refrain from politicising ethnicity and religion in the face of civil conflict. These factors include a common cause of women's rights, associational autonomy and opposition to patronage politics, gendered divisions of labour and peacemaking strategies and building crosscutting ties for economic survival, among others (Tripp 2000). This tendency does not arise from an innate or natural proclivity of women as peacemakers, rather it arises from "daily experiences with marginalisation and inequality" (2010: 662), despite the diversity of those experiences. These women's movements transcend differences to challenge structural inequality (Tripp 2000: 672). More interesting is that women during periods prior to conflict remain divided due to ethnic and other differences and only bridge such divides and locate their commonalities during conflict.

The post-conflict period also warrants further investigation as evidence indicates that the absence of official/sanctioned violence can impact on maintaining the bridges built during conflict. This would suggest that the ability of African women to build bridges across differences requires more than a predisposition towards embracing collective frameworks for mobilising (Tripp 2016). Alliances built on such foundations, however, can shift in unanticipated ways once the grounds for commonality become complicated by the processes that structure post-conflict reconstruction.

Despite these issues, there is no denying that the Liberian women's movement has contributed positively to reshaping the social and legal landscape resulting in a shift in the attitude of Liberian women. My respondents noted that women are now "hungry" for

equality and standing up for their rights. This is in comparison to their previous attitude where they “didn’t want to care about being equal” (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014). This latest awakening of women’s drive for equality, according to a leading local women’s peace and rights advocate, is attributable to the widespread programs aimed at educating women about their rights (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

Awareness Raising – Programs, Content, Delivery and Audience

Awareness programs have been initiated under various guises and due to the breadth of 1325 in Liberia, most programs focusing on women’s rights are generally considered to be tied to advancing the WPS Agenda focusing particularly on increasing women’s participation (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014). Awareness campaigns and workshops delivered at the local level around women’s legal and human rights form an essential foundation for increasing awareness of the WPS Agenda with the goal of creating opportunities to increase their participation through building economic and political empowerment as well as increasing ‘everyday’ peace and security.

These widespread programs, while offering greater access to ideas and knowledge previously unattainable to many women, can pose a number of challenges. These challenges arise around how the programs are delivered in terms of being sensitive to local experiences, the content of the programs, who they are aimed at and how raising awareness may negatively impact on women’s ‘everyday’ security.

Firstly, the delivery of the awareness raising programs raises the challenge of engaging with local women within their communities. This challenge requires incorporating sensitivity to local experiences of peace and insecurity and reflecting on how to deliver the programs to ensure they are pitched at the appropriate level. This is particularly important when running programs based on sensitising women to UNSCR 1325. Implementing the WPS policy requires a strong foundation in human rights and women’s rights awareness and how those programs are delivered is hence very important to the ongoing engagement of women in all aspects of the peace and security agenda. This is an issue that has been previously critiqued in the literature and one that commonly arises in situations where a Western rights-based framework is used (Fuest 2010). As one respondent suggests:

[You] need to look at how [1325] impact[s] them. How can it be supported? How do you operationalize it at all levels? I mean, we can be talking to somebody like a college graduate who can understand it, and say fine I understand empowerment and I understand justice etc. But when talking to women who are in rural areas who very seldom see a court house, all these things you have to be able to translate so that an ordinary person can understand it (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

Secondly, connected to delivering programs that are sensitive and appropriate is the challenge around the content of the programs. Programs have not necessarily been tailored to meet the specific needs of different groups of women. For example, the training delivered to local communities often reflects international frameworks which at best reflect nationally prioritised content and at worst are blueprints of global concepts (Fuest 2010) which end up “imposing ‘human rights’ programs without regard to local gender ideologies” (Moran 2012: 52; Abu-Lughod 2002; Merry 2006; Hodgson 2011; Basu 2010; Abramowitz 2009). Even where the effort is taken to train local trainers, this does not alleviate the issues of delivering internationally programmed content which has not been sensitised to account for local experiences. A leading peace advocate and champion of women’s rights and gender equality noted:

I think the gap is they get the training internationally and for them to translate it into what it should be locally is when it becomes problematic. [There are] problems with how to train information and how to do collaboration and so on (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

Thirdly, a major challenge to raising awareness around women’s rights and the WPS policy is targeting the most appropriate audience. In many cases, being sensitive to local conditions translates into using traditional mechanisms to identify who should attend awareness programs (Fuest 2010; Moran and Pitcher 2004). This can lead to the exclusion of certain women and girls based on factors such as religion, age and ethnicity as well as excluding men and boys who would also benefit from the awareness raising. The near exclusion of men from the programming through to the delivery and outcomes of awareness raising can lead to issues such as backlash, sometimes violent, against women’s increasing confidence to speak up for their rights, at home, in their communities and in public (Jennings 2012; Bacchi 2000).

The majority of my respondents recognised the exclusion of men from the awareness training in local communities as an issue. Most commonly, it was the local women participants in these trainings that raised the issue of the lack of men’s participation:

Girls realise can’t do it alone. Men need workshops. Back in 2012 participants said not enough to just give us training, need to involve our men. They have to come and get the awareness and understand some of the things that we go through as women and discuss issues with them. That is how we started engaging men. And they responded very well and some of these men they started to become agents of change in communities and take on women’s messages and pass on (Respondent NG3 D9, March/April 2014).

We have to include men into most of our programs so they understand, because if we leave the men behind and focus on the women, [there will] still be women not able to come as men won't let them (Respondent L7 D7, March/April 2014).

This is extended to include specific training for men so they can understand the issues that women face and how they may consciously and unconsciously reinforce inequality:

As we found out in one training in Grand Bassa, the women said 'sick and tired of you people telling us about our rights. I know everything about my rights. Because each time you tell me I tell my husband and he no happy. So is it possible to work with [our] men?' (Respondent L7 D7, March/April 2014).

For some respondents, this need to include men arises from a deeper understanding of how women and men are both implicated in the perpetuation of gender inequality and therefore, both need to be involved in challenging it (Respondent L6 D7, March/April 2014). It also arises from wanting to decrease the backlash and vulnerability that often accompanies the raising of awareness for women's and human rights reflecting the impacts of the gender see-saw (Bacchi 2000).

Fourthly, the above discussion links to the challenge identified by international, national and local respondents around the need to engage women without increasing the insecurity they are exposed to within their communities and within their homes. This fear of causing insecurity is recognised as resulting from the way programs are delivered and how communities are consulted prior to the delivery:

Actually we don't want to create conflict, you know, between women and their husband. [In] most cases [it is] the way women's empowerment [is] preached [that] can create conflict in the home. ... sometimes, there is [a] way people preach their gender equality and empowerment in [the] community [that] creates conflict. So male says, 'okay, so now you say that you and I are equal, okay, let's do everything equally. Don't ask me for money. Don't ask me for anything. So you put your hand in your pocket and buy food.' So the thing is, [then woman has to] buy food today, buy food tomorrow, so you can't put the woman in [that] bad situation (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014).

These challenges discussed by respondents arising from how women's rights and awareness programs are delivered, the content of the programs, the intended audience and how they address diversity is particularly noticeable in rural communities:

The [challenges arise from the] way in which people go about trying to teach it. You can't come into my community and tell me what I am doing is wrong and expect me to embrace you. If you come with that frontal approach I will say, 'Fine, do what you think is right, go ahead enjoy yourself but if I don't feel it will impact me, why should I embrace it?' I think lots of [the] time this approach is used in our rural areas is very wrong (Respondent L1 D5, March/April 2014).

These issues go beyond being sensitive to local experiences and education levels, though these are important and often cause issues in terms of disseminating WPS information. Rather, it goes to the core of the diversity of 'everyday' life in post-conflict communities that are struggling to rebuild in the wake of violent conflict. It also highlights the gap that can arise between the intentions of awareness programs and the unintended consequences that they may give rise to. Fuest's work provides further evidence of these unintended consequences such as sidelining Mandingos in non-ethnic reconciliation programs and the alienation of elders through the inclusion of youths in the same workshops (2010: 14).

In summary, awareness raising has led to both positive and negative impacts. For some, the increasing awareness of women's and human rights facilitated through the delivery of WPS principles and the Liberian women's movement has witnessed a change in attitude necessary to further the cause for gender equality. For others, however, this awareness raising has not been inclusive of their positioning within local communities where their intersecting identities based on religion, ethnicity and age have further marginalised their voices. This exclusion has led to further issues when considered in light of the economic empowerment schemes that usually accompany a raising of awareness in post-conflict settings.

Economic Empowerment – Programs, Content, Delivery and Audience

Economic empowerment focuses on schemes designed to increase women's financial security and is primarily supported by international and national sources. My respondents pointed to an array of services and programs that have been implemented, specifically targeting women's economic empowerment in Liberia.

These services and programs are consistent with those that have, over the last decade or so, changed the face of women's economic empowerment. In particular, the focus has been on economic empowerment schemes that fall under the umbrella of microfinance, which have had a huge impact on the lives of women in societies left stricken by conflict and/or poverty. In terms of promoting the WPS policy in post-conflict societies, the economic empowerment schemes I discuss can be viewed as supporting women's 'everyday' peace and security within their communities through providing new avenues to increase and translate their productive labour into financial security (for example see Yunnis 2006; Rankin 2001; Lazar 2004). According to some respondents, these schemes have given opportunities for Liberian women, particularly market women, to improve their economic status:

Women are also being empowered through most of the microfinance institutions we have. Formal institutions. Central Bank launched Village Savings and Loan Scheme which has helped a lot of women to [the] extent that they are not willing to continue in that program [anymore]. [They have] generated enough funds to continue on by themselves (Respondent L6 D7, March/April 2014).

Economic empowerment can involve a variety of schemes and policies based on reducing barriers that restrict women's productive capabilities and capacities through providing access to training and small scale credit schemes. While some respondents provide examples of women who have benefited greatly from the availability of microfinance services, other respondents convey less positive outcomes. These examples are grounded in the 'everyday' realities of a male-dominated society where men (husbands) control the finances of the households:

Even though women work for the money, because of [our] culture, [the] man controls the money. Even though you make the money and run around for business, bring money home, the husband decides where it goes. Some can't read and write so all controlled by husband. So when it comes to empowerment, the male will decide whether you go ahead because he decides where the money goes (Respondent L3 D5, March/April 2014).

Where women do obtain microfinance, the pressures of 'everyday' survival may impose impossible deadlines which impact on their ability to perform under the terms of the agreement:

... widows, single parents, food problems, issues with school fees, and then no time for the business, no time for women to carry on business before repay loan payment. One woman kill[ed] herself as could not make loan repayment (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014).

Further, for some groups of women, merely gaining access to such schemes poses the greatest challenge:

Rural women have larger disadvantage. Some of them who want to get involved, and those who want microfinance and other services that are provided in Monrovia and other big cities, not accessible to them (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014).

One of my respondents outlined their organisation's response to the desperate need of rural women to breakdown the gendered barriers erected around location, entailing delivery of an alternative model of financing that circumvents the tyranny of distance. Her organisation set up a community Village Savings and Loan scheme which is less complicated than other microfinance and bank models. These community Village Savings and Loans schemes:

include women and men as not [want to] create [a] condition that men [are] excluded. All members have their own money put together and available to loan it to

people. It is good because no collateral needed, as not all women have collateral (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014).

Other organisations, including international ones are also recognising the circumstances facing rural women in relation to participating in economic schemes and accessing finance and have used a similar community savings and loan model though they tend to focus exclusively on women. In particular, this model enables women in remote rural villages to benefit from this form of economic empowerment (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014).

Another form of economic empowerment specifically covered in the Liberian 1325 NAP is related to cross-border trade women (Strategic Issue 5, Priority Area 1.2). Cross-border trade women are women who cross the land borders of Liberia to take their goods to market and return with goods to sell in local markets. The rise of market women crossing borders has led to increasing concerns over their insecurity. Market women's insecurity became a major issue during the civil war years where they encountered intimidation, rape and bribery from different militia groups while trying to ensure the supply of food into Monrovia (Tripp 2016: 314). While the militia groups have been disarmed and Liberia and the Mano region is officially in a period of post-conflict peace, issues of sexual harassment and bribery still rate as challenges for women traders (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

The progress that has been made in empowering cross-border trade women in this regard has been significant. The emphasis placed on them in the Liberian 1325 NAP has enabled donor funding to be specifically funnelled into increasing security and improving conditions for this vulnerable group of women. UN Women has placed a large focus on providing skills and empowerment training to cross-border trade women to improve their financial and business skills. Similarly, the Women's Cross-Border Trade Association has funded dedicated storage for the goods that women trade across the border, enabling better security for their goods (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014). These activities have contributed greatly to increasing women's physical and financial security.

In summary, there have been both positive and negative impacts arising from increasing women's economic empowerment. The increase in financial security for some has allowed for greater control over their 'everyday' survival. However, for others, access to schemes to empower them economically has led to unintended consequences due to a lack of focus on changing embedded gender relations. One area where these unintended consequences are evident is in women's political participation and empowerment outcomes.

Political Empowerment – Voice and Representation

Political empowerment focuses on empowering women through increasing their political voice and representation. In this area the experiences of my respondents are quite diverse. Ten years under the leadership of a female president in a male-dominated patriarchal society like Liberia is bound to have an impact on women throughout the country. This impact, based on my dialogues can be viewed as both positive and negative. Women's political empowerment at the local level is being felt throughout local communities where women are now contesting traditionally male dominated governance positions. This contestation is not easy and certainly not equal, according to my local respondents (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

One word consistently crops up each time women's political representation is mentioned – finance, or more specifically, the lack thereof. Restrictions for women entering political races are numerous compared to their male counterparts, reflecting the gendered barriers to political participation:

A woman would have to consult her husband before she could take money from bank account. If it [was] the man, [he] goes on and takes money and puts on campaign. There are some issues there also and that is why we say even though we can be capable of occupying those positions even without quota in place, still need to contest the elections, and that is where issues arise (Respondent L7 D7, March/April 2014).

If woman goes into politics she needs to be financially stable or have the ability to attract finances. Major issue (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

The gendered barriers to political participation seem to be only the beginning as once women are in politics, they soon find that the way the game is played excludes them:

And when men are [doing] politics they go to nightclubs and that is where the decisions are made. After midnight and they are drinking and they make these decisions and leaves [a]lot of [the] women out and [they] feel [they] can't participate (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

The barriers that women politicians face in pushing forward a gender equality social change agenda are seemingly hard to budge. While the doors have been flung open, the level of participation it has enabled falls short of empowerment as it leaves uncontested the gendered power relations that underpin political structures. As a result, the effort required to pass gender sensitive legislation remains high. The fight to consolidate gains at a national political level highlight the difficulties faced by Liberian women in general, as a professional local respondent noted in relation to the fight to pass legislation to address the issues of SGBV:

It was difficult because most of the men in [the] legislature, they have ... traditional background. So it was difficult to pass [the Rape Act 2005]. It took long time but it passed. You know when people are used to their tradition, [it is] very difficult. You have to try to do awareness. You have to talk to them. You have to sensitise everything, every other time you [want to pass another law you] have to do it (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014).

Numerous attempts have been made to pass the Women's Equity Bill (in its latest revision) which would see political parties agree to "endeavour to encourage at least 30% of their candidates are women" (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014). The numerous failures to pass a gender quota bill, no matter how softly worded and weak, provides further evidence of the gendered power structures and how they restrict the ability of women to translate equal opportunities into equal outcomes. While the wheels are turning, they are not necessarily assisted by the inclusion of women at the highest levels as demonstrated by one respondent who states that it:

is appalling that we have a female sitting president who is unable to accomplish what the male president has accomplished in places like Kenya and Senegal, so but anyway, we will see. The fight is on (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

The role of a strong women's movement to underpin the progress towards enabling greater political participation and representation is well understood in Liberia. At the time of my fieldwork, some respondents were hopeful of a return to a stronger more unified women's movement with the Senatorial elections scheduled for October 2014, emulating the unified stance witnessed during the 2005 and 2011 elections. In early April, while I was still in Monrovia, it appeared as though the women's movement was finally gearing up for the elections with the launch of the Liberian National Women's Political Forum where:

they infused the element of trust funding into the women's campaigns. They looked at opening an account so people can chip in at the forum before they leave [the rally/meeting] and candidates can then access that money to fund campaigns. Running 16 women in the Senatorial elections which is a good number. Thinking beyond 2014 towards 2017 elections. It's a good way forward. It is interesting to see how it will mobilise and move and I think the President will back it (Respondent I5 D3, 3 April 2014).

Unfortunately, due to the health crisis that gripped Liberia in the form of the deadly Ebola virus, the Senatorial elections were postponed and the focus of many women turned to ensuring the safety of their families and communities. The impact of the deadly Ebola virus on Liberia has been devastating socially, economically and politically. It also highlighted the gendered nature of deadly disease where women's traditional gendered roles as carers saw them at greater risk of exposure and death to the Ebola virus (UN

Women News 2014).

The delayed elections finally took place on 20 December 2014. The results, after the promising kick off in April 2014 have been devastating for the Liberian women's political representation. Out of 139 candidates, 30 women stood resulting in only 6.7% female representation in a parliament that will be going to the 2017 elections to vote in a new President as Madam Johnson Sirleaf's mandate expires (www.inprofiledaily.com/?q=article/30-rejected-long-journey-trek accessed on 5 January 2015). The impact on the future of the women's movement is as yet unknown but with a further reduction in women's representation, a weakening of the President's political party and the stark reality of the gendered nature of deadly diseases, Liberian women need to prepare once again to fight for their rights to have a voice in the future of their country.

While some women have taken up the challenge of contesting political positions alongside men, their ability to compete against their male counterparts is greatly hampered. Once in political office, challenges to be heard and taken seriously remain. The political empowerment of women in Liberia witnesses the highs of attaining political office and the all too frequent lows of realising that they have no power to change entrenched unequal gender relations that infuse the political structures, at this point in time.

In summary, political empowerment in Liberia has engendered both positive and negative impacts. The greatest achievement for women in Liberia has been the election of a female president. The power attached to this office has also enabled some women to rise to the hold key positions of power within the government, such as the Minister for Finance and Minister for Foreign Affairs, though as noted by Tripp (2015) and Moran (1989, 2005), Liberian women have a long history of serving in official capacities. However, these positions are served at the pleasure of the president and do not represent a fundamental shift in the gendered power structures. The failure to pass equity legislation to enforce political quotas highlights the workings of these gendered power structures to ensure the interests of the male majority continue to be served. The use of gender quotas and policies to increase women's participation has been somewhat more successful in relation to the security sector.

Security – Frameworks, Laws and Audience

My respondents noted that the SSRs have included implementing extensive frameworks and reformed policies, heavily supported by the UNMIL, however, their views on the performance of the reforms are mixed. One of the key elements of strengthening the security framework from a WPS perspective is the policies around increasing the number

of women in the security sector. In Liberia, this has included increasing the percentage of female LNP officers and female Bureau of Immigration and Naturalisation (BIN) officers. These strategies have a two-fold purpose firstly to increase participation and secondly to better protect women exposed to violence and insecurity through encouraging greater reporting of violence. At the international level, the engagement of the Indian all female fully formed police unit in Liberia is believed to have had an impact on the reporting behaviours of Liberian women and increasing the interest of women in pursuing careers in the security sector (UN News Centre 2016; Porter and Mundkur 2012: 92). These reforms of the security sector are viewed as positive gains by both international and national respondents.

The easing of the education standards for entry into the LNP has resulted in increasing the percentage of women's participation to around 18% (Respondent I2 D1, March/April 2014), providing greater opportunities for women to access security sector jobs. Local respondents, however, contest the interpretation of these statistics as necessarily positive. Rather than focusing on the numbers, they tend to focus on women's experiences of working in the security sector. For example, while there has been a dramatic increase in female LNP recruits, the numbers of women in middle and senior level positions are not changing (GNWP 2011: 112). According to some respondents, due to their lack of education compared to their male counterparts, women security sector officers are not accessing or "holding leadership positions" (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014).

Local respondents also note that the duties assigned to female BIN officers did not necessarily reflect positive experiences. As one leading local advocate explained:

We have more women going to the border as cross-border traders and [they are] constantly harassed, sexually and in every other way. So [decided there was a] need for more female border control personnel at the borders. [Later we] find out that [BIN are] putting the women there without the proper support. [This is issue of] physical security for the female officers. For example, they don't have bathrooms that are separate for the women. [The] sleeping quarters [are not] in a separate building. Those kinds of things lead to them being harassed as well. So they are there supposedly to stop this harassment of the cross-border women traders but they themselves are being victimised (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

The consequences for the female BIN officers in the above example involve either putting up with the harassment, asking for a posting elsewhere or if that is not granted, walking away from the job (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014). These consequences are viewed as unacceptable and lead one local advocate to suggest that:

I think that is one of the biggest things with 1325 – how do you protect those who are supposed to protect you? (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

In summary, the positive shift towards higher numbers of female security sector personnel have been offset by the negative experiences of some who have taken up the opportunities presented. This reflects a focus on changing policies in the absence of also addressing entrenched sexism and gendered structures.

WPS Pillar One: Participation – Gender Stool Analysis of Local Themes

In this section, I apply the gender stool analysis to gain insight into how gender is constructed through the role and purpose of NGOs/CSOs, in the content, delivery and audience of the programs and activities designed to raise awareness of women's rights and the WPS Agenda at the local level, mechanisms to empower them economically and politically and policies to increase their participation in the security sector.

As noted previously at the global and national levels, the WPS participation pillar encompasses both gaining equal opportunities (*gender-as-equality*) and equality of outcomes (*gender-as-difference*). At the local level, a similar split is evident. As such I analyse the equal opportunity policies first and then shift to the equality of outcomes programs and schemes.

The objective of the security sector policies is aimed at levelling the playing field, reducing barriers to entry and providing equal opportunities for women to participate in the security sector. They reflect a *gender-as-equality* perspective through their focus on increasing numbers and reducing barriers to entry. The majority of the security related reforms are underpinned by a notion of gaining a gender balance within security institutions, supported by policies of non-discrimination. This tends to focus on 'women and men' as opposed to gender. A consequence that arises from this focus on 'women and men' as equals is the treatment of women once they have joined the security sector, where women and men are accorded the same treatment even though due to their gender, they can never attain the same outcomes.

For example, once the education barrier to the LNP was reduced through programs that assisted women in gaining the necessary qualifications, women were (supposedly) treated as equals to men. The consequences of equal treatment, however, tend to equate to less opportunities once the doors are opened. This is evidenced in the lack of women in leadership roles, particularly mid-level as opposed to the direct appointment roles that are at the discretion of the president (see GNWP 2011). While there are gender policies in place in security sector institutions, there is little documented evidence on how these policies have addressed such deficiencies.

Another consequence in terms of accessing equal opportunities is the failure to recognise that due to the differences among women, some will be further marginalised. Rural women in particular may find it more difficult to access the opportunities accorded to urban women who have greater access to education and the ability to take up the opportunities that a focus on increasing women's numbers presents.

A further consequence of gaining entry to security sector organisations based on equal opportunity is the lack of focus on systemic discrimination. An example of this is the integration of female BIN officers into the existing structures of the organisation. Once these women were posted to the border regions, the consequence of not recognising differences between women and men and ignoring the systemic discrimination embedded in institutional sexism, led to instances of violent insecurity for female BIN officers.

In contrast to the security policies which reflect the *gender-as-equality* perspective, the other local themes under the global WPS participation pillar in terms of the overwhelming majority of the programs and schemes aligns to reversing the marginalisation of women through positive action initiatives. The awareness raising and empowerment schemes primarily invoke a female gendered identity as opposed to other intersecting identities, such as those based on religion or ethnicity. At most, the empowerment schemes place an emphasis on either an economic or political gendered identity, but do not extend to the full range of diverse identities nor their equal valuing. Therefore, the objective of the majority of awareness raising and empowerment initiatives aligns closely to a *gender-as-difference* perspective, which aims to recognise women's difference through positively addressing their past discrimination. This positioning of women in their difference from men is similarly reflected through the women's NGOs and CSOs.

Some of the technical content of the awareness training is focused on statutory and mandatory protections of women's rights, reflecting a *gender-as-equality* perspective, even though the delivery and audience of this content reflects a *gender-as-difference* perspective through its primary focus on women only. Similarly, the content of one group's community savings and loan scheme evidenced a *gender-as-equality* perspective, offering women and men equal access to the scheme.

A number of consequences are evident at the local level in Liberia resulting from the predominance of a *gender-as-difference* perspective. The first set of consequences arises around access to the programs and schemes on offer. As noted in the above analysis, access to programs and schemes has been limited due to a lack of focus on the diversity of women's lives. For example, access may be limited due to husband's

forbidding their wives to travel to a neighbouring village where the program or scheme is situated. Access may also be limited due to a woman's ethnicity, age, location or religious status. The capacity of women to convert their increased participation and empowerment may be further limited due to traditional gender norms around men controlling the finances.

Contesting traditional gender norms has been, in some awareness raising programs, addressed through participants calling for the inclusion of men. This is also reflected in some economic empowerment schemes where equal access is given to women and men (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014). In terms of awareness raising, there has been a greater acceptance of the need to include men to ensure they don't subsequently restrict women's access to trainings. The majority of economic schemes, however, have not seen this shift to the inclusion of men and the subsequent benefits that accrue. This is witnessed through the experiences of women who are unable to convert their economic or political empowerment into substantive equality outcomes due to the continued entrenchment of gendered roles where men control the finances within the home. This highlights the contradictions that arise at the local level where the underlying premise of including men is interpreted differently in terms of awareness raising and empowerment, restricting the outcomes possible from implementing the WPS policy if not factored into the approach adopted.

In particular, the consequences are highlighted by the issues faced by women political candidates in terms of gaining adequate finances to maintain their campaigns. Due to entrenched gender inequality, while women may gain access to stand as political candidates, they only have a limited ability to convert that opportunity into positive outcomes. Similar to economic empowerment schemes, the primary consequence is that political participation *per se* does not contest entrenched gender relations within the family which sees men in control of the finances.

Another set of consequences arises around treating women as a homogenous group and privileging gender over all other identity markers. Awareness training in Liberia demonstrates this homogenisation through the lack of contextualisation offered around programs to account for the different roles women play in local communities. This is particularly relevant in rural areas where location shapes social, economic and political structures and opportunities. In most cases, homogenised programs fail to take account of the many factors that shape women's 'everyday' peace and security in local communities which are not directly linked to their differences from men (Fuest 2010).

In terms of empowerment, this is reflected in how many of the economic

empowerment schemes treat all women within economically identified roles as if their commonality as women and their difference from men gives them equal ability to capitalise on the schemes on offer. The homogenising tendency noted is differentiated to a limited degree to encompass differences between women based on their economic status. This offers a marginal focus on *gender-as-diversity* though this does not exhibit the equal valuing of all differences.

This homogenising tendency glosses over differences that arise between groups of women, in favour of unity. While unity is of critical importance for women in terms of gaining their rights and fighting for gender equality, there comes a point where it can also have negative impacts for some women due to other intersecting status markers, as noted in terms of accessing awareness and empowerment programs and schemes and contesting political office.

Not only has the tendency to homogenise women as a group been evidenced in Liberia, this has been coupled with a privileging of gender over other identity markers. This is particularly evident in rural areas where the diversity of 'everyday' life intersects with the traditional structures of local communities. As the delivery of programs and workshops in remote rural villages usually requires adherence to local customs, the lack of focus on the diversity of 'everyday' life can limit the impact of such programs. Local customs may include formal ceremonies but more importantly, could include the identification of which women can participate (Fuest 2010).

As noted above, certain groups of women may be excluded or marginalised at different times due to their ethnic, religious, economic, political or age status. This can lead to increasing tensions within local communities along traditional lines of division (Fuest 2010). Taking account of local conditions in terms of delivery, content and audience is therefore crucial to achieve positive outcomes. This a point made by McLeod when she notes it is necessary to ask which locals are involved in initiatives as this will assist in explaining how those initiatives are acted upon (2015: 62).

While both equality and difference perspectives have been evidenced by my respondents, there was little evidence cited in terms of valuing difference and respecting diversity or a *gender-as-diversity* perspective. Most awareness raising reflected differences arising from gender as opposed to those arising from other important status markers such as ethnicity and religion. This is supported in a study by Fuest (2010) where inclusive, participatory workshops required participants to choose a single identity, either woman, Christian, youth, creating tension and diluting the key message of the awareness raising.

Primarily, economic and political empowerment addresses differences based on women's economic/political status vis-à-vis men as opposed to recognising how other factors such as age or religion impact on the economic and political choices and opportunities available to Liberian women. It values the connection between gender and economic status only, though not equally, as evidenced by the emphasis placed by the international and national actors on cross-border traders.

In summary, the local themes associated with the global WPS participation pillar exhibits both a *gender-as-equality* and a *gender-as-difference* perspective, however, the *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant. The conceptual focus on a *gender-as-difference* perspective can have material consequences, as noted above, in terms of localising the WPS Agenda. Further, privileging gender over other identities fails to account for the far reaching impacts that traditional governance structures based on ethnic and religious identity have on enabling and constraining the opportunities available to different women.

WPS Pillar Three: Protection – Content Analysis of Local Themes

The global WPS protection pillar primarily focuses on securitising women's and girls' rights and safety in international law, with specific provisions around SGBV. The Liberian 1325 NAP reflects this pillar through prevention of violence against women policies, economic empowerment for vulnerable women, development and strengthening of judicial review, building capacity of county gender officers and establishing safe houses for GBV survivors. At the local level, the global WPS protection pillar is primarily reflected in the security and justice themes.

Security and justice impacts on all levels of society in Liberia, from the international support delivered by the UN, to the national frameworks and laws set up to guide good governance and protect citizens, from the enforcement of those laws by the LNP to the local communities which are steering a course between the traditional ways and the new 'democratic' ways.

Security and Justice – Frameworks, Laws and Audience

One of the key mechanisms that is aimed at providing greater protection for Liberian women is the reforms to the security sector (see previous section for impact of quota policies) and justice sector. The justice sector reforms encompass a legal framework that is now (technically) more responsive to gender at the national level through the introduction of a raft of gender sensitive laws, frameworks and procedures such as the Rape Law 2005, the SGBV Crimes Unit and the Special Court E in Monrovia dedicated to

SGBV cases. These improvements, however, do not erase the history and emotion that still clings to the memories of most Liberians, especially women's previous experiences with "justice" in Liberia (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014). These experiences include the continued impunity related to war time violence encompassing the theft of land and possessions as well as SGBV and the discrimination embedded in customary laws (Isser, Lubkemann and N'Tow 2009). This in part shapes the varied responses my respondents gave around the themes of gender, security and justice.

Many of the local respondents mentioned the increasing issues of violence against women as an area where the policy of the government and the frameworks it has deployed have failed Liberian women, leaving them to struggle within a society where the gendered peace shapes insecurity in 'everyday' life:

We work in the rural communities and in Monrovia, and everywhere the issue of protection is a problem for women. Legal protection. [It is a] great dishonour (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014).

This issue of justice and security looms large in the 'everyday' lives of Liberian women, especially those in rural areas where they are also subject to the customary (traditional) justice system (Respondent I3 D1, March/April 2014). The dual justice system operating in Liberia consists of a formal justice system based on Anglo-American common law and a traditional court system based on customary laws (unwritten). The customary laws, which form the basis of the traditional justice system, apply to rural Indigenous Liberians. The customary laws are also legitimated in the constitution of Liberia under Article 2 by recognising all customs not inconsistent with the constitution are legal; under Article 5 by preserving, protecting and promoting positive Liberian culture ensuring that traditional values compatible with public policy are adopted; and Article 65 where the courts of Liberia "shall apply both statutory and customary laws" (Constitution of Liberia 1986).

This legitimacy, however, is all but ignored by the international community which tends to fund improvements in the statutory justice system only (International Crisis Group 2006; Rawls 2005). According to one high ranking international respondent, the difficulties with Liberia's justice system/s are rooted in the dual legal system which has segregated justice based on ethnic identity and geographic location:

Rural communities are still very much ruled by traditional structures, albeit that efforts are being made to bring these communities within the formal justice system. Major barriers exist to such a move, based on traditional roles and responsibilities of local and town chiefs, social norms and distance from the capital. Apart from physically being separated from Monrovia by long distances, there is also a separation in terms of opportunities for economic and social development,

underpinned in most cases by a heavy emphasis on traditional African religion practised in the rural communities (Respondent I3 D1, March/April 2014).

While the customary laws are discriminatory against women, local respondents felt that the challenges of access to justice were also embedded within the formal justice system. A report on the dual justice system suggests in its conclusions that formal justice in Liberia fails the majority of rural Liberians, favouring the rich and powerful (Isser, Lubkemann and N'Tow 2009: 3). One local advocate contended that the formal justice system was just as bad for women as the customary as both were based on male perceptions of right and wrong (Respondent L3 D5, March/April 2014). In this respondent's opinion, the formal policy reform has yet to be recognised in practice where their experiences suggest that judges and police officers at times openly flaunt both the intent and letter of the law:

[In relation] to the issue of prosecuting rape cases, [a] lot of men are in leadership position[s] in [the] justice system. So when it comes to the issue of rape and domestic violence, they want to render their own judgement, what they perceive [to be justice]. In one case where [a] 17 year old girl [was] raped by [her] boyfriend, [the] judge rule[d that there was] no case as [he] thinks 17 year old girls *should have* [a] boyfriend (Respondent L3 D5, March/April 2014). [emphasis added]

This view of how women are treated within the justice system is reinforced by how women experience justice in their communities and in the police station:

In most cases, the rape cases end right at the police station because of the corruption in the justice system. The ones who should be protecting the victim are the ones negotiating for a compromise (Respondent L3 D5, March/April 2014).

Multiple examples were recounted of similar experiences of injustice within local communities. One such story, passionately retold by a local women's rights advocate, demonstrates the views of the majority of my respondents on the insecurity that women and girls face and how the gendered peace provides little protection:

This girl was gang raped and [the case was] brought to the child protection unit. Boys came also but [judge] disposed of case as all the boys were minors. [The ruling was that boys] could not be charged. But this wrong [interpretation of the law]. Then [the] judge say the child [girl who was raped] already has a child and she is 17, so whether she was raped, no matter, she already has child. Not too strange to happen. Case ended. The mother frustrated as her child now stigmatised in [the] community (Respondent L3 D5, March/April 2014).

Contrary to the view that it is only customary justice that is gender discriminatory, in Liberia both the formal and informal systems of state justice are letting women down.

Interlaced through these stories shared by local respondents of injustice and insecurity, however, is the recognition that the challenges faced by women trying to

access the justice system are slowly being addressed. As one leader of a professional group of Liberian women acknowledged:

For the rural women, to get justice we have been all around trying to encourage them, trying to teach them how to access justice. So we form[ed] in three counties Community Action Committees (CACs). [There are] fifteen people in each group and when anything happen[s] in the county besides where our office is, they are the ones to go around and see what is happening and help [the] person reach the court or the police (Respondent L8 D8, March/April 2014).

In contrast to rural Liberia, Monrovia has seen the establishment of a special Court E which only hears SGBV cases to streamline prosecutions. It also has the SGBV Crime Unit, set up “to prosecute perpetrators of gender and sexual based violence, particularly rape in Liberia” (Saffa Abdulai 2010: 2). An evaluation of the SGBV Crime Unit revealed both positive and negative outcomes. The report states that:

[t]he establishment of the office in Monrovia, and the provision of services have yielded significant benefits to the victims, partners like civil society and SGBV CU and the programme (Saffa Abdulai 2010: 3).

Conversely, it is also reported that:

Whilst other apparatus of the SGBV has provided relevant and timely services in some cases, the findings indicate that the timing, criteria of identifying final support needs, the coordination between the SGBV CU and the other partners such as the police, the quality of services, and continuity, all need to be improved. Furthermore, contrary to the programme logic, that needs of the partners will be reduced by the second half of the programme, several respondents indicated the need for more engagement in identified priority areas such as monitoring and evaluation, development of organizational strategies/policies, data management, programme planning and budgeting, and linking this to strategic plans (Saffa Abdulai 2010: 3).

Based on this assessment, the apparent ‘significant’ benefits are gained almost incidentally considering the long list of shortcomings noted. The experiences of justice and insecurity in Liberia, as described in the above discussions, showcase the contestability of post-conflict reforms. The experiences discussed reflect that gaining equality before the law and protective and preventative measures in legislation does not automatically translate to equality and security on the ground. Mediating the space between the policies and Acts aimed to increase equality, prevent violence and protect victims are security and justice personnel. It is at this intermediate level of local women trying to gain access to justice that the gendered peace has its greatest impact in terms of how WPS policy can be translated into positive outcomes for women.

WPS Pillar Three: Protection - Gender Stool Analysis of Local Themes

As noted previously at the global and national levels, the WPS protection pillar predominantly reflects a *gender-as-difference* perspective. This predominance is also evident at the local level. The majority of the justice related reforms are underpinned by a need to create special provisions and strategies because women and men are different, reversing women's marginalisation through positive action. The primary focus of the justice related reforms revolve around better management and handling of SGBV cases. One of the major areas of insecurity for Liberian women is the prevalence of SGBV and this insecurity is coupled with the injustice that most suffer within the justice system.

This insecurity was brought home to me during my dialogues and travelling around the capital of Monrovia and its outer suburbs. Many respondents shared stories with me of their hopes, wishes and vision of a future Liberia where women were able to walk around safely without the fear of harassment from men. The daily harassment of women they spoke of is reinforced by the statistics of incidents of rape notified on a daily basis to the Ministry of Gender and Development, in addition to those reported locally to police and hospitals (Respondent NG1 D9, March/April 2014).

The focus of the SGBV cases on women and girls as victims and men and boys as perpetrators reflects a *gender-as-difference* perspective. Gender is conflated with women (and girls) and the focus of the justice system in terms of these cases is on women as victims. The court and the crimes unit are set up to assist women to prosecute cases and provide other support required (Saffa Abdulai 2010). The focus on women in these actions is as passive victims and not as active agents contesting their rights to peace and security. Any focus on men is usually only as perpetrators, not as active agents in terms of crime prevention. None of the dialogues revealed the expectations set up in the Liberian 1325 NAP of the possibility of a rehabilitated offender.

Further, special Court E in Monrovia which is reserved for SGBV cases only, represents a separate institutional structure that recognises women's difference from men as does the SGBV Crimes Unit that responds to all reported SGBV cases in the Capital. While these measures have positive outcomes for some complainants, the separation of these cases from the mainstream courts in Monrovia marks them out as different and can increase the isolation and discrimination some women experience (Saffa Abdulai 2010).

The privileging of gender over all other identities, which is a key indicator of a *gender-as-difference* perspective, is evident in the lack of contextualisation for the diversity of factors that impact on women's 'everyday' lives and play a role in shaping their access to justice. Factors such as ethnic and religious identity limit the opportunities

to access justice in rural locations where women face ‘everyday’ discrimination and insecurity due to intersecting differences. These diverse factors intersect with the traditional justice system to further resist the opportunities and outcomes available to rural women in particular.

WPS Pillars Two and Four: Prevention and Relief and Recovery – Content Analysis of Local Themes

The global WPS prevention pillar primarily focuses on increasing participation and representation of women in prevention mechanisms and dialogues, while the global WPS relief and recovery pillar primarily focuses on gender equality, ensuring that transitional and reconstruction processes and institutions are gender responsive. The Liberian 1325 NAP reflects the prevention pillar in the regional security provisions and women’s roles in securing a broader regional peace. It reflects a relief and recovery focus throughout the plan as it is a plan set within a post-conflict context. As such, the analysis in Chapter Six focused on specific recovery mechanisms such as DDR, SSR and transitional justice. At the local level, the prevention and relief and recovery pillars are primarily reflected in the local peace and security theme which focuses on initiatives that were founded by local women for local women in order to increase their security within their communities as well as their voice in local peace and security matters.

My respondents noted a number of peace and security schemes which originated as local responses to issues of women’s insecurity. These schemes grew out of local women’s actions to address specific instances of insecurity, based on local community power structures.

Local Peace and Security – Local women, Local initiatives

The first scheme discussed by my respondents is the now internationally acclaimed Liberian women’s peace hut program. Basically, the women’s peace hut program is modelled on the traditional community dispute resolution mechanism of the Palaver Hut with one major difference: it is run by women. Prior to my fieldwork, my initial research revealed that it was politically and financially supported by the government of Liberia as well as UN Women with some international NGOs also funding individual huts in local communities (www.unwomen.org; GNWP 2011). This was contested once I arrived in Liberia.

During my fieldwork, I was fortunate to link up with women who were part of the organisation that founded the original women’s peace hut initiative. In one of my dialogue sessions in a steamy office on the outskirts of Monrovia, a couple of my respondents

shared with me their story of the origins of the women's peace hut program, from its small beginnings through to its co-optation by national and international actors. The origin story of the peace huts, following directly on from the events of the movie "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" (2008)¹⁸ was not the celebration and recognition of the progress made by women in Liberia towards gaining equality that I had anticipated. Rather, I was confronted by the bitterness that still edged the retelling of how this local initiative was appropriated by the government without knowledge nor acknowledgement of its origins.

As it was explained to me that afternoon, there are in fact two distinct versions of women's peace huts in Liberia, one founded by WIPNET, the Women In Peace Network best known for their Mass Action for Peace campaign and the other an initiative by the government of Liberia, capitalising on the success of the former. The critical difference between these two women's peace hut initiatives lies in how their implementation is approached and funded within local communities. This difference, according to my respondents, has had major impacts on the outcomes achieved in various communities. Exploring the different implementation approaches adopted highlights the challenges of addressing peace and security issues at the local level.

The WIPNET women's peace hut initiative was originally derived as an alternative to the sit-ins they had initiated on the Sinkor airfield during the conflict. The intent of these original women's peace huts is clearly explained by Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee, who was one of those women in white from the airfield sit-ins:

the women's peace huts are up-ending our Liberian tradition of the Palaver Hut (a traditional community dispute resolution structure)...Men run the Palaver Hut. Women observe from the outside and participate when asked by saying No or Yes. Men are welcome into the Women's Peace Hut but it's a women's space run by women where all voices count. It's in this way that women are deconstructing patriarchy and the violence it breeds (VeneKlasen 2013: 1).

The WIPNET women's peace hut program commenced in 2005 as an alternative location for women to meet to discuss peace and security as there was no longer a "need to sit under the hot sun and in the rain" (Respondent L4 D6, March/April 2014). This initial program was primarily focused on involving local communities in the development of the huts in order to make them viable as there were few funds available to assist:

Since it was our idea, we left the initiative with the community. We told them to speak to the authority for a space in the community. People speak to the authority

¹⁸ This movie is a dramatization of the Women's mass Action for Peace movement portraying how the women of Liberia fought for peace through rallying and demanding an end to the violence and the agreement of all warring parties to attend the peace talks which were held in Accra. These peace talks were successfully concluded with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) 2003 and the exile of the former President Charles Taylor to Nigeria.

and the authority give you a space. We had some seed money ... we gave to communities to be able to start. So \$500 would not build the hut. They used some of their local materials ... they themselves were involved in it so they own it. ... They own the process they own the entire thing so they know how to use it and they know if stay there without being used it is them missing out, so they feel part of it (Respondents L4 D6, March/April 2014).

The WIPNET women's peace huts grew at a steady rate, gaining popularity as a mechanism to include local women in discussions and solutions around peace and security in their communities. Due to the continuing issue around funding, each of these women's peace huts relied heavily on the local communities pitching in to find the additional resources needed. According to my respondents, this is a critical success factor of these peace huts, where the community themselves own the process and own the outcomes (Respondents L4 and L5 D6, March/April 2014).

The ongoing success of the WIPNET women's peace huts soon came to the attention of national and international actors, keen to consolidate and spread the success throughout all counties in Liberia. At the international level, UN Women started supporting the women's peace hut initiative engaging local women who had been part of the WIPNET women's peace hut program, in order to gain local buy-in through consultation (Respondent I4 D2, March/April 2014). These peace huts are closely attuned to and aligned with the implementation approach of the WIPNET women's peace huts.

At the national level, however, the government set about initiating a program to implement women's peace huts without respecting the insight gained from the original program around community ownership. While they partnered with various women's groups to implement their version of women's peace huts, they failed to consult or engage with either the originators of the women's peace huts (WIPNET) or the local communities where they decided to build the huts. These huts did not require the local communities to come together to lobby for space and resources as they were fully funded by the government. The government-funded women's peace huts, according to one local respondent, have failed to fulfil their purpose due to lack of consultation with local communities:

So the government wanted to follow the idea to take [peace huts] into all of the counties. They did not come back to ask 'how did you do it? How did [it] work? How did you manage for the people to do it when [you had] no money?' They did not come to us, they just started constructing peace huts in communities. ... And they just went about building it, building it as only a building. And those huts are useless, no one goes there, nobody does anything there, only the goats and chickens and sheep are there. Because that was not the idea of the community (Respondent L5 D6, March/April 2014).

The co-optation of the women's peace hut initiative by the government and by other organisations has led to both positive and negative outcomes for peace and security in local communities. The negative consequences that have arisen are not engaged with in the literature where women's peace huts are fashioned into a homogeneous initiative, albeit funded from different sources, always viewed as positively giving voice to local women. The negative consequences in some communities do have real impacts for women's security though and highlights how the process of doing peace and security at the local level requires more than just good intentions and adequate resources. It requires consultation and inclusion, something the women of Liberia have fought long and hard for. The outcomes engendered by the women's peace hut initiative in its various forms showcases the importance of engaging with local communities and local women on peace and security matters.

These peace huts provide a local variation of the peace and security strategies outlined in the Liberian 1325 NAP. Where the Liberian 1325 NAP tends to focus on regional and national peace and security matters, the women's peace huts focus on local peace and security. In terms of women's peace and security, focusing on their 'everyday' insecurity within their communities provides an essential foundation for creating opportunities for them to pursue greater inclusion and participation in other aspects of their lives.

Involving the community and involving women in particular from target communities may not only increase the possibility for success, it may also uncover issues that are hidden from outsiders. Engaging women from within local communities, according to one local respondent, is essential due to the role women in African communities tend to play:

... we women are not like men. ... We are more familial and take note of families, and not just us. The men will think 'what can I get out of this? Can I be president tomorrow.' But the woman wants to know what will happen to my children? What happens to my girl child? How can she perform with this? So it is different approach with women then with men (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

The second significant peace and security scheme noted by my respondents is 'community policing', which integrates both of the points highlighted by the discussion of women's peace huts above. Firstly, it focuses on involving the local community in its implementation and secondly, it engages with local women to gain insight into hidden community issues, rather than focusing only on issues that are currently being funded.

Local 'community policing' involves local women assisting other women in their community when they are faced with issues that they may be reluctant to bring to the

attention of authorities:

Sometimes there are issues at [the] community level that authorities don't even know about, but the women will and they will bring it to the attention of the police. The women they are working together [in such a way that it is] almost like ... [calling] the police station a 'peace hut'. People take cases [to the] police station and those women are there to negotiate and mediate those cases at the community level (Respondent L4 D6, March/April 2014).

Local 'community policing' builds on the concept of the women's peace hut where local women are enabling their communities to combat local issues by providing a safe space to engage in dialogues of peace and security. The focus of 'community policing' is on ensuring women feel secure in utilising local security mechanisms which have traditionally been sites of insecurity and injustice, as noted under the previous pillar.

A third peace and security empowerment scheme noted by respondents is the Women's Situation Room (WSR) which was first activated during the 2011 presidential elections. The WSR is an initiative driven by the Angie Brooks International Centre (ABIC), a leading women's empowerment NGO. The program brings together groups of women and youth from local communities with representatives from the media, public and private sectors to address women's participation in democratic and peaceful electoral processes. The role of women in the WSRs is to:

ensure their active participation in peaceful and democratic electoral processes by encouraging the resumption of the political dialogue among rival parties while at the same time sensitizing key partners on the importance of a peaceful, free and fair elections and pressure groups which played a crucial role in ensuring that the elections proceeded as peacefully as possible (<http://www.angiebrookscentre.com/what-we-do/our-actions/the-womens-situation-room/>).

Rather than using force to quell unrest during elections, the WSR ensures that communities keep on top of the hot spots and have a support network to fall back on to assist when necessary, as opposed to imposing solutions which do not resonate with community members and may in turn inflame the situation (such as increasing police presence):

... we provided assistance to the women, only by invitation. We listen to what they have and then we come in and give them the support they request and answer any questions. We also give access to communications. You see them on television and on radio, they have access. They have issues they want addressed by politicians, and we are not there to resolve their issues but we can give them access which is what you do so the politicians can hear them and see if they can try and find solutions (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

The WSR engages women from local communities to assist in identifying potential

security issues but also in developing peaceful and effective solutions. The WSR has been so successful that the African Union requested it be rolled out in other African countries as a key monitoring and security mechanism to address election related violence (Respondent L1 D4, March/April 2014).

In summary, I have discussed three key local peace and security initiatives which have been activated at the local community level and tailored to the 'everyday' needs of local women. All these initiatives have a common thread running through them. They all recognise and value a unique women's perspective and perception of power and hierarchy that are different from traditional male views. This extends and contests the common conception of 'the local' or the 'local-local' popularised in the peacebuilding literature that critiques the liberal peace agenda (Richmond 2010b; Richmond and Mitchell 2012).

It also engages in more depth with what is meant by 'everyday' peace and security. It sketches out the types of 'everyday' practices, the 'common social exchange' that Roberts (2011) refers to, providing a glimpse of the networks at play that are based on practicality, legitimacy, loyalty, necessity, sustenance and unequal power relations that permeate 'everyday' survival. It also implicates the hybridity and friction that is noted in the scholarship of Björkdahl and Ivan (2015), George (2016) and McLeod (2015). The peace huts in particular reflect the friction that can arise between the global, the national and local where the resistance and co-optation can have perverse and opposing outcomes. It also reinforces the applicability of the feminist lens I apply to notions of the 'everyday' and the local where "gender, identity, expectations and norms" are "at the very root of what constitutes and creates security and insecurity for both women and men" (Handrahan 2004: 442).

WPS Pillars Two and Four: Prevention and Relief and Recovery - Gender Stool Analysis of Local Themes

An analysis of the global WPS prevention and relief and recovery pillars encompassing the local peace and security theme displays similar indicators to those analysed under the global WPS participation pillar, though due to its focus on locally initiated and led schemes, it has different points of emphasis.

The objective of local peace and security schemes aligns most closely with a *gender-as-difference* perspective through its primary focus on taking positive action for women to address their marginalisation through creating separate institutional structures. While it focuses on female gendered identities and privileges gender over other identities, it does so primarily from a locally-situated context. That is, the majority of initiatives

discussed by my respondents relating to specific peace and security schemes originated at the local level and were designed to address local issues. In this way most peace and security initiatives privilege a *local* female gendered identity. This has implications for the impacts of such initiatives, as discussed below.

In terms of both forms of women's peace hut, they clearly create a separate institutional structure for the recognition of women's difference from men. This separate provision, however, fails to transform the gendered local governance structures as it operates in parallel to the traditional Palaver Hut, run by the male members of the community. The women's peace huts, as described by Leymah Gbowee, however, offer the possibility of moving towards such a transformation (*gender-as-diversity*). For this to progress, the equal valuing of difference noted by Gbowee in terms of listening to everyone's voice needs to extend to the core of the 'women's space'. That is, it would require the upturning or deconstruction of its own identification as being a "women's" peace hut.

Further, while there is some recognition of the similarities between women and men through the inclusion of men within women's peace huts, the purpose of this recognition emphasises the positioning of women within the women's peace hut schema rather than emphasising gender neutrality (*gender-as-equality*) or valuing differences equally (*gender-as-diversity*). The other local peace and security schemes of community policing and the WSR reflect a similar focus on women.

The predominance of a *gender-as-difference* perspective is evidenced through the governing structures adopted by women's peace huts where women are in the decision-making (power) roles, the scope of 'community policing' to assist women to navigate the local law enforcement institutions and the emphasis on women in the WSR. While men have been included in some aspects of these initiatives to varying degrees and also gain benefits, the focus tends to be on women rather than gender.

When a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant, men are usually excluded due to the focus on women. This is evidenced in the analysis above of the Liberian 1325 NAP and the observations of Jennings (2012) that men have been excluded from the social policy agenda. The aim is to reverse the discrimination that arises from operating within a power system that is gendered male. While some men may gain benefit from this reversal as well, the operation of these initiatives tend to exclude men. In terms of the local peace and security initiatives discussed above, men are not excluded, though, they are not fully engaged either. For example, while men have access to the peace huts, they do not have access to the leadership positions, which they

traditionally hold within the local community. They can present cases and be defendants but they do not hold positions of power. Men have equal opportunity to access justice from the peace huts, however, they do not have equal opportunity to adjudicate, reflecting a reversal of the traditional Palaver Hut.

The lack of a *gender-as-diversity* perspective is evidenced in the homogenisation of local women as a group. Religion, ethnicity, age, class and other diverse factors that shape local women's lives are not specifically addressed by women's peace huts, community policing or the WSR, however, since they are situated within the local community, the diversity of their 'everyday' lives form the context of their interactions with the local peace and security schemes. While this contextualisation assists in shaping how the schemes operate, they do not contest how other diverse factors impede access and redress through local peace and security mechanisms.

This is evident in the focus of local women's peace and security on reversing the gendered roles of local community dispute resolution and support mechanisms. In women's peace huts, where women perform the traditional role of men, in the police stations, where women advocate, represent and support other women to navigate the legal barriers to justice and within the WSR where women's leadership and local networks shape its operation, a local female gendered identity is privileged. Such privileging, whilst displaying strength by uniting women, also reflects a weakness in glossing over the many differences that constrain some women from taking advantage of the opportunities that have been created.

While such a focus on 'women only' generally gives rise to a number of negative consequences, the WIPNET women's peace huts and to a lesser extent 'community policing' and the WSR, offer a counter-point to this negativity. That is, as a measure of increasing participation of local women in governance and peace structures at the local level, the WIPNET women's peace huts, 'community policing' and the WSR initiatives contest the more negative critique of a difference approach. This localised approach shifts how the consequences arising from taking a *gender difference* approach are experienced at the local level. It highlights the complexity and interdependencies of the different gender perspectives and the need to take into account the context of the WPS policy implementation.

In terms of the broader and less consultative roll out of government-funded women's peace huts, this is more reflective of the broader context around the history and distance between the national and local in Liberia, a context that frames how gender perspectives impact at the local level. More specially, it speaks to the issues around how

local peace and security issues are addressed within a post-conflict landscape. These issues are clearly reflected in the content of the Liberian 1325 NAP and noted in the findings of the previous chapter (Chapter Six).

Following McLeod’s line of enquiry into “*which* local actors and *which* international actors are involved” (2015:61), greater clarity is gained over the contradictory outcomes of the peace hut initiatives. The co-optation of the locally situated peace huts led to the legitimacy of those huts being undermined in the eyes of the locals while at the same time strengthening the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the internationals. As McLeod notes:

[n]oticing *which* local actors are involved goes some way towards explaining why certain images of gender and security are co-opted, and why hybridity occurs in particular ways, with particular actors participating (McLeod 2015:62).

This is witnessed in the co-optation of the peace huts by the government and the hybridity of those huts in the hands of national and international actors.

Summary of Gender Stool Analysis of Local Themes

This chapter sets out an analysis of the four global WPS pillars aligned to a number of local themes that arose from the fieldwork data. The pillars were subjected to a gender stool analysis to gain insight into how different gender perspectives enable and constrain implementation outcomes of the WPS policy. Chart 7-1 below graphically summarises the gender stool analysis at the local level, based on fieldwork in Liberia in 2014.

Chart 7-1 Gender Stool Analysis – Local Level

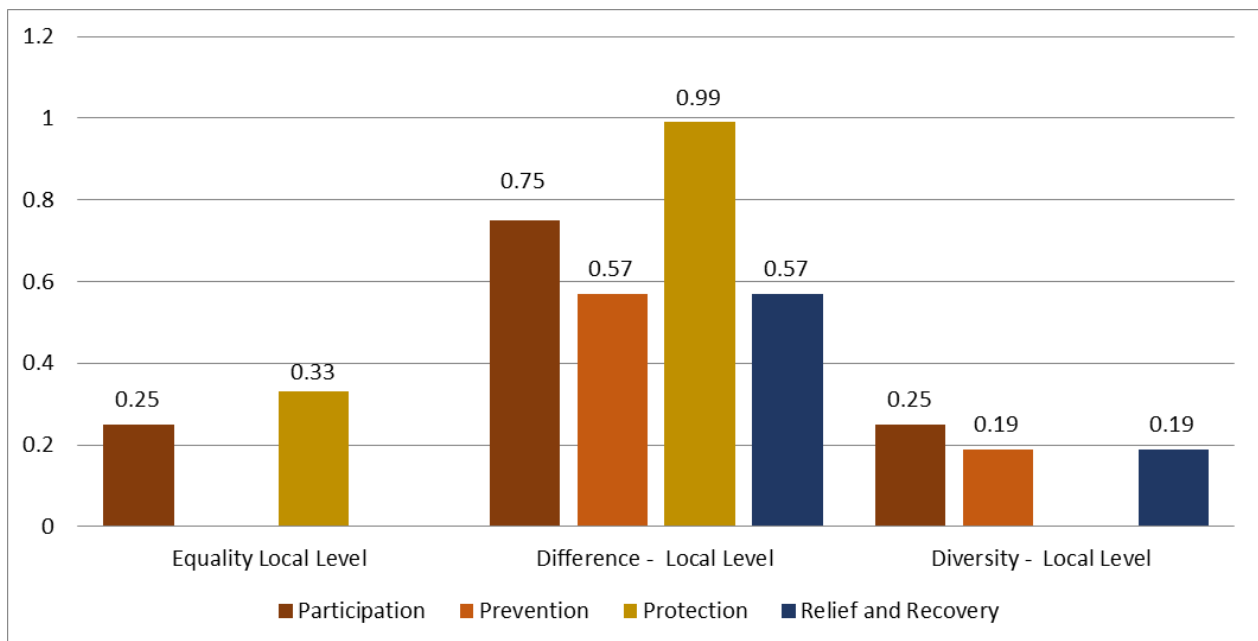


Chart 7-1 above firstly reveals that at the local level a *gender-as-difference*

perspective is predominant. Secondly it reveals that this predominance is rather consistently reflected in all four pillars. Thirdly it reveals how the implementation of the global WPS policy and Liberian 1325 NAP have impacted the 'everyday' local practices of peace and security.

As the gender stool analysis of the local level above attests, the impact of taking a gender difference approach to implementing the WPS policy in Liberia has resulted in the positive outcomes of raising awareness, empowering women and strengthening security and justice being offset by negative impacts that arise from excluding men, homogenising women as a group and privileging gender over other identities. Specifically, these negative impacts are associated with a lack of focus on gender relations *per se* and their intersection with other unequal social relations.

The dynamics of gender relations and how it shapes the 'everyday' lives of local Liberian women are not factored in when only women are engaged in the design and delivery of WPS policy related programs and activities. Without factoring in context around the dynamics at play within male dominated and patriarchal social systems, there is a tendency to shine a light on the differences between women and men, rather than focusing on how their relations and diversity shape 'everyday' life. This sole focus on women tends to restrict the scope and purpose of WPS policy to address what women need to do to change their circumstances as opposed to addressing the underlying power relations that shape inequality (Otto 2010).

The inclusion of men, however, is predicated on men wanting to be included and conversely, on women feeling comfortable with including men. The inclusion or exclusion of men from gender equality projects is a slippery slope that can impede progress towards achieving equality. The inclusion/exclusion of men dilemma revolves around whether their inclusion would place in peril the aims of achieving gender equality but at the same time, without their inclusion, gender interventions can only go so far (Chant and Gutmann 2002: 271).

The primary consequence of excluding men is the non-contestation of entrenched gender relations within the family which sees men in control of the finances, regardless of who earns the money and within the community and public arena where gendered power structures favour men. Without addressing these sites of gender inequality, in the home, in the community and in the local and national governing structures, the gains made by women through accessing finance are offset by the backlash in the private and public spheres which accompanies the exclusion of men (Jennings 2012). These consequences, according to Jennings arise from the:

exclusion of men from the various gender equality activities, the confrontational behaviour and attitudes of most women who become empowered, and the lack of guidance for both men and women to help them learn how to constructively navigate this social change (2012: 275).

As noted in Chapter Six, men are for all intent and purposes excluded from the production and implementation of the Liberian 1325 NAP and this appears to be the default position when translating the plan into actions at the local level. In many ways this disjuncture between empowering women through advocating WPS policy and the reluctance to include men is one of the biggest challenges in addressing the key factors that underpin women's subordination in 'everyday' local communities.

Further, a lack of focus on the differences that arise between groups of women within rural communities, shaped by history, tradition, ethnicity, religion and class, could lead to the further marginalisation and exclusion of certain sub-groups of women (Fuest 2010; Moran 1989). It could also lead to underestimating the impact that identity markers such as ethnicity and religion can have on accessing WPS programs and activities, as well as reducing the relevance of content which fails to recognise the lived reality of the diversity of 'everyday' life in post-conflict settings.

As the analysis above reveals, both positive and negative impacts arise from the predominance of a *gender-as-difference* perspective. Some of these negative consequences have been offset by the shift in a number of contexts to incorporate a *gender-as-equality* perspective, through giving equal access to women and men. These negative consequences could also be further offset through a focus on the multiple sites of subordination (*gender-as-diversity* perspective), such as ethnicity, religion, class and age within a local community context. The focus of a *gender-as-diversity* perspective is on dismantling the existing power structures that underpin 'everyday' life where such power structures embed multiple sites of subordination, with gender being just one among many.

Reconciling Global, National and Local Gender Practice

Chart 7-2 summarises the comparative gender stool analysis reflecting the shift in emphasis of each gender perspective in the translation of the global WPS pillars into the Liberian 1325 NAP and into local practice.

Chart 7-2 Comparative Gender Stool Analysis – Global, National and Local Levels

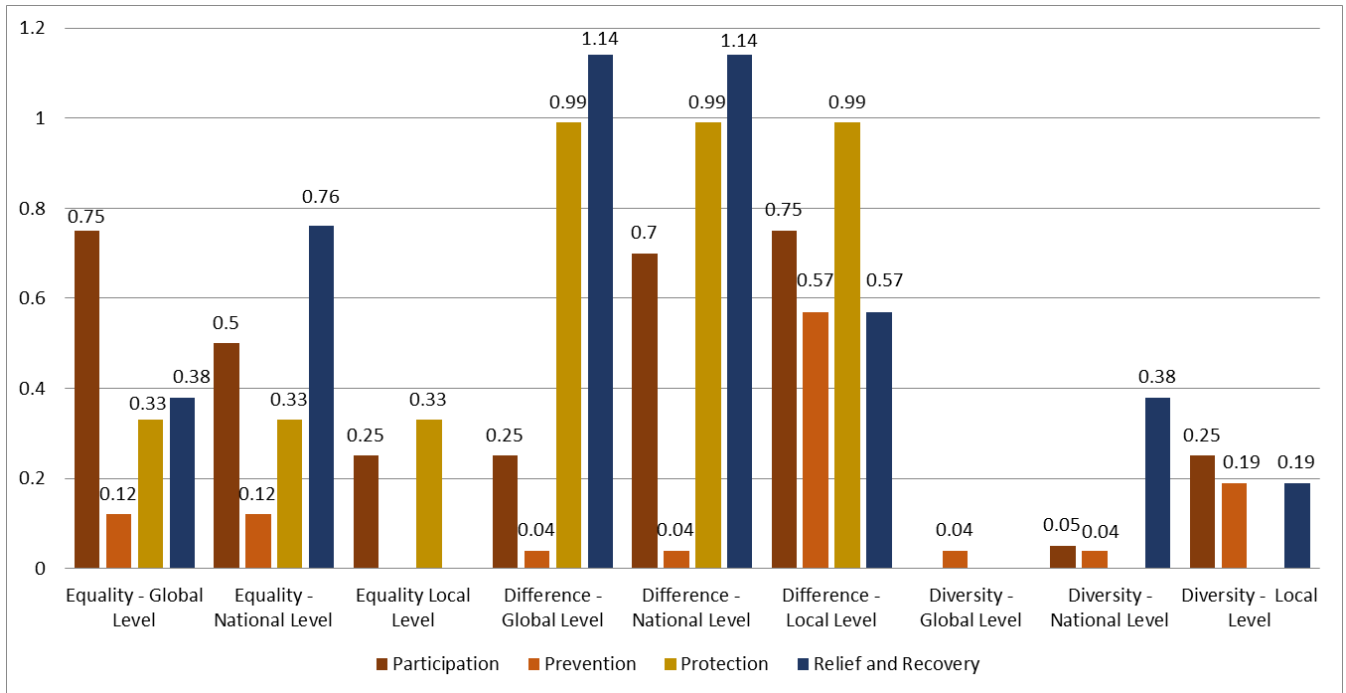


Chart 7-2 above summarizes the gender stool analysis comparing the global WPS policy to the Liberian 1325 NAP and the local gender practices. The chart provides an overview of how the emphasis on a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant at all three levels. It also highlights how the mix of gender perspectives change as the global policy is translated into local practice.

In addition to gaining insight into how different gender perspectives enable and constrain outcomes of implementing WPS policy within the post-conflict landscape of Liberia, the analysis above also points towards how these gender perspectives can be co-opted at the local level, reversing some of the negative impacts. This is evidenced in an analysis of how the emphasis on equality, difference and diversity has shifted from the global to local level.

While a *gender-as-difference* perspective is predominant at the global, national and local levels, the emphasis on each gender perspective and the overall mix of perspectives differ. In particular, while all three levels reflect a strong and rather consistent focus on difference, there is a dramatic reduction in the focus on equality at the local level. This reinforces the grounding of the equality perspective in providing the legal frameworks and structures for gender equality, predominantly at the national level and strongly supported at the global level. There is also a decidedly increasing focus on a diversity perspective from the global to the local level. While the focus is still only marginal, it demonstrates how translating global policy into local practice requires a

greater focus on the nuances and diversity of 'everyday' life.

The analysis also highlights that not all difference approaches are equal. That is, when a difference approach is utilised at the national and global levels, there are a number of negative consequences which constrain the outcomes at all three levels. When a difference approach is utilised at the local level, however, specifically through locally-initiated and locally implemented actions, the practical outcomes are more enabling. This points to the importance of privileging women's 'everyday' experiences of peace and security in the implementation of the WPS Agenda, as it is only by focusing on how peace and security are embodied in the 'everyday' that gender strategies that balance the competing and complex needs of equality, difference and diversity can be devised.

This finding aligns most closely to McLeod's (2015) feminist treatment of the notion of hybridity that takes account of how both locals (nationals) and internationals are involved in developing, implementing and co-opting various images of gender, peace and security. Gaining insight into the notions of the 'local' and the 'everyday' from this perspective is more valuable than the view from Richmond's genderless 'local-local'.

Conclusions – Gendering Local Practices through Global Policy

In this chapter I have completed the third gender stool analysis, this time focused on the local level. The analyses conducted into the global policy and the national frameworks of the WPS agenda offered distinctions along the lines of the global WPS pillars. At the local level the analytical distinctions between pillars were not as defined, resulting in the emergence of themes of peace and insecurity and the further re-interpretation of the global WPS pillars. This highlights the challenges of translating a global policy into local practice.

Analysing the fieldwork data through the lens of the global WPS pillars reveals the fluidity of local peace and security matters and how they are shaped by 'everyday' practices. The clear lines that separate the pillars at the global and national level are merged at the local level, where matters of peace and security are shaped more by immediate 'everyday' needs as opposed to distinct strategies to raise participation and increase protection.

Based on an analysis of the material gathered during my fieldwork in Liberia, I firstly highlighted the impacts of the global and national approaches to the WPS policy framed within the global WPS pillars. Secondly, I reconciled the similarities and differences that accrue to how gender is understood within the global and national WPS policy and the implications for its co-optation and resistance as it is translated into local

practice.

The experiences discussed above reflect the positive impacts of spreading women's rights awareness and the increasing gains made through empowering women economically, politically and locally and the progress towards strengthening security and justice. They also reflect the constraints manifested in the backlash from husbands, from community members and from colleagues, the stress and pressure to repay loans as well as the constant battle to belong and be heard when no one wants to listen. When placed on the scales of equality, the balance is shifting, ever so slowly though not without a constant battle.

They also reflect the gender see-saw (Bacchi 2000) which sees the highs of rights awareness, economic, political and local empowerment and the reforms to security and justice sectors balanced by the lows of resistance, backlash and violence. This shifting scale of highs and lows continues to colour the way projects to "empower" and address gender inequality impact on the lives of Liberian women.

My analysis of the local level revealed that the implementation of the WPS policy in Liberia is underpinned by a *gender-as-difference* perspective, supported by a *gender-as-equality* perspective. The positive and negative impacts that arose from the implementation were examined to gain insight into how different gender perspectives both enable and constrain outcomes from implementing the WPS policy. Nuances were revealed in terms of contesting the negative impacts usually associated with a *gender-as-difference* perspective where it is implemented at the local level through locally situated mechanisms. This supports a further finding around the importance of engaging with the local and particularly local women's diverse experiences of peace and security to improve the practical outcomes of translating global WPS policy into local practice, taking particular note of the insight gained by applying McLeod's (2015) questioning of 'which locals' and 'which internationals'.

The experiences of insecurity, exclusion, marginalisation and resistance outlined above, reveal the nature of the gendered peace in Liberia, contributing to my argument that different gender perspectives can enable and constrain the outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda in post-conflict countries in complex and nuanced ways. Further, it reveals that different constructs of gender can also enable and constrain who is engaged in developing the 1325 NAP, who benefits from its implementation and how it can be resisted and co-opted in the 'everyday' local practices of peace and security.

Chapter Eight: Gender and the Local in Dialogues of Peace and Security

Introduction

Gender inequality shapes and impacts the lives of women and girls, men and boys the world over. Within the post-conflict landscape, gender inequality is starkly evident in the violent insecurity of women and girl's lives in the aftermath of war, enveloped in a gendered peace. That is, women differentially experience the violence and insecurity of the post-conflict context (Pankhurst 2008; Pettman 1996). In an effort to recognise the impact that violent conflict and gendered peace have on women and girls, the UN Security Council adopted UNSCR 1325 (2000) and followed it up with a further seven resolutions over a fifteen year period.

The importance of the WPS Agenda for promoting gender equality and delivering more gender equitable outcomes in conflict and post-conflict situations has been recognised by the majority of UN Member states, however, only 65 Member states have formally implemented the WPS Agenda. This lack of engagement with the practical implementation of the WPS Agenda and the challenges faced by those Member states that do attempt it, goes to the very core of the research undertaken within my thesis.

In this concluding chapter I pull together the threads from the theory and the case study findings to summarise what I found during my research focused on how different gender perspectives enable and constrain the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS policy in a post-conflict environment. My research for this thesis was framed by two questions:

1. How is gender constructed in the global WPS policy?
2. What is the enabling and constraining impact of these particular constructions of gender in WPS policy at the global, national and local levels?

Before I attempted to answer these questions, I developed a review of the relevant literature on WPS issues as well as gender peace and conflict, to demonstrate where and how my own study was situated in relation to existing debates and why the questions framing this study were important. In particular, the review engaged with the extensive scholarship that has arisen around the WPS policy and the debates that have informed and critiqued its implementation. From this review I identified various factors that partially explain the challenges and halting progress of WPS policy implementation.

I also identified additional productive lines of enquiry that deepen our understanding of the nature of the ongoing challenges to implementation. Specifically, I pursued a line of enquiry that extends the gendered analysis of the WPS policy at the

global, national and local levels to examine how different gender perspectives enable and constrain its practical implementation outcomes. This line of enquiry built on the compelling work of many feminist scholars, particularly Pratt (2013). Building on these solid foundations, I analytically assessed the different constructions of gender evident in the WPS policy using a three-legged gender stool analytical tool.

The analytical aims of my thesis were located within a feminist theoretical framework. Specifically, it focused on uncovering the experiences of those marginalised by the mainstream International Relations orthodoxy, seeking to actively engage with “those made insecure by the prevailing order” (Lee-Koo 2009: 431) and within Critical Peace Studies, seeking to privilege women’s experiences and the power relations that shape those experiences, as a site of knowledge production. It was also located within the increasing body of literature focused on privileging the ‘everyday’ and the post-conflict ‘local’ as an alternative site of knowledge within peacebuilding (Richmond 2009; Roberts 2011; Donias 2012). The framework draws on a number of distinct and contested concepts.

Firstly, the framework addressed the contested concept of gender examining feminist equality/difference debates and the emergence of a diversity/intersectional approach. It did this by utilising a three-legged gender stool which provided an analytical frame that engaged with, rather than ignored, the interconnections and links between the different gender perspectives that have arisen over time. Each leg of the stool represents one of the three distinct perspectives (*-as-equality*, *-as-difference*, *-as-diversity*) utilised within feminist theory in relation to defining and addressing gender inequality. The gender stool brings these perspectives into conversation with each other, rather than viewing them as oppositional.

The gender stool utilised in the framework provided insight into how different gender perspectives shape policies and strategies that are aimed at addressing gender inequality. It analyses the lack of progress on the premise that different gender perspectives enable and inhibit the implementation outcomes of the WPS Agenda.

Secondly, the framework addressed the contested concepts of the ‘everyday’ and the post-conflict ‘local’ through critically engaging with the literature focused on the post-conflict landscape and the liberal peace. De Certeau (1984), Richmond (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), Richmond and Mitchell (2012) and Roberts (2011) provided the starting point for developing a notion of the ‘everyday’ and the post-conflict ‘local’. This led me to engage with the work of McLeod (2015) which applied a feminist perspective to the hybridity that arises from the interactions of the ‘local’ and the ‘international’. In particular,

I was seeking a notion of the 'local' and the 'everyday' that privileged the experiences of women. In privileging women's 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity within the local context, I undertook a period of fieldwork in post-conflict Liberia (March/April 2014). This fieldwork contributed to my understanding of the 'everyday' lives of women and girls within the post-conflict context and to understanding how the WPS policy framework was articulated in practice.

By focusing on the 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity of women and girls within the local post-conflict context, my thesis contributes to the literature starting to emerge at the intersection of gender, the 'everyday' and the post-conflict local (Björkdahl and Ivan 2015; George 2016; McLeod 2015). It also contributes to the growing body of evidence that examines the impact that concepts like gender have on the 'everyday' lives of women within the post-conflict landscape (Pratt 2013; McLeod 2011, 2015; Tripp 2015, 2016).

'Everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity within local post-conflict communities are not isolated, discrete nor disassociated experiences. They are entwined in and through the international and national structures and institutions that attempt to re-inscribe those experiences into the production of a requisite and often unnatural 'new democratic' state. I have sought to examine this process of re-inscribing 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity through the implementation of the WPS Agenda within the post-conflict context of Liberia.

This brings me to the crux of my thesis: in setting out to answer my research questions as outlined above, what did I find?

Summary of Findings and Analysis of Case Study

The research undertaken in this thesis was specifically designed to understand firstly, what constructs of gender are evident in the WPS policy and secondly, how do they enable and constrain the practical implementation outcomes.

In answering the first part, I undertook an examination of the content of the global WPS policy and the key document that underpinned its production, Chapter IV.E of the Beijing PfA (1995). The gender stool analysis revealed that the global WPS policy is predominantly underpinned by a *gender-as-difference* perspective, while also reflecting to a lesser degree, a *gender-as-equality* perspective, with minimal inclusion of a *gender-as-diversity* perspective.

Having identified that a *gender-as-difference* perspective predominantly underpins the WPS Agenda at the global level, the case study chapters examined the impact of this

predominance on the 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity within the local post-conflict landscape of Liberia. The case study chapters examined the historical gender relations in Liberia through to the end of the civil war in 2003 (Chapter Five), the equality practice history from the end of the civil war through to the implementation of the Liberian 1325 NAP (Chapter Six) and the impact of this implementation as evidenced through local 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity (Chapter Seven).

This examination of the national and local levels revealed similar outcomes where a *gender-as-difference* perspective was predominant. While the emphasis on different gender perspectives varied, all preference difference over equality. Diversity consistently played a minor role at each level.

My thesis argued that a major consequence of focusing on a single gender perspective is that it limits the potential outcomes through disengaging with the contestability inherent in the concept of gender, as reflected in the feminist debates around equality, difference and intersectionality. By focusing on a single gender perspective, not only are the strengths that underpin that particular perspective more strongly reflected in the outcomes, but so too are its weaknesses. For example, the strengths of increasing the representation of women in political office or in decision making roles are offset by the weaknesses of not recognising the differences between women and men and those among women. It is also offset by the diversity inherent in other social relations such as ethnicity, religion and class, which in conjunction with gender differences, enables and restricts how women can access opportunities such as gender quotas and relaxed entry requirements into key security sector organisations.

By recognising that gender can encompass equality, difference *and* diversity, I argued the weaknesses of each perspective can be offset by the strengths of the other perspectives, leading to more balanced and equitable outcomes in policies, strategies and practices designed to address gender inequality. This can be viewed as an extension of my feminist methodology based on Haraway's 'situated knowledges' (1988) which embraces the partiality of knowledge while simultaneously recognising its situated existence.

Another consequence of focusing on a single gender perspective is the so-called gender see-saw effect (Bacchi 2000). The gender see-saw effect is most commonly evidenced in male-dominated societies where the long held patriarchal order is perceived to be disrupted through the targeting of women's rights and entitlements to the detriment of men's entitlements. The gender see-saw effect is emphasised when an unbalanced or one-sided approach is taken to addressing sites of gender inequality.

I evidenced this within the first hour of my arrival in Liberia, while waiting for my lift to take me to the capital. While waiting I was engaged in a discussion with a group of Liberian men ('taxi' drivers) around my reasons for visiting Liberia. Upon hearing my interest in gender equality, the discussion quickly turned towards "the bad [situation of] rape and violence suffered by women" (Respondent O1 D11, March/April 2014). This soon dovetailed into a what I perceived as a barely disguised defence of the prevalence of violence against women, centred on the charge that the women were "taking all the jobs" (Respondent O1 D11, March/April 2014).

This linking of gender equality and violence against women and the further linking of violence to women claiming a greater role in society provides a classic example of the gender see-saw effect where the sense of masculine entitlement (to jobs) is interpreted in such a way (women taking those jobs) that a backlash (violence) occurs. This is evidenced in the discussions I note above and was reinforced in various dialogues with respondents (Respondent O1 D11, March/April 2014; Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014). This gendered and often violent backlash, results from a lack of focus on balancing the diverse needs of women and men, girls and boys within their broader social interactions. The gender see-saw effect is particularly evident in situations where a *gender difference* approach is predominant in addressing sites of gender inequality, as evidenced in Liberia (Jennings 2012).

The major implication of focusing on a single gender perspective in addressing sites of gender inequality therefore, is that the power of the critiques and the scholarship around the concept of gender is muted. The wealth of knowledge informed by the debates within feminist scholarship, centred on how gender is understood and how it impacts on and is impacted by the diversity of social relations and interactions in 'everyday' life, is potentially lost where a single gender perspective is predominantly used to shape and inform the production and implementation of policies, agendas and strategies. In addition, the richness and complexity of 'everyday' diverse narratives of being a particular woman and a particular man in a particular time and place are lost.

This failure to engage with the gender equality practice history specific to different post-conflict contexts and the diversity of 'everyday' narratives of local women and men can have impacts on the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda. This failure to engage can result in unbalanced implementations that can lead to a gendered backlash. Such a backlash can have negative consequences for gender equality within a post-conflict context, especially at the local level.

The impact of the post-conflict landscape on the experiences of gendered peace

and insecurity discussed by my respondents cannot and should not be under-emphasised. While Liberia has maintained over 10 years of official peace, the violence embedded in the weak governance structures of the State and the inadequate justice mechanisms unable to keep pace with the post-conflict violence are reflected in the vulnerability, uncertainty and insecurity faced by women in their 'everyday' lives. Further, the 'everyday' experiences of violence and insecurity that manifests in post-conflict environments such as Liberia are gendered (Pankhurst 2008; Pettman 1996).

This led to the key finding of this thesis that in order to understand how different gender perspectives impact on the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda, attention must be paid to women's 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity within local post-conflict communities. This is most strongly evidenced in the divergence of experiences in applying a *gender difference* approach to nationally-led and implemented gender projects and those that were locally-led and implemented. This finding is a major contribution of this thesis, in-conjunction with the recognition that different gender perspectives enable and constrain the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS policy.

Contribution of this Thesis

The outcomes of my engagement with the scholarship around gender and the WPS agenda located within the specific post-conflict landscape of Liberia has led to a number of insights that contribute to the growing scholarship that engages specifically with the implementation of the WPS Agenda within the post-conflict landscape. These insights relate to the practical implementation outcomes possible at the local level when translating a global policy into a national framework.

My thesis further develops the scholarship around how different gender perspectives can impact on the practical implementation outcomes of strategies addressing gender inequality within a feminist international peace and security frame. I develop the scholarship through applying the gender stool analytical tool. This gender analysis specifically engages with the mix of gender perspectives that arise from the feminist debates around equality (*gender-as-equality*), difference (*gender-as-difference*) and intersectionality (*gender-as-diversity*). Rather than privileging a single gender perspective, the gender stool analysis aims to understand how the mix of perspectives enables and constrains practical outcomes.

The usefulness of the gender stool analytical tool was highlighted in Chapter Seven where a comparative analysis of the local, national and global levels revealed that

while all three favoured a difference perspective, they did so to varying degrees and in varying combinations with equality and diversity perspectives. The range of perspectives and their unique mix at each level provided a more nuanced understanding of the challenges encountered in implementing the global WPS policy in post-conflict Liberia.

Added to this development of the scholarship, my thesis also contributes to the importance of developing feminist notions of the 'everyday' and the 'local' within the post-conflict context. Building on the hybridity and representations suggested in the peacebuilding literature, I argue for a more nuanced and complex 'everyday' and 'local' that is suggested by Roberts (2011), reflecting the strategies and tactics that are woven through de Certeau's (1984) work. While Roberts extends de Certeau's work into the post-conflict landscape, I follow in the footsteps of feminist scholars such as Björkdhal and Ivan (2015), George (2016) and McLeod (2015) by overlaying a feminist lens that recognises that "gender, identity, expectations and norms" are "at the very root of what constitutes and creates security and insecurity for both women and men" (Handrahan 2004: 442). It is from within this feminist frame that I locate notions of the 'everyday' and the 'local' in terms of implementing the WPS Agenda.

My thesis contributes to the feminist international peace and security debates, taking seriously the differing gender perspectives, the 'everyday' and the 'local' as devices and identities to challenge and reinscribe gender practices. It does this through creating spaces for dialogue and opportunities for engagement with the implementation of the WPS Agenda, impacting positively on women's 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity within local post-conflict communities. These spaces and opportunities, I suggest, are best reflected through being more gender-aware and enabling balanced approaches to implementation that engage with varied combinations of equality, difference and diversity, taking account of specific equality practice histories and local conditions.

The insecurity evident within the local post-conflict Liberian landscape forms part of the 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity. Women's and girl's 'everyday' experiences within the local community context are rarely recognised in the agendas and strategies specifically produced to address their insecurity. My thesis suggests that taking account of the gendered peace and insecurity embedded within local post-conflict communities will enable WPS Agenda implementation outcomes to more comprehensively address local sites of gender inequality and contribute positively to the ongoing progress towards implementing the WPS policy. Applying a gender stool analytical tool to gain insight into how the enabling and constraining impacts of different

gender perspectives facilitates such a focus.

Tripp contends that the political success of equality and difference approaches to gender depends “on the dominant understandings and framing of difference within the broader society” (2016: 320). In line with this view I assert that implementation outcomes of the WPS Agenda are not solely based on understandings of gender in the global policy but rely similarly on conditions operating locally. Global policy frameworks are shaped in important ways, first, by the gender equality practice history that underpins the development of a 1325 NAP and gender mainstreaming frameworks and second, by ‘everyday’ understandings of gender in local community settings. The gender stool analysis suggests that not only do different gender perspectives shape practical outcomes, but also points towards contrary outcomes in terms of whether those gender perspectives arise within global policy, national plans or local practice.

Limitations of my research

The focus on the ‘everyday’ experiences of women within a post-conflict environment in this thesis gave rise to a number of limitations related to the depth and reach of the research. The most obvious limitation was imposed by the safety concerns that adhere to research undertaken within a post-conflict environment. These safety concerns related both to those who chose to respond to the invitation to be part of my research project and secondly to myself as the researcher. These limitations encompassed the need to follow certain protocols in terms of movements around Liberia and how and what dialogues were undertaken. These limitations were attended to through the formalities of assurances around the scope of my dialogues as well as the assurances from a locally based organisation for my daily logistical safety.

The health crisis that impacted Liberia after my arrival though, posed the greatest potential limitation to my research. The outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus which crossed the border into Liberia in the same week I arrived could have drastically impacted my research. A major limitation was the restriction of my movements to the confines of urban Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. While this may be classified as a limitation, its impact was lessened due to the Monrovia-centric nature of aid provision and governance in Liberia and the high number of displaced persons still residing in Monrovia as a result of the civil war. I was fortunate to engage with a number of respondents who were able to share their own experiences of rural life in Liberia as a backdrop to the efforts they currently expend to assist women in rural communities. While I was unable to physically observe and experience ‘everyday’ life in rural communities, I was able to visualise and record the

experiences of those who have spent their lives either in rural communities or working to make the lives of women in those communities more secure.

The use of conversational dialogues as opposed to other forms of interview techniques may also be considered a limitation in so far as such a technique can result in a diverse range of responses which may not align to the core questions of the research. In light of the restrictions on my movements around Liberia, however, this so-called limitation turned into a key strength. It allowed me to explore in greater depth the experiences of my local respondents both in their official capacity as representatives of their organisations and as 'everyday' Liberian women experiencing the gendered peace and insecurity. In allowing the dialogues to be guided by my respondents, I remained faithful to my methodological ethos in privileging women's experiences as sites of knowledge production and also recognising that those experiences are constituted within the representations they use to articulate their experiences (Ackerly and True 2008).

The limitations noted above can be viewed as strengthening the distinction embedded in feminist scholarship around recognising women's experiences, embracing a pragmatic stance that requires flexibility and fluidity to capture snapshots of women's 'everyday' lives. These snapshots are only intended to provide glimpses of the complexity and diversity of 'everyday' practices that constitute experiences of gendered peace and insecurity. They do, however, provide insights that may be used to create spaces and opportunities previously inaccessible and are reflective of the embodied, situated and partial feminist knowledge advocated by Haraway (1988).

Application of Findings to the Broader Context

Having discussed the contribution to knowledge and the limitations of my thesis based on the post-conflict case study of Liberia, I will finish my thesis with a discussion of the broader applications that my research findings may draw on and questions that require further study.

The findings in this thesis could be applied to the broader context in terms of embracing the contestability of the concept of gender as an analytical tool. My utilisation of the three-legged gender stool to interrogate how different gender perspectives can enable and constrain practical outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda could be applied to a number of other international agendas that aim to address sites of gender inequality, such as the CEDAW. It could also usefully be applied as an analytical tool at a national or local level where policies, strategies or laws have a particular perspective of gender embedded in them, to assess the impact that restricting gender to just equality or

difference or diversity may have on practical outcomes.

In furthering the theoretical claims of this thesis, my research gives rise to a number of questions that require further examination to test whether the findings outlined above can be applied to the broader context. The first question is: Can embracing the contestability of the notion of gender, as defined in this thesis, provide greater insight into the lack of positive outcomes being realised from implementing the WPS Agenda in post-conflict landscapes? By examining other post-conflict implementation sites, further evidence can be gathered to support or dispute the value of embracing this contestability.

The second question is: Can embracing women's 'everyday' experiences of gendered peace and insecurity in the aftermath of conflict, provide useful insights for developing strategies to improve the practical outcomes arising from implementing the WPS Agenda? This question contests the emphasis placed on 'peace and security' as the focal point for assessing women's experiences. Rather, it suggests focusing on the 'everyday' experiences of 'gendered peace and insecurity' within the post-conflict landscape. These questions arise from the specific findings that are evident in my examination of post-conflict Liberia and may provide for insightful and constructive future research areas.

In suggesting these questions for further research, my thesis lends itself to comparative work in other post-conflict environments. Such work could strengthen the evidential claim that different gender perspectives enable and constrain the practical outcomes of implementing the WPS Agenda.

By way of concluding this thesis, I want to share the visions of some of my respondents for the future of Liberia. I asked this question at the end of each session and the responses I received were very telling in terms of identifying what Liberia currently lacks and how these shortcomings are envisioned in terms of what 'everyday' peace and security looks like through the eyes of Liberian women. The responses I have chosen to share, for me, allude to the potential of embracing a diversity gender perspective, in addition to the equality and difference perspectives that currently shape the translation of the global WPS policy into local practice:

Government does not have ability to foster development everywhere, though it maintains power over communities. Government needs to decentralise most of all its activities. Even though we are saying we are decentralising, the Government is implementing policy, we want it to be practical. Let it be practical. For example, if the Government can decentralise resources and make available resources at local level, I think we may be able to move faster (Respondent L2 D5, March/April 2014).

And so our vision for Liberia is that people at a rural level are being empowered to fulfil their destiny to be able to provide for their family, you know, survive. Raise money out of their farming work and their rural activity to send children to school. In that way the nation will grow cause we will have education. So if empower people at rural level who will be able to recognise that education is important and send their children to school, we contribute to development (Respondent L3 D5, March/April 2014).

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Appendix One

PARITICPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Name of Project: Beyond Mainstreaming Gender Difference: A Mainstreaming Gender and Justice Approach to Peace and Security

Investigator: Michelle Dunn

Consent agreement

1. I have read the Project Information Sheet and confirm that I am willing to participate in this research and that I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any data I have contributed until the PhD is submitted in approximated January 2015.
3. I understand that while information gained during the study will be published, my personal information will remain confidential.
4. I give my permission for my responses in interviews to be recorded.

Yes

No

Name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____

Date: / /

Researcher's signature and date: _____

Appendix Two

The gender stool analysis assigned a score of either 3 (strong), 2 (some), 1 (marginal) or 0 (none) in relation to the focus of each gender perspective associated with the WPS pillars. This score was then adjusted for the frequency of operational paragraphs which were classified under each WPS pillar. Each of these tables form the basis for the charts in chapters four, six and seven.

Data for Chart 4-1 Summary of Gender Stool Analysis – Global Level:

Global WPS Pillar	Gender Perspective (Frequency Adjusted)					
	Equality	Freq Adj	Difference	Freq Adj	Diversity	Freq Adj
Participation (25%)	3	0.75	1	0.25	0	0
Prevention (4%)	3	0.12	1	0.04	1	0.04
Protection (33%)	1	0.33	3	0.99	0	0
Relief & Recovery (38%)	1	.038	3	1.14	0	0
TOTAL		1.58		2.42		0.04
Order		Two		One		Three

Data for Chart 6-2 Summary of Gender Stool Analysis – National Level:

Global WPS Pillar	Gender Perspective (Frequency Adjusted)					
	Equality	Freq Adj	Difference	Freq Adj	Diversity	Freq Adj
Participation (25%)	2	0.5	3	0.7	1	0.05
Prevention (4%)	3	0.12	1	0.04	1	0.04
Protection (33%)	1	0.33	3	0.99	0	0
Relief & Recovery (38%)	2	0.76	3	1.14	1	0.38
TOTAL		1.71		2.87		0.47
Order		Two		One		Three

Data for Chart 7-1 Summary of Gender Stool Analysis – Local Level:

Global WPS Pillar	Gender Perspective (Frequency Adjusted)					
	Equality	Freq Adj	Difference	Freq Adj	Diversity	Freq Adj
Participation (25%)	1	0.25	3	0.75	1	0.25
Prevention (4%)	0	0	1.5	0.57	0.5	0.19
Protection (33%)	1	0.33	3	0.99	0	0
Relief & Recovery (38%)	0	0	1.5	0.57	0.5	0.19
TOTAL		0.58		2.88		0.63
Order		Three		One		Two