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UNSC Resolution 1325 national action plans in Liberia and Sierra Leone: An analysis of gendered power relations in hybrid peacebuilding

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ABSTRACT



This paper considers how the use of ‘hybridity’ in the peacebuilding literature overlooks the gendered dimensions of hybrid interactions. It does so by examining the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 national action plans (NAPs) for Liberia and Sierra Leone. By asking the gendered questions of ‘who participates?’ and ‘how do they participate?’ it draws from Mac Ginty’s conception of hybridity and traces the compliance and incentivizing power in hybridized peace, as well as the ability of local actors to resist and provide alternatives. However, Mac Ginty’s model is found to be inadequate because of its inattention to the gendered nature of power. It is found that with a gendered approach to hybridity, it is easier to trace the processes of hybridization of NAPs in post-conflict states where their implementation is limited. In asking the questions of ‘who’ and ‘how’, three conclusions about the gendered nature of hybrid peacebuilding are drawn: international intervention relies upon the ‘feminization’ of local actors; issues framed within the realm of the ‘masculine’ are more likely to get attention; and the Resolution 1325 agenda in post-conflict states can be subverted by framing it as a ‘soft’ issue.

KEYWORDS

UNSC Resolution 1325; hybrid peace; national action plans; Liberia; Sierra Leone

Introduction

This paper assesses the gendered power in hybrid peacebuilding through examining the national action plans (NAPs) used to implement the agenda of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325. Specifically, the NAPs of the post-conflict contexts of Liberia and Sierra Leone are analysed in relation to the NAPs as part of wider liberal peace interventions. NAPs in post-conflict states are an excellent way to make sense of hybridity and how power relations function within hybrid peace because they represent an (already hybridized) liberal peace policy and its attempt to influence an (already hybridized) post-conflict environment (Mac Ginty 2010, 2011).¹ For Mac Ginty (2010, 2011), hybridity is something that always happens in peacebuilding because of the incentivizing

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and coercive powers of ‘the international’ and the powers of ‘local’ actors to resist, ignore, subvert and provide alternatives. Hybridity is therefore not a tool to be instrumentalized, but instead a way of understanding the outcomes of peacebuilding as being produced through complex and messy local–international interactions and shifting power relations (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2016). However, the evidence from the NAPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone illustrates that, when put to the test, Mac Ginty’s four-part model of hybridity (2010, 2011) is insufficient for understanding the complexity and messiness of power relations in hybrid peacebuilding because of its inattention to the gendered nature of power relations.

This failure renders the concept of hybridity unable to describe why and how particular outcomes have emerged from particular processes, such as the processes of the development and implementation of NAPs in post-conflict states. This paper addresses the matter of what a gender lens can reveal about the functioning of hybrid peacebuilding by considering the questions of ‘who participates?’ and ‘how do they participate?’ in the context of the NAPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and in relation to Mac Ginty’s four-part model. The analysis reveals how UNSC Resolution 1325, as an internationally-driven element of peacebuilding, is imbued with gendered power. In turn, this gendered power influences the power relations of local–international processes at play in the wider peacebuilding project.

It is concluded that thinking about *gendered* power is extremely useful in understanding how hybridity’s incentivizing and coercive power works, as this reveals which locals can engage in participation or resistance, how some locals are better able to participate than others, and which issues can be most easily resisted. Further, it reveals the gendered power of the implementation of Resolution 1325 in a peacebuilding context, wherein programmes related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are privileged. This reinforces the gendered power of internationals to ‘protect’ local women, who are portrayed primarily as victims.

Decades of feminist activism predated the passing of UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000), which formalizes and institutionalizes the recognition of a ‘Women, Peace and Security’ (WPS) agenda within international peacebuilding initiatives. The resolution brings women into the discussion of conflict, peace and security. There are a numerous excellent analyses that examine the resolution from the perspectives of international governance, discourse, peacebuilding and feminist security studies (Shepherd 2008; Swaine 2010; Gizelis and Olsson 2015; McLeod 2015). Fifteen years of subsequent resolutions and debate have advanced discussions over the best means of implementing Resolution 1325 and the WPS agenda.

Notably, the agenda of Resolution 1325, like the liberal peace agenda, establishes relationships between ‘the international’ and ‘the local’ in its assumption that the international community is synonymous with ‘peace’ and that the domestic spheres of conflict and post-conflict states represent ‘the problem’ to be solved by the international community. The resolution assumes that the UNSC is the ‘gatekeeper’ for the inclusion of women and their interests in international peacebuilding and security (Shepherd 2008, 97), a role which extends to assuming the responsibility to ‘protect’ vulnerable women from the violence in their domestic sphere. What implicitly follows is the assertion that the violent domestic spheres of conflict and post-conflict states are a source of threat to women’s security, thereby establishing a rationale for international intervention. Women’s security has become a variable within the logic of peacebuilding, and the UN has established

parameters for the implementation of Resolution 1325 in part by insisting on the responsibility of UN peacebuilding missions to facilitate ‘local’ implementation through insisting on local ownership of the resolution’s agenda.²

The next section of this paper engages with the concept of hybridity within the peacebuilding literature, and examines how this literature largely overlooks gendered power relations. The following section outlines the data collection methods used in Liberia and Sierra Leone for this research, before engaging in an analysis of the gendered dimensions of power in the hybrid peacebuilding of the NAPs. Finally, three key insights are drawn from the NAPs, which may enhance Mac Ginty’s model of hybridity (2010, 2011) and contribute to debates about the suitability of NAPs for post-conflict states.

Hybridized peacebuilding and a feminist critique

Mac Ginty (2010, 2011) has attempted to conceptualize the nuances of peacebuilding by recognizing the many layers of the liberal peace project and attending to the two-way interactions between groups that result in hybrid peace. He conceptualizes hybridity as an inherent process wherein ‘local’ and ‘international’ actors cooperate and compete through a variety of agents, structures and networks to produce hybrid peace (Mac Ginty 2010). By viewing the range of actors and their interactions at all levels this raises a fundamental question about participation, as it reveals how local groups are incentivized and forced to comply with the liberal peace project. It also exposes how they are able to resist, ignore and adapt interventions, as well as providing alternatives (391). According to Mac Ginty (2010), this four-part analytical approach allows one to ‘locate the sources and direction of power and agency’ (407), which is critical when considering gendered dimensions of peace with regard to who participates and how they participate.

Other discussions and conceptualizations of hybridity have informed debates about peacebuilding and the liberal peace (Peterson 2012; Björkdahl and Höglund 2013; Millar 2014). Millar (2014) argues that the concept of hybridity is too broad and should therefore be disaggregated into the levels of institutions, practices, rituals and concepts. Hybridization occurs naturally at all levels, but some levels are more amenable to international intervention than others (502). In critiquing the increasing number of prescriptive approaches that seek to instrumentalize and implement hybridity, Millar points out that while institutions may be hybridized through international intervention, rituals and concepts are much harder to change and therefore cannot be purposefully hybridized (505). This begins to get at the question of ‘how’ participation in hybrid peacebuilding happens through its attention to power differentials between institutions, rituals, concepts and practices, as he argues that there is a need to pay attention to ‘what is being hybridized, why, how and to what effect’ (511). The question of ‘who’ participates in this hybridity is implicit in Millar’s analysis because, as he points out, local non-elites may not fully participate in or have positive experiences with hybridity.

Mac Ginty and Richmond (2016) suggest that hybridity is a ‘fluid process with multiple – already hybridized – actors and norms influencing one another’ (229). Viewing hybrid peacebuilding through a less rigid lens allows one to determine the levels of power at play between all actors and acknowledge how hybridity results in dilemmas that both empower and restrict peace. However, the matter of the *identity* of the local actors participating in hybrid peacebuilding is not explicit. Mac Ginty and Richmond correctly identify

that there are power relations across all groups of actors: ‘the central dilemmas of hybridity ultimately lie in the configuration of relationships between different actors and their socio-historical, normative and interest frameworks’ (229). In their understanding of how hybridity functions, power circulates between different actors. What this cannot explain is just exactly how some actors are able to participate in hybrid peacebuilding while others are kept in positions of marginality and prevented from participating.

Peterson (2012, 14) notes that despite power being the central determinant in these descriptions of hybrid peace, using the lens of hybridity neglects certain power differentials. In particular she notes that the detail and complexity in the local power dynamics – in terms of which groups or individuals engage with the international or indeed how the international functions within global power differentials – is often not revealed in a basic analysis of hybridity. She calls for a more detailed interpretation of how local groups and in particular subsets within those groups experience hybridization in order to avoid homogenous and generalized assessments of processes and actors (20). This would reveal how people participate and interact in everyday practices of peacebuilding and provide a clearer analysis of the varied outcomes of hybridity. One practical method to reveal this nuance in hybridity may be achieved by adopting the approach put forward by Björkdahl and Höglund (2013), who contend that the concept of friction between the global and local encounters must be assessed, as this can affect the outcomes of peacebuilding as well as acting as a stimulus for change to occur (290). Analysing friction reveals vertical and asymmetrical relations between groups and thereby exposes how power is produced in peacebuilding contexts (292). This allows for the transformation of agency to be captured – for example, local agency can be both conflictual and accommodating within the peace project. This approach allows researchers to unpick more precisely who is participating in peacebuilding and through what specific means.

Drawing from this, it is contended that the limitation of much of the hybridity literature, Mac Ginty’s (2010) discussion included, is the absence of gendered dimensions of power when analysing how peace is hybridized. McLeod (2015) effectively highlights this by arguing that inattention to the gendered dimensions of power results in the inability of hybridity to fully explain how hybrid peace generates particular outcomes. As McLeod points out, not only is there a glaring absence of gender in much of the hybridity literature, but a gendered approach to hybridity can make a crucial contribution to understanding how hybridity functions.

McLeod frames this within a feminist critique of international relations, pointing out that existing hybrid peace models fails to explain ‘hidden’ power relations that appear only when one steps out of the binary division between personal and political, and into the assertion that ‘the personal is international, the international is personal’ (McLeod 2015, 52; see also Enloe 2014). Power relations are not only mediated by whether one is a ‘local’ or ‘international’ – relations of power at the interpersonal and the local level interact with power relations within the international level to determine who can and cannot participate, and to mediate how participation happens. Gender is one way that power relations are mediated, both for ‘internationals’ and ‘locals’ – therefore, these gendered power relations have a very real impact on who participates in hybrid peace and how they participate. Despite hybridity’s added value of examining power relations between local and international actors in peacebuilding, it will not go far enough without also

paying heed to how these power relations are gendered. The potential contribution of a gendered approach to hybridity is evident because, like much of the hybridity literature outlined above, feminist approaches are frequently concerned with the messiness of power relations, the experiences of 'locals' and the marginalizations produced or reinforced through peacebuilding (Cohn 2004; McLeod 2015).

Reflecting critiques similar to those raised in the hybridity literature, feminist scholars raise questions of who participates and how they participate in relation to Resolution 1325 more broadly. While acknowledging the dedication and years of activism required to pass Resolution 1325 in the UNSC, Cohn (2004) argues that the final version of the resolution represents an agenda for women's protection and participation that does not address the *politics* of how women are threatened and disempowered in the first place. She argues that excluding the 'too political' dimensions of masculinities, militarism, and arms control was a pragmatic decision made by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Working Group advocating for the resolution, because of their (tenuous) position within the UN and the nature of decision-making within the UNSC. Gendered institutions, norms, and values therefore determined the answer to the question of 'how' participation happened in drafting of and advocating for Resolution 1325 (Cohn 2004, 13).

Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011) raise the question of who participates and how they participate during the implementation of Resolution 1325: 'When 1325 calls for empowering women and supporting so-called indigenous women's peace strategies, we thus need to ask critically which women and which indigenous strategies?' (498). They point out the double bind faced by local women's groups, such as when they are perceived as being 'deviant' or 'angry' (Gibbins 2011) if they do not follow the international agenda for how to implement Resolution 1325 while also facing difficulties mobilizing their own grassroots when relying on the international framework of the resolution. This results in limitations to who participates in implementation and how they participate (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011).

These feminist perspectives on Resolution 1325 illustrate the importance of asking questions about who participates in hybrid peace and how they participate. They also illustrate the degree to which particular perspectives on women as 'victims' determine which elements of Resolution 1325 are privileged, and that actors engaging in work on the resolution are likely expected to fit into the UN agenda. As Cohn (2004) and McLeod (2015) point out, there are strongly gendered power relationships at play within the Resolution 1325 agenda. It is argued here that these feminist perspectives on gendered power can help inform and enhance analyses of hybridity.

Data collection in Liberia and Sierra Leone

This paper investigates the NAPs of two post-conflict countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone. These cases were selected by reviewing the list of NAPs created since the signing of the resolution in 2000. Both countries have experienced extended periods of protracted civil war in the last 20 years, as well as having buoyant and active women's movements and activists that were crucial in moving the peace process forward. As some time has elapsed since their adoption, they were considered appropriate cases for investigation as the NAPs were coming to the end of their implementation cycles, thereby making it possible to assess their impact at the time the data was collected.

The Liberia National Action Plan (LNAP) was adopted in 2009, after the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) provided funding for a national consultant to be hired (Government of Liberia, 2009). They initiated the process of development of the NAP with government ministries, local women's groups and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Running over a four-year cycle, no final report of implementation has been written, but achievements include: greater recruitment of women into the security sector; having more women in key decision-making positions, and in peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes; improving women's social and economic empowerment; and providing information to women about how to protect their rights and security (Basini and Ryan, 2016). The Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SiLNAP) was adopted in 2010 after two years of development by a consortium of the government, the UN and CSOs (Government of Sierra Leone, 2010). This NAP blends Resolution 1325 with Resolution 1820, which is concerned with sexual violence as a weapon of war. It had a four-year cycle over which time it was a critical document in assisting with a number of achievements including (but not limited to): the passing of the Sexual Offenses Act (Government of Sierra Leone, 2012); the inclusion of more women in peacekeeping missions; the addressing of SGBV; and the appointment of more women in key decision-making positions. The limited resources and outbreak of Ebola in 2014 meant that the final report by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) cited only modest achievements (Government of Sierra Leone 2015).

The second author conducted field research in Sierra Leone for three weeks in October/November 2013, conducting 24 semi-structured interviews with 31 individuals. Of these interviews, 39% took place with government employees (meaning those on the government payroll such as ministry workers or those that work for the military or the police) and 61% with non-government workers such as local women's groups and CSOs, UN bodies and international donors. In addition, a focus group was convened in the rural district of Port Loko with women from the Port Loko Women's Security Group. This group was comprised of women from across the Port Loko district who meet regularly to discuss local women's issues and how to tackle them. The first author conducted field research in Liberia for three weeks in April/May 2014, conducting 31 interviews with 40 individuals. Of these interviews, 33% were conducted with government employees and 67% with non-government workers. In addition, the first author convened a focus group with Bong County Women, a group that meets to discuss issues in the county that impact women and girls.³

The majority of the interviews took place in the capital cities of Freetown and Monrovia because of the relatively centralized government systems in both countries. However, it was felt that in order to gauge the reach of the NAPs it was vital to travel outside the capital cities and so the focus groups were conducted in Port Loko and Bong County, as these areas are more isolated with poorer road networks. The interview questions in both countries covered a number of broad themes, including: the planning, development and implementation of the NAP at all levels; monitoring and evaluation; how the document worked in harmony or conflict with government policy; what the spread and use of the NAP was at the local level; and how the NAPs were used to direct future policy as well as local activities. The questions used in both countries are similar, but with some local variations to capture specific contextual factors. NVivo was used to code the

interview data based on the life cycles of the NAPs from the design stage through to monitoring and reporting.

Who participates?

The gendered question of ‘who’ participates in the NAPs matters because pre-existing (gendered) power relations in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as between different international actors, helped to shape who did and did not participate in the hybrid peacebuilding practice of the NAPs. What is found in the context of the LNAP and SiLNAP is that groups that were well connected to international NGOs were more likely to participate, reflecting a divide of public/private.

Resolution 1325 focuses on a range of institutions and actors. It calls upon member states to implement the resolution while also acknowledging the roles of individuals, institutions and non-state actors such as NGOs. Interaction between these different levels occurs during the implementation of the resolution, but the engagement between different actors also predated implementation. Interaction between these different levels produced the specific version of Resolution 1325 that was passed, and in particular laid a foundation for how coordination across different levels would occur.

A central element of Mac Ginty’s hybridity model is the ability of liberal peace agents to enforce acceptance over the dominant form of liberal peace intervention (Mac Ginty 2011, 9). The UN offered NAPs as the preferred mode of delivery for implementing Resolution 1325, and member states were encouraged to draft their own plans. Statements by presidents of the UNSC offer encouragement for member states to develop NAPs. In particular, two statements are of notable importance:

The Council welcomes the efforts of member states in implementing 1325 (2000) at the national level, including the development of national action plans, and encourages Member States to continue to pursue such implementation. (UNSC 2004, 3)

The Security Council reiterates its call to Member States to continue to implement resolution 1325 (2000), including through the development of national action plans or other national level strategies. (UNSC 2005, 2)

This shows that the encouragement for member states to develop NAPs begins at the ‘top’ of the UN, and filters down through various UN bodies, including UN missions. Just prior to the development of NAPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) actively encouraged the creation of NAPs. OSAGI held two high-level policy dialogues in 2007, one of which took place in Africa (OSAGI 2007, 2008). An assessment conducted prior to this dialogue argued that developing a NAP was a necessary step for implementing Resolution 1325. The question of ‘who’ is clearly part of the focus on encouraging NAPs, as the report references the need for civil society to be involved in implementing the resolution. OSAGI’s claim that NAPs are the only way to recognize women’s contribution to peace is inherently problematic in its assertion that without NAPs it is not possible to recognize how local women’s groups build peace. This reflects the compliance powers of Resolution 1325, as it frames NAPs as the option that member states should take if they want to be ‘in line’ with the UN. The encouragement for member states to use NAPs is still prevalent;

notably, the 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 describes NAPs as a crucial tool for member state accountability in meeting their obligations (UNWomen 2015).

There are multiple actors involved in this compliance power. For example, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) have all written handbooks on how to develop NAPs. OSAGI, INSTRAW and the WILPF assert that civil society should be involved in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of NAPs so as to reflect the specific context of the state (NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security 2005; UN-INSTRAW 2006; WILPF 2013). This clearly represents the compliance power of NAPs to capture local actors, such as CSOs. These manuals assume that the role of CSOs is to pressure their national government to enact NAPs. However, there is no discussion of *which* civil society groups should participate, or how to ensure that they represent an array of interests.

International NGOs (INGOs) and think tanks such as Inclusive Security, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) and International Alert have also encouraged local CSOs to advocate for the development of NAPs. This illustrates the diffusion of the international's incentivizing power through different levels, wherein INGOs can exercise power over local women's groups by incentivizing cooperation with the UN agenda. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, this incentivizing power functions predominantly through aid provision. A respondent in Sierra Leone reflected this sentiment: 'It's a document that is donor driven'.⁴ Another respondent noted:

The bottom line is it doesn't really come from below it's to meet external expectations. It is always tied with aid, there are always people who come and say 'you need this' and people mobilize around it and then they move on to the next one.⁵

The compliance and incentivizing mechanisms from the UN, international NGOs and elite women's activism affected who participated. In post-conflict states such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, the compliance power of NAPs was particularly effective because the presence of a UN peacebuilding mission establishes the UN as an authority and a source of legitimacy. This increases the UN's compliance power in relation to Resolution 1325. According to the UN, in both Liberia and Sierra Leone the respective UN missions supported the development of NAPs as a part of their gender remits (DPKO 2010, 37). The presence of the UN further exerted a specific influence on determining who would participate in the development of the NAPs at a local level. In both cases the strong women's movement produced local elites from women's activism who were well connected to the international community and UN structures, and were therefore incentivized to develop NAPs. Because of hybridity, 'local' actors are always already hybridized, but some are more connected to international actors than others for various reasons, such as personal networks, funding, language and access to international organizations.

From the perspective of some women's groups in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the development of the NAPs was participatory and inclusive. However, other respondents noted that there was a bias towards women's groups in the capitals and towards women's groups whose agenda was already closely aligned with that of Resolution 1325. This is true even for groups who are ostensibly included officially in the NAP process. For example, in Liberia, the CSO Observatory was tasked with monitoring the

implementation of the NAP. Interviews with nine of the seventeen members revealed that some groups felt 'left out' of information and meetings while others reported feeling included. Groups who mentioned international NGO partners and/or better networks and resources connecting them to international actors generally reported greater communication with the MoGD and/or the international community. In Sierra Leone one member of the steering committee tasked for the implementation of the SiLNAP commented that it was the same organizations that attended the meetings. Those involved had been trying to revive the committee and extend its reach, but with little current success due to capacity constraints.⁶ This illustrates the present critique of hybridity's inattention to gendered power relations; the question of which women's groups did or did not participate reflects the privileging of groups who could access the 'international' compared to groups who were less connected or who 'deviated' from the international agenda (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011). Inclusions and exclusions of those involved with the production and implementation of NAPs produces highly gendered divisions of public/private wherein groups with international connections are more likely to be a part of public discourses about women, peace and security in Liberia and Sierra Leone. These gendered inclusions and exclusions also play out when the 'local' engages in resistance to hybrid peacebuilding.

The ability of actors to resist, adapt or ignore liberal peace interventions is a key aspect of hybridity in peacebuilding. A wide variety of actors, from government ministers/ministries to local women's groups, engage in resistance to the agenda and implementation of NAPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Thinking about the ability of local actors to resist intervention is important for destabilizing claims that the targets of intervention are powerless recipients. These local actors all have the potential to alter the liberal peace project. Resistance to the WPS agenda of NAPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone occurred at different levels. At the level of government, ignoring and resisting the NAPs occurred within line ministries implicated in the plans. There was also resistance within national budgets when there were no budget lines for the implementation of the NAPs.

Mac Ginty's (2011) model of hybridity also considers the ability of local actors to present and maintain alternative forms of peace. These processes often work with local customs and traditions that can be at odds with or subvert the liberal peace project. This acknowledges that there are spaces where internal and external actors do not meet, but where peacebuilding takes place. As Mac Ginty (2011) points out, these alternative spaces and those within them are often invisible to 'the international'. Women's groups throughout Liberia and Sierra Leone actively provide alternatives to the WPS agenda of the NAPs.

The women's peace movement that ended the civil war in Liberia represents the most important local alternatives to the LNAP. During the war, local women throughout Liberia organized together across religious and ethnic lines to bring warring factions to the negotiating table. These organizations continued their involvement after the negotiated peace and the arrival of an international peacebuilding intervention when they demanded the inclusion of women in the post-conflict peacebuilding (GNWP 2012).⁷ Women in Liberia recognized their own role in building peace in their countries. This illustrates that women experiencing war can, and do organize for their security, on their own terms, and with the means at hand, without the WPS agenda telling them what is important. Their recognition of their own roles in building peace meant they could capitalize on the WPS agenda to push for implementation of 1325 in Liberia.

In Sierra Leone, the women's movement was buoyant throughout the conflict, campaigning for an end to the war, circulating petitions, and encouraging heads of states to attend peace talks. The strong force of women's activism remains today; they continue pushing for gender and equality, women's empowerment, and encouraging the development of new laws and policies.⁸ As in Liberia, these actions were underway before the peacebuilding project took hold. While the women's peace movement recognized that international instruments like Resolution 1325 could bolster their work, the reach of the document is often limited to those in urban or peri-urban localities. In the more rural areas, and within smaller women's empowerment NGOs, there is less familiarity with the document. However, during the fieldwork many examples were found of women engaging in work that related directly to the pillars of the NAP without knowing that their work was aligned with its agenda. One women's rights activist observed:

In fact, when we spoke to some of them, some had already been implementing aspects of the plan without knowing that they were. But, they had their actions limited to gender-based violence, which is rife in Sierra Leone.⁹

At a local level, CSOs engage in activities that relate to the goals of Resolution 1325, but these groups are doing so intuitively, without anyone telling them that they need to. These respondents were engaged in efforts to address issues identified by local women, as they had done during the war, in the immediate aftermath of the comprehensive peace agreements, and throughout the duration of the UN peacebuilding missions. They present alternatives to the current understandings of who participates in peacebuilding, because frequently they are not identified as 'actors' by international peacebuilders. Their offices may not have phones, electricity or websites, and they may not be invited to take part in meetings at the UN or the gender ministries, but the diverse ranks of local women involved in alternative forms of peacebuilding serve as a reminder of the importance of paying attention to the everyday lived experiences of those who are otherwise marginalized from traditional understandings of war and peace (Sylvester 2013).

The question of 'who' participates in the hybrid peacebuilding practice of the NAPs is not straightforward. It reflects the messy, gendered politics within the halls of international institutions, as well as on the ground in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The compliance and incentivizing power of hybridity includes (or even co-opts) some women's groups while simultaneously excluding others. At the same time, individuals and ministries within the governments engage in resistance to the NAPs and their agenda, whilst local women's groups continue their own peacebuilding in spaces outside of the view of the international outreach.

How do they participate?

The question of 'who' is alone insufficient to get at the gendered power of NAPs as a hybrid peacebuilding practice. The question of *how* actors participate in the NAPs matters because some issues are prioritized over others, and state actors at the national level find ways to avoid or resist implementing the NAPs. What is found in the context of the LNAP and SiLNAP is that while some CSOs used the NAPs to remind their governments of their international commitment to Resolution 1325, SGBV-related programmes

were prioritized over other issues, and state actors can subvert the implementation of NAPs by framing them as a lower priority because they represent ‘women’s issues’.

Participation in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the NAPs provides specific incentives for those involved. The findings of the present research point to a number of ways in which the incentivizing power of Resolution 1325 operates through moral and material incentives connected to the NAPs. Therefore, those creating the NAP can feel like they are part of the ‘international community’, thus providing legitimacy to their work. This can lead to further incentives of financial assistance to continue projects, which has subsequent effects in terms of capacity building and recognition, both nationally and internationally.

In the case of Liberia, several research participants noted that the LNAP was a way in which post-conflict Liberia could ‘speak’ to the international community and show that they are fulfilling their obligations to implement Resolution 1325, thus ‘boosting’ their state legitimacy. Respondents employed by the government during the development of the LNAP and representatives of CSOs expressed this sentiment:

The government wants to be in the international community.¹⁰

It also shows that Liberia is part of the international community. It engages with a specific protocol and shows that Liberia wants to be a part of Global Society.¹¹

When UNSCR 1325 was developed and was calling on countries to develop NAPs for the implementation of 1325, Liberia as signatory to these international instruments saw the need to come up with its action plan.¹²

In Sierra Leone, similar responses about the incentives of NAPs were also features of many interviews. In a similar way to the LNAP, the SiLNAP provided legitimacy for many people working on women’s issues. Nationally it provided a concrete structure around which to coordinate gender issues. A member of the MSWGCA commented:

I can say that having a NAP makes it very specific especially for women’s participation in peace and security issues, rather than just a passing mention as in other documents.¹³

The SiLNAP helps to give a rationale to our work.¹⁴

Responses from CSOs involved in activities to implement the LNAP also referenced it as a tool they used to assess their activities and remind the government of their commitment to women’s equality:

So when you hear CSOs making these arguments in a meeting, face to face with government officials then you feel like, OK, even if they don’t do 100% of what CSOs are saying, there is a platform, somewhere that we can bring them on board and see what they are saying.¹⁵

Similarly in Sierra Leone, CSOs and those working in human rights commented that the document was used to work with the government and affect national policy documents and instruments that focus on women’s specific issues:

We needed a tool with which we can engage the government. The idea for the SiLNAP came from activism and we partnered with the government.¹⁶

We use it to influence policies for example. It was launched in 2010 by the president and had the Gender Offences Act take the lead from 1325. A series of other documents and national

policy frameworks have come from 1325 for example the Gender and Security Policy which the military and police use.¹⁷

These responses reveal that the development of a NAP is a way that Liberia and Sierra Leone can show the international community that they are moving forward on issues of gender equality after the war, as well as to remind their governments of the responsibilities they have for implementing 1325. However, some respondents in both cases noted that the incentivizing power of the international community in developing a NAP was problematic. One respondent noted:

They should have their own policy that is tied to issues that impact women in Liberia, not necessarily policy that is tied to the global agenda of 1325. I think for the NAP the government was pushed by the international community to be in line with global practice and increase global visibility, but that it wasn't necessarily written to address women's issues in Liberia.¹⁸

This sentiment, expressed by a Liberian national working for an INGO, illustrates that the 'how' of participation in the hybrid peacebuilding practice of Resolution 1325 is driven more by international norms and values than by close attention to local needs. Reflecting on the previous respondents' comments on their use of the NAPs, it is a disheartening possibility that NAPs may benefit the international interveners and donors more than the local women they are supposed to support; it may therefore be an example of co-option of the 'national' by the 'international', as referenced in the incentivizing power of Mac Ginty's model (2011). Furthermore, this clearly represents an example of how the gendered power in hybridity privileges certain ways of implementing Resolution 1325 over others (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011). This is not to say that the groups in question have no genuine concern for the needs and issues facing women, but instead that their work and dedication had been redirected by the international through the gendered incentivizing power of the hybrid peace. However, it would be a mistake to assume complete acceptance of the NAP and its incentivizing and compliance power.

In relation to how local actors resist or ignore the WPS agenda of the NAPs, it is useful to think about which issues are prioritized and what this might tell us. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, it was found that when initiatives to implement the NAPs were undertaken, they disproportionately favoured measures related to SGBV¹⁹:

I think that there is too much of a focus on SGBV. The MoGD tends to highlight it more than other issues, maybe because they know they can easily attract donor funding with the issue. It's not that SGBV isn't an issue, it's just that focusing only on it means that other important issues that are really impacting women are not given enough attention.²⁰

Giving primacy to SGBV above other issues such as the promotion of women in leadership, the empowerment of women in economics and politics, and the inclusion of women in peacebuilding programmes tends to reassert that identity (being a woman) is intrinsically linked to interest (needing protection). Ignoring these elements of the NAPs reinforces claims of the state's role to protect vulnerable women without challenging the fundamental structures that disempower women, and without recognizing the myriad experiences and needs which women have outside of the issue of SGBV. While Mac Ginty's model (2010, 2011) allows us to see how locals engage in resistance to peacebuilding, it cannot fully account for which issues locals resist and which issues they don't. As the case of SGBV demonstrates, it is 'easier' to resist the parts of the NAP that challenge

women's fundamental disempowerment by focusing instead on issues that perpetrate the dominate norms of women as victims.

There are multiple other ways in which various local actors resist, ignore or adapt the NAPs and their agendas in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Some of these examples of resistance are overt and some result from the limited capacity of the government to fully implement and enforce the NAPs. This illustrates the ways in which local actors challenge liberal peace programmes, and how their resistance impacts the liberal peace agenda, contributing to a hybrid peace. In Liberia, the low priority given to women's issues within various line ministries, as well as the impact of the state's limited capacity to implement the LNAP, reflects this resistance.

A very clear example of resisting and ignoring the NAP's WPS agenda is found when examining the case of the gender desk officers (GDOs). The LNAP calls for the establishment of a designated GDO in every line ministry that has any responsibility for implementing a part of the LNAP. The present research found that some ministries did not have assigned GDOs, while others often assigned the position to individuals who held no decision-making power (they held positions such as a librarian or secretary) and their line ministries gave them tasks unrelated to gender or the NAPs. This represents more than just limited state capacity, because in some ministries GDOs do have decision-making powers, while in others they do not. It is argued that, at best, the example of the GDOs represents the way in which local actors can ignore elements of the NAPs:

There was a survey on implementation, and most ministries did not have a gender desk officer, or if they do have a GDO they have different responsibilities from what the NAP says they should have. They are not doing what they should be doing; they are maybe planning logistics for the ministry or coordinating cars.²¹

Even when the GDO has decision-making power, there is no guarantee that the rest of the ministry will see the LNAP or gender as a serious issue. A respondent who was the GDO for her ministry explained the view of gender and her role as the focal point in her ministry:

Since I am the gender focal point, the assumption is that anything that has to do with gender is only my job. As soon as anyone sees a letterhead that says 'gender', they give it to me; gender has such a low priority that it is seen that only one person should be doing it.²²

The low level of importance accorded to gender issues and the GDOs can be seen within the 'resistance' of local actors within hybrid peace. Whereas ministries cooperated during the development of the plan, they were cooperating less when it came to implementing the plan. This reflects the gendered dynamics of power unaccounted for in Mac Ginty's model of hybridity (2010, 2011). The 'soft' nature of women's issues and the NAPs illustrate how resistance might result from gendered conceptions of which elements of the hybrid peace can be resisted (women's issues) in contrast to which issues local actors perceive to be less open to resistance.

Gendered power is also reflected in *how* the low capacity of the government contributes to ignoring and resisting the LNAP. In a post-conflict context, where resources are extremely limited and government capacity is low, the WPS agenda of the NAPs is often ignored in favour of 'more important' matters. This is clearly a reflection of the low priority given to gender throughout Liberia's domestic sphere – and throughout

the international sphere. One respondent – a former senator – had been the Chairperson for the Economic Committee during the first few years of the LNAP. He stated: ‘I was really looking forward to seeing 1325 reflected in the national budget, but it wasn’t really’.²³ This reflects an example of how the government selectively ignores an opportunity to build its capacity to fully implement the LNAP. The gendered power relations in such a move are clear, wherein it is easier to ignore the ‘soft’ issue of women.

In Sierra Leone, resistance to the SiLNAP occurs when relevant line ministries frame gender programmes and issues as the sole remit of the MSWGCA. A civil servant echoed these sentiments in an interview:

Every ministry should buy in and see where it comes in. There is a failure to engage with other ministries, departments and agencies to use the document. It should be a national guiding document not just for the MSWGCA. People don’t want to share funding, it’s always limited.²⁴

Similarly, capacity constraints within the MSWGCA hampered the SiLNAP’s implementation. Rather than coordinating relevant policies, plans and documents that have gone before with the SiLNAP, funding for implementation remains issue led. This lack of coordination was frustrating and hampering true implementation. Interviewees commented:

Part of the problem is that it has to be spearheaded by the government and the government moves at a really slow pace. At the end of it all it shows that the government is not committed although they say they are committed.²⁵

I wish the Ministry of Social Welfare was strong enough to coordinate activities. The government doesn’t have enough staff, they are trapped.²⁶

It’s a pity that not much has been done because of the constraints of the government for implementation.²⁷

Resistance towards implementation is perhaps not always deliberate, but it is still an unfortunate reality in post-conflict countries. Despite many women working tirelessly to move the NAPs forward, these barriers arising from limited government capacity and an unwillingness to prioritize gender-based issues mean that full implementation is unlikely to occur. Throughout the interactions between the ‘domestic’ and the ‘international’, the WPS agenda of the NAPs is sometimes resisted, subverted, or even ignored. Choices about what to prioritize – and how to prioritize it – will naturally occur in resource-scarce post-conflict contexts. Choices to ignore or resist the agenda of WPS and the NAPs reflect gendered assumptions that ‘women issues’ are ‘soft issues’. Further, as outlined above, the decisions about NAP implementation often reflect the ongoing association that women are victims in need of protection.

In Liberia, multiple respondents referred to how local women’s groups were ‘doing 1325 before 1325’ or, are ‘doing 1325 without knowing it.’ This illustrates how internal groups engage in alternative forms of peacebuilding not driven by the liberal peace intervention:

When 1325 and the plan came, we realized that we were already doing 1325, we just didn’t know.²⁸

And what we realized is that people were already doing these things in Liberia, but it was not formally structured or called 1325.²⁹

In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, it can be seen that women's groups were presenting alternatives to the NAPs and the agenda of Resolution 1325 by engaging in activities not mentioned in either the resolution or the NAPs. In some cases, this may be because the groups were unaware of the NAPs and Resolution 1325, despite doing work relevant to them; in others, they present alternatives because there is a perception that something is missing from the NAPs or the resolution itself. This can be seen, for example, in the activities of the Bong County Women, who at the time this research was conducted were fundraising to build a hut adjacent to a maternity hospital, so that women accompanying patients could rest and cook in a secure area.³⁰ Similarly, in a focus group in Port Loko with a women's security group from across the district, only five of twenty members interviewed were aware of Resolution 1325 and the SiLNAP. They had been active in solving problems that are not referenced in the SiLNAP, in particular concerning women's land rights. Members of the group were directly involved in settling a woman's land dispute with her family and helping her to get access to her land and have the perpetrator prosecuted.³¹ The alternatives illustrate the hybridity of the Resolution 1325 agenda in post-conflict contexts, inasmuch as local actors are engaging in activities directly related to women's security but without using the resolution or a NAP as a rationale for doing so. Further, it also reveals gendered divisions of power wherein small, local women's organizations are not invited to be involved in formal measures to implement the WPS agenda of the NAPs – thereby feminizing their role through relegating them to the 'private' realm. However, their continued engagement in issues relevant to their own lives and communities strongly demonstrates the ways in which 'the personal is political'.

Conclusion

Mac Ginty's model of hybridity has value for analysing the interactions between international and local actors in peacebuilding (2010, 2011). However, as the present analysis shows, the model is limited because it cannot account for the *varieties* of power, and the ways in which power is gendered in all its forms and guises. As McLeod points out, a gendered analysis of power makes it possible to see how power is 'textured' (2015, 49). In practice, gendered power relations result in the privileging of some actors over others, as well as the tendency to revert to narrow definitions of 'women's issues' that frame women primarily as victims, such as through focusing on SGBV. Gendered relations of power also permeate the international institutions involved in intervention, and the experiences of individuals within those institutions (McLeod 2015; Sylvester 2013). Therefore, these multiple gendered experiences will invariably result in a complex array of relations of power that are most visible when viewed through the lens of gender. When the claim that 'the personal is international, and the international is personal' is taken seriously, it is possible to see how, for example, the gendered experiences of an international intervener impact the ways in which that intervener negotiates the highly gendered environment of a post-conflict state (McLeod 2015; Sylvester 2013). When approached from a gender-neutral stance, Mac Ginty's model of hybridity overlooks the very complexity which it seeks to highlight (2010, 2011).

This article aims to incorporate gendered power into Mac Ginty's model (2010, 2011) by asking the very feminist questions of 'who' participates in the hybrid peacebuilding practice of NAPs and 'how' they participate. The present analysis reveals three insights on the

gendered power implicit in hybridity. Firstly, in relation to ‘who’ participates in a hybrid peacebuilding practice, the compliance and incentivizing power used to capture and co-opt the participation of the ‘local’ in international peacebuilding intervention feminizes the role of local actors. Local actors are included in a perfunctory rather than substantive way, thereby diminishing their agency to devise their own peacebuilding programme. Thinking about gender when thinking about the compliance and incentivizing power in hybridity provides a useful way of unpacking the relations between ‘locals’ and ‘internationals’. It also provides the means by which the nuance of power relations amongst different ‘local’ and ‘international’ actors can be understood, as not all local actors are equally ‘feminized’; for example, actors within the security sector may be able to exert more agency and decision-making power. Similarly, not all international actors exercise ‘masculinized’ power.

Secondly, gendered power in hybridity is evident in how participation takes place. Throughout hybrid peacebuilding practices, such as in the example of the NAPs, interactions that determine which issues to prioritize and how to prioritize them reflect choices that reify, rather than challenge, the dichotomy between the experiences and needs of men and women (for similar conclusions in differing contexts, see Shepherd 2008; MacKenzie 2009; McLeod 2015). Within the case of NAPs, the ways in which this occurs are clear. Issues such as SGBV are given priority, reinforcing the perception that women in post-conflict states are primarily victims who are in need of protection. In interviews, several respondents commented on the privileging of SGBV over other issues, and other respondents pointed implicitly to this in their discussions of how they used the NAPs to frame their activities, wherein the NAPs contain more references to women as victims than women as actors. This prioritization of some issues over others, and the prioritization of issues that reinforce rather than challenge gender roles, might help to provide some nuance to Mac Ginty’s model (2010, 2011). This may help to explain how it is that some issues are at the fore of peacebuilding, while others are relegated to the background – or are more likely to appear as local ‘alternatives’ to the liberal peace.

The final insight offered in this article is a particular reflection on the attempt to ‘instrumentalize’ the hybridity of Resolution 1325 with the use of NAPs. This research has shown that the NAPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone are representative of hybrid peacebuilding. In the NAPs, ‘the international’ attempts to work through local CSOs and the national governments to develop a means of implementing Resolution 1325 that simultaneously reflects the international norms of the WPS agenda and the local contexts. When attempts to instrumentalize hybridity are inevitably met with resistance and subversion from ‘the local’, it is women’s issues and needs that are most likely to be resisted or subverted. This is because gendered power relations makes these issues and needs most easily relegated to the ‘private’ realm or labelled as ‘soft’ issues. The unpredictability of hybrid interactions in the messy context of post-conflict states means that international interventions to implement Resolution 1325 should pay heed to this and adapt accordingly; rather than assuming that NAPs are universally the best means of implementing Resolution 1325, it is important to consider how state actors push NAPs aside after their adoption, and how that act of pushing them aside reflects a clear gendered power, where soft issues can be ignored or subverted during the tumultuous post-conflict period. At the same time, it is clear that women’s groups will continue to organize themselves based on their own

needs and experiences, as reflected by the sentiments that the women in Liberia ‘were doing 1325 before 1325.’

Attempts to orchestrate or instrumentalize hybridity result in the ‘negative’ hybridity critiqued by Richmond (2015), wherein there is no genuine agency attributed to the local, and where existing power structures and hierarchies are reinforced rather than challenged. This has clearly been the case with the NAPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The ‘international’ may have had a genuine desire to implement Resolution 1325 in Liberia and Sierra Leone – but the attempt to do so through NAPs reifies prevailing norms and results in outcomes that were not predicted. Further, the complexity of power relations and the unpredictability of interactions hampers the full implementation of the NAPs.

Future research could expand on the first two insights presented above in order to explore the gendered politics of hybridity in more detail within particular cases or across particular issues. For example, it might be informative to examine the gendered politics of security sector reform (SSR) or state-building by thinking about Mac Ginty’s model (2010, 2011) when ‘wearing gender lenses’. This may help to unpack the nuance of which actors participate in hybrid peacebuilding practices, which actors are excluded through their own choice or through design, and how different issues emerge as primary while other issues are relegated to the margins. Mac Ginty’s model (2010, 2011) offers important explanatory value for unpacking interactions between the international and local actors, but it will continue to overlook some of the details unless it can also account for how both international and local power is gendered.

Notes

1. As clearly elucidated by Mac Ginty, hybridity cannot be engineered because it is something that always has already taken place, and hybridity cannot be managed because attempts to do so cannot possibly account for the multitude of actors, interests and power imbalances (Mac Ginty 2011; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2016).
2. This international–local approach has been examined in other peacebuilding sectors such as the policy transfers in security sector reform (SSR) outlined by Schroeder, Chappuis, and Kocak (2013).
3. The women’s CSO groups whose members were interviewed comprised many of the organizations which were involved in the drafting of the NAPs. In Sierra Leone these include local CSOs committed to providing access to justice and security, those campaigning for good governance and to get more women into politics, women’s activist groups such as the Women’s Forum, and members of regional peacebuilding organizations such as the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Mano River Women’s Peace Network (MARWOPNET). In Liberia, the NAP included a list of the CSO observatory that oversaw the drafting of the NAP, and members of nine of the seventeen groups were interviewed. These include groups committed to access to justice, development and empowerment, rural and urban development groups, and women’s educational organizations such as the Women’s NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) and the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), who are a subsidiary of WANEP.
4. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
5. Interview with an academic and gender consultant conducted by Helen Basini, October 2013 in Freetown.
6. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
7. The Liberian groups include local chapters of WIPNET along with regional organizations such as MARWOPNET and WANEP.

8. For example, since the war there has been considerable movement on gender laws and legislation, including in 2000 the twin national policies on the Advancement of Women and Gender Mainstreaming. Since then the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005) and the three gender acts in 2007, which include the Domestic Violence Act, the Customary Marriage and Divorce Acts and the Devolution of the Estate Act were enacted. Furthermore, the Chieftaincy Act (2009) and the Sexual Offenses Bill (2012) show that the government is beginning to commit to gender equality.
9. Interview with a member of a local women's NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
10. Interview with a former government official conducted by Caitlin Ryan, May 2014 Gbarnga.
11. Interview with a INGO conducted by Caitlin Ryan, May 2014 Monrovia.
12. Interview with a former local government official conducted by Caitlin Ryan, April 2014 Monrovia.
13. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
14. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
15. Interview with a former local government official conducted by Caitlin Ryan, April 2014 Monrovia.
16. Interview with a local government official conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
17. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
18. Interview with a INGO conducted by Caitlin Ryan, April 2014 Monrovia.
19. In the case of Sierra Leone they created an entire NAP on GBV in 2012 in addition to the SILNAP.
20. Interview with a INGO conducted by Caitlin Ryan, April 2014 Monrovia.
21. Interview with a local umbrella organization for NGOs conducted by Caitlin Ryan, April 2014 Monrovia.
22. Interview with a local government official conducted by Caitlin Ryan, May 2014 Monrovia.
23. Interview with a former government official conducted by Caitlin Ryan, May 2014 Gbarnga.
24. Interview with a local government official conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
25. Interview with a local government official conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
26. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
27. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 in Freetown.
28. Interview with a member of a local NGO conducted by Caitlin Ryan, April 2014 in Monrovia.
29. Interview with a INGO conducted by Caitlin Ryan, April 2014 Monrovia.
30. Focus Group with Bong County women's group conducted by Caitlin Ryan, May 2014 Gbarnga.
31. Focus Group with Port Loko Security Group conducted by Helen Basini, November 2013 Port Loko.

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