

Securitising Sexual Violence in the United Nations Women, Peace and Security

Agenda

The Case of Liberia, 2000-2013



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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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Abstract

This thesis explores the securitisation of sexual violence in the United Nations Women, Peace and Security agenda, drawing on the Liberian experience. This study is conducted through a critical discourse analysis of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council from 2000 to 2019, and the Liberian National Action Plan, implemented from 2009 to 2013 as a tool to localise the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Liberia. Four categories of analysis have been developed as a limited perspective of the securitisation of sexual violence: women and girls as victims and in need of protection; men and boys as victims; special attention to sexual violence and rape; and sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security. This thesis aims to investigate the securitisation of sexual violence and its influence on the response to sexual violence in the Liberian National Action Plan.

Ultimately, this thesis finds that the Women, Peace and Security agenda has facilitated the securitisation of sexual violence through: the overrepresentation of women and girls as victims in need of protection; a corresponding underrepresentation of men and boys as victims; and a consistent depiction of sexual violence as both the most egregious type of violence and as an impediment to international peace and security. Its influence on the Liberian National Action Plan is limited, indicated by a sense of agency assigned to women and girls through the specification of the types of protection from which they would benefit; the inclusion of men (though boys are not mentioned) as beneficiaries of anti-sexual and gender-based violence measures; the inconsistent depiction of the comparable severity between sexual violence and other forms of violence; and no mention of sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security. This thesis provides a limited insight of the extent to which norms institutionalised by the United Nations occur in localised tools.

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Acronyms

American Colonisation Society	ACS
Anti-Terror Unit	ATU
Armed Forces of Liberia	AFL
Congress for Democratic Change	CDC
Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	CEDAW
Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration	DDR
Economic Community of West African States	ECOWAS
ECOWAS Monitoring Group	ECOMOG
Gender-Based Violence	GBV
Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia	INPFL
Inter-Agency Standing Committee	IASC
International Criminal Court	ICC
International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda	ICTR
International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia	ICTY
Liberian National Action Plan	LNAP
Liberian National Police	LNP
Liberian Peace Council	LPC
Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy	LURD
Liberian Women's Initiative	LWI
Mano River Women's Peace Network	MARWOPNET
National Action Plan(s)	NAP(s)
National Patriotic Front of Liberia	NPFL
National Patriotic Front of Liberia's Central Revolutionary Council	NPFL-CRC
National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender-Based Violence in Liberia	GBV-POA
Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict	OSRSG-SVC
Security Sector Reform	SSR
Sexual and gender-based violence	SGBV
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	TRC
True Whig Party	TWP
United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia	ULIMO
United Nations	UN
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR

United Nations Joint Programme to Prevent and Respond to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence	UN JP SGBV
United Nations Mission in Liberia	UNMIL
United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA
United States	US
Unity Party	UP
World Health Organisation	WHO
Women in Peacebuilding Network	WIPNET
Women of Liberia Mass Action of Peace	WLMAP
Women, Peace and Security	WPS

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In the two decades following its conception, the United Nations (UN) Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has seen progress and failure, and has been subject to both praise and criticism by scholars and practitioners. The agenda has made some significant strides in the broader goal of sustainable peace through a gendered lens: *The Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325* reported the following success in implementation since the adoption of Resolution 1325:¹ the number of women in leadership positions in the UN has steadily increased in areas such as in peacekeeping missions as commanders and soldiers; Member States have adopted comprehensive frameworks regarding sexual violence in conflict through, for example, the strengthening of international laws and monitoring mechanisms; and the adoption of General Recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, which provides a guide on how to achieve security and accountability.ⁱ

However, while the agenda has been lauded for its progress and success in building sustainable, gendered peace, it has hosted several criticisms, including the conflation of ‘gender issues’ and ‘women’s issues’, thereby constructing a limited understanding of gender relations before, during and after conflict. Adibeli Nduka-Agwu presents the example of Resolution 1325 calling for UN peacekeepers and other peacekeeping personnel to undergo gender awareness training, which is subsequently linked to learning about the “protection, rights and particular needs of women, as well as the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures.”²

The WPS agenda’s underpinnings, produced from the hegemonic peacebuilding approach adopted by the UN which favours democracy, economic liberalisation, and the protection of human rights,³ are critiqued as problematic as it assumes that by pursuing these tenets, violent conflict can be lowered or circumvented. However, Karen Barnes (2010) argues that a universal approach may not work in varying contexts. Moreover, democratisation and economic liberalisation, foundational to liberal peace, require functioning institutions, which may not be the case in transitional contexts which have seen the erosion of a country’s economic, judicial and security sectors.⁴ The liberal feminist foundation of the WPS agenda has likewise been criticised in its approach to achieving gender equality: the inclusion and participation of women in societal structures will eventually lead to a spill-over effect, resulting in the

ⁱ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is an independent entity tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. General Recommendation no. 30 guides the obligation of states regarding crimes against women by non-state actors.

transformation in attitudes to gender relations and ultimately, the elimination of gender inequality.⁵ This reduces the focus on gender power relations and may impede true societal transformation.

The WPS agenda has also been critiqued as facilitating the securitisation of sexual violence, in which sexual violence has been identified as a security threat that impedes international peace and security.⁶ The addition of sexual violence to the security agenda followed the adoption of Resolution 1820 in 2008, which *inter alia* recognised sexual violence as a “weapon of war” used strategically to advance certain goals during conflict such as population displacement.⁷ While some researchers consider this a positive move in assessing gender-specific threats,⁸ Sara Meger (2016) argues that the securitisation of sexual violence leads to its fetishisation, turning it into a commodity in a political economy of sexual violence.⁹ This political economy operates based on the exchange-value assigned to sexual violence, in which donor and aid organisations, victims and perpetrators all engage for the material benefit.¹⁰

Key to the research objective is the assertion that the WPS has constructed women as victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during conflict.¹¹ Resolution 1325 (2000) calls on the actors involved in an armed conflict to “take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence (GBV), particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse...”¹² Resolution 1820 likewise discusses the “[protection of civilians], including women and girls, from all forms of sexual violence,” placing special importance on women and girls and entrenching the trope of women and girls as victims in need of protection.¹³ Where Resolution 1325 made some strides in redefining women’s place in conflict by recognising their important contributions to peacemaking and peacebuilding, and diverging from the hegemonic assumption of victimhood, Resolution 1820 returned to the stereotypical language constructing women and girls as victims of (largely male) violence and in need of protection.¹⁴

The term ‘women and girls’ is used in this thesis with the understanding that this grouping is inherently problematic. The conflation of gender and women, extending to gender issues and women’s issues has long been critiqued in the WPS agenda, such as through the call to protect women and girls from GBV,¹⁵ and the conflation between violence against women and GBV by entities such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).¹⁶ By consistently grouping women and girls together, there is an embedding of the idea that women require care as children would, infantilising women, or a construction of them as being entitled to immunity due to their association with girls (and in other cases, children).¹⁷

One of the first sites of implementation of Resolution 1325 was Liberia, making it an appropriate case study for this thesis. It is also the first post-conflict country to implement a National Action Plan (NAP) as a strategy to localise the WPS agenda. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was likewise the first UN mission to integrate a gender perspective as called for by Resolution 1325. Women’s contributions to peace efforts in Liberia precede Resolution 1325’s call for the increased participation

of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. Grassroots organisations were key in restoring peace in Liberia, organising boycotts during the First Liberian Civil War, halting economic activity in all spheres of society, and taking part in the 2003 peace negotiations in Accra, Ghana during the Second Liberian Civil War.¹⁸ The latter effort, culminating in a siege of the peace hall by the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace (WLMAP), a nonviolent peace movement characterised by their daily protests at a fish market in Monrovia where then-President Charles Taylor would pass, was key in securing peace in Liberia and ending the civil war. Women's efforts in peacemaking were recognised at an international level, most significantly with Leymah Gbowee and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 alongside Yemeni activist Tawakkol Karma, for their work in advancing women's participation in peacebuilding.ⁱⁱ

With the above in mind, this thesis seeks to analyse the securitisation of sexual violence in the WPS agenda and its influence on the response to sexual violence in the Liberian NAP (LNAP). The research question, therefore, reads as follows:

Has the Women, Peace and Security agenda facilitated the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security, and has this securitisation been present in Liberia's National Action Plan?ⁱⁱⁱ

1.2. Analytical Framework: The Securitisation of Sexual Violence

The analytical framework employed in this thesis is posited on the conceptualisation of the securitisation of sexual violence put forward by Sara Meger in her 2016 article *The Fetishisation of Sexual Violence in International Security*, which will be located in a Liberian context in Chapter Four.

Meger utilises securitisation theory, conceived by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. Their seminal publication *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998) outlines security as the occurrence whereby politics transcends the established rules dictating responses and reframes it as a special issue requiring an extraordinary response.¹⁹ Securitisation, therefore, is the construction of a particular issue as an existential threat. The targeted audience does not need to adopt emergency measures to respond

ⁱⁱ Gbowee, a Liberian social worker and peace activist, led the nonviolent movement WLMAP and advanced the 2003 peace talks in Accra, Ghana, which would bring an end to the Second Liberian Civil War. Sirleaf, a dissident of the Doe regime and the later Taylor regime, was elected in 2005 as Liberia's first female president and Africa's first female head of state.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is crucial to note that Liberian women are not a homogenous group, and that their positions during and after the civil war may differ based on ethnicity, religion, and geographical location. However, the civil wars had an immense impact on women in multiple spheres of their lives: politically, economically, and physically to name a few.

to this threat. Rather, it must generate just enough support among its target audience to legitimise emergency measures and other responses that would not have been used had the issue not been elevated to the status of ‘existential threat’.²⁰ In some cases, securitisation may become institutionalised, in which the urgent nature of the issue has been accepted as an existential threat and therefore does not require constant platforming. When the issue is spoken about, the urgency is implicit.²¹ Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde present three actors in the securitisation process: 1) *the referent objects*, which are the objects perceived to be existentially threatened; 2) *the securitising actors*, who securitise issues through platforming that which is believed to constitute existential threats against the referent objects; and 3) *the functional actors*, who impact the sector in which the issue is located.

Meger locates this framework within the context of sexual violence in international peace and security. The WPS agenda, reflected in the adoption of Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2242 (2015), and 2467 (2019), has largely centred around protecting women from SGBV in conflict. These resolutions occur against an extensive historical backdrop of approaches to combating sexual violence. Following the side-lining of sexual violence after World War II, which saw widespread sexual violence perpetrated by the Imperial Japanese Army against women largely from Korea, China and the Philippines but also multiple countries across Asia,^{iv} sexual violence emerged as an issue in need of an urgent response in the 1990s. The tribunals following the Rwandan Genocide and the Yugoslav Wars recognised rape as a weapon of war in a legal paradigm, leading to rape being prosecuted as a war crime.²² It likewise signalled a discursive shift from perceiving rape as a consequence of conflict and instead as a strategic tool. Since then, addressing sexual violence has reached mainstream peace and security discourse, most clearly exhibited within the WPS agenda where it is discussed in nearly half of the existing resolutions.

According to Meger, the adoption of Resolution 1820 (2008), which recognised sexual violence as a weapon of war, is attributed to the securitisation of sexual violence.²³ In this case, sexual violence has been constructed as an existential threat requiring an urgent response from international institutions. The idea that GBV, including sexual violence, is an unfortunate consequence of armed conflict has been disputed in favour of the view that armed conflict exacerbates existing unequal gender relations in a society. Meger argues that this idea entering mainstream advocacy, policy and academia has resulted in the fetishisation and consequent decontextualisation of sexual violence.²⁴

^{iv} The lack of trials or prosecutions of perpetrators in the Japanese Imperial Army, and the continued denial and erasure by the Japanese government and nationalist activists are indicative of the way that sexual violence has been historically ignored.

Following Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's analysis of the three actors taking part in the securitisation process in the context of sexual violence, the victims would be considered the referent objects due to them facing the intersubjective existential threat resulting from perpetrators committing acts of sexual violence. The securitisation actor, who securitises sexual violence would broadly encompass the advocates, activists, and scholars who have brought this issue to a public forum and the UN. The referent actors, influencing the sector would include a broad range of actors such as combatants in an armed conflict, the government, and third-party actors such as peacekeeping forces.

1.3. Methodology

This thesis will primarily utilise a qualitative, desk-based method of research. A desk-based method provides a viable research avenue when fieldwork is unfeasible; this is the case given the limited scope of this thesis. Desk-based research utilises qualitative data from existing sources, including primary sources (which contain original material, such as diaries, historical records, films, and photographs), secondary sources (which analyse primary sources, such as textbooks and academic journal articles), and tertiary sources (which organise and compile other sources).²⁵

Critical discourse analysis will be employed in Chapter Four to investigate the securitisation of sexual violence in the WPS resolutions and the LNAP. Critical discourse analysis as a methodological approach allows the researcher to “[describe, interpret and explain] how discourses construct, maintain and legitimise social inequalities”.²⁶ Discourse can be understood as “the ways to constitute knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them.”²⁷ Mullet outlines the a general analytical framework as follows: 1) select the discourse; 2) locate and prepare data sources; 3) explore the background of each text, which can be inferred from the preambular paragraphs in each resolution; 4) code texts and identify overarching themes; 5) analyse the external relations in the texts, which entails a study of the social relations that control the text and an examination of the ways the text influences social practices and vice versa; 6) analyse the internal relations in the texts, looking at the way that language has been used and why this may be the case; and 7) interpret the data.²⁸

In conducting this analysis, this thesis will set a time parameter of 2000-2013. The Second Liberian Civil War ended in 2003 with the victory of groups fighting in opposition to then-President Charles Taylor, his subsequent exile to Nigeria and the deployment of UNMIL from September 2003 to March 2018.^v Although it has already been mentioned that women's activism preceded the adoption of

^v The United Nations Mission in Liberia was a peacekeeping force established in 2003 to support the implementation of the ceasefire agreed upon by warring parties; protect UN staff and civilians, augment human rights assistance, and engaged in security sector reform.

Resolution 1325, the research objective focuses on the WPS agenda, which came into conception in 2000 and saw Liberia as its first site of implementation in 2003. The Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in August 2003, denoting the official end of the Second Liberian Civil War. This was followed by presidential elections in 2005, which saw Ellen Johnson Sirleaf elected president with the Unity Party (UP). Despite UNMIL completing its mandate in 2018, the time frame for this thesis will close in 2013. This parameter has been selected to exclude the Ebola virus epidemic, occurring from 2014 to 2015 in Liberia.

The Ebola epidemic introduced a new element to SGBV in West Africa. In a context where SGBV was already rife, the impact of the Ebola epidemic on women's ability to generate income resulted in an increase of transactional sex as a means to survive, which is a type of sexual violence.²⁹ Trends of increased rape and other types of sexual violence were recorded in Sierra Leone following an end to the epidemic. Moreover, a new element was introduced into the discussion on gender. Firstly, women comprised the majority of deaths caused by Ebola. Women comprised 60-75% of deaths during the epidemic, with other gendered impacts including a higher risk of fatality for pregnant women, a higher risk for caregivers who are most often women, and higher rates of sexual violence against women and girls resulting from the economic collapse.³⁰ Gender roles were key in the spread of the virus; in Gabon, it was concluded that men contracted the virus first because they were outside to a higher degree. However, the virus resulted in the deaths of more women as they cared for the infected.³¹ These gender roles were manipulated by men to ensure that women looked after the infected and thus were more susceptible to infection themselves.³² The Ebola epidemic exposed the flaws in the capacity of the Liberian government in their response to the epidemic. Along with the abovementioned elements, addressing the lack of capacity extends beyond the scope of this thesis and as such, will be excluded.

1.4. Limitations

The primary limitation relates to the method of critical discourse analysis, which will feature in Chapter Four through an analysis of the resolutions forming the WPS agenda and the LNAP. Critical discourse analysis offers an eclectic approach to understand social inequalities and how they are constructed, maintained and legitimised.³³ However, critical discourse analysis is limited in its subjective nature, which may lead the analyst to conduct their research with existing biases or understandings of the research topic at hand. Moreover, critical discourse analysis has been critiqued as being an extremely broad method without a set of clear techniques for the analyst.³⁴ This study will utilise critical discourse analysis through a limited framework of four categories. The categories, which will be explained at length in Chapter Four, are 1) women and girls as victims and in need of protection; 2) men and boys as victims; 3) special attention to sexual violence and rape; and 4) sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security.

1.5. Critical Concepts

Gender

This term is highly contested. Therefore to avoid a lack of clarity, this thesis uses the definition of ‘gender’ as put forward by the UN, which it defines as describing “the social differences and social relations between women and men. It, therefore, refers not to women or men, but to the relationship between them, and the way this is socially constructed.”³⁵ However, this particular conceptualisation of gender has been problematic due to the frequent conflation of ‘gender issues’ and ‘women’s issues.’ This conflation limits a comprehensive understanding of gender relations before, during and after conflict. Heidi Hudson further argues that the needs of women may be overlooked and that while prioritising gender in institutions such as the UN may seem progressive, it also could be used to divert the focus from women and the measures that are needed to eradicate disadvantages.³⁶ Despite the conceptual issues, the UN definition has been chosen due to the focus of this thesis on the WPS agenda.

Gender-Based Violence

There is a lack of consensus on the definition of GBV. With a variety of definitions being used by organisations in their work around sexual violence during conflict, Pamela Scully notes that GBV has increasingly replaced the term ‘violence against women’. However, there is often still a conflation of the terms, along with the conflation of GBV and sexual violence.³⁷ According to Scully, using the term GBV offers the opportunity to locate violence against women in broader societal gender relations and to address the foundational causes.³⁸

Despite the utilisation of GBV in UN documents, such as the United Nations Population Fund’s (UNFPA) 2001 report ‘A Practical Approach to Gender-based Violence’ and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) document ‘Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Refugee Situations’, there remains a lack of agreement on the definition. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), established in 1991, is the highest-level humanitarian coordination forum within the UN system. It is vital in consolidating humanitarian responses through its facilitation of a coherent, united response by bringing together various organisations in addressing humanitarian crises.³⁹ Given its involvement in multiple UN agencies, including the UNFPA and the UNHCR, the definition presented as part of the IASC’s ‘Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings’ will be used:

“GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It

includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private”.⁴⁰

This particular definition acknowledges the systemic inequality that exists between men and women, and the way that these inequalities underscore violence against women and girls in and following conflict. Moreover, it acknowledges the existence of gendered dimensions of violence against men and boys, especially those that are perpetrated to reinforce gendered norms of masculinity and femininity. The guidelines use the example of sexual violence perpetrated against male combatants by their adversaries to emasculate them.⁴¹

Despite the comprehensive understanding of GBV put forward by the IASC, there is a persisting tendency among organisations that work on GBV prevention for the term to be used synonymously to violence against women. Additionally, there is an entrenchment of the dichotomy of men as perpetrators and women as victims.⁴² As a result, violence against men and boys is insufficiently addressed, stigmas persist, underreporting of GBV cases increases, and justice is not served. For women and girls, their agency is curtailed in their reduction to victims of male violence, which in turn impedes a holistic response to the full range of women’s experiences during and following conflict.⁴³

Sexual Violence

As mentioned above, sexual violence is often conflated with GBV. Although intersections certainly occur, it is important to understand the two concepts in their differences as well. This thesis will use the definition of sexual violence as outlined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), adopted in 1998 and implemented in 2002. This particular definition has been chosen as it is representative of a consensus in international law. Liberia’s ratification of the Rome Statute in 2004 and former president Charles Taylor’s 2012 conviction in the ICC of war crimes, including sexual violence, additionally emphasise the relevance of the Rome Statute in the Liberian context. The ICC’s ‘Elements of Crimes’^{vi} lists sexual violence both as a crime against humanity and as a war crime. The two categories differ based on the perpetrators: crimes against humanity are perpetrated by regional or national governments, whereas war crimes are perpetrated by armies and soldiers. According to the ICC, a crime against humanity or a war crime of sexual violence has been perpetrated when:

“The perpetrator committed an act of a sexual nature against one or more persons or caused such person or persons to engage in an act of a sexual nature by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression

^{vi} The Elements of Crimes are replicated from the *Official Records of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, First session, New York, 3-10 September 2002*.

or abuse of power, against such person or persons or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or such person's or persons' incapacity to give genuine consent; the conduct was of a gravity comparable to that of a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions; the perpetrator was aware of the factual circumstances that established the gravity of the conduct; the conduct took place in the context of and was associated with an international armed conflict; and the perpetrator was aware of factual circumstances that established the existence of an armed conflict".⁴⁴

Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilisation constitute acts of sexual violence.⁴⁵ As is the case with GBV, women and girls are often constructed as the sole victims of sexual violence. Pamela Scully highlights the emphasis of Resolution 1820 on sexual violence committed against women and girls, in which it is stated that:

“women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group and that sexual violence perpetrated in this manner may in some instances persist after the cessation of hostilities”.⁴⁶

1.6. Research Layout

Given the focus of this thesis on the securitisation of sexual violence, Chapter Two will begin with a discussion on the approaches to sexual violence in international security. Next, this chapter will provide a contextual background centred around the WPS agenda, starting with the activism and mobilisation leading up to the adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000. It will then look at Resolution 1325 itself and the resolutions passed after 2000 relating to the WPS agenda, paying specific attention to Resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009). Chapter Two will review both the pragmatic and critical perspectives on Resolution 1325 and the WPS agenda, providing an abridgment of the debates in the field.

Chapter Three will focus on the Liberian case study, contextualising Liberia before the civil war, during the first and second civil wars, and during the post-conflict reconstruction process. It will discuss the Liberian women's movement and the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Liberia. Finally, it will outline the post-conflict transition in Liberia, such as the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process (DDR), security sector reform (SSR) and the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Chapter Four will comprise the primary analysis. This chapter will conduct a critical discourse analysis on the resolutions forming the WPS agenda, looking at the representation of women and girls as victims, the representation of men and boys as victims, the special attention paid to sexual violence over other forms of violence and the perspective that sexual violence is an impediment to international peace and security. The representation of women and girls is particularly important in the securitisation process, because the constitution of women as victims and the entrenchment of this trope sustains the need to identify sexual violence as both a security threat and an existential threat to those at risk. Lastly, this chapter will comparatively analyse the LNAP through the abovementioned categories, investigating whether LNAP's approach to sexual violence has been influenced by the securitisation of sexual violence in the WPS agenda.

Chapter Five will serve as a conclusion, presenting the overall findings as they relate to the research question and research aim. It will then reflect on the limitations of the study and how this study can be adapted for future research.

¹ Radhika Coomaraswamy, United Nations Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice and Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, 2015, New York.

² Adibeli Nduka-Agwu, "'Doing Gender' After the War: Dealing with Gender Mainstreaming and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peace Operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone", *Civil Wars* 11, 2 (2009), 182, accessed 12 October 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240802631087>.

³ Karen Barnes, "Engendering peace or a gendered peace? The UN and liberal peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, 2002-2007" (PhD dissertation, London School of Economics, 2010), 26.

⁴ Barnes, "Engendering peace or a gendered peace? The UN and liberal peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, 2002-2007", 42.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ Sara Meger, "The Fetishisation of Sexual Violence in International Security", *International Studies Quarterly* 60 (2016), 149.

⁷ Meger, "The Fetishisation of Sexual Violence in International Security", 149.

⁸ Laura Shepherd, *Gender, Violence and Security: Discourse as Practice* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2008); Jennifer Lobasz & Laura Sjoeborg, "Critical Perspectives on Gender and Politics: The State and Feminist Security Studies", *Politics & Gender* 7, 4 (2011), 537-604.

⁹ Meger, "The Fetishisation of Sexual Violence in International Security", 149.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Pamela Scully, "Expanding the Concept of Gender-Based Violence in Peacebuilding and Development", *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 5, 3, (2010), 21.

¹² United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000), accessed 11 October 2022, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1325>.

¹³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820, S/RES/1820 (19 June 2008), accessed 11 October 2022, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1820>.

¹⁴ Lesley Pruitt, "Looking Back, Moving Forward: International Approaches to Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence", *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 33, 4 (2012), 307.

¹⁵ Dianne Otto, "A Sign of Weakness? Disrupting Gender Certainties in the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325", *Michigan Journal of Gender & Law*, 13, 1 (2006), 160.

¹⁶ Scully, "Expanding the Concept of Gender-Based Violence in Peacebuilding and Development", 27.

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2. The Women, Peace and Security Agenda

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will begin with an overview of the international approaches addressing sexual violence. It will then provide an overview of the work done by women activists preceding the adoption of Resolution 1325. Next, this chapter will look at the resolutions adopted after 2000, which consolidated the WPS agenda. This chapter will then outline key debates within the field, divided into two schools of thought: the pragmatic school and the critical school. As the dominant framework for gender and security, the WPS agenda occupies a vital position in the securitisation of sexual violence, given the extensive attention in resolutions augmenting the WPS agenda. Thus, a comprehensive grasp of the WPS agenda is vital in engaging in the broader discussion of the securitisation of sexual violence.

2.2. Mapping the Approaches to Sexual Violence in International Peace and Security

The history of sexual violence during conflict has existed as long as conflict itself and has been a key point of discussion in legal paradigms for centuries. Lucas de Penna, a 14th century Italian lawyer, was a key advocate that wartime rape should be punished with the same severity as rape perpetrated during times of peace. Dutch philosopher Hugo Grotius likewise affirmed in the 16th century that wartime rape required punitive measures.¹ Regulations Article 46 of the Hague Convention (1907) recognised that “family honours and rights, the lives of persons ... must be respected.”² This has been interpreted to extend to wartime rape.

However, sexual violence continued to be perceived as an “unfortunate by-product of war,” leading to its marginalisation and a deprivation of justice for victims.³ A key example of this deprivation was evident after World War II, in which wartime rape was sidelined. Rape was not included in the legal agenda in the Nuremberg trials despite accounts of rape perpetrated by Soviet soldiers during the occupation of Eastern Germany, French soldiers and Moroccan mercenaries in Italy, and British soldiers in France and Italy.⁴ Additionally, while rape perpetrated by the Japanese Imperial Army in Nanking die featured in the conviction of Iwane Matsui, a key military general and commander, women who had been raped by Japanese soldiers, kept as ‘comfort women,’ were not invited to testify.⁵

The end of World War II brought a new focus to international legal frameworks for humanitarian protection during war. The Geneva Conventions set a new legal standard, with the series of treaties protecting sick and wounded soldiers on land and at sea during war, protecting the rights of prisoners of war, and protecting the rights of civilians.⁶ The Fourth Geneva Convention specifically stated that

“women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault.”⁷ However, rape and sexual violence were not recognised either as a crime against humanity or as a strategic tool until the Yugoslav Wars and the Rwandan Genocide.

Mass rape as a strategy to disrupt cultural and ethnic cohesion, and terrorise the community, thereby disrupting resistance during conflict became evident during the Yugoslav Wars, in the use of rape camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina by Serb forces and primarily targeting the Bosniak population. The Rwandan Genocide was another case in which sexual violence was used as a strategic tool, against primarily Tutsi women and girls, but including Hutu women and girls.⁸ These events serve as a precursor to the institutionalisation of sexual violence in international peace and security.

Despite later UN resolutions relating to the WPS agenda acknowledging the impact of conflict on men and boys, as well as gender and sexual minorities, it is important to note that the WPS agenda initially presented women and girls as the sole victims of sexual violence. It is with this early, yet persisting limitation in mind that we consider the steps taken in international agreements and policy commitments to the norm diffusion of sexual violence. The UN Decade of Women was key to illuminating GBV on an international level: the advocacy surrounding GBV later developed to include other types of violence against women such as sexual violence, sexual exploitation, detention, refugeeism and internal displacement, the latter of which disproportionately affects women and children.⁹ The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 and enforced in 1981 as an international treaty. CEDAW was the result of three decades of advocacy by the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which was created in 1946 to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment.¹⁰ The Convention outlines different types of discrimination against women and girls in areas such as healthcare and reproductive rights, education, and employment. Because it is a legally-binding treaty, states that have ratified it are legally bound to work towards the elimination of gender inequality.

Legal frameworks addressing sexual violence are marked by the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) by the UN in 1993, following the end of the Yugoslav Wars. The Yugoslav Wars comprised several separate ethnic conflicts from 1991-2001, including in modern-day, Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹¹ Widespread systematic rape perpetrated primarily by the Serbian security apparatus was characteristic in several of these conflicts. Accounts emerging from the Bosnian War showed an insight into systematic rape used as a measure of ethnic cleansing to drive Bosniak populations out of targeted areas and to enforce pregnancy resulting from rape, wherein the child would hold the perpetrator’s ethnicity.¹²

The ICTY was the first with a focus on war crimes since the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals. The aim was to try individuals who were most culpable for atrocities carried out during the conflicts.¹³ The crimes under its jurisdiction include violations of the laws of war; crimes against humanity, including murder, enslavement, imprisonment torture, rape, and political, racial and religious persecution as well as genocide.¹⁴ From 1993 to 2017, the ICTY indicted 161 individuals for violations of international humanitarian law and sentenced 91 individuals.ⁱ The ICTY opened multiple cases, sometimes trying multiple individuals in one case, in which varying degrees of rape charges were laid. These included the direct perpetration of rape, as well as individuals in leadership positions who permitted and encouraged their subordinates to rape detainees with impunity.¹⁵

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was crucial in setting the legal precedent that mass rape constitutes an act of genocidal rape, carried out to destroy the Tutsi ethnic group either in part or whole.¹⁶ Launched by the UN Security Council in 1994 and dissolved in 2016, the ICTR indicted 93 individuals for their roles in the Rwandan Genocide.ⁱⁱ The genocide took place during the Rwandan Civil War, fought between the Rwandan Armed Forces and the Rwandan Patriotic Front from October 1990 until the signing of the Arusha Accords in July 1994. By the end of the genocide, approximately 800 000 to 1 000 000 people, largely composed of Tutsis, and politically moderate Hutus and Twas, were killed by Hutu extremists.¹⁷ Like the Yugoslav Wars, rape was a defining feature of the atrocities committed in 1994. The ICTR opened multiple cases that included charges of rape to varying degrees. The most high-profile judgement came in the indictment of Jean-Paul Akayesu, the former mayor of Taba, for his part in inciting violence and rape during the genocide. His trial and subsequent sentencing marked the first judgement in an international court for genocide, as well as the first time an individual had been prosecuted for rape as an act of genocide.¹⁸ Although advocacy around sexual violence predates the ICTY and ICTR, the tribunals were important in incorporating sexual violence into legal frameworks responding to gross violations of human rights. They succeeded in platforming sexual violence as a crime against humanity and illustrating that prosecuting these crimes was possible. Moreover, they set the legal precedent for other tribunals such as the Special Courts for Sierra Leone which notably found former Liberian president Charles Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting multiple war crimes and crimes against humanity including rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence.¹⁹

ⁱ The remaining individuals were either acquitted (18) or referred to national jurisdictions (13), had their indictments withdrawn (20), had died before or after their transfer to the ICTY (17), or are on retrial (2).

ⁱⁱ Of these 93 individuals, 62 were sentenced. The remaining individuals were either acquitted (14), referred to national jurisdictions (10), referred as fugitives to the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (3), had died before judgement (2), or had their indictments withdrawn before trial (2).

Despite the tribunals' success, they are not without criticism. The framing of sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide as instrumental and located in the larger perpetration of genocide raised concerns for Hutu victims of sexual violence: because violence against Hutu women did not constitute part of a genocidal aim, their justice was curtailed.²⁰ Additionally, while both the ICTY and ICTR have augmented the international legal paradigms regarding the prosecution of sexual violence during conflict, their legacies have been criticised as creating a limited focus on sexual violence as a strategic tool, leaving deficiencies in addressing crimes perpetrated against victims outside of the perceived strategy. This narrow focus results in an ideational homogenisation of GBV which in turn marginalises the experiences of others, such as those of Hutu women during the genocide.²¹

Sexual violence arose again in 1995 in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, following the Fourth World Conference on Women. Previous conferences (Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, and Nairobi in 1985) sought to acknowledge and call for the addressing of gender inequality and the need for women's empowerment in national and international contexts. However, the Beijing Conference was especially important in the broader discussion of responding to sexual violence. The Beijing Platform for Action recognised the human rights violations against women during armed conflict, "including murder, torture, systematic rape, forced pregnancy and forced abortion, in particular under policies of ethnic cleansing."²²

The tribunals in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda exposed the deficiency of an established legal framework in dealing with sexual violence. This deficiency would be addressed through the establishment of the ICC in 1998, with the legal mandate to end impunity for the perpetrators of egregious crimes against humanity and war crimes, including crimes of sexual violence.²³ The ICC has seen some success in responding to sexual and gender-based crimes, with charges of this nature brought in 18 out of 26 cases and against 22 of 38 individuals.²⁴ These convictions took place against an evolved backdrop of the institutionalisation of sexual violence at the UN. Decades of advocacy led to the adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000 which, *inter alia*, called for parties to conflict to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, in particular rape and other types of sexual violence.²⁵

2.3. The Road to Resolution 1325

Resolution 1325 was adopted by the UN Security Council to address the marginalisation of women and gender issues in peace and security. Its adoption did not occur within a vacuum but was the result of decades of work done by women activists. It occurred against the background of the experiences of women of armed contemporary armed conflict, which were inextricably linked to their status in society. Although communities at large were impacted by armed conflict, violent extremism and terrorism,

according to the UN, women and girls were particularly affected by this due to the unequal status they share with men in many societies.²⁶

The resolution followed several developments from the 1970s, which sought to recognise and raise awareness about gender inequality and the necessity of women's empowerment at both national and international stages.²⁷ The most well-known of these conferences was the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, which took place in Beijing in 1995 and marked a landmark change in the international community's agenda for gender equality. The conference, attended by some 30 000 women from across the globe, led to the unanimous adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which presented an agenda for gender empowerment.²⁸ The declaration reaffirmed the commitment of participating governments in ensuring the human rights of women and girls.²⁹ Among the critical issues identified in the declaration was 'women and armed conflict', which included the engagement of women in conflict resolution, the protection of women in conflict situations and the promotion of women's involvement in creating sustainable peace.

In addition to the conferences, the UN employed several initiatives in which gender perspectives were recognised. These initiatives included the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights which recognised wartime violence against women as a violation of human rights; the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women; the agreed conclusions by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1998, which addressed the need to gender-sensitive justice and the importance women's participation in conflict resolution; and the General Assembly's 23rd special session, which reaffirmed the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.³⁰ In October 2000, before the adoption of Resolution 1325, the UN Security Council facilitated a dialogue between members of the council and women representatives of NGOs from Sierra Leone, Zambia, Somalia and Guatemala, focused on the impact of armed conflict on women and the role that women can play in achieving peace.³¹ The Security Council additionally held a discussion on women, peace and security, in which 40 Member States contributed supporting statements for the mainstreaming of gendered perspectives into peace operations, along with the participation of women in peace processes.ⁱⁱⁱ

The unanimous adoption Resolution 1325 also came as a result of mobilisation and advocacy efforts by civil society and women's groups, bringing to the foreground the idea of peace and security as gendered concepts comprised of an intricate network of relationships between power and inequities across the genders. War and conflict exacerbate gender dynamics, often pushing them to extremes, such as the masculinities driving severe violence. These dynamics also enable women to occupy positions of power

ⁱⁱⁱ Gender mainstreaming can be understood as a strategy to promote gender equality by ensuring that gender perspectives are central to actions such as policy development, legislation, advocacy and a host of other activities.

and exert their influence in governance processes.³² Given the complexity of the dynamics that emerge during conflict and subsequent processes of peacemaking and peacebuilding, it is necessary to respond with policies and programmes that are developed with a gendered perspective. The adoption of Resolution 1325 led to the institutionalisation of these ideas.

Resolution 1325 calls for action alongside four pillars: 1) *Participation*, which entails the increased presence of women in decision-making processes at national, regional and international levels as well as in developing policies geared towards conflict prevention and conflict resolution, the appointment of more women as representatives in UN peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, and bringing about a gendered perspective into peacekeeping operations; 2) *Protection*, which includes supporting women's initiatives on the ground in protecting women from SGBV; 3) *Prevention*, which entails ending impunity in conflict and developing more comprehensive DDR initiatives that incorporate a gender-sensitive perspective to the processes that prevent the reignition of conflict; and 4) *Relief and Recovery*, which includes measures to initiate gender-sensitive responses to conflict and post-conflict situations, and accounting for the distinctive needs of women and girls in refugee camps.³³

2.4. The Securitisation of Sexual Violence in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The adoption of Resolution 1820 in 2008 was key to the securitisation of sexual violence. Where sexual violence is one of the key issues highlighted in Resolution 1325, it is the primary focus of Resolution 1820. It defines rape as a weapon of war, used “to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations.”³⁴ The language in the operative clauses of Resolution 1820, which outline the course of action, frequently uses the words “stresses,” “demands” and “urges,” which create a sense of urgency in responding to sexual violence.³⁵ Moreover, it is made abundantly clear that sexual violence impedes international peace and security, and that the prevention of sexual violence can “significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.”³⁶ In contrast, Resolution 1325 is less explicit in connecting sexual violence and international peace and security, recognising that “an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls [and] effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection ... can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.”³⁷ Thus, Resolution 1820 is possibly the most crucial component in the securitisation of sexual violence in the UN as it succeeded in constructing sexual violence as a security issue, with women and girls facing an urgent threat.

Resolution 1888, adopted in 2009, reaffirmed its antecedent's recognition that sexual violence is used systematically against civilian populations in conflict and that it is necessary for Member States to work to combat sexual violence. The resolution additionally instituted the Office of the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC).³⁸ The OSRSG-SVC operates with three priorities: to foster cultures of justice and accountability through frequent and consistent prosecutions and work towards preventing sexual violence; to cultivate national ownership for survivor-centred responses; and to address the root causes of sexual violence, namely structural gender inequality and poverty.³⁹ The OSRSG-SVC additionally chairs the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, which connects 23 UN bodies in the fight against sexual violence. The *Framework for the Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, published in 2022, takes a two-pronged approach: preventing incidents of sexual violence and preventing further impact.⁴⁰

Approaches to sexual violence have been augmented by additional Security Council resolutions forming part of the broader WPS agenda, with Resolutions 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019) all reaffirming the Security Council's position that rape has been employed systematically in conflict-zones, targeting civilian populations and calling for decisive action in preventing and eliminating sexual violence. The extensive response at the UN level has led to the development of a comprehensive framework for preventing and eliminating sexual violence. However, it is not without criticism. Most notably, men and boys were not recognised as victims of sexual violence until the adoption of Resolution 2106. However, they would once again be omitted as victims of sexual violence in Resolutions 2122 and 2242, only to appear in Resolution 2467 and disappear again in Resolution 2493. The inconsistency of the representation of men and boys as victims of sexual violence is indicative of an entrenched stereotype of women as the sole victims, as well as the deficiency of responses to men and boys who are victims of sexual violence.

2.5. Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security After 2000

Recent decades have seen a new era of conflict, vastly different since the founding of the UN. Although the fatalities as a result of war have decreased since the end of World War II, there has been an increasing intensity of violence due to intra-state wars involving non-state actors.⁴¹ Likewise, the number of armed groups involved in these conflicts has increased, bringing to the foreground new rebel groups, armed militias and violent extremist groups. Violent extremist groups, in particular, have been characterised by their one-sided war against civilians, especially in countries devastated by civil war, as well as the difficulty for governments and non-governmental third parties to negotiate with these groups.⁴² The transforming nature of conflict and most notably the rise of violent extremism, along with the gendered dimensions of these phenomena have meant that this agenda has been consolidated by several additional resolutions. Since 2000, a total of nine additional resolutions related to Resolution 1325 have been adopted to strengthen the WPS Agenda and render it continually relevant in the face of changing conflict.⁴³

United Nations Security Resolutions Passed After Resolution 1325 (2000)

<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Date Adopted</u>	<u>Notable Features</u>
1820	2008	Recognised sexual violence as a weapon of war; recognised sexual violence as a war crime, a crime against humanity, and an act of genocide; recognised the need for specialised training for peacekeeping troops to prevent and respond to sexual violence; called for an increased number of women in peace operations.
1888	2009	Reiterated that sexual violence aggravates conflict and hinders global peace and security; called for leadership to respond to sexual violence in conflict; called for a Team of Experts to conflict zones where sexual violence has occurred.
1889	2009	Urged Member States, and international and regional organisations to implement auxiliary measures to increase women's participation in peace processes; called for better indicators to measure the activities and impact of Resolution 1325.
1960	2010	Restated the need to end sexual violence in conflict; introduced an initiative to name parties who are suspected of committing sexual violence in referrals to the UN Sanctions Committee, to the International Criminal Court for condemnation, restitution, and legal action.
2106	2013	Emphasised the need to strengthen existing measures and obligations instead of introducing new initiatives; highlighted the importance of women's participation in responding to sexual violence.
2122	2013	Affirmed an cohesive approach based on the coherence between political, security, development, human rights, and the rule of law in achieving sustainable peace; recognised the need for consistent implementation of Resolution 1325.
2242	2015	Urged Member States to assess strategy around implementing Resolution 1325; recognised the vital role of the WPS agenda in combatting violent extremism; called for increasing women's access to justice and expedited investigations of sexual and gender-based violence.
2467	2019	Recognised that conflict-related sexual violence exists as part of a wider range of gender inequality and gender-based violence; recognised the need to address the structural causes of sexual violence; acknowledged the need for an approach centred on survivors of sexual violence; affirmed that beneficiaries of this approach should include women with children born out of sexual violence, as well as men and boys.
2493	2019	Called on Member States to promote women's rights (political, economic and civil), increase their funding in the national WPS Agenda

and further support civil society; encourage Member States to foster positive atmospheres for civil society, including female community leaders, peacebuilders and political figures.

2.6. Perspectives on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Pragmatic Perspectives on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The pragmatic school of thought is comprised of authors who believe that there has been a significant amount of progress made by Resolution 1325 in a variety of areas of implementation. These perspectives, however, refrain from wholly accepting the WPS agenda as faultless, and the sentiments behind their arguments are more positive in a pragmatic way; although there are limitations to the agenda which have constrained the full extent of implementation, it is worth noting the strides that have been made as well.

The very adoption of Resolution 1325 indicates the breaking of an official barrier in terms of recognising the link between women's rights, international security and sustainable peace.⁴⁴ This is significant because the majority of international treaties and conventions that consolidate international legal frameworks began as normative ideals launched and developed under UN auspices. The acknowledgement of the link between women's rights, international security and sustainable peace thus paves the way for new norms and ideas; this reason alone prompts an positive view of Resolution 1325.⁴⁵ However, the vital norm diffusion that the WPS agenda has brought is marred with several issues, such as the lack of accountability mechanisms, slow implementation and the perceived retreat from non-governmental organisations in the WPS lobby, compared to the lobby leading up to the adoption of Resolution 1325.⁴⁶

Misrepresentation has been a key issue among the critical school of thought; with the critical school of thought highlighting an excessive categorisation of women as victims, usually regarding SGBV. The manufactured archetypes of women, such as the mother, the victim or the peacemakers.⁴⁷ Critics hold the view that these archetypes are rooted in essentialist ideas of gender and womanhood, limiting the agency and the capabilities of women in conflict-affected areas.⁴⁸ While Laura J. Shepherd (2011) contends that these archetypes have been present in the WPS agenda, she argues that there has been a positive move within the UN Security Council to recognise women as 'agential subjects' an action which presents an opportunity for holistic engagement with these women.⁴⁹

A key critique of the WPS agenda is centred around the perception that the agenda is simply a set of Western-based, liberal ideas of international security repackaged and dressed up for the Global South. This critique has been made by a group of G-77 countries.⁵⁰ From a more radical perspective, WPS

resolutions have been identified as imperialist in nature. These assumptions have made civil society organisations and governments across various contexts wary in their engagement with the implementation of the WPS agenda.⁵¹ The outward-looking nature of National Action Plans developed by Member States of the Global North, addressing each respective state's foreign policy in conflict-affected areas instead of focusing on domestic issues such as GBV, reproductive health or equal pay, has contributed to this perspective.⁵² These arguments culminate in the assumption that the WPS agenda has been used by powerful states of the Global North to establish their own foreign policy in the Global South under the guise of working toward gender equality.⁵³ For example, UN Security Council Resolution 1483 on Iraq and Kuwait referred to Resolution 1325, tacitly justifying intervention by the West, claiming that military intervention would advance equal rights and social justice for citizens of Iraq.⁵⁴ This critique has received pushback from authors from the Global South. Soumita Basu is one of these authors, arguing that although dynamics emerging from global governance generally skew in favour of the Global North and its principles (such as the conceptualisation of economic development in neoliberal economic frameworks), viewing the WPS agenda as one of these dynamics strips the Global South of their agency and ownership.⁵⁵

Perspectives that focus on the Global South's ownership of the WPS agenda tend to hold a more positive view than their scholarly counterparts who view the agenda as an imperialist construct. However, the literature that holds a more favourable view of the WPS agenda does not do so without a critical perspective that considers potential issues and limitations. Basu, for example, highlights the slow implementation and realisation of the full potential of the WPS agenda: where operational success has occurred, such as the UNFPA's work in Liberia and Sudan, it did not necessarily translate into "high-level engagement to promote systemic change."⁵⁶ Additionally, she critiques the narrowing of the WPS agenda in the Security Council to reflect an effort of "militarised peace" which explains the reluctance of civil society actors to engage with the WPS agenda.⁵⁷ Despite these critiques, she contends that it should not diminish the overall value of the WPS agenda and that measures should be taken to improve the buy-in and engagement of civil society organisations to aid the WPS agenda in reaching its full potential.

Although some of the literature appears to hold a more positive view of the WPS agenda than other contributions to the literature, it is important to note that these sentiments are not shallow or uncritical. Concerns such as the slow implementation of the agenda, the potential militarisation of the agenda and the lack of accountability mechanisms, to name a few, do not detract from the overall value of the agenda and its potential to make transformative change. Instead, across the literature, these critiques are seen as issues to address to reach a more holistic operationalisation of the agenda.

Critical Perspectives on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

While the pragmatic school focuses on the positive steps that have been taken so far, which in turn signals a positive future for the WPS agenda, the critical school of thought paints a grim future for the WPS agenda. These debates have evolved since the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000, with new critiques emerging alongside the changing nature of conflict, for example, the rise in violent extremism and terrorism.

The first eight years following the adoption of Resolution 1325 generated an abundance of literature assessing the preliminary success and failure of – and the rationale for – the WPS agenda. Although these assessments were not focused on the long-term impacts, key criticisms still emerged around Resolution 1325 before Resolution 1820 on sexual violence would be adopted in June 2009. It has been argued that the perceived positive correlation between women’s participation in peace processes, gender equality and sustainable peace, which underpins Resolution 1325 and its call to increase the participation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts, is not supported by empirical evidence.⁵⁸ The positive correlation between women’s participation in peace processes, gender equality and sustainable peace raised a critical question of whether or not women are inherently peaceful beings: the dichotomy of men and masculinity being cruel and violent, versus women and femininity being peaceful and militaristic has been a common idea within the critical school of thought, forming the argument of gender essentialisation in the WPS agenda.⁵⁹

The fact that patriarchal, discriminatory state structures (resulting in unequal access to land, education and healthcare) often do not undergo a radical transformation within the conflict-to-post-conflict transition is an indication of the extensive work that still needs to be done for the WPS agenda to secure sustainable, gendered peace. Notwithstanding that it has been widely accepted that patriarchy is a driver of violent conflict, to the extent that gender inequality in society is a reliable indicator of the possibility of an outbreak of violence.⁶⁰ A lack of structural change in gender has been echoed by other authors such as Fionnuala Ní Aoláin in her 2009 article *Women, Security and the Patriarchy of Internationalised Transitional Justice*.⁶¹ Where the ambitions of transitional goals have expanded to include structural forms, gender concerns have not been granted the attention that it needs. The issue of the patriarchy as the key constraint has seemingly not been dealt with sufficiently, as concerns raised by Barnes and Ní Aoláin in 2006 and 2009 respectively, were raised again in 2021 by Seema Shekhawat in her assessment of Resolution 1325 two decades later, where she argues that attempts to tackle gender inequality through the lens of the WPS agenda will retain, if not multiply, existing gender realities if existing gender structures are not addressed and amended.⁶²

The perceived lack of recognition of the structures of global capitalism, imperialism and neocolonialism at the UN, which in turn may result in an incomplete and skewed implementation of the WPS agenda, has been argued by authors such as Sheri Lynn Gibbings (2011),⁶³ Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-

Devroe (2011)⁶⁴ and Pratt (2013).⁶⁵ This critique is among those that have received a substantial amount of pushback from authors who think that the Global South does hold ownership over the WPS agenda and is not simply a recipient of imperial foreign policies. In addition to the critique of the imperial nature of the WPS agenda, Pratt and Richter-Devroe emphasise Sahla Aroussi's argument that a narrow concept of justice employed in the WPS agenda does not fully recognise the links between structural inequality, vulnerability and insecurity.⁶⁶ Critiques over the entrenched structural gender inequality needing urgent intervention to maximise the success of the WPS agenda hold a significant amount of weight: this can be seen in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the pandemic has exposed structural inequalities in gender (reflected in the rise of GBV during COVID-19 lockdowns) and class (illustrated by the disproportionate economic impact on women).⁶⁷ The apparent inability of the WPS agenda to facilitate the transformation of social structures across varying contexts becomes key when considering how existing power structures continue to undermine gender equality in the face of humanitarian crises.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a contextual background on the WPS agenda and to locate the issue of sexual violence within the WPS framework. By constructing a comprehensive timeline on the development of approaches in addressing sexual violence and highlighting significant events and mechanisms, this chapter has illustrated the integration of sexual violence into international public consciousness. This integration has culminated in the securitisation of sexual violence in the UN, most significantly with the adoption of Resolution 1820. This chapter has likewise explained the steps leading to the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000, Resolution 1325 itself, and consequent resolutions comprising the WPS agenda. Finally, this chapter has organised debates around the WPS agenda into two camps: pragmatic perspectives, which largely acknowledge that while progress has been slow, the WPS agenda overall is a valuable framework with the potential to make transformative change; and critical perspectives which hold criticisms such as the argued neocolonial nature of the WPS agenda and the lack of structural transformation in the implementation of the WPS agenda.

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3. Case Study: Liberia

3.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the chosen case study of this thesis, the Republic of Liberia. Liberia was the first post-conflict site of implementation of Resolution 1325. Notably, UNMIL was the first UN peacekeeping mission operating with a gender mainstreaming mandate as called for by Resolution 1325, and Liberia adopted its first NAP, implemented from 2009 to 2019, and its second national plan in 2019, to be implemented until 2023. In line with assessing the WPS agenda and its role in the securitisation of sexual violence, the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars were characterised by widespread sexual violence committed by multiple belligerents. The figures vary between sources, with the Liberian TRC analysing 17 000 statements from victims and witnesses, covering over 90 000 victims and 160 000 acts of sexual violence.¹ Thus, the ensuing response by international organisations and donors, human rights groups and grassroots organisations (amongst other actors) presents the opportunity to locate the securitisation of sexual violence in Liberia.

This chapter will begin with a political-historical overview of Liberia before the civil wars. The conception of the Liberian state and the century of Americo-Liberian rule, which brought widespread relative deprivation for the indigenous population, is vital to our understanding of the roots of the civil wars. Next, this chapter will outline the First Liberian Civil War (1989-1997), the key actors and significant events before its official end in 1997 with the signing of the Abuja Accord and the election of Charles Taylor. Thirdly, it will provide a similarly-structured overview of the Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003), paying particular attention to the role of Liberian women in fostering peace. Following a discussion on the Liberian women's movement, this chapter will then turn its attention to the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Liberia. Finally, this chapter will outline Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction processes such as DDR, SSR and the TRC, assessing the effectiveness of these processes.

3.2. Liberia Before the Civil Wars

Liberia began as a political project in the 19th century, expedited by the American Colonisation Society (ACS). The ACS was founded in 1816 by a group of clergymen to expatriate newly-freed slaves to Africa. Despite being among the ethnic minority (around 2% of the population), the Americo-Liberians were successful in securing dominance in the colony, which advanced their goal for greater autonomy and self-governance.² These efforts resulted in the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1847,

officially establishing the Republic of Liberia, which was recognised by the majority of European countries, as well as the United States (US) several years later.

The near-century-long monopolisation of the Liberian polity by the Americo-Liberian elite of the True Whig Party (TWP) began in 1869. Under the TWP, indigenous Liberians were systematically oppressed and excluded from voting processes, land and property rights, and social and cultural life. However, the TWP's hold on power became increasingly unstable largely due to the patrimonial nature of governance and discontent among Liberians exacerbated by rising oil prices in the 1970s. In response to this discontent the government, led by William Tubman opened recruitment to the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) to unemployed youth living in larger cities, many of whom were indigenous Liberians.³

According to J. Gus Liebenow (1981), this move would prove fatal for the TWP as it would facilitate the entry of Samuel Doe into the AFL where he would eventually be promoted to Master Sergeant in October 1979. Six months later, in April 1980, Doe and sixteen other officers and soldiers entered the presidential palace and executed President William Tolbert and 27 others in a violent coup d'état that ultimately ended 102 years of TWP rule.⁴ In October 1985, Doe succeeded himself as Liberia's elected leader through rigged elections.

Widespread repression continued under the Doe regime. In turn, Charles Taylor, a former ally of Samuel Doe who had escaped imprisonment in Massachusetts, founded the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in Côte d'Ivoire. In December 1989, Taylor and the NPFL crossed into Liberia and launched the armed rebellion that overthrew the Doe regime and ignited the First Liberian Civil War.⁵

3.3. First Liberian Civil War (1989-1997)

Although it was Charles Taylor and the NPFL that initiated the rebellion against the Doe regime, George Klay Kieh Jr. (2004) identifies seven key factions were involved in the fighting:⁶ 1) the NPFL, organised initially by Thomas Quiwonkpa to overthrow the Doe regime in 1985. Following the unsuccessful coup and Quiwonkpa's assassination, Charles Taylor established himself as the new head of the NPFL with the agenda to take power; 2) the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), a splinter faction of the NPFL established by Prince Johnson, which sought to remove Samuel Doe from power but to prevent Taylor from ascending the presidency. Johnson and the INPFL was directly involved in the capture and execution of Doe in 1990. The INPFL was dissolved in 1992 after Johnson's surrender to the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG);ⁱ 3) the United

ⁱ ECOMOG was an armed force created by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), primarily supported by Nigeria but utilising contributed units by other West African states, including Liberia.

Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), formed in 1991. The group faced continual power struggles, with the militia splitting in 1994 into the ULIMO-K and ULIMO-J; 4) the Liberian Peace Council (LPC), which appealed to Krahn nationalism to recruit members. The AFL likewise served as the primary recruiting site. Like the NPFL, ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K, the LPC sought to obtain political power; 5) the Lofa Defense Force, which was supposedly organised to protect Lofa County against attacks from other groups. However, François Massaquoi, a former government official during both the Tolbert and Doe regimes and others sought to gain political positions in the interim governments; 6) the NPFL's Central Revolutionary Council (NPFL-CRC), established in 1991 as another splinter group from the NPFL. Led by former confidantes of Charles Taylor and comprised of defectors from the NPFL, the NPFL-CRC sought to gain political power, despite having limited capabilities; 7) the AFL, in which leadership deficiencies in the military (as a result of positions being given based on nepotism), untrained and ill-equipped forces, a lack of legitimacy among the Liberian polity and poor strategy left the Doe regime in an unfavourable position against opposing factions.

The First Liberian Civil War lasted approximately seven years and seven months, from December 1989 to August 1997. Within two months and with the growing support of civilians who had been victimised by the Doe regime, the NPFL had made significant gains in Nimba County, capturing several other small towns.⁷ During this period, Prince Johnson, a key leading figure in the NPFL, broke from the group to form the INPFL. Fighting between the AFL and the NPFL allowed the INPFL to build its strength and numbers to capture the Western neighbourhoods of Monrovia by the end of June 1990. Six months into the invasion, the NPFL controlled around 80% of Liberian territory, as well as the country's iron ore and timber reserves.⁸

After a series of failed peace agreements in 1993 and 1994, warring factions returned to the negotiating table to sign the Abuja Accord in August 1995. For the first time, leaders of these factions were allowed to become members of the Council of the State. The fighting diminished significantly compared to prior agreements, but it once again erupted into several weeks of fighting between the NPFL, ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K in Monrovia, which killed thousands and displaced around half of Monrovia's population of 1 300 000.⁹ The fighting subsided with the NPFL and ULIMO-K consolidating their power, and with that, warring groups returned to the negotiating table. Another ceasefire was implemented, and an amended version of the Abuja Accord was signed in August 1996, the fourteenth peace agreement since the civil war began. Disarmament took place from November 1996 to February 1997, and general elections took place in July 1997, which international observers deemed to be free and fair. Charles Taylor and the National Patriotic Party, running under the slogan "He killed my man, he killed my pa, but I will vote for him," won with just over 75% of the vote, with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and UP taking the next largest share of 9,5% of the vote.¹⁰

By the end of the First Liberian Civil War, 250 000 civilians had been killed, 1 000 000 had been internally displaced and 850 000 were made refugees, fleeing to neighbouring countries.¹¹ The civil war additionally gained international attention to the use of child soldiers. Approximately 15 000 children had been recruited as soldiers during the civil war, with the NPFL and ULIMO being the primary recruiters.¹² Violence against civilians and sexual violence was widespread and committed by all factions including ECOMOG peacekeepers.¹³

The Abuja Accord brought two years of fragile peace,ⁱⁱ although patronage-based politics continued under the newly-elected Taylor regime. Taylor's former adversaries, Alhaji Kromah and Roosevelt Johnson of ULIMO-K and ULIMO-J respectively, were given positions in his administration. The state security apparatus likewise consisted of fighters from other groups who now lent their support to Taylor.¹⁴ Human rights abuses, largely driven by ethnic scapegoating, and social and economic deprivation continued, indicating that there had not been a significant transformation between the Doe and Taylor regimes.¹⁵

It was against this backdrop that, in April 1999, armed incursions into Liberia from its northern neighbour, Guinea, occurred. The incursions were carried out by Liberian dissidents, primarily former members of ULIMO. A year prior, fighting erupted in Monrovia as a result of Taylor's ATU invading the headquarters of Roosevelt Johnson, leader of ULIMO-J, in an attempt to arrest him. Johnson fled to Nigeria and the remnants of ULIMO-J's forces fled Liberia after persecution by the ATU.¹⁶ The incursions sparked the beginning of the Second Liberian Civil War, and paved the way for the formation and involvement of two key rebel groups: the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD); and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) in 1999 and 2003 respectively.

3.4. Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003)

The key players in the Second Liberian Civil War differed from the first: 1) LURD, which was involved since 1999. LURD began as a largely unorganised group of exiled ULIMO fighters, committing small attacks in Liberia from refugee camps in Guinea. Unable to form a coherent military group and lacking external support from the Sierra Leonian, Ivorian and Guinean governments, there was initially an insignificant threat to the stability of the Taylor regime. However, this would change when a group of Guinean rebels, supported by Charles Taylor, seized the town of Guéckédou, near the border connecting Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This attack prompted sympathy for the Liberian dissidents by the Guinean government, and thus the provision of weapons and ammunition began.¹⁷ LURD was formed

ⁱⁱ A fragile peace denotes that there was a failure in meaningful security sector reform and reconciliation processes, and a rushed DDR programme.

with the simple goal of deposing Charles Taylor; 2) MODEL entered the fray in 2003. MODEL shared LURD's ambition to overthrow the Taylor regime, however it did not support LURD. It was unlikely that MODEL possessed the capacity to take over the presidency, but MODEL leadership made it clear that should LURD capture the presidency, it would face MODEL's retaliation.¹⁸ LURD, MODEL, and smaller anti-Taylor groups formerly associated with the AFL fought against a contingent of pro-Taylor forces. These forces included loyalist elements of the AFL, the ATU, the Liberian National Police (LNP), and NPFL militias.

The smaller incursions along the Liberian-Guinean border by unorganised groups eventually paved the way for a full-blown LURD invasion of Liberia, resulting in the group capturing Voinjama, a small city serving as the capital of Lofa County. Pro-Taylor forces retaliated by crossing the border into Guinea. Fighting continued over eighteen months, with both sides making respective gains and losses until early 2002, when LURD advanced further into Liberia, capturing key towns along the way. Taylor's inability to repel LURD forces and secure his victories stemmed from his support of the Revolutionary United Front in their involvement in the Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002) and his involvement in the trade of 'blood diamonds.'ⁱⁱⁱ Taylor was indicted for this, resulting in economic sanctions enforced by the UN: Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, supporting anti-Taylor proxies, were able to equip them with weapons and ammunition originally supplied by the US and France respectively.¹⁹

In April 2003, WLMAP was established. Led by Leymah Gbowee, the group consisted of Christian and Muslim women in daily protests at the fish market in Monrovia, a location that Charles Taylor was guaranteed to see when his envoy passed. Women gathered in plain white clothes and sang under the banner "The Women of Liberia Want Peace Now!"²⁰ Beyond their daily protest, the movement was also characterised by a sex strike, soliciting their partners' support for the restoration of peace by withdrawing sex, and the threat of a curse. In an interview with Helen Morales, Gbowee acknowledged the sensationalism behind the sex strikes, evident in that it was the first thing that interviewers would ask about.²¹ The reality of the sex strike was less light-hearted than perceived in Western media: women would attend meetings bruised, and having either been raped by their husbands or beaten into submission.²² In Gbowee's own words, the strike "had little or no practical effect, but it was extremely valuable in getting us media attention."²³ Although it was a new and attention-grabbing avenue that women activists pursued in their goal to restore peace, Gbowee attributes the women's "moral clarity, persistence and patience" as their most effective weapons.²⁴

ⁱⁱⁱ The UN constitutes 'blood diamonds' (or 'conflict diamonds') as any diamond that is mined in areas controlled by groups acting in opposition to a sovereign government, and sold to finance an insurgency against the government.

The women from WLMAP met with Taylor, who agreed to their demands to attend peace talks. The movement likewise convinced the rebel leaders, in Sierra Leone at the time, to travel to Ghana to attend the peace talks. The peace talks took place in Accra, with representatives from WLMAP in attendance, among other delegates which included Thabo Mbeki, then-President of South Africa, and the former Nigerian President General Abdulsalami Abubakar as the lead facilitator. The peace talks stalled several times over six weeks. Gbowee attributes this, in part, to a lack of will of rebel leaders who were enjoying the luxurious amenities that had been non-existent during the fighting.²⁵ Notably, during these talks Taylor was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for abetting war crimes during the country's civil war. Consequently, he fled back to Liberia to avoid extradition, leaving his delegation to negotiate on his behalf.

Fearing that the stalling talks were the last opportunity to broker a peace agreement, the women of WLMAP seized the peace hall by locking arms and preventing the entry and exit of delegates until a peace agreement was signed. When security forces tried to intervene, Gbowee threatened to strip naked, forcing them to yield.^{iv} Delegates tried to jump out of the window, but the same security forces who had initially tried to intervene, directed the women of WLMAP to the windows to prevent them from doing so.²⁶ The women agreed to stand down on two conditions: firstly, that the peace talks would move forward, with delegates regularly attending the sessions; and secondly, the delegates would pass by the women without insulting them. The conditions were accepted, and the peace talks resumed, with the mood shifting from jovial to more serious. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed on August 18 2003.²⁷ The terms of the agreement included that: Taylor would resign from the Presidency and would be exiled to Nigeria; a UN peacekeeping force would be deployed to Monrovia, *inter alia*, to facilitate the disarmament process; and a transitional government would lead the country until elections took place.

Women played an active role in ensuring that immediate post-conflict processes underwent smoothly. The Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), established in 2001 as the Christian women's group that would eventually join their Muslim counterparts to form WLMAP stepped in during the botched DDR process in December 2003, when fighting erupted among former combatants who had initially reported to the Schefflin army base to surrender their weapons for money. The following day, WIPNET circulated statements over the radio in all local vernaculars urging calm and telling the combatants that the women were doing all that they could to ensure that the process would go smoothly and that everyone would receive their payments. After a few days, the situation calmed.²⁸

^{iv} In African cultures, it is a curse to see the naked body of a matronly woman, particularly when it is done deliberately.

The 2005 election ushered in a new political chapter for Liberia with the presidency of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the UP. The runoff election for the presidency took place on November 8 2005, with Sirleaf running against George Weah, a former football player, and the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC). The vote stood at roughly 60% in her favour and the remaining 40% in the favour of George Weah.²⁹ Sirleaf was inaugurated on January 16 2006 as the President of Liberia, making her Africa's first female head of state.

3.5. The Liberian Women's Movement

As mentioned above, Liberian women played a significant role in pushing for belligerent parties to sign the peace agreement in 2003 and bringing an end to the civil war. However, women's peace activism in Liberia precedes the establishment of WLMAP and the subsequent protests during the second civil war. Before political activism, women's involvement in peacebuilding activities largely began in relief work and advocacy, including the provision of food and clothing to displaced people earlier in the civil war. The lack of a unified political voice was primarily due to the banning of the Federation of Liberian Women's Organisations in the 1980s under Samuel Doe's regime, because of its political nature. The federation consisted of multiple women's groups in civil society.³⁰

A coherent, unified movement would enter the political arena with the establishment of the Liberian Women's Initiative (LWI) in 1994 to help restore peace in Liberia.³¹ The LWI allowed for collaboration across various sectors of society and fostered inter-faith cooperation for a universal goal. Women's groups, along with the Interfaith Mediation Council and other civil society groups, organised several "stay-home" days in March 1995 and into 1996, following similar boycotts organised by the Concerned Women of Liberia in 1993.³² Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia's president from 2006-2018, asserted that the boycotts had a far-reaching impact, bringing a halt to activities in markets, government buildings, transport and businesses. Women's groups additionally organised a series of peaceful protests at key locations such as the US Embassy, embassies of the member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UN offices and the headquarters of warring factions.³³

The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) is another organisation forming part of the well-established women's movement before the formation of WLMAP. Headquartered in Freetown, Sierra Leone, MARWOPNET was established with the support of ECOWAS to advance peace and development in the Mano River region, consisting of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Regional cooperation was crucial during the period of the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars for several reasons: the spill-over of fighting in Liberia into the latter countries as well as Côte d'Ivoire; the external support provided by each country's respective heads of state to different factions involved in the civil war; and the mass displacement of refugees from, for example, Liberia into Sierra Leone and vice versa

with both civil wars concurrently underway. MARWOPNET engaged in the peace talks in Accra initially as observers and later as active participants. Though MARWOPNET, LWI and WIPNET all sought the same goal of achieving peace, tensions existed amongst the groups which initially resulted in a lack of cooperation between the MARWOPNET and LWI, and WIPNET. Leymah Gbowee attributed this lack of cooperation to class tensions: the women of LWI and MARWOPNET were “the educated elite” and the women of WIPNET were “the indigenous poor.”³⁴

Peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts were recognised at an international level, with Sarah Daraba Kaba of MARWOPNET receiving the 2003 UN Human Rights Prize, and Leymah Gbowee, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Yemeni political activist Tawakkul Karman receiving the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and women’s rights to full participation in peacebuilding work.”³⁵

3.6. Resolution 1325 in Liberia

The implementation of Resolution 1325 in Liberia has taken place across multiple levels: international, regional, national and local. In September 2003, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1509, pertaining to the aftermath of the Second Liberian Civil War. The resolution most notably established UNMIL as a stabilisation force, assuming the authority previously held by the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia, and consisting of approximately 15 000 military personnel, with 250 military observers, 160 staff officers and 1 115 civilian police officers.³⁶ Beyond UNMIL’s set objectives outlined earlier in this chapter, it was the first UN peacekeeping mission to have an explicit mandate to mainstream gender in its peacekeeping activities.³⁷

Gender mainstreaming emerged in the 1990s as an effort to prioritise gender issues in development programmes.³⁸ Gender occupies a crucial position in peacekeeping operations: a gender perspective is necessary to guarantee that the varying needs and experiences of men, women, boys and girls are considered and adequately addressed in peacekeeping operations.³⁹ Given that UNMIL was established in 2003, three years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, the mandate for gender mainstreaming was introduced from the onset of the mission’s deployment.

The gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the UN, asserting that gender must be taken into consideration across policy and practice” has faced several criticisms.⁴⁰ Firstly, Hilary Charlesworth (2005) critiques the definition as being too narrow, and not adequately addressing “the complex way in which gender is created and sustained by social and power relations.”⁴¹ Lindy Heineken (2013) argues that the liberal feminist foundations of gender mainstreaming, focusing more on the participation of women in the public realm and taking an ‘add women and stir’ approach without directly challenging

unequal power relations, has emphasised bringing women into the political processes without understanding that these women may not have the relevant expertise, thereby entrenching the stereotype that these women lack agency.⁴² Moreover, by taking the ‘add women and stir’ approach, an opportunity is missed to address root causes and existing power hierarchies that entrench gender inequality.

UNMIL’s mandate faced several issues on the ground following the end of the Second Liberian Civil War. It has been critiqued for its failure to engage local women’s knowledge and expertise in the implementation of Resolution 1325 in processes such as DDR.⁴³ The gap between UNMIL, as the primary international instrument at the time facilitating the implementation of Resolution 1325 through its gender mandate, and women’s grassroots organisations is most stark in the 2003 DDR process facilitated by UNMIL. Helen Basini (2013) contends that there is a lack of evidence showing that women’s organisations were involved in either planning or implementing the DDR process before it started. She uses an example previously mentioned in this chapter, of how WIPNET stepped in to ease the hostilities that had broken up among combatants at the Schefflin army base.⁴⁴

Moreover, UNMIL has been criticised for the inadequacy of staff capacity: the work gender advisor in charge of monitoring the inclusion of female fighters in the DDR programme only started three months after the aborted first phase of DDR in December 2003.⁴⁵ Phase I of the DDR process saw only 424 women disarmed, next to approximately 11 200 men, illustrating a lack of coordination in the office of the gender advisor.⁴⁶ Gender-sensitive training for incoming UNMIL suffered due to only one volunteer working in the office of the gender advisor who held little sway over the senior members of the mission. The language barrier between international personnel of the office of the gender advisor and the local targets of this work was likewise an issue, however, UNMIL was able to amend this by integrating more local voices into the work that was aimed at their communities.⁴⁷

Emma Njoki Wamai (2011) highlights a host of other issues plaguing UNMIL, such as its prolonged operation, which highlights the contradiction that exists in the length of time: the perceived need for a prolonged mission to facilitate a sustainable, long-term nation-building on one hand, and on the other, the need for a shorter term mission so that the government can control the nation-building process and enable the independent growth of institutions.⁴⁸ Njoki Wamai likewise comments on the lack of coordination at an organisational and normative level, leading to an incoherence of values and understanding of Resolution 1325 and poor planning in areas such as the DDR process, which has been highlighted several times as being due to the lack of local expertise.⁴⁹

At a national level, Resolution 1325 is implemented through the framework of the NAP, developed by the Liberian government and a variety of partners such as the UN, local and international organisations, faith-based organisations, and traditional leaders.⁵⁰ NAPs serve as a framework for the government’s

strategy for localising the WPS agenda. The first LNAP was implemented from 2009 until 2013, with the second LNAP implemented in 2019 and set to run until 2023. With UN Security Council Resolution 1820 adopted in 2008, the LNAP included the implementation of Resolution 1820. Thus, the response to sexual violence in the LNAP was developed within a political and humanitarian context where sexual violence had been securitised. The LNAP was developed with three key objectives: 1) to consolidate policies of prevention, response and protection that safeguard the rights and security of women and girls; 2) to advance the development of policies (economic, social and security) to empower women and girls and facilitate their participation in Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction process; and 3) to augment gender mainstreaming processes but increasing awareness of Resolution 1325.⁵¹ Furthermore, the LNAP was developed along four key pillars: 1) the protection of women and girls from all forms of violence, including SGBV; 2) the prevention of violence against women and girls; 3) the promotion of women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction at different levels; and 4) the sustainable promotion of the LNAP.⁵²

The LNAP, like other NAPs, has been critiqued for its interpretation of 'local ownership'. Oliver Richmond (2012) argues that local ownership echoes the position of international donors that "ownership is mainly seen as participation and compliance in international regimes."⁵³ The lack of local ownership has been linked to the broader liberal peacebuilding consensus, in which the LNAP has been used to communicate with the international community by speaking the language of Resolution 1325. Community peacebuilders in Liberia have validated this claim, with one representative asserting that "for the NAP, the government was pushed by the international community to be in line with global practice and to increase global visibility, but it was not necessarily working to address the women's issues in Liberia."⁵⁴ This speaks to the practice of legitimising international concepts by incorporating a sense of local ownership. Additionally, local ownership is not promised by local participation: women's organisations were extensively involved in the development of the LNAP but were not represented in technical meetings.⁵⁵

Helen Basini and Caitlin Ryan (2016) further argue that the LNAP (along with the Sierra Leone NAP) has been plagued by an excess of bureaucracy and red tape that has yielded poor implementation and therefore an inadequate degree of transformation.⁵⁶ The success of the LNAP has been determined by quantifiable data, such as the quota for 20% of women candidates in elections at national and local levels. Additionally, 190 indicators were initially used to measure the operationalisation of the LNAP, but collection proved to be difficult due to the lack of instruments available at that time, leading the Liberian government to identify 21 indicators as priorities, limiting the scope and therefore increasing efficiency.⁵⁷ However, successful quotas and other quantifiable successes do not adequately address the intricate gendered power relations that exist in many societies, including Liberia.⁵⁸ Therefore, it is difficult to ensure transformative structural change. The bureaucratic nature of the LNAP has led to

poor application, monitoring, and evaluation, and has additionally led to a concentration of the impact in Monrovia instead of dispersed equally to urban and rural areas.⁵⁹ The implementation of the LNAP has been further plagued by capacity issues, insufficient will and funding, and the lack of resources to go around.⁶⁰

Although Resolution 1325 has been recognised as being implemented at an international level by UNMIL and a national level by the Liberian government, it is also crucial to acknowledge that before the adoption of Resolution 1325, women's organisations were already 'doing 1325'.⁶¹ The Concerned Christian Community, operating in southwestern Liberia, arranged shelter and security for women who had experienced sexual violence perpetrated by rebel combatants before the establishment of UNMIL.⁶² This aligns with Resolution 1325's *protection* pillar. Another example is the work done by the LWI: beyond the group's organised boycotts, it also advocated for fighters to adhere to disarmament processes, which aligns with the *prevention* pillar, and mobilised women to participate in the election support for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, which aligns with the *participation* pillar.⁶³ Women's groups also fulfilled the *relief and recovery* pillar: for example, through the Women in Action for Goodwill's distribution of relief items to women and children in refugee camps and the provision of trauma counselling.⁶⁴ The lack of integration of local ownership into the implementation of Resolution 1325 has meant that organisations such as the ones mentioned above have had to continue their implementation of Resolution 1325 independently.

3.7. Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Liberia

Post-conflict reconstruction initiatives generally begin when parties to a conflict come together to sign a peace agreement denoting that hostilities have come to an end, apart from isolated incidents of fighting.⁶⁵ It advances measures that can build sustainable peace, including restoring order; disarming combatants and taking custody or destroying weapons; repatriating refugees; reforming the security sector; protecting human rights; strengthening institutions such as the judiciary; and facilitating free and fair elections.⁶⁶ Although there is a myriad of measures that need to be taken to build a sustainable peace, this section will look at the DDR and SSR process, and the strengthening of judicial and accountability mechanisms, through the TRC in Liberia.

The DDR process was facilitated through UNMIL to collect and destroy weapons and ammunition, disengage combatants from their organisations, and provide support to ex-combatants through education, vocational training and social reintegration.⁶⁷ Between multiple phases, approximately 100 000 Liberians went through the UN-facilitated DDR process.⁶⁸ However, while the UN considers the disarmament process a success, hidden caches of weapons and ammunition have been uncovered throughout the country. This has led to the assertion that the disarmament process has not been as

comprehensive as initially thought. In 2011, the LNP had found a cache of weapons near the border shared with Côte d'Ivoire, comprising 1 400 AK-47 rounds, 70 AK-47 magazines, 67 AK-47 rifles and 50-calibre machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and rocket launches.⁶⁹ Additionally, in a documentary interview conducted by Vice in 2009, a former warlord going by the *nom de guerre* General Rambo shared that he regularly conducted searches for hidden weapons and ammunition to then either destroy or hand over to the authorities.⁷⁰ In one account, General Rambo recalled meeting people in the Lofa jungle in possession of rocket launchers and other arms. He suggested that should rebel forces wish to take control of the country, they would be able to do so in a matter of hours.⁷¹ Poverty continues to plague Liberia, with 50.9% of the population living under the national poverty line in 2016.⁷² Relative deprivation and inadequate disarmament create a fragile situation in Liberia, in which should conflict spark (caused by discontent, among other potential reasons), the acquisition of arms would come with ease.

The SSR process is another significant marker in any post-conflict transition. SSR can be understood as the set of processes through which the security system is transformed into a framework that favours transparency, accountability and good democratic governance.⁷³ SSR engages a range of actors and institutions, from varying perspectives, acknowledging the crucial role that non-military actors occupy in sustainable peace and security.⁷⁴ A security-based understanding of SSR is centred around the protection of the state and its citizens against violence perpetrated by the security apparatus, including the police and the military. A governance-based understanding of SSR is centred around the state's monopoly on violence, which includes elected civilians who are tasked with managing the different arms of the security sector, the legislature on oversight and other key tasks.⁷⁵

There has been a conscious effort to engage gender perspectives in SSR initiatives in Liberia. The most significant example is the transformation of the LNP. Police reform was a key facet of Liberia's peacebuilding process, with the 2003 peace agreements calling for the LNP to be rehailed and redesigned.⁷⁶ During the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars, the LNP was regarded as brutal, with rape and murder committed by police officers. The 2003 peace agreement and the wider post-conflict transition provided a necessary opportunity for the LNP to regain the trust of the civilians it serves. Under the auspices of Resolution 1325 and its call to increase the representation of women in the security sector, the Liberian Government and UNMIL sought to increase the representation of female police officers, from 2% in 2005 to 20% in 2014.⁷⁷ Key to gender-sensitive police reform was a more comprehensive response to SGBV, which occurred alongside the adoption of the Rape Amendment Act in 2005. To achieve this response, the Women and Children's Protection Section was formed in 2005 to respond to cases of SGBV against women and children. More general issues within the justice sector, including insufficient capacity and ineffective infrastructure, as well as the fact that many SGBV cases that had been reported had taken place during the civil wars, led to a backlog in cases. In response, the

justice department designed a new court system, the ‘Special Court’, which offered witnesses and victims the opportunity to remain anonymous instead of facing the alleged perpetrator. Additionally, a new SGBV Crimes Unit was established in April 2003 to guide victims in the prosecution process, aiding the police in their investigations and training prosecutors in trying cases of SGBV.⁷⁸ However, despite these responses, the backlog of SGBV cases has persisted.

In addition to DDR and SSR as two key processes in post-conflict transitions, the pursuit of truth and justice as a means to understand the full scope of violence during a particular period and appropriate legal responses and recompense occupies a vital role in the peacebuilding process. A truth commission can be understood as a “temporary body officially sanctioned by the state to investigate a pattern of past abuses that took place over a period of time based on engagement with the affected population, with the aim of producing a final report.”⁷⁹ The Liberian TRC was launched in 2005 under the auspice of the 2003 peace agreement. In total, the TRC gathered 20 000 statements and 500 direct testimonies from Liberians both from the country and abroad. Additionally, the report identified some 98 perpetrators of war crimes and gross violations against human rights, from across the participating belligerents in the conflict. The report additionally recommended the investigation and prosecution of 21 individuals and 19 corporations and state entities.⁸⁰ Notably, the TRC recommended around 50 politicians and civil servants be barred from public office for 30 years including Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who was serving as president at that time.

The TRC received positive attention for its facilitation of victims being able to make the transition from victim to citizen by presenting their personal statements and finding closure after the conflict.⁸¹ The TRC was additionally lauded for its engagement with diaspora groups, the incorporation of traditional justice systems such as the Palava Huts,^v the acknowledgement of resource exploitation as a key component in the conflict and the acute impact of the conflict on vulnerable populations, such as children.⁸² However, the TRC is not without criticism. Key critiques include the absence of testimonies by prominent political figures, such as President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.⁸³ The inclusion of these political figures would serve to illustrate that no one is above the law, but this did not come to pass. Interestingly enough, the TRC would later determine that the primary culpability of the civil wars belonged to the Liberian political elite.⁸⁴ Another key criticism was the nature of its recommendations, including amnesty, reparations and prosecution among others, which were not implemented as legally binding. Despite the recommended investigation of 54 individuals, they were not investigated due to time and financial constraints.⁸⁵

^v The Palava Hut Programme allowed around 7 000 former fighters to engage with their communities in conflict resolution and community-based healing.

Despite the peacebuilding initiatives mentioned above, it remains to be seen whether or not Liberia is in a state of sustainable peace. A 2016 report by the United States Agency for International Development on sustainable peace in Liberia concluded that while there was a low risk of the country slipping back into a conflict comparable to the civil wars, there still existed the potential for isolated incidents of conflict, stemming from unaddressed grievances such as poverty and poor service delivery, to spread in scope and scale.⁸⁶

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a comprehensive overview of the political and historical causes of the Liberian Civil Wars, beginning with the conception of the state before delving into the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars. It has discussed the role of women in bringing the Second Liberian Civil War to an end, as well as the implementation of Resolution 1325 through UNMIL and its gender mainstreaming mandate, and the LNAP. Notably, women's organisations have been implementing Resolution 1325 before it was adopted, and have found themselves operating outside its bounds due to the lack of local ownership integrated into its implementation. This chapter has closed the contextual background with an insight into post-reconstruction in Liberia, with a focus on DDR and SSR processes as well as the TRC as the key transitional justice mechanism. This chapter locates the case study in the broader discussion of the securitisation of sexual violence, in which sexual violence was a key characteristic of the civil wars. By discussing the implementation of Resolution 1325, the consequent analysis of the securitisation of sexual violence in WPS resolutions and the LNAP can take place with a full understanding of the events preceding these documents.

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4. Securitising Sexual Violence in Liberia, 2000-2013

4.1. Introduction

This chapter constitutes the primary analytical component of this dissertation. It will begin with a critical discourse analysis of the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda on: the representation of women and girls as victims and in need of protection; men and boys as victims; special attention to sexual violence and rape; and sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security. This analysis is relevant to the broader research objective for several reasons. Firstly, the representation of women and girls as victims and the securitisation of sexual violence constitute each other. Securitising a particular issue requires the acceptance that there is an existential threat against the referent objects (in this case, women and girls under threat of sexual violence).¹ The referent object cannot exist outside of victimhood: for there to be an existential threat that is then securitised, there has to be a victim. The entrenched stereotype of women and girls as victims of sexual violence sustains the need for the securitisation of sexual violence. As a consequence of this entrenchment, *men and boys as victims* are often neglected as having experienced sexual violence and are therefore limited in the way that they may benefit from responses to sexual violence. The *special mention of sexual violence and rape*, setting it apart from other forms of violence, illustrates the enforcement of a de facto hierarchy of atrocities that ensues with the securitisation of sexual violence. It is placed at the apex of this hierarchy and therefore requires a prioritised response. Finally, the acknowledgement of *sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security* is the clearest indication of securitisation, in that it necessitates an extraordinary response to a valid security issue.

Following the initial analysis, this chapter will then ascertain the degree to which the institutionalised securitisation of sexual violence in the United Nations has permeated WPS activities in Liberia, with a comparative analysis alongside the four categories. Given that the LNAP has been understood as the means through which the Liberian government has communicated with the international community in the language of Resolution 1325, and due to the limited scope of this thesis, it will be the primary document for analysis.¹ This section essentially seeks to connect the categories for the previous critical discourse analysis to the LNAP, thereby determining if the securitisation of sexual violence has extended to the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Liberia through the NAP.

4.2. The Securitisation of Sexual Violence in United Nations Security Council Resolutions

¹ The *referent objects* are the objects that are perceived to be under existential threat.

The construction of women as victims and in need of protection and saving has been a consistent point of criticism dating back as far as the 1980s in postcolonial feminist schools of thought. Chandra Talpade Mohanty's 1984 essay *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* discusses the archetypes of "third world"ⁱⁱ women in research conducted by Western feminists. Mohanty argues that a homogenous analysis of these women has resulted in the assumption of women as a group that has already been understood as "powerless, exploited, and sexually harassed" in feminist discourses.² One such category of analysis is *women as victims of male violence*, which is predicated on the sexual control, subservience and oppression of women by men, creating a dichotomy of powerless women alongside powerful men.³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's 1988 piece, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* discusses the construction of women as victims in need of rescuing or saving, using the example of colonial India and the practice of *sati*.ⁱⁱⁱ The abolition of this practice by the British colonial administrations represents what Spivak terms as "white men saving brown women from brown men."⁴ The entrenchment of women as victims has cemented itself in our critical understanding of the position that women, especially from the Global South,^{iv} occupy in international peace and security discourse. As mentioned before, the construction of women as victims is intricately linked to the securitisation of sexual violence. The referent object in the securitisation process cannot be separated from a state of victimhood; because it is constructed as facing an existential threat that requires a response of extraordinary measures, namely protecting or saving the referent object.

The representation of women as victims in UN documents relating to the WPS agenda has been discussed by an array of scholars and practitioners in the field. Pamela Scully (2010) discusses the focus on women as victims of sexual violence in the Beijing Declaration on Violence and UN Security Council 1325, and how it has shaped responses to GBV in international peace and security. A trend emerges through Scully's analysis of key documents in responding to GBV, in which women are often recognised as the sole victims of violence. In contrast, men are constructed as the perpetrators. Although men have been increasingly integrated with community-level discussion on GBV, the dominant paradigm still is constructed around a women-victim, male-perpetrator dichotomy.⁵ The construction of women as the sole victims of GBV, and more specifically as victims of sexual violence, neglects the experiences of men and boys with sexual violence even though sexual violence against men and boys has been documented against combatants in civil wars, including the Liberian Civil War.⁶ This leads

ⁱⁱ Mohanty critically uses this term to describe a class of economically developing nations, located across Africa, Asia and the Middle East

ⁱⁱⁱ Sati is a historical Hindu practice in which a widow sacrifices herself on her husband's funeral pyre.

^{iv} This term refers to the socio-economic and political region comprising Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. This region is associated with low industrialisation and political and cultural marginalisation in relation to its counterpart, the Global North.

not only to a lack of resources designated for men and boys, but may foster a stigma wherein they feel unable to talk about their experiences, thus rendering them silent casualties.⁷

Heidi Hudson (2012) discusses the “essentialist, stereotypical notions of women as victims or mothers,” which downplays their role as agents of political change and additionally erases the experiences of men and boys.⁸ Hudson integrates the hegemonic binary of femininity and masculinity into the construction of women as victims, highlighting that this construction leads to the entrenchment of “positive masculinity” and “negative masculinity,” constituting the protector and the perpetrator respectively. This relationship is perpetuated through UN discourses on sexual violence, with advocacy centring around acknowledgement, condemnation and the demand for justice.⁹ Cultural relativism should be prioritised in raising awareness of sexual violence to avoid the “liberal-feminist treatment” of women from the Global South as a homogenous group of victims or understanding sexual violence as an issue separate from context-specific gender relations or the presence of violence in post-conflict societies.¹⁰ Mohanty’s category of *victims of male violence*, explained earlier in this section, is an indication of the former.

The representation of women as victims in UN resolutions and other documents relating to the WPS agenda has additionally been discussed by scholars such as Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe (2011) and Laura J. Shepherd (2016), though they accept that there has been a rising acknowledgement of women as agents of change and contributors to long-lasting peace and security.¹¹ Lesley Pruitt (2012) draws together critiques from authors such as Wynne Russel (2007) and Diane Otto (2007) to present a critique of the language used in Resolution 1820 (2008), which is argued to portray women as victims in need of protectors and erasing the experiences of men and boys as victims of sexual violence.¹² Nicola Pratt (2013), Cheryl Hendricks (2015) and Omotola Adeyoju Ilesanmi (2021) have likewise acknowledged and critiqued the representation of women as victims, which curtails their agency in other areas of peace and security, such as their contributions to peace processes.¹³

This chapter builds on the above inferences with its own critical discourse analysis on the representation of women in Security Council resolutions relating to the WPS agenda. In language theory, the securitisation process constitutes a ‘speech act,’ in which words constitute reality.¹⁴ The adoptions of the various resolutions relating to the WPS agenda, particularly those that centre around sexual violence, constitute a reality wherein sexual violence is a security threat that impedes the restoration and maintenance of international peace, and is a threat to the existence of women. The evolution of approaches to addressing sexual violence serves as a foundation for this speech act and the subsequent securitisation of sexual violence.

This analysis primarily seeks to assess the representation of women and girls as victims of sexual violence who require protection to highlight the mutually constituting relationship between this construction, and the securitisation of sexual violence. This category has been developed with both implicit and explicit inferences about victimhood. As mentioned before, key to the construction of women as victims is the need to save or rescue them. Therefore, the category of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* is composed of both the explicit reference to women and girls as victims and the need to protect them from sexual violence. It should be noted that simply speaking of victims does not constitute the representation of women and girls as victims, and thus a subjective lens is required to assess the connotations behind the labelling of women and girls as victims. Additionally, the lack of acknowledgement of men and boys as victims of sexual violence has played a key role in enforcing the stereotype of women as the sole victims. Thus, the analysis incorporates the category of *men and boys as victims*.

The analysis takes on two additional categories which each occupy a unique position in the securitisation of sexual violence. The first category is the *special attention to sexual violence and rape*, which emphasises these violations over others that may persist during conflicts such as forced blockade, starvation, poverty and other forms of GBV.¹⁵ Sexual violence as a strategic instrument to advance a particular goal, be it displacing populations or invoking terror, has been accepted in mainstream discussions at an international level and has been accepted by the UN. However, Sara Meger argues that this narrow focus on sexual violence enforces a hierarchy of atrocities, which places sexual violence and rape at the top of this hierarchy.¹⁶ The second additional category looks at *sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security*. Key to the securitisation process is the acknowledgement of a particular issue as a security threat. In this case, the issue that is constructed as a security threat is sexual violence.

Women and Girls as Victims and in Need of Protection

The category of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* featured across every resolution passed, apart from Resolution 2242 (2015). Notably, while Resolution 1325 did not explicitly present women and girls as victims, it called for the protection of women and girls both in the broader situation of conflict and specifically against sexual violence. These include Resolution 1325's call for "effective institutional arrangements to guarantee [women and girls'] protection ..." and for "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 ..."¹⁷ Resolution 1820 (2008) refers to women and girls in need of protection, such as the need to "... take appropriate measures to protect civilians, including women and girls, from all forms of sexual violence ..." and prioritising their protection in their commitment to "[ensure] the protection of civilians, in particular women and girls, during and after armed conflicts ..."¹⁸ Women and girls are additionally separated as victims of sexual violence and in need of protection,

with Resolution 1820 calling relevant stakeholders to “...to ensure that all victims of sexual violence, particularly women and girls, have equal protection under the law and equal access to justice ...”¹⁹ Consequent resolutions, excluding Resolution 2242, make reference to women and girls as victims of conflict or specifically of sexual violence, whereas only Resolutions 1888, 2467 and 2493 make reference to women and girls as in need of protection.

The prevalence of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* in Resolution 1820 over other resolutions, is indicative of Lesley Pruitt’s assessment of Resolution 1820 returning to the stereotypical language constructing women as victims of (largely male) violence and in need of protection.²⁰ In terms of securitisation, the process hinges on the *referent objects*, the things that are understood to be existentially threatened.²¹ The *referent objects* thus exist in a reality where an intervention of extraordinary measure is needed to protect or save them from the perceived threat. In the case of the securitisation of sexual violence, the referent objects are women and girls living in situations of conflict. The first category illustrates a common pattern in UN resolutions relating to the WPS agenda to portray *women and girls as victims and in need of protection*; a perpetual message that they are under threat of sexual violence. Thus, this category sustains the securitisation process as it continually reminds us of the need to protect women and girls from sexual violence. This categorisation is constructed with the implications of grouping women and girls together in mind, which has been discussed as infantilising women by constructing them as in need of care.²²

Men and Boys as Victims

This particular category emerges out of the discussion that women and girls are often constructed as the sole victims of violence, particularly sexual violence. Men and boys were not recognised as victims of sexual violence for 13 years since the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000. They were mentioned once in Resolution 2106 (2013), with the only other mention being their role in helping to empower women and girls. *Men and boys as victims* would not be mentioned again until Resolution 2467 (2019), in which the Security Council calls for the inclusion of “provisions for women with children born as a result of sexual violence in conflict, as well as men and boys who may have been victims of sexual violence in conflict ...”, recognises that “men and boys are also targets of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, including in the context of detention settings and those associated with armed groups ...”, urges Member States “to protect victims who are men and boys through the strengthening of policies that offer appropriate responses to male survivors and challenge cultural assumptions about male invulnerability to such violence ...” and requests further investigation of sexual violence, including against men and boys.²³ They would once again be omitted in Resolution 2493 (2019).

Pamela Scully (2010) notes that the depiction of women as victims and men as perpetrators does not reflect the dynamics of civil wars in the 21st century.²⁴ A 2008 study, titled the *Association of Combatant*

Status and Sexual Violence With Health and Mental Health Outcomes in Postconflict Liberia, assessed the impact of psychosocial trauma linked to participation in the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars as well as exposure to sexual violence and mental health in a sample of 1 666 individuals, with 786 of these individuals being men and 880 being women. Key among the conclusions drawn was that 32,6% of adult male combatants experienced sexual violence in comparison with 7% of men who were not engaged in combat. Additionally, soldiers and rebels comprised the majority of perpetrators of sexual violence committed against Liberian men, both of combatant and non-combatant status.²⁵ Although a sample size of 1 666 individuals cannot be used to discuss the experiences of men and boys during the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars at large, it is indicative of the fact that men and boys were also victims of sexual violence. Therefore, it is important to ensure that they receive adequate representation in discussions in responding to sexual violence and can benefit from the resources allocated to this response. In addition to men being victimised by other men, there exists the phenomenon of nuanced perpetrators, which may include men who have committed sexual violence under duress. For example, civilian men in Liberia were forced to rape their neighbours or face death at the hands of fighters from Charles Taylor's NPFL.²⁶

The lack of acknowledgement of men and boys as victims of sexual violence illustrates the deficiencies in current approaches to addressing GBV, which may not look at gender relations in its entirety. Sexual violence has been used in conflict by fighters on one side to emasculate fighters on the other side and destroy their troop morale.²⁷ Focusing solely on women and girls as victims of gendered violence conflates 'gender issues' with 'women's issues' eliminating the opportunity to confront and disrupt gender relations in a meaningful way.

Special Attention to Sexual Violence and Rape

As mentioned before, this category emerged from Sara Meger's identification of the hierarchy of atrocities that is produced by the securitisation of sexual violence. This analysis identified instances across the resolutions related to the WPS agenda whereby sexual violence was set apart from other forms of violence and impacts of armed conflict. By focusing 'particularly' on sexual violence or separating it from other forms of violence, the message is delivered that sexual violence (especially as a strategic weapon, which has been accepted by the UN) is worse than other forms of violence as well as sexual violence committed outside of times of war.²⁸

The highest frequency of this category occurred in Resolution 1820, which Meger considers to be reflective of the securitisation of sexual violence.²⁹ Examples of the occurrence of this category include the Security Council's recollection of the commitments enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action "... in particular those concerning sexual violence and women in situations of armed conflict," the condemnation of "violence against women and children in situations of armed conflict,

including sexual violence in situations of armed conflict” and the request for personnel deployed by the UN to be trained to “prevent, recognize and respond to sexual violence and other forms of violence against civilians.”³⁰ The second-highest frequency of this category occurred in Resolution 1960 (2010), which served as a reiteration to end sexual violence and introduced particular measures to aid in this endeavour, including sanctions and a list whereby perpetrators are named. The *special attention to sexual violence and rape* appeared in every resolution related to the WPS agenda apart from Resolution 2493 (2019). Despite this omission, however, a larger inference can still be made that illustrates the presence of a hierarchy of atrocities in which sexual violence occupies the highest tier and is the primary concern when addressing phenomena occurring in conflict.

Sexual Violence as a Threat to International Peace and Security

This category featured in every resolution apart from Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1889 (2009) and 2493 (2019). The first mention of *sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security* came in 2008, with Resolution 1820 advancing the Security Council’s message that “sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war 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,” and affirming that “effective steps to prevent and respond to such acts of sexual violence can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.”³¹ Similar phrasing has been used in consequent resolutions, continuing the message that there is an inverse relationship between sexual violence and international peace and security: the prevalence of the former results in the erosion of the latter. This link is a key component in the securitisation of sexual violence, in which sexual violence is turned into a security issue that has to be solved to achieve sustainable peace.

4.3. Responding to Sexual Violence in Liberia

By the end of the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars, around 250 000 people had been killed, over 1 000 000 had been internally displaced and hundreds of thousands had fled Liberia as refugees.³² Sexual violence was a key point of discussion during the civil wars and has been in the post-conflict period. The preliminary report of the Liberian TRC revealed that around 26 000 or 28% of reported violations were committed against women.³³ These violations included “gang rape, sexual slavery ... [dehumanisation] through gendered violence by, for example being forced to have sex with their sons or male relatives,” molestation with foreign objects and hard labour.³⁴

Statistics of sexual violence vary between sources, with the highest statistic being purported by the WHO’s *Country Cooperation Strategy from Liberia* report, published in 2005, in which the organisation claimed that 75% of women and girls in Liberia had been victims of rape during the civil wars.³⁵ The

report referenced a survey of 412 women respondents where 77,4% of the respondents had been raped and a further 64,2% of these rapes were gang rapes.³⁶ The extrapolation of a figure that cannot be representative of the range of experiences of Liberian women and girls points to the sensationalism of sexual violence in Liberia, leading to the belief that 77,4% of women and girls across Liberia as a whole experienced raped during the civil wars. In reality, the true figure cannot be known, owed largely to a lack of reporting caused by stigma, or a lack of infrastructure in the LNP to investigate allegations of rape, among a variety of reasons.³⁷ Despite the dubious nature of this set of statistics, it has been repeated by numerous human rights groups and media organisations, such as Amnesty International and the Guardian.³⁸ Notably, it was also used in the 2015 report by the Advocates for Human Rights^v which aimed to assess Liberia's compliance with the CEDAW declaration. The report constructs a grave situation facing the Liberian government, with "three-quarters of Liberian women and girls [having been] a victim" of sexual violence.³⁹ This is significant, considering that CEDAW is utilised as a tool in reporting on Resolutions 1325 and 1820 in the first LNAP.⁴⁰

However, even after the civil wars ended, sexual violence has continued to persist. During the civil war, sexual violence was primarily perpetrated by combatants whereas post-conflict, the perpetrators comprised ex-combatants, members of communities of families, teachers and intimate partners.⁴¹

The Liberian government has taken multiple steps to respond to sexual violence. A key example is the Rape Amendment Act, which was passed in 2005 and geared toward protecting individuals from the systematic abuses that occurred during and in the aftermath of the civil war.⁴² Although the Rape Amendment Act has been lauded as progressive in addressing sexual violence and ending impunity, implementation in the courts has proven to be a challenge. Inconsistencies in the language used in the Rape Amendment Act are one of such challenges: a variety of understandings of meanings such as 'consent', 'first-degree rape' and 'second-degree rape' has led to inaccurate interpretations by the judiciary, law enforcement and the general public.⁴³ Moreover, there exists a disconnect between the formal legal system and the customary legal system, with the customary system used by around 80% of the Liberian population, resulting in a gap in punitive measures because the disputes dealt with under customary law were usually settled between the families of the victim and the perpetrator.⁴⁴ The Rape Amendment Act has come under further scrutiny: firstly, due to various obstacles in the victim's pursuit of justice such as the requirement for them to pay for the prosecution of their assailants through transportation for the police and prison food for the alleged perpetrators; secondly, due to the proclivity of the police to demand bribes or outright assault victims who would come forward to report a crime;

^v The Advocates for Human Rights is a non-governmental organization with special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

and thirdly due to the weakness of the legal system, which has resulted in very few convictions between 2005 and 2015.⁴⁵

The Liberian government (under the leadership of the Ministries of Gender and Development, Justice, Health and Internal Affairs, along with the UN and other partners) adopted the *National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender-Based Violence in Liberia* (GBV-POA) in November 2006. At this stage, several interventions had been attempted to address SGBV in Liberia. However, poor coordination of these interventions led to duplicated processes and the waste of resources, thus resulting in an inadequate response and a limited impact on victims and survivors.⁴⁶ The GBV-POA was developed to reduce SGBV by 30% by the end of the programme in 2011 and provide the necessary care and services to victims of SGBV.⁴⁷ According to the Ministry of Gender and Development, there were 2 383 reported cases of sexual violence in 2011 and 1 678 reported cases in 2012, in a country with a population of just over 4 000 000 people.⁴⁸ However, this figure is likely much larger when accounting for issues such as the narrow interpretation of rape or sexual violence, in which spousal rape is not explicitly criminalised; social stigma, which prevents victims from reporting cases of sexual violence; and the pressure to seek justice through customary systems instead of through prosecution, such as financial restitution from the family of the perpetrator.⁴⁹

In line with the WPS agenda, the Liberian government has implemented two NAPs, with the first plan running from 2009-2013 and the second plan running from 2019-2023. This chapter will only look at the first NAP, adhering to the time parameter applied to this thesis.

The LNAP was developed in line with Resolution 1325 as well as Resolution 1820. Its development took place within a broader agenda in international peace and security wherein sexual violence had been securitised. Thus, it raises an interesting line of inquiry: assessing the degree to which the Liberian government and its various partners have taken a securitised approach to address sexual violence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the LNAP was developed alongside four key pillars: *protection, prevention, participation, and empowerment and promotion*. This is similar to the pillars foundational to Resolution 1325 apart from *empowerment and promotion*, which is absent from Resolution 1325 in favour of *relief and recovery*. Additionally, in collaboration with various UN agencies, the Liberian government sought to implement four joint programmes that would align with the NAP. For sexual violence, in particular, the United Nations Joint Programme to Prevent and Respond to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (UN JP SGBV) was signed in June 2008 to implement holistic responses to SGBV. In addition to this, the NAP dictated that UNMIL would undertake the implementation of Resolution 1820 through various initiatives, such as advancing the National-Anti Rape Campaign and other campaigns geared towards civic education on GBV.⁵⁰

Women and Girls as Victims and in Need of Protection

This chapter has previously mentioned how the construction of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* can contribute to the perception of sexual violence as a security issue by the sustaining the perception that there is an object under threat. The LNAP, like the WPS agenda, contains a *protection* pillar at the foundation of its implementation. However, where the element of protection in the WPS agenda is primarily focused on the protection of women and girls from violence, particularly sexual violence, the element of protection in the LNAP focuses on protection through counselling, psycho-social support, and the facilitation of counselling networks.⁵¹ Protection in the WPS agenda is exceptionally vague,^{vi} which has led to interpretations by scholars that this concept perpetuates a sense of victimhood and a lack of agency for women and girls.^{vii} However, the LNAP is detailed in its understanding of protection, such as the creation of protection networks and safe houses. Moreover, *protection* is understood as transforming gender biases and discrimination and making environments safer through, for example, increasing the gender responsiveness of security sector institutions and increasing the quality of education for reproductive health.⁵² The *prevention* pillar is predicated on “[preventing] all types of violence against women and girls,”⁵³ and attempts to give agency to women and girls through confidence-building programmes and other civic education in which they can participate.

Men and Boys as Victims

Men and boys are featured at an alarmingly infrequent degree in the WPS agenda, contributing to the idea that sexual violence is perpetrated solely against women and girls. In a more positive light, the LNAP makes several mentions of men not just as participants in combatting SGBV but as beneficiaries of any measures that are implemented. For example, the *protection* pillar calls for the strengthening of protection and counsellor networks, which will “benefit women, girls and men in the community.”⁵⁴ Additionally, the pillar seeks to advance economic empowerment for “traumatised women and men.”⁵⁵ It has been noted that the conflation between women and girls can lead to the infantilisation of women through their grouping with girl children, and the same can be applied to grouping men and boys.⁵⁶ This conflation has been made in abundance between women and girls, but not for men and boys. While it is important to note the implications of this conflation, the exclusion of boys from the LNAP is

^{vi} Context-specific measures are not necessarily due to the scope and reach of Resolution 1325 and consequent resolutions; however, there still can be some broader specification, for example, the form that ‘protection’ would take, be it safe houses or increased policing.

^{vii} See Heidi Hudson’s *A Double-edged Sword of Peace? Reflections on the Tension between Representation and Protection in Gendering Liberia Peacebuilding* (2012); Lesley Pruitt’s *Looking Back, Moving Forward: International Approaches to Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence* (2012); Cheryl Hendricks’ *Women, Peace and Security in Africa: Conceptual and implementation challenges and shifts* (2015) and Omotola Adeyoju Ilesanmi’s *UNSCR 1325 and African Women in Conflict and Peace* (2021).

especially erroneous, considering that boys who had been recruited as child soldiers, had also experienced sexual violence and rape.⁵⁷

Special Attention to Sexual Violence and Rape

It is interesting to note the positions that sexual violence and rape occupy within the discussion surrounding GBV and violence against women. Within the limited parameters of this study, it has been established that the WPS agenda has frequently situated sexual violence and rape at the apex of the so-called hierarchy of atrocities. In some instances, the LNAP acknowledges that violence that is situated outside of sexual violence and rape requires the same urgency in their responses. For example, the first strategic issue under the *protection* pillar calls for the government to provide “psycho-social and trauma counselling to women and girls affected by all types of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.”⁵⁸ SGBV has been mentioned in a way that sets it apart from the other forms of violence, but this does not render sexual violence and rape, or other forms of GBV as inherently more important. Instead, victims (albeit limited in this particular strategic issue to women and girls) of all types of violence should receive the necessary psycho-social and mental health support. In other instances, it sets SGBV aside as the most egregious violation to fall upon women and girls. The *prevention* pillar calls for the government to implement initiatives to prevent all types of violence against women and girls, especially SGBV.⁵⁹ In doing this, the LNAP places the highest importance on the prevention of SGBV, thereby fostering the hierarchy of atrocities.

The securitisation of sexual violence in the LNAP is not as clear as it is in the WPS agenda. Within the scope of this analysis, this is partly because sexual violence is not recognised as a *threat to international peace and security* which is a vital component of securitisation. Within the other categories, *women and girls* were represented relatively favourably with agency and men were represented, although their representation was scarce. Notably, boys were excluded entirely and while all groups are vulnerable, it should be acknowledged that some experiences of child soldiers involved sexual violence. *Special attention to sexual violence and rape* was paid in the LNAP, but all forms of violence were acknowledged as requiring attention. Thus, the securitisation of sexual violence in the WPS agenda has not entirely extended to the LNAP.

Securitised language has been recorded through interviews with Liberian citizens, with one citizen in Monrovia decrying rape as the “new war,” especially for teenagers and children in 2009.⁶⁰ In this sense, the rape epidemic in Liberia is considered to require a response of extraordinary measures: rape is the new war, the bodies of women and girls are the battlefields and the belligerents are perpetrators, rape culture and festering gender inequality. The success of Liberia’s fight against sexual violence has come under significant scrutiny: for example, as mentioned earlier the *protection* pillar of the LNAP included the creation of protection and counselling networks and entailed the construction of safe houses.

However, it was reported that in 2012, the Liberian government had only launched these safe houses in two out of 15 counties.⁶¹ In September 2020, President George Weah declared rape as a national emergency; however, key promises such as the creation of a national sex offenders database and the appointment of a special prosecutor for rape have not yet been fulfilled.

Considering that some scholars in the field of sexual violence in international peace and security understand the securitisation process as not necessarily eradicating the phenomenon,⁶² the following question can be raised: if the securitisation of sexual violence in the WPS agenda extended to the LNAP and favoured measures of an extraordinary nature and an acute urgency,^{viii} would we see more favourable results in the reduction and eradication of sexual violence?

4.4. Conclusion

Through a critical discourse analysis of the UN Security Council resolutions forming the broader WPS agenda, this chapter has sought to illustrate the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security. This has been done through the crafting of analytical categories that are each elemental in the securitisation of sexual violence. The representation of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* sustains securitisation: they are essentially the referent objects under threat, requiring an extraordinary response to save them. As a result of this, *men and boys as victims* are neglected in discussions about sexual violence and are often left out as potential beneficiaries of help after sexual violence have been perpetrated against them. A hierarchy of atrocities is enforced through the securitisation of sexual violence, in which sexual violence occupies the highest level of importance.⁶³ Thus, this analysis set out to ascertain the extent to which this hierarchy is active through *special attention to sexual violence and rape*. Finally, this analysis sought to determine the prevalence of the idea that *sexual violence* has now become a *threat to international peace and security*. The addition of sexual violence to the global security agenda is indicative of its securitisation.

Ultimately, this analysis made several inferences. Firstly, *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* features across every resolution in some capacity, apart from Resolution 2242 (2015). Despite this, there was still a consistent representation of women and girls as victims who need protection, implied to come from an external force such as a government or non-governmental organisation. In contrast to this prevalence, *men and boys as victims* were scarcely mentioned, appearing once in Resolution 2106 (2013) and twice in Resolution 2467 (2019). Their introduction is relatively recent, meaning that there is a potential for their needs and experiences to be more inclusively incorporated into the discussion of sexual violence in international peace and security. *Special attention*

^{viii} This is with the conclusion drawn in this limited study that the LNAP has not fully securitised sexual violence.

to sexual violence and rape, thereby enforcing a hierarchy of atrocities, features in every resolution apart from Resolution 2493 (2019), illustrating a common trend for sexual violence and rape to be considered the most egregious crimes that are committed during conflict. Lastly, *sexual violence as a threat to international security* emerged in Resolution 1820 and featured in subsequent resolutions excluding Resolutions 1889 (2009) and 2493 (2019). Thus, it is possible to conclude that this particular understanding of sexual violence has been relatively consistent in international peace and security.

Notably, each category apart from *men and boys as victims* emerged from Resolution 1820 (2008). The fact that men and boys were neither featured as victims of sexual violence nor, at the very least, as victims of broader violence in conflict is linked is an indication that an overrepresentation of women and girls as victims means that men and boys are underrepresented, if at all. Resolution 1820 additionally constructs sexual violence as inherently more heinous than other forms of violence. This feeds into the reinforcement of the idea that a response of extraordinary measure is required to address sexual violence. The presence of the categories *women and girls as victims in and need of protection*, *special mention of sexual violence and rape*, and *sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security*, as well as the non-presence of *men and boys as victims*, therefore, is an indication of the securitisation of sexual violence within a limited scope.

The LNAP represents a less acute securitisation. This is due to the relative agency granted to women and girls through their participation in initiatives such as civic education. The *protection* pillar of Resolution 1325 concentrates on the protection largely of women and girls in a vague sense, which can be interpreted as physical protection. The *protection* pillar in the LNAP is centred around transforming the environment into one fosters a sense of gender equality, such as through the elimination of gender discrimination in security sector institutions, which is key to the ambition of an equal society. The representation of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* is less severe, with the broad call to “[protect] women and girls from all types of violence” that is then further divided into transformative initiatives instead of focusing on protection that curtails their agency. With this mild representation, there remains an underrepresentation of *men and boys as victims*, and certainly an underrepresentation of boys. Sexual violence has been recorded among male combatants during the Liberian civil war,⁶⁴ as well as against boy-child soldiers.⁶⁵ Thus, they should be included in initiatives seeking to respond to and mitigate sexual violence. The enforcement of a hierarchy of atrocities, sustained by *special attention to sexual violence and rape* is not as apparent in the LNAP as there is a broader call for responses to all forms of violence.⁶⁶ Lastly, the idea that *sexual violence is a threat to international peace and security* does not contribute to the rationale in the LNAP to respond to sexual violence as it does in the resolutions forming the WPS agenda. With Resolution 1820 (2008) embracing the incorporation of sexual violence to the security agenda through securitisation, and informing the development of the LNAP, an interesting line of inquiry is raised when one considers the effectiveness

of the response to sexual violence as to whether or not a full securitisation of sexual violence could yield more favourable results. However, it should be noted that this analysis does not attribute the perceived failure to address sexual violence as a result of the limited conclusions drawn.

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- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.
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- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 14; 18; 26
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.
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5. Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter serves as the conclusion to the thesis. It will begin by summarising the findings of the analysis as they relate to the proposed research question, and will outline how this thesis contributes to discussions on the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security. It will then reflect on the limitations of the thesis and how this may have impacted the overall findings. Finally, this chapter will present recommendations for future research, drawing on the limitations and how they can be adapted to drive a more comprehensive study.

5.2. Findings

Chapters Two and Three served to contextualise the research question, by bringing together the WPS agenda and the case study of Liberia. An ample understanding of the historical approaches to addressing sexual violence in international peace and security and the WPS agenda is key given that the LNAP, as with all NAPs, has been used as a tool to localise the WPS agenda in Liberia. Resolution 1820, in particular, draws together the discussion on the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security and the WPS agenda. Furthermore, an insight into the Liberian civil war, in which sexual violence was a key characteristic, is crucial to understanding the state of gender relations and sexual violence that persists in a post-conflict environment.

In Chapter Four, this thesis aimed to analyse the securitisation of sexual violence in the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda as well as the first LNAP, implemented from 2009 to 2013. This analysis was undertaken in a limited scope, utilising four categories developed from existing frameworks both on the representation of women in UN resolutions and the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security.

The first category, *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* is derived from the idea of women and girls often being constructed as the sole victims of SGBV. The stereotype of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* is key to the analysis at hand because it sustains the securitisation of sexual violence. In this framework, constructed from the securitisation framework conceived by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, the referent objects are objects perceived to be existentially threatened.¹ In the context of securitising sexual violence, women and girls can be understood as the referent objects. The entrenchment of the trope of *women and girls as victims and in*

need of protection sustains the securitisation process by consistently identifying an existential threat of sexual violence against women and girls and as a result, they require protection.

The persisting construction of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* gives rise to the misconception that they are the sole victims of violence. In fostering this trope, men and boys are often excluded from discussions on responding to SGBV. However, this is not the case, especially in contexts of civil war in the 21st century. In Liberia, for example, sexual violence was recorded among male combatants and non-combatants, perpetrated primarily by soldiers and rebels.² Thus, the second category *men and boys as victims*, serves to highlight the hyper-focus on women and girls as victims, which in turn sustains the securitisation of sexual violence by consistently identifying women and girls as the referent objects.

The third category is derived from Sara Meger's framework of the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security. According to Meger, the securitisation of sexual violence "enforces a de facto hierarchy of atrocities." This has been adapted to the *special attention to sexual violence and rape*, in which these phenomena occupy the highest tier and is the primary concern when addressing phenomena occurring in conflict.

The final category, *sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security*, is straight-forward and is predicated on Resolution 1820, which declares that "sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war 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" and that "effective steps to prevent and respond to such acts of sexual violence can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security."³ This message constructs sexual violence as a security issue, thereby laying the foundations for its securitisation.

The securitisation of sexual violence investigated in the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda as well as the LNAP utilised the four categories as analytical perspectives. The overall findings in the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda read as follows: firstly, there was a consistent representation of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection*. Its most frequent prevalence occurred in Resolution 1820 (2008), which is the first indication that sexual violence had been added to the international security agenda. It additionally reflects a return to the stereotypical language of women and girls in a state of victimhood.⁴ It featured consistently across the other resolutions apart from Resolution 2242. Resolution 1325 does not explicitly reference women as victims, but in line with the *protection* pillar established in the resolution, it was emphasised that the parties involved in an armed conflict need to protect women and girls from GBV, "particularly rape and other forms of sexual

abuse.”⁵ Secondly, in contrast to the frequency of *women and girls as victims and in need of protection*, *men and boys as victims* were scarcely mentioned. Across all of the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda, they featured in once in Resolution 2106 and twice in Resolution 2467. This may speak to a larger issue in which gender relations during and after conflict are understood through a limited perspective and where phenomena such as sexual violence being used to emasculate troops during conflict are not understood in their full complexity.⁶ Thirdly, the *special attention to sexual violence and rape* was most prevalent in Resolution 1820 and was present in every resolution apart from Resolution 2493. Within the limited parameters of this study, this indicates an acceptance that sexual violence and rape are especially egregious crimes. Lastly, the idea of *sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security* features across all but four of the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda. It was first mentioned in Resolution 1820, with similar phrasing utilised in several consequent resolutions, thereby indicating a collective understanding of the correlation between sexual violence and sustainable peace.

Within the limited scope, this analysis identified elements of securitised sexual violence in the resolutions forming the WPS agenda. This analysis extended to the most recent resolution, adopted in 2019. However, when considering the influence of the resolutions on the LNAP, a tool for the localisation of the WPS agenda in Liberia, Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) respectively are the only relevant resolutions to the LNAP, which was implemented from 2009 to 2013.

Through a similar limited analysis, this study concluded that the securitisation of sexual violence in the LNAP is less acute despite Resolutions 1325 and 1820 forming the foundations of the development of the plan. The category *women and girls as victims and in need of protection* in the LNAP differed from the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda in its detailed description of how women and girls will be protected. This is through psycho-social support and counselling among other initiatives.⁷ This eliminates the vagueness of the meaning of protection, which can be misinterpreted in a way that curtails the agency of women and girls, as has been the case in the WPS agenda. The category *men and boys as victims* occurs in fragments in the LNAP. Men are included as both participants in combatting SGBV and as beneficiaries of anti-SGBV measures, although their representation is more scarce compared to women and girls. Additionally, boys were excluded entirely as potential victims of SGBV. This is significant considering that child soldiers were especially vulnerable to sexual violence during the civil wars.⁸ Where *special attention to sexual violence and rape* is concerned, the LNAP emphasises in some instances that violence outside of sexual violence and rape should necessitate a response of the same calibre. However, in others, it is set apart as the type of violence from which women and girls *especially* need to be protected.⁹ The category *sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security*, which is key to the securitisation of sexual violence, does not feature in the LNAP. It is from this inference and those above that the analysis concludes, through the limited scope, that the securitisation

of sexual violence in the resolutions constituting the WPS agenda has not been reproduced to the same acute scale in the LNAP.

The answer to the research question, therefore, is that yes, the Women, Peace and Security agenda has facilitated the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security. However, this securitisation has not been uniformly present in Liberia's National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security.

5.3.Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis has been impacted by two key limitations. Firstly, only four categories were utilised in the analyses of the resolutions forming the WPS agenda and the LNAP, due to the required scope and length of this thesis. Therefore, the conclusions have been drawn from a narrow perspective. This study could be improved with a more comprehensive exploration of the securitisation of sexual violence in international peace and security, yielding an expanded set of indicators which, in turn, would add a more nuanced edge to the discussion. The second key limitation was the time parameter: 2000-2013, to exclude the Ebola epidemic, which took place from 2014-2015. In setting this parameter, only the first LNAP was analysed alongside the WPS resolutions and the second LNAP (2019-2023) was excluded. Future research could broaden the scope of discussion by engaging with the second LNAP and looking at the effectiveness of Liberia's response to sexual violence along with other documents. President George Weah's 2020 declaration of rape and other forms of SGBV as a national emergency serves to highlight that this is still a prevalent issue.¹⁰

The conclusions drawn do not make a sweeping statement on whether or not securitisation is a positive approach to responding to sexual violence. Moreover, it acknowledges that the LNAP has been criticised on a number of fronts and is not the primary framework for dealing with sexual violence. Instead, the analysis serves as a limited insight into the ways that norms institutionalised by the UN may influence the development of localised tools such as the LNAP.

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¹⁰ Leah Rodriguez, “Why Liberia Just Declared Rape a National Emergency”, *Global Citizen*, 14 September 2020, accessed 24 January 2023, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/liberia-declares-rape-national-emergency/>.

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