# "… Operations on the Ground in Distant Countries"

*Norwegian Male Officers' Understanding and Use of the Women, Peace and Security Norms*

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II

# Abstract

The Women, Peace and Security resolutions promotes norms along the pillars of participation, protection, prevention and recovery and relief. The norms seek to, among other things, improve women's participation in conflict management, strengthen the protection of women's rights and bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations and promote the use of a gender perspective when dealing with conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. However, it is not always clear what this means in practice. This thesis takes as its point of departure that the Women, Peace and Security norms are dynamic processes and a work in progress. Practitioners shape and fill the norms with content as they work to realise the norms in different contexts and situations.

Military organisations play an important role in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security norms, as they are important actors in questions related to security and conflict management. To better understand how the Women, Peace and Security norms are interpreted and put into practice by military practitioners in Norway, this thesis examines how male officers – as holders of formal and informal power and gatekeepers to the military organisation – understand and use these norms. It also examines the identity construction involved on the officers' discourse on Women, Peace and Security, as this highlights important dimensions of the officers' understanding and use of the norms.

I find that the officers, in many regards, have an instrumental understanding and use of the Women, Peace and Security norms, concentrating on how the norms can contribute to improve the Norwegian Armed Forces' ability to solve the mission. The interviews also suggest that the officers struggle to find the norms' relevance and meaning in many contexts and situations. Moreover, I find examples of identity constructions where the Women, Peace and Security norms are considered a natural part of the Norwegian Self's identity, as opposed to the Other, which in many instances has a different culture or attitude with regards to these norms. In the interview material, the Women, Peace and Security norms seem to be easier to understand and is perceived as more relevant to use in the meeting with the Other, typically in international operations where the Norwegian Armed Forces operate in a different cultural setting, meet different gender roles and interact with people living in the area of operation.

# Acknowledgements

# Abbreviations

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

IGO – Inter-governmental Organisation.

NAF – Norwegian Armed Forces.

NAP – National Action Plan.

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation.

OF – Officer.

PRT – Provincial Reconstruction Team.

RQ – Research Question.

S.l. – sine loco (without place, for references where place of publication is unknown).

UN – United Nations.

UNSC – United Nations Security Council.

UNSCR – United Nations Security Council Resolution

WPS – Women, Peace and Security.

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**Tables**

# 1 Introduction

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted its Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (UNSCR 1325). This was the first of several Women, Peace and Security (WPS) resolutions that deal with "the gendered impacts of war, violence, and security practices" (George, Lee-Koo and Shepherd 2019:311).[1] These resolutions are seen as a set of international norms along the pillars participation, protection, prevention and recovery and relief. Women's rights activists, supporter states and the UN Security Council seek to promote these norm to UN bodies, states and international institutions and make part of peace and security governance (Davies and True 2019:3-4; George, Lee-Koo and Shepherd 2019:312-313, 320; True-Frost 2007; O'Reilly 2019; Bastick and de Torres 2010:3). Therefore, we need to know more about how these norms are understood and used in different settings and contexts, including in militaries. This is where this thesis makes its contribution through in-depth interviews with Norwegian officers.

The WPS resolutions, which is often referred to as the WPS agenda, highlight that women and men, girls and boys experience conflict differently and that armed conflict affects them in different ways (Cohn 2008:185). The military's role within the WPS agenda is disputed between an instrumental and a rights-based strand of thought (Davies and True 2019:5). Nevertheless, as argued by Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:2) "whether military organizations are seen as hurdles or supporters, they are impossible to overlook as key components in any strategy to promote women's rights or a gender perspective in security affairs". One example of this can be seen in Norway, where the Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF) have been assigned an important role in the work of implementing the WPS agenda in Norway (Kvarving 2014:125, 136, 145).

The WPS norms seek to increase women's participation in conflict management and conflict resolution, to improve the protection of women from sexualised violence in conflict and post-conflict settings as well as the protection of women's rights, and promote the use of a gender perspective (Tryggestad 2014:106). However, the WPS norms remain ambiguous, and it is not clear what participation, protection and applying a gender perspective mean in practice in a military setting. The WPS norms and the process of realising them is a *work in progress*.

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[1] See comments on referencing style in appendix no. 2.

The content of the norms is dynamic and there are "tensions and ambivalences as state and non-state actors struggle, compete and collaborate to define and implement the atypical security agenda" (Davies and True 2019:3-4, 6, citation p. 4). Therefore, according to Davies and True (2019:11), "scholars must be sensitive to how the WPS agenda will be directly encountered by peace and security actors on the ground, including activists, practitioners, and politicians". It is the practitioners at state level (experts, bureaucrats, military personnel, police, etc.) who turn the norms into practice.

Moreover, research suggests that there are many obstacles and shortcomings in the implementation of the WPS resolutions. From a broad geographic and thematic perspective, the Global Study from 2015 pointed at low numbers of legal prosecutions of sexual violence, low participation of women in peace processes, few countries with National Action Plans (NAP, not to be confounded with NAF) for WPS and little funding for WPS programmes (Coomaraswamy 2015:14-15). In the case of the NAF, the implementation of the WPS resolutions has in many regards has been unsatisfactory and uneven. Much remains with regard to the use of the resolutions' provisions in operations and to the recruitment and retainment of women (Andreassen, Holan and Skotnes 2009; Solhjell 2010:10-11; Schjølset 2010:8; Solhjell et al. 2012:16-20; Ellingsen 2013). Additionally, the Armed Forces are characterised by exclusionary and traditional masculinity ideals that are reproduced in practices, hegemonic discourses and status-seeking among Allied soldiers (Rones 2015a:55, 75-77; Rones and Fasting 2017; Totland 2009:iii, 111-114). Other veins of research claim that organisational culture and lack of leadership and knowledge provide difficult conditions for the necessary changes to implement the WPS agenda (Kvarving 2019:9; Skeie 2018:74).

To better understand how the WPS norms are understood and used in practice in a military setting, and to contribute to improve our understanding of the process of implementing these norms in the NAF, I therefore examine how Norwegian military practitioners understand (interpret and fill with content) and use (turn into practice) the WPS norms. I concentrate on male military practitioners, because men make up the majority of the NAF' personnel, and historically, male predominance has been the rule (Totland 2014:75; Hanson et al. 2017:8; Norwegian Armed Forces 2020:3, 86). In other words, men constitute the main group of implementers of the WPS norms (Solhjell 2010:11) and they hold both the informal and formal power in the military organisation (Andreassen and Ingalls 2009:268). More

specifically, I concentrate on male *officers*, as officers hold important functions as senior staff members or leaders with regards to the implementation of the WPS norms (Kvarving 2019:147-153, 164-167).

## 1.1    Research Question

I raise two research questions (RQ) in this thesis. First, I ask:

> *RQ 1: How do male officers in the Norwegian Armed Forces understand and use the norms of the Women, Peace and Security resolutions?*

I concentrate on the norms related to the protection and participation pillars of the WPS resolutions as well as to the use of a gender perspective, as these norms get most attention in the assignments that the NAF receive from the Ministry of Defence. I have a particular focus on protection, participation and gender perspective *in the planning and carrying out of operations*, as planning and carrying out of operations are at the core of the armed forces' tasks (Kvarving 2014:132).

This first research question how the ambiguous WPS norms are filled with content and turned into practical action by military practitioners. This process of making sense of norms involves questions of collective identity as interpreting and turning norms into practice shape and interact with our common perceptions of who we, as a collective, are. To complement the first question, I therefore ask:

> *RQ2: How is identity constructed in the officers' discourse on Women, Peace and Security?*

To answer these two research questions, I conduct qualitative in-depth interviews with 13 male officers at the OF3-OF5 (Major, Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel)[2] level in the NAF. The interviews were conducted during the spring, summer and autumn of 2020. They covered central concepts in the WPS resolutions and the assignments that the NAF are given with regards to WPS as well as the officers' experiences with WPS. This way, the interviews

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[2] Lieutenant Commander, Commander and Captain respectively in the Navy.

explore how these officers understand (interpret, make sense of) and use (turn into practice) the WPS norms in their work. The information provided during the interviews should be considered as the officers' personal opinions, reflections and experiences.

To analyse the interview material, I take a discursive approach to international norms. Krook and True (2010) suggest that norms should be considered sense-making practices and dynamic processes, where practitioners interpret the norms and link them to existing norm sets as they turn the norms into practice. To structure the analysis of identity construction in the officers' discourse about the WPS norms I Use Hansen's (2006) concept of linking and differentiation. This identity construction highlights important dimensions of the officers' use and understanding of the norms.

By answering these research questions, this thesis makes two contributions. First, it contributes to building knowledge about how military practitioners understand the WPS norms and how the norms, as dynamic processes and a work in progress, are used and turned into practice (see Krook and True 2010; Davies and True 2019). This contributes to bring WPS and feminist research and activism closer together with the military perspectives and practices. This is an underexposed topic in existing literature and theoretical approach that should be followed up in future research, according to Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:142-143). Second, it contributes to map out examples of implementation of the norms in the NAF and to explain the process of implementation in this organisation by suggesting possible reasons for the status in which the implementation finds itself, which are two gaps in the literature according to Kvarving (2019:49).

## 1.2    Main Argument

In my interview material, I find that the male officers understand and use the WPS norms in an instrumental way, focusing on how the norms can help the NAF solve missions in a better way. At the same time, I find many examples of uncertainty about how the norms should be understood, what they should mean in practice and illustrations of the officers struggling with finding the norms' relevance in the planning and carrying out of operations. The officers consider the norms to be relevant in international rather than national operations, and understand the gender perspective as a matter of cultural sensitivity and knowledge rather

than a matter of gender equality. Furthermore, the interviews suggest that the officers construct a collective identity through linking and juxtaposing the Self with the Other. The WPS norms are considered as natural to the Self, as gender equality is considered a natural and incorporated part of Norwegian identity, whereas the Other is constructed as having less progressive or different attitudes to WPS. The identity construction can thus serve as a prism through which the WPS norms become easier to understand and use. The thesis' title "operations on the ground in distant countries", which refers to a statement by one of the informants, captures these dimensions well: the WPS norms are considered relevant in operations abroad, where the NAF operate on the ground in different cultural settings, meet different gender roles and interact with people living in the area of operation. In this understanding, the constructed Self and its practices meets the constructed Other and its practices.

## 1.3    An Outline of the Thesis

I start off by a review of the literature, where I present the WPS norms, some conflict lines and gaps in the WPS literature as well as relevant findings and theory on WPS in the Norwegian Armed Forces. Here, I also justify my focus on male officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms more in detail. Then, I turn to the analytical framework, where I outline the discourse-theoretical approach to norms as processes and identity construction. This is the theory I use to analyse the interview data. The methods chapter describes the methods I have used and discuss methodological considerations. The analysis chapter begins with an elaboration of the ambiguity of the WPS norms in the UNSC resolutions and in Norwegian policy documents. Then I analyse the interview data to examine how the male officers understand and use the WPS norms in their work as well as the identity construction in the officers' discourse on WPS. Finally, I conclude and discuss the implications of my findings in the conclusion chapter.

# 2 Literature Review

In this chapter, I identify the gaps in the literature that my thesis contributes to fill, and I contextualize the creation of the WPS resolutions. Then, I ask how what the WPS norms look like and how they can be interpreted and what it might entail for the NAF. I also map out the conflict lines in the WPS literature and the shortcomings in the NAF's implementation of the WPS norms.

## 2.1    Gaps in the Literature

Based on their study of the Swedish Armed Forces, Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:142-143) call for more research on the process of implementing the WPS resolutions in other countries and on how the use of a gender perspective affect military operations. They argue that there is little interaction between (1) the military field and (2) the gender and feminist fields of research. Furthermore, few existing contributions study examples of real implementation or seek to explain the current shortcomings in implementation in the NAF (Kvarving 2019:49).

My review of the literature demonstrates that the WPS norms are contested in terms of content and can be considered dynamic processes. It also demonstrates that male officers play an important role in the implementation of the WPS resolutions in the NAF. Therefore, we need to know more about how the WPS norms are understood and used by male officers. Elvebakken (2017:4-5, 62-64) has studied norm contestation in the Norwegian WPS governmental and civil society expert community, using a partly similar approach to the WPS norms as I do in this thesis. However, to my knowledge, there are no comprehensive studies of the WPS norms as contested and as dynamic processes within a military setting in Norway and there exists no study that examines how Norwegian male officers understand and use the WPS norms.

## 2.2    Contextualising the Creation and Introduction of the WPS Agenda

Women's and feminist movements have engaged in peace and security at least since the mid-1800s. Often, the struggle for women's rights and liberation was linked to the struggle for

peace. For instance, female peace activists and feminist organisations engaged in the opposition to the First World War and in the promotion of peace in the interwar years and they highlighted the health risks associated with nuclear weapons in the post-war period (see Stearns 2014:105, 116, 118-119, 128, 149, 195). The WPS agenda has its roots in the World Conferences on Women in 1975 and, particularly 1995, with the Beijing Platform for Action and its focus on the gendered impact of war and the need to strengthen women's participation and protection. Cooperation between civil society, the UN and particularly certain elected members of the UN Security Council was eventually crucial to get the UNSCR 1325 resolution adopted in 2000 (George, Lee-Koo and Shepherd 2019:311-312). Together with internal UN efforts on women's issues and NGO's growing influence, the new security dynamics and a focus on human security[3] during the 1990s were also driving forces in the process of creating the resolutions. There was a shift from inter- to intra-state conflict, the inviolability of the state sovereignty and non-intervention principles were questioned and the concept of security expanded to comprise human security as well as the traditional state security (Tryggestad 2009:542-543).

## 2.3　The WPS Agenda as a Work in Progress

The WPS resolutions constitute a normative framework that the UN Security Council wants to promote to the UN organisation and to UN member states (even if it is not a legally binding framework) (Bastick and de Torres 2010:3-4; True-Frost 2007; Tryggestad 2009:544; Davies and True 2019:12 (footnote)). The content of the WPS norms is contested, the language of the UNSCR 1325 is not strong and it contains few decisions with concrete implications. Therefore, these norms can be considered a work in progress, where different state and non-state actors work to define and turn the norms into practice (Davies and True 2019:3-4, 6; Tryggestad 2009:544).[4] This approach fits into the understanding of international norms as processes rather than static entities (see Wiener 2009; Krook and True 2010). International norms are typically vague and ambiguous to create consensus (Bailey 2008 and van Kersbergen and Verbeek 2007, both in Krook and True 2010:109), and norm change takes

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[3] Whereas state security emphasises the state (its institutions and founding ideas) as the referent object of security and military instruments to achieve security, human security emphasises the interdependent and border-crossing nature of security threats and considers people (individuals) to be referent objects and development as the instrument to achieve security (Collins 2016:2; Jackson 2016:205; United Nations Development Programme 1994:22-23).

[4] See comments on references to the Security Council Resolutions in appendix no. 2.

time. In the following, I outline what the resolution say about the participation and protection pillars as well as the key provision of applying a gender perspective,[5] which are the most relevant categories of norms for the NAF (Tryggestad 2014:105-106). This provides a starting point for understanding the topic at hand and a basis for the discussion of ambiguity in the WPS norms in the analytical section.

### 2.3.1    The Norms in the WPS Resolutions

The UNSCR 1325 implies that the Armed Forces must recruit female peacekeepers (*participation*), plan and carry out peacekeeping missions while applying a *gender perspective* and make sure that soldiers, officers and others receive pre-deployment gender-sensitive training. The resolution states that women's participation, protection of women and girls and prevention of violence against them are important aspects of the process of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts (UNSC 2000: fourth, fifth, eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs, operative paragraphs 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10; Tryggestad 2014:105-107). The other WPS resolutions highlight several issues related to these broader provisions of protection, participation and gender perspective, which are relevant for the NAF. This overview is inspired by Tryggestad (2014:107-109) and complemented with the latest resolutions (UNSC 2013a: fifth preambular paragraph; UNSC 2015: twelfth preambular paragraph, operative paragraphs 8, 9, 10; UNSC 2019a: operative paragraphs 1, 24, 26, 28, 32; UNSC 2019b: operative paragraph 2):

➢ *Protection* and *prevention*: peacekeepers should receive training in how to handle and report sexualised violence[6] (resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960, 2106 and 2467), parties to conflict should combat sexual violence through clear orders, codes of conduct and enforcement of accountability (resolution 2467), the norm of zero tolerance for sexual abuse conducted by persons in UN service must be improved (resolutions 1820, 2106 and 2242) and sexual exploitation and abuse must be addressed through training and judicial processes (resolution 2242);

➢ *Participation*: there must be more women in national military and police units and more military women must be deployed in operations abroad (resolutions 1888 and

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[5] Applying a gender perspective is also referred to as gender mainstreaming, which means to mainstream the use of a gender perspective (see Egnell, Hojem and Berts 2014:21).

[6] Conflict-related sexual violence can be defined as "sexual violence by armed organizations during armed conflict" (Wood 2015:458).

2122), women should have equal opportunities to work in security positions (resolution 2467) and there is a need to have more women in important positions and at other levels in peacekeeping (resolutions 2493 and 2242);

➢ *Gender perspective*: the particular situation and needs of women and girls must be taken into consideration, both during operations and during disarmament, demobilisation and re-integrations programmes for people who have been involved in armed groups (resolutions 1889 and 2122) and several resolutions also highlight the role of men and boys both in fulfilling the goals of the resolution and as potential victims (resolutions 2106, 2242 and 2467).

### 2.3.2    Norm Ambiguity in the WPS Literature

The debate within the WPS literature contains conflict lines that can also serve to exemplify how the WPS norms are contested and a work in progress. First, some argue that the WPS norms and the use of these norms have a strong emphasis on women as victims and in need of protection, especially from conflict-related sexualised violence (see for instance Kreft (2016:134, 153-154)). Together with the representation of women as peacemakers, this victim representation constitutes an essentialist[7] and stereotypical understanding of women. This precludes women's role as agents and limits the international engagement to "provid[ing] paternalistic protection for women" (Aoláin and Valji 2019:54-55, citation p. 55; Gibbings 2011:533-535; Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011:493-495).

Second, the applicability of the WPS norms is contested. Actors typically consider the norms to be relevant abroad, but not at home. This external focus is often found in National Action Plans (Shepherd 2016). Moreover, the WPS norms are often considered relevant in some types of conflict, like conventional, inter-state conflicts, but not in internal conflicts (Aoláin and Valji 2019:57-58).

Third, there is a tension between an instrumental and a rights-based approach to the WPS norms. The instrumental approach emphasises that the WPS norms could be used to improve military operations, by making them more efficient and more considerate. The rights-based approach rejects such militarised approaches to WPS and emphasises women's right to

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[7] Essentialism can be described as "a mind-set that claims to recognize the unchanging essence of individual and social identity, and which then connects views and behaviour to identity" (Smith 2001:34).

participate (Davies and True 2019:4-6). The rights-based approach is transformative and seeks more fundamental change than simply using the WPS norms as an add-on to military operations. This transformation can consist of a reduction in the military organisation's masculine characteristics and a change in the military personnel's and state's perception of conflict and security as well as the way the armed forces manage conflict (Egnell, Hojem and Berts 2014:14, 34). It can also constitute of more anti-militarist and system-critical components, which have traditionally characterised feminist engagement in this field.

Critics argue that the UN's speech practices make such anti-militarist talk and criticism difficult (Gibbings 2011:532-535). Moreover, they argue that the Security Council's engagement in the agenda has contributed to upheld the traditional, militarised and state-centric understanding of the security architecture (Otto 2016:1-2, 4, 10). There is a scepticism towards the instrumental approach because it does not necessarily promote transformative change, it is potentially narrow and based on essentialist understanding of women, and there is a risk of the agenda being co-opted (Egnell, Hojem and Berts 2014).

Taking a middle position, Kirby and Shepherd (2016:391-392), argue that compromise probably have been necessary to promote the agenda. However, the more radical aspects of the agenda, which the necessary compromise cannot achieve, must still be the standard for measuring progress. Likewise, Davies and True (2019:4-6) promote a *pragmatist* approach, which opens for incremental change and is concerned with finding solutions that work. This involves compromise between the partly revolutionary content of the WPS agenda and the political realities of the interaction between the agenda and states and militaries.

From a pragmatist point of view, the WPS agenda must engage with problematic institutions to create change (Davies and True 2019:4-5). According to Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:2), militaries are necessarily part of the work to change how conflict and security are dealt with and strengthen women's position. Just as there is scepticism to a militarised approach to WPS among certain promoters of the agenda, there is scepticism towards the implementation of the WPS norms in the military because it is considered to weaken military effectiveness[8]. Women are seen as physically weaker and because the principles of gender perspective and gender balance are thought to make the military culture more adapted to society's demands rather

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[8] Military effectiveness can be defined as "the ability to produce favorable military outcomes" (Biddle 2017).

than those of war. In many contemporary conflicts, this zero-sum approach to (1) military effectiveness and (2) gender perspectives and the WPS is flawed, as the gender perspective can improve military effectiveness and improve the situation of women during conflict, for instance through better information gathering and better protection of civilians (Egnell, Hojem and Berts 2014:23-39).

### 2.3.3    Implementing the Ambiguous WPS Norms

A term which I often use in this thesis, is "implementation" of the WPS norms. It is therefore useful to clarify what this means and how it relates to the idea that the WPS agenda is a work in progress. From the point of view of public policy literature, implementation can be seen as putting actions into place to achieve a policy goal (see e.g. Winter 2011:2-3). For instance, the NAF must take certain actions to realise the goals in the WPS resolutions. However, given the ambiguity of the WPS norms, part of this process of implementation is interpreting the norms, linking them to existing norms and figuring out how to convert them into practice. We can think this as the WPS norms being a work in progress or dynamic processes where practitioners play a role in shaping the content of the norms and what they mean in practice (see Davies and True 2019:6, 11; Krook and True 2010:104-105, 109, 122-123).

## 2.4    Male Officers and WPS

Following the idea that the WPS agenda is a work in practice, and that international norms are dynamic processes, practitioners play an important role in the development and practical implementation of international norms (Davies and True 2019; Krook and True 2010). In a military setting, male officers constitute a particularly interesting group of practitioners. It is likely that men's understanding and use of the WPS norms will influence the military organisation's implementation of the WPS resolutions and how they are turned into practice (see also Andreassen and Ingalls 2009:273; Sveide 2017:63-65).

Connell (2005:1801-1802; 2003:4) argues that gender equality requires that men and boys support it, and that they are willing to change behaviour and masculinity ideals. According to this view, men can be considered gatekeepers for gender equality, as there is a gendered distribution of, among other things, political and cultural power in men's favour in society. Men make up the majority of the personnel in the NAF, and probably hold formal and

informal power in the military organisation (Andreassen and Ingalls 2009:268). In other words, men can be considered "gatekeepers" to the military organisation and the recognition of attitudes and topics that are valued and considered important.

For instance, Hovde (2010:65-66) finds that male leaders in the NAF do not properly understand the benefits from more women in the NAF. He suggests that this might contribute to explain why the NAF do not reach the political goals for more women in the organisation. Furthermore, Solhjell (2010:11) argues that because men make up the majority of the personnel, they are also the ones that must put the norms related to protection from and prevention of sexualised violence into practice. Likewise, the Men, Peace and Security perspective highlights men as agents and participants in the work for gender equality and men as possible victims of sexualised violence (Kirby and Shepherd 2016:386-387).

Furthermore, existing research suggests that the changes associated with the implementation of the WPS agenda and the use of a gender perspective must have the leadership's support (Kvarving 2014:145). For instance, Kvarving (2019:236) points to the military leaders' relationship with the masculine military organisation and the absence of transformational leadership when she explains the lack of implementation of the WPS agenda in the NAF (see also Skeie 2018:74). Furthermore, measures to strengthen the NAF in qualitative terms after the end of the Cold War have been characterised by bottom-up dynamics (Bogen and Håkenstad 2015:335-336, 338, 341). This suggests that it is analytically fruitful to examine the experiences, understandings and perspectives of personnel in the military organisation (but not necessarily among the top leaders, i.e. generals and admirals), to shed light upon bottom-up driven change in the case of WPS.

Therefore, I concentrate on officers at the OF 3-OF 5 level (Major – Colonel).[9] Officers are supposed to be generalists with responsibility for "leadership, command and control"[10] (Prop. 111 LS (2014–2015):6, 25-26, citation p. 26, my translation). Part of their job is therefore to prioritise and assess what is important and what is less important to fulfil a mission or solve an assignment, as. As such, they are potentially influential players in the process where the strategic guidelines from the politicians and the top-leadership of the Armed Forces, including

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[9] Thanks to Sigbjørn Halsne and Stein Helge Kingsrød for input on this point.
[10] Original wording in Norwegian: "ledelse, kommando og kontroll".

the provisions in the WPS agenda, are transformed into operational plans and then carried out in practice on the ground (see more on this process in Norwegian Command and Staff College 2019:11-12). Officers at this level hold senior or leadership jobs, or they have held such jobs, which makes them representatives of a group of practitioners who are supposed to use, interpret and/or put the WPS norms into practice in their military job at higher or lower levels of the military organisation.

In other words, this group of informants can provide useful insight into both the process of implementation of the WPS resolutions in the NAF and how the WPS norms are turned into practice in a military setting. However, there is no study that examines how male officers understand and use the WPS norms.

## 2.5    WPS in the Norwegian Armed Forces

Using Kvarving's (2019:46-50) review of the literature as a starting point, I will go through the central findings about Norway's implementation of the WPS resolutions.

Rones (2015a:55, 75-77) argues that the NAF are still characterised by masculinity ideals such as the outdoorsman and, increasingly, the warrior. Rones and Fasting (2017:154-159) claim that traditional masculinity ideals of the military organisation and of important allies are reproduced through, *inter alia*, complicit masculinity in Norway's and Norwegian military personnel's status-seeking in NATO and among personnel from key allies like Great Britain and the USA. Despite finding little evidence of military masculinity among Norwegian personnel deployed abroad in the 1990s and early 2000s, Haaland (2012:63-64, 72-73) argues that there is a conservative view of female personnel and women living in the area of operation in the NAF. This suggests that there are elements of a male and masculine-centred military culture and warrior culture that seem to persist as the basis for military professional identity. These characteristics of the NAF might make it more difficult to integrate women in the military organisation, and to implement a gender perspective in international military operations and get the full benefit from it (Andreassen and Ingalls 2009:270-271; on masculinity and warrior culture, see also Gussgard 2018:96-97; Totland 2009:iii, 111, 113-114).

Moreover, women's participation in the NAF remains low. Indeed, the female percentage of conscripts increased from approximately five percent to 25 percent between 2007 and 2017, which is partly due to the introduction of gender-neutral conscription. There has also been a slight increase in the female percentage of military employees during this period (Hanson et al. 2017:8). Women made up 13 per cent of the military employees and 33 per cent of civilian employees in 2019 (Norwegian Armed Forces 2020:86). The Armed Forces have had problems recruiting enough for international operations. In Afghanistan, the Armed Forces experienced having too few female soldiers to ensure proper contact with local women (Solhjell et al. 2012:16-18). This makes the participation of women in the area of operations more difficult. Furthermore, the NAF have had problems retaining military women (Schjølset 2010:5, 23).

Furthermore, knowledge and awareness about gender issues have not been satisfactory and the prioritisation of this has been limited during Norway's military engagement in Afghanistan. From 2005 to approximately 2008, the Norwegian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Meymaneh had little contact with local women, gender issues were generally not prioritised and there was very little knowledge about the UNSCR 1325 (Andreassen, Holan and Skotnes 2009:84, 89, 91-93, 95-96). In late 2011, at least the military part of the PRT started to talk to local women, use mixed and an ad how female engagement teams, as well as increase the attention on gender issues and the UNSCR 1325. However, the structures remained, in many regards, ad hoc, the focus on gender issues varied with different PRT commanders and there was a lack of an overall strategy and concrete measures for implementing UNSCR 1325 (Ellingsen 2013:10-11, 17-18, 21, 23, 25). Likewise, Solhjell's (2010:10-11) findings suggest that the role of sexualised violence in training of personnel going on UN missions has been dependent upon individual instructors, and that mainstreaming of the UNSCR 1325 in the NAF and the attention to sexualised violence has been limited. Solhjell argues that the UNSCR 1325 has not been part of the measurement of effectiveness and degree of accomplishment during operations.

In other words, as pointed out by Kvarving (2014:137, 140-141). the Armed Forces' operational units have not emphasised the gender perspective in planning and carrying out of operations. The Defence Staff has not been able to "translate" the UNSCR 1325-related assignments from the political leadership into concrete military tasks and justifications and

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that is considered relevant and possible for the military organisation to implement. It is possible that there is lack of understanding among military leaders of the role that the gender perspective plays in military activity

This gives a rather negative picture of the implementation of the WPS resolutions in the NAF. Several attempts have been made to explain the status of implementation in the NAF. Kvarving (2019:17) examines the "cultural, structural and functional factors" that "promote or prevent implementation of UNSCR 1325, gender perspectives and gender policies in both the military organisation and military operations". She finds, among other things, that "an organisational culture that is resistant to change" and "lack of transformational leadership skills" are two of the reasons for the poor implementation in the NAF, and that theories on masculinities provide analytical leverage (Kvarving 2019:9 (citation), 236 (citation)). Skeie (2018:(Skeie 2018:5 (citation), 23-24, 74-75) argues that "the mixed achievement of internal implementation is due to the effect of path dependence" and insufficient knowledge of and leadership on gender issues.

## 2.6    This Thesis' Contribution

My research provides two sets of findings that contribute to fill the two gaps in the literature that I have discussed in this review. First, it contributes to build knowledge about the WPS norms as processes and how they are understood by military practitioners. This contributes to bring the field of military activity, from the perspective of practitioners, together with WPS as a political agenda and gender research. Second, as men play an important role in the implementation of the WPS norms in the military organisation, my research can contribute to explain the process of implementation in the NAF. This way, the thesis is interesting both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective, and it complements the contributions by Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014: see e.g. pp. 3-4 ) and Kvarving (2019).

# 3 Analytical Framework

To examine how male officers, who are practitioners, understand and use the WPS norms in their jobs, I need an analytical framework with a theoretical component that can support the study of these practitioners' understanding and use of international norms. Krook and True's (2010) discursive approach to international norms allows me to study the WPS norms as dynamic processes influenced by those who turn the norms into practice as well as the norms' meaning-making function and their meaning in use. We can think of this as the meaning of the norms is being perceived as continuously shaped and reshaped through practices. This allows me to study the interaction between the WPS norms and the military institution, through the officers' interpretation of the norms (internal dynamism) and their linking of the norms to existing sets of norms (external dynamism). I complement this with Hansen's (2006) discursive approach to identity construction, as it helps me highlight important dimensions of identity construction in the officers' discourse on the WPS norms. This way, it is possible to answer both how the officers "understand", which a is a question of interpretation and meaning making, and "use", which is a question of practice, the WPS norms. It is also possible to answer how identity is constructed in the officers' discourse on WPS. This chapter concentrates mostly on the theoretical components of the analytical framework. The methods and methodological details are explained in the next chapter.

## 3.1    International Norms as Dynamic Processes

Norms can be defined as "values, principles and procedures that are widespread and institutionalized" or "as a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity" (Krook and True 2010:106; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:891). Krook and True (2010: see esp. pp. 104-105, 108-111) take Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998: see esp. pp. 895-905) arguments, as well as similar constructivist ideas, further by pointing out that norms are not static "things" that are spread, go through a cascade and are internalised. Rather, we must analyse norms as dynamic processes. The wide, or even vague, formulation of norms, which is necessary for norms to spread and states to agree to adhere to them, opens for different interpretations and changing meanings of the norm in use (see also Wiener 2009). In other words, international norms are often ambiguous.

According to this view, norms "are mediated by agents, who give norms varied content and seek to link or separate them from others in the broader normative environment" (Krook and True 2010:108). For instance, the staff in ministries, armed forces, police forces, etc. operationalise the ideas and norms of the WPS resolutions and embed them in practices. These actors make interpretations and debate what the WPS norms mean as they put them into practice (internal dynamism), and they put the WPS norms into relation with other existing norms for different reasons and with various motivations (external dynamism) (Krook and True 2010:109-111).

In other words, I concentrate on the spread, evolution and impact of the WPS norms from the point of view of *practitioners* at the *domestic* level. Krook and True (2010:122-123) concentrate on dynamism among IGO and NGO staff and transnational and local activists. I extend this following Davies and True's (2019:11) recommendation to pay attention to local actors as practitioners. This is still in line with Krook and True's (2010:109, 122-123) advice, as I study how norms are filled with content by the local actors who convert the norms into concrete actions and measures.

### 3.1.1   A Discursive Approach

A discourse can be defined as "a cohesive ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations about a specific object that frame that object in a certain way and, therefore, delimit the possibilities for action in relation to it" (Epstein 2008:2). Discourses are collective perceptions that are constituted by normative and descriptive ideas and expressed in language. The normative ideas say something about what is right and valuable. The descriptive ideas say something about how the world works and the impact of our actions. A discourse is, in other words, a collective frame of meaning, i.e. a *structure* of normative and descriptive ideas about the world, into which an individual will put statements about and perceptions of the world to make sense of them (Bratberg 2017:34-36;  see also Dunn and Neumann 2016:4).[11] We often refer to these sense-making structures, or models, as representations. These representations constitute reality the way it *appears* to individuals (Neumann 2001:32-33, 60; Dunn and Neumann 2016:5)

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[11] Thanks to Inger Skjelsbæk for pointing this out.

Theorising international norms from a discursive starting point, Krook and True (2010:108) argue that norms are "sensemaking practices". Applying Epstein's (2008:6) understanding of discourse to the WPS agenda, we can say that the normative and descriptive ideas of the WPS resolutions, as a discourse, give a certain meaning to the world and the objects within it (for example women, the Armed Forces or an area of operation). Moreover, this discourse provides actors with a platform (a so-called subject position, meaning an "I" or a "we") to talk from, and it enables and constrains action. In other words, these normative and descriptive ideas make up collective frames of meaning or interpretation that individuals use to make sense of the world, as well as what choices to make and how to act. When these actions are patterned, they are analytically perceived as practices (Bratberg 2017:35-36, 39; Dunn and Neumann 2016:2).

Discourses are *relational* and shifting. From a discourse theoretical point of view, meaning is made when signs (for example words in written or oral language) are put in a contingent (and shifting) relationship to each other (Epstein 2008:5, 7). This means that the structure is not fixed, and that a discourse is always contingent and may be contested. As such, it is also open-ended and emergent. However, when a certain frame of meaning is constructed it can push other frames of meaning aside and put constraints on relationship between different constructions of meaning. In other words, this friction between different frames of meaning illustrates how meaning is tightly interwoven with power (see Epstein 2008:9-10).

By consequence, as pointed out by Krook and True (2010:108-109), I cannot simply consider normative and descriptive ideas of the WPS agenda as given and unambiguous "things" and assume that these norms and ideas spread through deliberations, persuasion and socialisation. The normative and descriptive ideas of the WPS agenda must be seen together with the powerful discourses and existing frames of meaning that the officers take for granted. Therefore, it is necessary to concentrate on the process of meaning construction by approaching norms as dynamic processes, as discourses both fix meaning in a certain way and might be challenged by other ways of putting the signifiers together (Epstein 2008:10-12).

### 3.1.2   Analysing Internal and External Sources of Norms Dynamics

There is no standard recipe for how to conduct discourse analysis (Milliken 1999, cited in Bratberg 2017:53-54). However, Krook and True (2010) provide some guidelines on how to analyse norms as processes from a discursive angle. This constitutes the methodological starting point for the practical analytical steps and techniques I use in this thesis. By analytical steps I mean what to look at and what to look for in the interviews. By analytical techniques I mean how to proceed, which discussed in greater detail in the methods chapter.

Krook and True's (2010:108-109) discursive approach to international norms concentrates on internal and external sources of dynamism. There is no clear demarcation between these two categories of dynamism, but they serve as analytical tools that structures the analysis. To analyse internal dynamism, I must study the different meanings that the officers put into the WPS norms. This involves studying how the officers define the norms, how they contest the norms and how they frame the norms (Krook and True 2010:109-110). We can think of this as intra-discursive dynamism or friction, meaning dynamism or friction between the different interpretations of the WPS norms. Using the concept representations, we can say that there is friction between the different interpretations and representations of the norms, meaning how they are understood as part of the discourse *on WPS* (Dunn and Neumann 2016:118-121; see alsoJørgensen and Phillips 1999:84).

To analyse external dynamism, I must study how the officers link the WPS norms to existing norms in process. The linking of norms can be done strategically by those who want to promote the emerging norms, or by those who do not want to promote the emerging norms. The linking of emerging and existing norms can cause inspiration, involve alignment between different sets of norms or create conflict between them (Krook and True 2010:110-111). We can think of this as inter-discursive dynamism or friction, meaning dynamism between the norms of the WPS discourse and those of other discourses in the military (for more on interdiscursivity, see Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:84, 93-94, 143-144). In other words, whereas intra-discursive friction refers to friction between different representations *on* (or interpretations *of) WPS*, inter-discursive friction refers to friction between WPS, as a discourse, and other discourses *in the military field.*

Finally, according to Krook and True's (2010:109, 122-123), I must look at the interaction between the internal and external sources of dynamism. New norms may emerge among the

officers when they engage with the WPS norms. The normative environment can help the WPS norms gain traction, it can create tension between these norms and existing norms, or it can create interpretations of these norms that are different from what those who promoted WPS agenda sought to achieve. Furthermore, the officers, who turn the fairly open and ambiguous WPS norms into practice, may interpret the norms differently and establish different local practices.

## 3.2     A Discursive Approach to Identity

In my interviews, I found analytically important identity constructions in the officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms. The officers adopted subject-positions (see Epstein 2008:14-15) and engaged in processes of linking and differentiation that constructed a collective Norwegian identity in relation to the Other (see Hansen 2006: esp. chap. 3). The concept of subject-position and Hansen's (2006) framework for examining the construction of representations of identity – the Self and the Other – is a useful way to analyse this identity construction in my interview material.

Epstein (2008:14-15, emphases in original) defines a subject-position as "*a position within a discourse*", and she argues that "in *stepping into* a particular subject-position carved out by a discourse, in taking on the 'I/we' of that discourse, the actor's identity is produced in a very specific way". Where research sets forth to examine the actors' relationship to a set of norms, seeking to assess the internalisation of norms can only provide a part of the picture. Significantly, the analysis should seek to grasp the interpretative frames that are mobilised when actors make sense of and try to apply the norms. By speaking a certain discourse, the actors communicate their identity both to themselves and to others. In the case of the normative ideas of the WPS resolutions, an actor identify itself with these norms and recognise itself in them by speaking the discourse of the WPS agenda (Epstein 2008:15-16).

Whereas Hansen (2006:1-2) study the constitutive, or performative, relationship between identity and foreign policy, I use Hansen's framework to study identity construction and representations of identity involved in the male officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms. These constructions, or representations, of identity help the actor invest the world – or materiality – with meaning (Hansen 2006:23). Within the context of this thesis, I seek to

provide insight into the life world of the officers and potential implications of the representations of identity that are present.

Hansen (2006:19-20, 42) argues that identity is constructed through the process of linking and differentiation. Linking and differentiation refers to the process where signs (terms) that describe the Self are linked together, and then juxtaposed to a set of signs that describe the Other. As such, identity is constructed by signs that are assigned a meaning in relation to other signs. Studying linking and differentiation allows me to study the construction of the Selves and the Others, as well as the degree to which they are different, in my interviews. It also allows me to study stability, slips and instabilities as well as change in the discourse on WPS in the interviews, as a sign does not necessarily have the same meaning in different discourses (Hansen 2006:42, 44-45, 51).

Identity is also constructed through spatiality, but there is no room to analyse this thoroughly in this thesis. Future research can, for instance, look at the political substance of linking and differentiation by looking at how identity is spatially and temporally constructed through the Norwegian natural Self as opposed to a different or less progressive, Non-Norwegian Other with regards to the WPS norms or gender equality (see Hansen 2006:46-51).

### 3.2.1    Analysing Linking and Differentiation

Like I did with internal and external dynamism, I will explain the practical analytical steps and techniques I use to analyse linking and differentiation. As I stated above, Hansen (2006:42) suggests that representations of identity are constructed through a "dual process of linking and differentiation". The process of linking consists of *linking* together signs that contribute to construct the Self (and the Other). The process of differentiation consists of juxtaposing these signs with the signs that contribute to construct the Other. This process of creating groups of signs that express sameness and juxtaposing the signs from one group with those of another helps analyse how identity is constructed: signs are put in relation to each other in a system of signs (Hansen 2006:41-42).

In discourse analysis, a sign can be "written or oral, visual or auditive" (Epstein 2008:5). In practice, signs are explicitly articulated terms that contribute to construct the Self and the Other (Hansen 2006:41-42). In my analysis of the interviews with the officers, I must look for

these explicitly articulated terms that describe the Self (can be for instance the NAF or the Norwegian Society) and the Other (can be for instance a society in which one is operation), and how they are linked together and juxtaposed with each other. This juxtaposing can happen both explicitly and implicitly (Hansen 2006:44). In the analysis, when the juxtaposing in the interview material is implicit or the informants use different explicit terms that have the same or similar meaning or intention, it has been necessary for me as an analyst to find a term that can capture all this.

These studies of linking and differentiation in the interviews provide the basis for identifying a set of basis discourses. These basic discourses are ideal-types or analytical lenses. They are not empirical entities. They represent different identity constructions that help us see the debate's structure in terms of the main areas of contestation and the most important representations (Hansen 2006:51-52). In practical terms when conducting the analysis, "explicit articulations of key representations of identity" should form the basis for the basic discourses (Hansen 2006:53). Inspired by this concept of basic discourse, I have also suggested a basic discourse based on the analysis of intra- and inter-discursive friction (internal and external sources of dynamism) in the officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms.

I identify basic discourses through the analysis of the interview data. To get a grasp of the concepts at hand, I must look at WPS resolutions and Norwegian policy documents as well as existing literature. The basic discourses should cover different degrees of otherness in the relationship between the Self and the Other, and promote different ideas of appropriate behaviour. Furthermore, the basic discourses should be used to criticise and respond to each other, typically with one basic discourse being the main basic discourse to be criticised (Hansen 2006:53-54). I try to capture this in my use of the natural basic discourse and by nuancing the identity of the Self.

# 4 Methods and Methodological Considerations[12]

In this section, I explain and discuss methodological choices, considerations and procedures linked to selection of texts and informants, semi-structured interviewing, access to information, my positionality, ethics and transcriptions in a discourse analysis. I also assess different quality questions (validity, transparency, etc.) in discourse analysis.

## 4.1 Selecting Informants and Documents

This thesis is a qualitative study and examines the officers I have interviewed in-depth. The point is to learn something about this sample of informants. However, these findings can contribute to build knowledge about how male officers and military organisations understand and use the WPS norms. They can also help us build knowledge about the implementation of these norms in the NAF. Nevertheless, the external validity of my findings must be assessed through further testing.

As this is a qualitative study that seeks to build in-depth knowledge about male officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms and provide thick descriptions about this phenomenon, I use purposeful sampling technique (Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen 2010:106). I have identified male officers at the OF3-OF5 level with experience from international operations to be the most purposeful group to recruit from (see explanation in introduction and literature review). I added the international operations criteria to increase the chance that the officers had experience with the WPS agenda, as the agenda often is considered to apply abroad (see e.g. Shepherd 2016). Initially, I was also open to officers at OF 2 level (Captain), but I ended up with a sample of officers at the OF 3-OF 5 level.

There is no publicly available list of employees in the NAF, less so any overview of officers with experience from international operations. To recruit within this partly hard to reach group, I chose to use the snowball sampling method (see Atkinson and Flint 2004:1044). I

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[12] Certain of the points and claims in this section on, *inter alia*, validity, generalisability, metadata, the nature of interview data, the role of the interviewer and the "outsider" problem are developed, nuanced and refined on the basis of ideas and arguments that I started to work with in a term paper for a master's course in qualitative research methods, see Bæk (2019b; see also Bæk 2019a)

used personal contacts in the Armed Forces to find potential informants or someone who could put me in contact with potential informants and I asked those I interviewed for other informants. I contacted potential informants and made interview appointments by telephone and/or email.

The snowball method is an effective way to access informants in a semi-closed group of informants. However, this method of recruiting might bias the selection of informants, which affects the data. The informants might refer me to a person with a particular view, there might be rumours about me among the informants and there might be potential self-recruitment problems in the cases where my contact persons have reached out broadly to colleagues and some have chosen to participate (Hellevik 2002:122; Fujii 2010:232-234). Nevertheless, in qualitative research, limitations to the representativeness of the sample and the external validity of the study is not necessarily considered a problem. This is because, using my thesis as an example, the goal is first and foremost to examine and build knowledge about the officers (the sample) I have interviewed, not Norwegian male officers in general (the universe) (Bryman 2016:188; Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen 2010:106-107).

One needs a corpus that consists of texts by various actors when conducting discourse analysis. Both documents and transcribed talk from interviews can form the empirical basis for a discourse analysis, and we can think of the interview transcripts as texts in this corpus (Bratberg 2017:54; Nikander 2012:397, 404; Hansen 2006:85-86). To ensure a varied corpus of texts and better capture different nuances of male officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms, I have included officers with background from all three branches of the Armed Forces (the Army, Navy and Air Force). Most of them are, however, Army officers. Moreover, I have included officers with experience from different units and with experience from higher and lower levels of command in the military organisation. I stopped recruiting when I had a group of informants with a varied background and when new interviews did not provide much new information, which is often referred to as saturation (Geddes, Parker and Scott 2017:348). I also conducted some background interviews with experts and others with experience from with WPS. These interviews provided me with background information that made me better prepared for analysing the topic at hand and understand the interview data. However, I have not made direct use of the information from these interviews in the thesis.

The UN Security Council resolutions and the other governmental documents I used to map out the WPS norms and Norway's work with these norms serve primarily as a starting point for the analysis of the interview data, which is the analytical emphasis of this thesis. To capture the most essential without including too many documents I concentrate on "key texts" (Hansen 2006:82). These are texts that functions as nodes in the debate and which are often referred to. I have used the WPS resolutions, the Norwegian National Action Plans for WPS and important Norwegian defence policy documents. The latter group consists of the government's long-term plans for the defence sector (adopted by the Norwegian parliament), and the Letters of Implementation in which the Norwegian Ministry of Defence give instructions to the Norwegian defence sector based on the long-term plans. Due to restricted access, I have relied on publicly available documents.

According to Hansen (2006:82), the main part of the texts should be from the time period that is studied. However, there should also be older texts in the corpus. The interviews cover both the situation today and experiences that the officers have made during the last couple of decades. As regards the documents, I have included different versions of the documents from 2006 (when Norway got its first National Action Plan) until February 2020 (see detailed list in appendix no. 1). I have also included the long-term plan and the letter of implementation that were adopted in 2004, as these documents were in force when Norway launched its first National Action Plan in 2006. To identify the parts of the long and many governmental documents that should be subject to a close reading, I have used Nvivo to query (search) the documents for terms that indicate that the documents talk of the WPS agenda or topics related to it (see list of terms in appendix 2). These words are based on key vocabulary from the WPS resolutions and words that are typically used in relation to this in government documents.

## 4.2    Interviewing for Discourse Analysis

Interviewing for discourse analysis demands a certain interview technique and it requires certain methodological reflections that I discuss in this section.

### 4.2.1    The Construction of Interview Data

Nikander (2012:397, 401, 403, 410; see also Chouliaraki 2000 in Hansen 2006:85-86) establishes three premises on which a discourse analysis using interview data should be built.

First, the data is considered an account. In other words, the interviewer does not tap exact information about the interviewee's ideas or some reality outside of the interviewee. Second, the interview is considered a discursive space, and, third, the analysis concentrates on this discursive space as well as how the data is an example of the meaning-making and cultural knowledge in the society or context under study. In other words, the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, and the active role of both the interviewer and the interviewee in meaning-making and agenda setting during the interview are key elements of a sound and fruitful analysis. Epistemologically, this discursive approach to interview data belongs to a social constructivist paradigm (a partly similar approach can be found in Holstein and Gubrium's (2016:68-72)). This discursive approach allows the researchers to access and study the process of meaning-making and the identities as well as the cultural conceptions, resources and logics that go into this process (Nikander 2012:404-405). As such, "interview accounts [are seen] not just as self-contained but also as empirical windows onto a cultural universe and the interpretative resources at hand to make sense of the world and social reality" (Nikander 2012:410; for a similar argument, see Miller and Glassner 2016:56).

## 4.2.2    Semi-structured Interviews

It is important that interview data used in discourse analyses is the result of interviews where it has been possible for the interviewee to express his or her ideas. Explorative and conversation-like interviews are well-suited for this purpose (Bratberg 2017:54). Therefore, I have conducted in-depth qualitative interviews, as they allow the researcher to get a proper understanding of how the informant understand and conceive of a phenomenon (Miller and Glassner 2016:53, 56). These interviews have been semi-structured. This means that I have used an interview-guide, but that the "questions, topics and order may be varied" (Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen 2010:137). This gives a certain standardisation, which makes it possible for me to cover the topics I am interested in and ask more specific questions. It also provides flexibility, which allows the informant to influence the conversation and makes it possible for me as an interviewer to adapt the questions and the order of the questions to the points raised by the informant (Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen 2010:139).

I have used a mix of open and more specific questions to balance the need to let the informant talk freely and to make sure that the informant is talking about the topic and problems which

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are central to my research. The order and wording of the questions have not been the same in all the interviews. Some of my questions have been detailed and I have also asked some yes/no questions or leading questions, both deliberately and by accident. Even though yes/no-questions and leading questions are susceptible to producing a certain type of answers or do not in themselves invite to long answers, they have been necessary or handy to open new topics, ask specific or clarifying questions or double-check an interpretation (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:201). I have made sure to listen to the informant's reflections before asking follow-up questions, presenting possible objections, explaining theoretical concepts or problematisations of the informant's answer, or explaining my own thoughts, to explore the topic at hand together with the informant. This is an example of how the interviewer and the informant create knowledge together in the interview setting (see Holstein and Gubrium 2016:68-69; Nikander 2012:410) and of how the researcher take an active role in the interview (Andersen 2006:281).

I conferred with an expert and practitioner on WPS and gender in the military during the writing of the interview guide. I also conducted a test interview with this person, where he/she played an informant, using his/her expertise and experience to provide feedback. This way, I improved the starting point for exploring the topic at hand in the interviews by asking better questions and making the topic more accessible for military personnel. This improves the validity of my analysis as my interpretation of the phenomenon at hand gets more credible and precise (see King, Keohane and Verba 1994:25; Peräkylä 2016:413-415).

### 4.2.3    Operationalisation

In an interview setting, theoretical concepts are translated into an operational frame of reference and understanding which can be used to explore the topic at hand. This is often referred to as operationalisation (Andersen 2006:286, 289; Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen 2010:63). This connects the data gathering to existing research and it makes it possible for the interviewer to guide the conversation so that the interviewer can cover the topics he/she is interested in and check whether his or her possible expectations are correct. This might be helpful when interviewing key informants such as officers, as many of these are resourceful and potentially hold much knowledge about the topic under study, and this requires that the interviewer take an active role to use the opportunity to get insights from the informant and avoid that the interview is diverted. However, the interviewer's active role does

not imply that the interview is controlled or dominated by the interviewer (Andersen 2006:279, 281-282, 286-292).

My thesis concentrate on the concepts of protection, participation and gender perspective from the WPS resolutions as well as findings from existing research, such as the instrumental and rights-based approaches to WPS (Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad 2011; Davies and True 2019:5), the role of military effectiveness arguments for promoting implementation (Egnell, Hojem and Berts 2014) and masculinities in the NAF (Rones 2015a; Rones and Fasting 2017). This way, the theoretical insights and concepts can serve both as inspirations and starting points for an exploration of the topic at hand and as theoretical "pegs" on which to hang the discussions and new insights that emerge during the interview (see Andersen 2006:286-287). This contributes to strengthen my understanding of my interview findings and put the constructed data from my interviews into a larger context or a larger frame of meaning beyond my interviews.

I have already explained the style of interviewing I use to explore the topic. However, one particular section of the interview guide deserves particular attention, as the answers to these questions have been an important basis for my analysis. In this part, I have used one of the formulations from the last Letter of Implementation as a starting point. In the general section of the letter, describing assignments for the entire defence sector, including the NAF, the Ministry of Defence states that:

> "In accordance with the government's action plan for Women, Peace and Security 2019-2022, the Norwegian Armed Forces' operations shall be planned and carried out in way that they also attend to both protection of women, and women's participation. Furthermore, the Norwegian Armed Forces shall emphasise a gender perspective in connection with this effort by including gender as a factor in both the planning and carrying-out phases"[13] (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:29, my translation).

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[13] Original wording in Norwegian: "I tråd med regjeringens handlingsplan for kvinner, fred og sikkerhet 2019-2022 skal Forsvarets operasjoner planlegges og gjennomføres på en slik måte at de også ivaretar både beskyttelse av kvinner, og kvinners deltakelse. Videre skal Forsvaret vektlegge et genderperspektiv ifm. denne innsatsen ved at kjønn tas med som en faktor i både planleggings- og gjennomføringsfasen". Since this citation is from the general section of the letter of implementation, it is possible that the word "*Forsvaret*" (the defence) refers to the entire defence sector, not only the Norwegian Armed Forces. However, I think translating it into the Norwegian Armed Forces makes sense, both because the defence sector includes the Armed Forces and because

This formulation reflects the WPS norms that I focus on: protection, participation and gender perspective. Therefore, it constitutes a good starting point for discussing how the informants understand and use the WPS norms. It also captures the more specified tasks that are described in detail in the Letter of Implementation. The Armed Forces are asked to, among other things, to concretise how the gender perspective can be used in military activities:

> "Concretising the gender perspective in operational planning, meaning activities in future operations for protection of women, and for women's participation in handling of war and conflict. This is in accordance with national planning work, where gender is already included as a factor"[14] (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:30, my translation).

This formulation in a way confirms Davies and True's (2019:6) argument that the WPS agenda is a work in progress and True and Krook's (2010) point that norms are processes: the Letter of Implementation asks the NAF to interpret the norms of the WPS resolutions by making the gender perspective in operational planning concrete and implement activities that protects women and ensure women's participation.

The letter also asks the Armed Forces to build capacity with regards to the gender perspective in operations and in the organisation as well as contribute to international military cooperation in this field and dialogue with civil society (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:30). In the section of the letter directed exclusively at the NAF, it is also stated that "the Norwegian Armed Forces shall implement and use a gender perspective in planning, preparations, carrying out, reporting and evaluation of operations. This applies to all Norwegian contributions to multinational operations, training and exercising"[15] (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:44, my translation).

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the letter seems to refer to the defence sector as a whole as "*forsvarssektoren*" (the defence sector) or "*etatene*" (the agencies).

[14] Original wording in Norwegian: "Konkretisering av genderperspektivet i operasjonsplanlegging, i form av aktiviteter i fremtidige operasjoner for beskyttelse av kvinner, og for kvinners deltakelse i håndtering av krig og konflikt. Dette i tråd med nasjonalt planverk, hvor gender allerede inngår som en faktor".

[15] Original wording in Norwegian: "Forsvaret skal implementere og anvende et genderperspektiv i planlegging, forberedelser, gjennomføring, rapportering og evaluering av operasjoner. Det gjelder alle norske bidrag til flernasjonale operasjoner, trening og øving".

In my interviews, I asked the informants how they understood the concept of "gender perspective". Based on the general description from the Letter of Implementation, cited above, which I read out loud during the interviews, I asked the officers how they understood "the protection of women, and women's participation" and how they understood "including gender as a factor both in the planning and carrying-out phases" of operations. I also explored whether they had any practical experience or examples of this, and how it applied to national and international settings.

In the case of this question, it is possible that the informants understood the formulation "the protection of women, and women's participation" as protection of women and protection of women's participation. Protection and participation overlap, but are not always the same thing. This makes it potentially challenging to make a credible (valid) interpretation, as it is not certain that my question made the informant describe his opinions and reflections associated with the concepts that I was interested in. Moreover, if different informants understood the question differently, this makes the data less accurate, or less reliable (Peräkylä 2016:414; Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:276). However, the fact that I read the entire two sentences aloud might have contributed to alleviate this potential problem, as it put the concepts into their context.

Even though we might distinguish biological and (often) fixed *sex* from cultural and flexible *gender* at a theoretical level, these concepts are closely intertwined and dependent upon each other (Goldstein 2004:2). In the context of WPS, one is often referring to the cultural and social aspects of gender to highlight "how both gender differences and social values influence women's lives in conflict situations", later also expanding it to men (Schjølset 2014:16). This is the way I understand gender in this thesis. Moreover, there might be a validity and reliability challenge linked to the use of the words "*kjønn*" and "gender" in a Norwegian setting. "*Kjønn*" can refer to both biological sex and the social construct that we usually referred to as gender in English. Due to this linguistic ambiguity, I have used both "kjønn" and "kjønnsperspektiv" as well as "gender" and "gender perspective" when I have been referring to "gender" and "gender perspective". I have sought to understand what the informants put into the concepts they use (which have been both "gender" and "*kjønn*"). Likewise, I have sought to communicate to the informants that I am most of the time referring to the cultural and social "gender" and "gender perspective" when I use the terms "*kjønn*" and

"*kjønnsperspektiv*". This might contribute to increase the validity (credibility) and reliability (accuracy and consistency) in the sense that I increase the chance of making sure that I understand what the informant is talking about and vice-versa (Peräkylä 2016:414).

## 4.3    Ethics

Interviews should be based on informed consent and research should be done "'with' rather than 'on' people" (Hammersley 2014:535-536 (citation p. 536);  see also Ryen 2016:32-33). Hammersley (2014:536-538) point out that some people therefore question the ethics of analysing interview data through constructivist-oriented types of discourse analysis. However, he argues that it is defensible to gather and analyse data this way, as it is difficult to alleviate the ethical challenges and the potential harm caused is very limited. I do not consider these potential ethical concerns to constitute a big problem to the discursive approach to norms suggested by Krook and True (2010). The discourse theoretical approach to identity construction based on Hansen (2006) is more susceptible to the potential ethical critique. However, the alternative to using it would have been to not highlight important aspects of the data.

To inform properly before the interviews, I have provided the informants with a letter containing information about the project and their rights. I have started each interview by repeating the most important information and giving the informants the possibility to ask questions. During the de-brief after the interview, I have also explained to the informant that I analyse the content of what the informant has told me, the language he has used and how he understands and make sense of his job as an officer. I have done this after the interview to avoid making the informant too self-conscious. However, despite this de-brief, it might still be difficult to make the informant understand the purpose of the research (Hammersley 2014:532-533).

## 4.4    Positionality and Access

As pointed out above, the interviewer and his or her positionality influence the data that is produced in an interview and it is an important aspect of the construction of knowledge in the discursive space of the interview. My privileges, background and approach to the topic at hand might affect my approach to the topic under study (Hudson 2019:851-852). My

background as a white young man from a Northern European country who study WPS within a defence and security policy setting as well as my academic and professional way into the field of WPS might make my approach to WPS different from students with another background.

Furthermore, my identity, social background and gender might impact on what interviewees tell during an interview, and how they tell it. It can be particularly problematic if the researcher is not part of the group he or she studies, as it can lead to poor questions, misunderstanding lack of confidence (Miller and Glassner 2016:54, 56). As I am a student, a young adult and a civilian, it is reasonable to assume that my older, military and professional informants perceive me as an outsider in some way or another. However, my experience from the NAF (even though it is limited) and my affiliation to the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies might have contributed to improve my access. Moreover, the simple fact that I am a man interviewing men *might* also contribute to improve access, even though this dynamic is poorly understood (Broom, Hand and Tovey 2009:52-53).

My command of Norwegian language, my experience from and basic knowledge about the Armed Forces as well as the experience with military jargon and words might provide me with a good starting point for improved access and ability to analyse the data. Furthermore, when doing discourse analysis, cultural competency, knowledge about the case in question and the language in use is important to conduct a good analysis and understand what is put into different concepts (Hansen 2006:11, 83-84; Græger 2007:35). To create trust and compensate for potential elements of elite interview power asymmetries due to my inferior positionality vis-à-vis the informants, I have also made sure to know the topic well, adapted my style of interviewing to the informant and used my familiarity with the jargon and the terminology of the interviewee's field of expertise (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:175-176; Harvey 2011:433-434). Finally, as gender and WPS might be perceived as critical research agendas, I have sought to avoid making the interview feel like and audit of how well the informants do their job, or how "well" or "correct" their values and attitudes towards gender questions are.

## 4.5    Virtual Interviews

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been necessary to conduct most of the interviews virtually. I have conducted some interviews using video conference services, but generally it was simpler and more efficient to opt telephone interviews. Using video conference services turned out to be challenging because the informants typically did not use the virtual services that are considered safe for data collection by the University of Oslo or because the informants did not have access to the necessary equipment at work. From a research ethical point of view, it is important to ensure the security of virtual interviews (Mosley 2013:8), and I have done so by following the rules and requirements from the University with regards to approved technical solutions. In other words, using virtual interviews have simply been necessary to make the interviews possible during the pandemic. Moreover, using virtual interviews has made it easier to find a time that suits both me and the informant and to interview people far away (Bryman 2016:492).

On the other hand, virtual interviews can impact on my access due to poorer rapport with the interviewee and on the quality of the data as there is a loss of contextual data and information about the interviewees' body language, reactions, and other visual aspects. This might also make it more challenging to interpret the data (Mosley 2013:7-8). To alleviate these challenges, I have used video in some instances, which contributes to minimize the problem of lost body language and other visible and contextual data and improves the rapport (see Bryman 2016:492). To strengthen the rapport, I have sometimes also used a one-way camera so that the interviewee has been able to see me. After the first telephone interviews, I also added a more detailed presentation of myself and the project. By telling the interviewee more about myself, I sought to strengthen the interviewee's confidence and strengthen my rapport with him when we could not see each other.

## 4.6    Transcriptions

A transcription helps the researcher to analyse the outcome of the mutual meaning-making in the interview (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:218). Transcribing means interpreting the interview and translating the oral interview account from oral to written language. This involves a loss of information (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:204-205). Therefore, it is important to make sure that the transcriptions provide the adequate information for the

analytical technique and be explicit about how the interviews have been transcribed (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:206-212).

To conduct discourse analysis, I have made what Jackson and Bazeley (2019:43) call a "verbatim transcription" of 11 of the 13 the interviews with the male officers and kept the spoken language style to the extent possible. I have listened through the recording of the interviews carefully, listened to passages or the entire recording several times and conferred with the recording when in doubt when transcribing. I have also marked passages with poor audio quality (see Bryman 2016:492). This has strengthened the reliability, as the reporting of the interviews gets more accurate, and the validity, as it helps me ensure that my interpretation is credible (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:211-212; Peräkylä 2016:414). The two last interviews were conducted late in the research processes to complement the sample and data collection. I therefore chose to simply rely on the audio recordings (instead of transcribing them) to save time.

Moreover, the citations that are used in the thesis are translated from oral Norwegian to written English. This adds another layer of interpretation. To avoid potential ethical concerns related to how citations in oral language style would make the informants appear, the citations from the interviews in the thesis are written in formal and written language style.[16] This also makes them easier to read (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015:213-214).

## 4.7    Anonymity

From a research ethical point of view, one must consider the informant's confidentiality (Ryen 2016:32). The data in my research are not particularly sensitive. First, the data do not belong to any "special category of personal data" (sensitive personal information), such as health information, criminal offences, union membership, etc. (Norwegian Centre for Research Data 2019). Second, I have stated explicitly to the informants, both in the letter of information and at the beginning of the interview, that they must not provide any confidential or classified information. My impression is that the informants have been very conscious about this. However, to increase the chance of getting honest answers and lowering the barrier for participating, thus increasing my access, I chose to anonymise the primary informants and

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[16] I have marked the omission of meaningful parts of a citation, but not small omissions that do not change the meaning of the statement.

give them pseudonyms in the text.[17] Anonymity also reduces the risk for the informants, as findings from the NAF can get quite a lot of attention (Blix 2013).

As the NAF is a quite small organisation, too many details about the informant might make them recognisable to persons who know the different units of the organisation and the people there well (see Gussgard 2018:51; Kvål 2015:11-12). I have therefore not linked the informant and their statements to their branch, the name of the units in which they work, etc. I have also been careful with information about places, names and other details when they refer to experiences from their career. This limits some of the analytical possibilities of the data, especially with regards to the level of detail in example and the relationship between the different units in the NAF. However, it might have led to more frank answers, even though it is possible that the informants have limited themselves because they know how easily recognisable they are (see also Kvål 2015:12).

## 4.8   Close-Reading and Coding

The analytical techniques are outlined in analytical framework chapter, but I will explain briefly how I conducted the analysis of the data. As regards the documents, I conducted a close reading on paper of the entire WPS resolutions to identify the descriptive and normative ideas as well as the key representations. In my close reading of the National Action Plans, I concentrated on the parts that were most relevant for the activity in which the NAF are engaged. I queried the long-term plans and the letters of implementation in Nvivo 12. Then I conducted a close reading of the relevant parts of these documents, and coded the content inductively into broad thematic nodes describing what the documents were discussing, such as "1325", "increase number of women" (in the NAF) and "sexualised violence". This formed the basis for the analysis of how the WPS norms "travel" from the international to the national level and are channelled into the NAF.

As regards the interviews, I noted interesting findings and potential in a document while transcribing. This initial inductive coding gave me an overview over the interview as well as topics that were present across several interviews. When I had transcribed the interviews, I conducted a close-reading of the transcription, and coded the content into thematic nodes in

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[17] During the research project, the names of the informants in the data have been replaced with a code referring to scrambling key with the personal information. The data and the scrambling key have been stored separately.

Nvivo 12. Then, I conducted a close reading of the statements and passages from the interviews in the most relevant nodes and combined this with some of the notes from the initial coding. This formed the basis for the discourse inspired analysis. This was an ongoing process, where I conducted interviews, worked with transcription and coding in parallel. I did not transcribe and systematically code the two last of the 13 interviews, as these were simply supposed to complement the data, and relied on the audio recordings and notes.

Moreover, Hansen (2006:41) argues to make a good reading and analysis of a text, it is important to concentrate on "explicit discursive articulations". A good analysis is close to the text, and there is need for putting the citations into context (see also Bratberg 2017:56; Rapley 2016:338). To contextualise and stay close to the text, I have used many and sometimes rather long citations in my analysis of the interviews, sometimes also including the question or a description of the topic discussed. This also makes it possible for the reader to assess my interpretations. This, in turn, strengthens the credibility (an aspect of validity) of my interpretation and makes it more transparent for others to assess (Peräkylä 2016:413-415).

# 5 Understanding and Using the WPS Norms

In chapter 2, I introduced the WPS norms briefly, elaborated on the WPS norms literature, and gave some examples of the ambiguous nature of the norms. In this chapter, I examine how the officers make sense of these ambiguous, in progress and dynamic norms and how the officers make them more concrete and tangible. To better understand what the WPS norms consist of, I start off by digging deeper into to the ambiguity of the WPS norms through an initial analysis of the WPS resolutions and some key Norwegian WPS and defence policy documents. This forms the basis for analysing how the officers understand the norms, what to do about them and use them in operations. This part of the analysis involves examining the friction within the WPS norms, or exploring different interpretations and understandings of the norms (which I refer to as intra-discursive friction, or what Krook and True (2010:109) refer to as an internal source of norm dynamism). Finally, I examine how the WPS norms fit into, and possibly complement, the environment of existing norm sets in the military organisation. This involves examining the friction between the WPS norms and existing norms and frames of meaning in the NAF (which I refer to as inter-discursive friction or, what Krook and True (2010:109) call an external source of norm dynamism). This sheds light upon how the officers accommodate and challenge the emerging WPS discourse.

## 5.1 Norms and Ambiguity in the WPS Resolutions and Norwegian Policy Documents

To get a better grip of the WPS norms that I introduced in the literature review chapter, I conduct a close reading of the WPS resolutions and some selected Norwegian WPS and defence policy documents to map out their descriptive and normative ideas and the ambiguities within them. The table below gives and overview of the types of documents and the relationship between them (appendix 1 gives a full overview over the different versions of the documents). This close reading give me better a grip of the norms (normative ideas) and the perceptions of how the world works (descriptive ideas) that are at play in the collective frames of meaning that we find in the WPS resolutions (Bratberg 2017:34). This also serves as a triangulating support for the analysis of my interview data, not because adding more types of data or methods take me closer to some objective truth (Silverman 2010:133-134,

277-278), but because it contributes to contextualise my analysis and tie it into existing frames of meaning-making in the WPS field.

*Table 1 Levels and Types of Documents*

| Level | Type of Document |
|---|---|
| International | UN Security Council resolutions on WPS. |
| National – inter-ministerial | Norway's National Action Plans on WPS. |
| National – defence sector | Long-Term Plans for the Defence Sector; Letters of Implementation for the Defence Sector. |

### 5.1.1  WPS Resolutions: Women as Victims with Particular Needs and Women as Empowered Actors with Particular Contributions

The normative content, or guidelines, of UN resolutions are typically communicated in the resolution's operative paragraphs, which communicates the organ's opinion as well as the measures and actions that member states are asked to put in place (United Nations Department of Conference Services 1983:167; Kirby and Shepherd 2016:378). The preamble expresses the basis for the Security Council's decision and its reason for acting (United Nations Department of Conference Services 1983:167). The preambular and the operative paragraphs can thus be considered an expression of a way of understanding how the world works and how it ought to be that the Security Council wants to promote to the member states. We can think of this set of norms and descriptive ideas as a discourse. The WPS resolutions communicate several norms linked to protection, participation and gender perspective (see Tryggestad 2014:106). However, these norms represent women and girls as victims in need of protection and women as empowered actors.

A key descriptive idea of the UNSCR 1325, is the idea "that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict" (UNSC 2000: fourth preambular paragraph). The subsequent resolutions direct the attention towards several aspects of the particular needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict

situations: the special impact on women and girls linked to sexualised violence, forced displacement and other forms of human rights infringements. They also emphasise that sexualised violence can also hit men and boys and have an impact on witnesses. (UNSC 2013b: seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs; UNSC 2008: sixth preambular paragraph; UNSC 2013a: sixth preambular paragraph). From this perspective, the protection norms of the WPS resolutions represent women and girls as victims and in need of protection (see also UNSC 2000: sixth and ninth preambular paragraphs, operative paragraphs 6, 9, 10, 12, citation from ninth preambular paragraph; UNSC 2008: operative paragraphs 2, 3, 7; UNSC 2009a: operative paragraphs 2, 3, 6, 7, 21).

A second important descriptive idea is the underrepresentation of women in decision-making, peace processes and in UN peacekeeping forces (see e.g. UNSC 2009a: thirteenth preambular paragraph, operative paragraph 19; UNSC 2010: operative paragraph 15; UNSC 2013a: operative paragraph 14; UNSC 2009b:seventh preambular paragraph). The Security Council is "*deeply concerned* also about the persistent obstacles and challenges to women's participation and full involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflict" (UNSC 2008: eleventh preambular paragraph). A third descriptive idea highlights how the particular impact of conflict on women and girls as well as their underrepresentation affect international peace and security as well as peace and reconciliation processes in post-conflict situations negatively (UNSC 2009b: eighth preambular paragraph; UNSC 2000; UNSC 2013a: operative paragraph 1; UNSC 2009a: operative paragraph 1). This is an expression of women's particular contribution to peace and security and that WPS is a matter that is relevant for international peace and security (see UNSC 2009b: twelfth preambular paragraph; UNSC 2013b: fourth preambular paragraph; see also UNSC 2009a: twenty-second preambular paragraph). From this perspective, the WPS norms represent women as empowered actors with agency. The resolutions highlight the need to improve women's participation in decision-making, mediation and peacekeeping and to focus on empowerment as well as protection (UNSC 2000: operative paragraph 1; UNSC 2008: tenth preambular paragraph; UNSC 2009b: operative paragraph 1, eleventh preambular paragraph; UNSC 2009a: operative paragraphs 16, 19).

Moreover, the resolutions introduce the concepts of gender perspective and gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding processes (UNSC 2000: eighth

preambular paragraph, operative paragraph 8; UNSC 2009b: operative paragraph 8; UNSC 2013a: operative paragraph 8). This builds on the descriptive and normative ideas that women and girls are particularly affected by conflict, have special needs and can make a particular contribution as empowered actors.

These representations of women as victims and actors provide models through which actors and states make sense of conflict and conflict management, and, in turn, constitute the basis for action and justifications for changing practices. However, the positive impact of women's participation is based on an essentialist understanding of women as peacemakers (see e.g. Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011:493-495). Some also argue that sexualized violence, representation of women as victims and the protection norms have received too much attention (Aoláin and Valji 2019:55). Nevertheless, Kirby and Shepherd (2016:379-383) argue that protection often is a prerequisite for meaningful and real participation.

### 5.1.2 Norwegian Policy Documents: Limited Guidelines on the Practical Implementation of the WPS Norms

The WPS norms "travel" from the international to the national level, where the norms are put into practice, for instance by the NAF. This norms travel can be traced in Norway's National Action Plans for Women Peace and Security as well as important defence policy document (steering documents) such as the Long-Term Plans or the Letter of Implementation. For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to map out what these documents say about participation, protection and gender perspective.

I find that there are few concrete indications on exactly what the norms should mean in practice or instructions on how to turn the norms into practice in Norwegian policy documents. Indeed, there are some concrete practical measures, like increasing the number of women, having contact with women in the area of operation and conducting training, the resolutions. However, the policy documents say little about what the norms should mean in a military context and what the norms should lead to beyond the large concepts and numerable indicators. This is particularly the case for the more transformative dimensions of the agenda. Moreover, the conflict lines in the WPS literature illustrates that the meaning of the WPS norms are contested (see section literature review chapter). The processual and in progress aspects of the WPS norms are also demonstrated by the latest Letter of Implementation,

where the NAF is asked to concretise the norms and figure out how they can be turned into action. This ambiguity in the WPS norms and the documents is key to understand how the male officers understand and use these norms in their work.

## The Norwegian National Action Plans (NAPs)

Several topics have been recurring in Norway's four NAPs on WPS. These were for instance: Increase the number of women and ensure a gender-balanced participation in operations in the NAF and in NATO and the UN (*participation*), gender-balanced *participation* in operations, use a *gender perspective* or gender-sensitive approach in planning, carrying out and assessment of international operations (e.g. in NATO or UN operations), have contact with both men and women in the area of operation (to ensure women's *participation*) and conduct training in gender issues, sexual violence, etc. before deployment (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006:5-7, 9, 11; Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011:10-13; Norwegian Ministries 2015:21, 23-24, 26, 28; Norwegian Ministries 2019:35).

Among the new elements, the second Norwegian National Action Plan (framed as a strategic plan) emphasised the need for (1) applying and including a *gender perspective* in the training of local forces help train forces abroad and in capacity-building, (2) tactical procedures that facilitates contact with local women (*participation*) and contributions to improve the security situation of these women (*protection*), and, (3) the plan asked that the Ministry of Defence to establish a framework for how conflict related sexual violence should be dealt with by soldiers and officers in missions abroad (*protection* and prevention) (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011:4, 13, 20). The fourth National Action Plan pointed at the role of men and boys, it stated that there is a "zero tolerance for sexual harassment, maltreatment and abuse" when the NAF are operating both at home and abroad (*protection* and prevention), and that the plan's provisions for missions and operations covered both national and international operations (Norwegian Ministries 2019:28-30, 35 (citation)). This demonstrates some of the dimensions of the WPS agenda that are addressed in the plans.

If we take this last National Action Plan as an example, there are many examples of what the NAF can do to implement the WPS norms. Some of these guidelines are concrete, such as increasing the number of women, increasing competence or having a zero-tolerance policy towards sexualised violence and sexual abuse (Norwegian Ministries 2019:35, 67-68, 70).

However, beyond the numerable indicators and the concrete measures such as a zero-tolerance policy, the guidelines and goals still centre around concepts such as participation and gender perspective. The plan makes some suggestions as to what these concepts can mean in practice and how they can be dealt by the NAF, but much is still left open.

## Defence Policy Documents

The steering documents contain much discussion of gender issues and women in the NAF that is both explicitly and not explicitly linked to the WPS agenda. However, there are few concrete instructions or indications of the WPS norms are supposed to be implemented and what they mean in practice. The long-term plans concentrate on increasing the number of women in the Armed Forces (*participation*), and the 2009-2012 plan highlighted the need to increase the number of women in Norwegian deployments abroad and ensuring women's *participation* in peace work and have contact with civilians in the area of operation. The long-terms plans also emphasise the importance of gender equality, diversity (not only in terms of gender) and the need for the Armed Forces to reflect the changes in society and the population to improve the Armed Forces' legitimacy and the access to people with the right skills (St.prp. nr. 42 (2003–2004):75, 77, 88; St.prp. nr. 48 (2007–2008):13, 21, 61, 112-114, 121, 124-125, 128-129, 148; Prop. 73 S (2011–2012):14, 16, 36-37, 116-117, 119, 120-122, 133-134; Prop. 151 S (2015-2016):92-93, 100).

The 2013-2016 long-term plan makes a short reference to the UNSCR 1325 and states that a diverse group of personnel, in terms of gender and background (*participation*), contribute to improve the force's ability to meet different people's need for security (*protection*) (Prop. 73 S (2011–2012):122). All long-term plans, except the one for the period 2005-2008, contain references to the UNSCR 1325 or WPS and the use of a *gender perspective* in planning and carrying out of operations. In the 2017-2020 long-term plan, the UNSCR 1325 and the use of a gender perspective is discussed in relation to the NAF's tasks within multinational emergency management and international cooperation on security and defence. The plan states that the *gender perspective* must always be taken into consideration in efforts abroad (Prop. 151 S (2015-2016):25, 32, 100). This links the WPS norms to efforts abroad, but also to the participation of women in the organisation at home.

The letters of implementation elaborate on the content of the long-term plans and turn it into assignments for the NAF. Like the long-term plans, the letters of implementation emphasise the importance of gender equality and the goal of increasing the number of women in the NAF and the diversity of the personnel (*participation*) and point at the importance of military leaders having competency in the field of *gender perspective* (see Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2004:23, 34, 50-51; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008:17, 73, 86; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2012:50-51, 55; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2016b:31, 49, 50, 89, 90-93; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2016a:91, 205, 208-209; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:41, 59, 60, 97, 99, 100). In broad outline, as regards the explicit references to the WPS norms in the Letters of Implementation from the Ministry of Defence to the NAF, the UNSCR 1325 and National Action Plan are linked to increased number of women (*participation*) in the NAF and the use of a *gender perspective* in training as well as when operations are planned, carried out and evaluated.

The first version of the Letter of Implementation for the 2009-2012 long-term plan says that the *gender perspective* should be part of the NAF's main business, that it is important in conflict areas to ensure that the needs of women are taken into account (*protection*) and to make sure that NAF "reflect the composition of the population and the other forms of diversity in society" [18] (*participation*) (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008:77, my translation). The last version of the Letter of Implementation for the 2009-2012 long-term plan highlighted the need to deal with sexualised violence and bring the men on board (prevention and *protection*). The *gender perspective* would improve Norway's contribution to protection of civilians by giving the personnel a better understanding of the context in which they were operating (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2012:30; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2016a:62). The last version of the Letter of Implementation for the 2013-2016 long-term plan states that the *gender perspective* is relevant for all types of operations that the NAF engage in (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2016a:62). In the Letter of Implementation for the 2017-2020 long-term plan, the Ministry of Defence states that the NAF must take into account women's *participation* and *protection* as well as using a *gender perspective* in plans and while operating. The Armed Forces is also asked to develop concrete ways to carry out the *gender perspective* and build capacity on doing this (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:29-30, 44).

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[18] Original wording in Norwegian: "speile befolkningssammensetningen og mangfoldet i samfunnet for øvrig."

## 5.2 Intra-Discursive Friction: Interpreting, Debating and Finding the WPS Norms' Relevance

I now turn to how the officers understand these ambiguous WPS norms of protection, participation and gender perspective, and how they use them in practice in operations and in their daily work. To study this, I examine how the officers interpret the norms. Different actors in different contexts interpret and operationalise the norms differently as they put them into practice. Therefore, the definition of the norm may develop and change over time (Krook and True 2010:109-110, 122-123). We can think of this as intra-discursive friction, where we are interested in the relationship between different interpretations and representations of the WPS norms and frames of meaning *within the WPS field*.

### 5.2.1 What Does a Gender Perspective Mean?

The interviews indicate that the officers consider the content of the concepts to be ambiguous and that different actors understand the concepts in different ways. For instance, the interviews exemplify how the gender perspective is often associated with both gender equality and with a cultural perspective that helps understand the area of operation. This association with gender equality suggests that the officers experience that the gender perspective is often linked to the well-known and easy-to-grasp topics of women and gender equality. However, the officers also challenge this gender equality understanding by arguing that a cultural perspective probably is more in line with the resolution.

"Albert"[19] found it difficult to grasp the concept of gender perspective and thought that different actors and persons put different meaning into the concept. He said that:

> "in one moment, I feel that it is used almost as a synonym for gender equality, and in the next moment, it is used very generally, almost as in understanding the operational environment you are going into" (interview with "Albert").

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[19] I refer to the different informants and the information they have provided during the interviews by using pseudonyms in the text. When making direct citations from the interviews, I always add a parenthesis stating from which interview the citation is taken after the citation. When I refer to, sum up or paraphrase information from the interviews, I do not add a parenthesis if the pseudonym already is a natural part of the text. In instances where the pseudonym is not a natural part of the text, I add a parenthesis stating from which interview the paraphrased or summed up information is taken. All translations of citations from the interview material from Norwegian to English are done by me, unless otherwise stated.

Two other informants expressed partly similar experiences and understanding of the concept of gender, but contributed to nuance the picture. "Steve" said:

> "the way gender is perceived internationally, it is rather broad. Meanwhile, at home [i.e. in Norway, my comment], I have the feeling that some, and then I am not referring to myself, but that it is maybe interpreted more towards a gender equality perspective" (interview with "Steve").

"Richard" said: "if you say gender perspective, I think most people in the Norwegian Armed Forces would think that it is about proportion of women, gender equality and avoid bullying and sexual harassment" (interview with "Richard"). Both "Richard" and "Steve" thought a cultural approach to gender perspective was more useful than the traditional gender equality approach. "Richard" exemplified this meaning of the gender perspective with the protection of civilians in cases where gender is used as "a weapon in the conflict or an instrument in the conflict" in areas with different culture and religions (interview with "Richard"). He said:

> "then, this gender perspective gets a completely different meaning than simply ensuring a proportion of women in your own force. In other words, it means that it is a factor in the operation that you must take into consideration" (interview with "Richard").

"Roger" agreed that the concept of gender perspective is complicated:

> "the gender perspective is, after all, a bit difficult to grasp. We are talking, I think, about gender the way it is perceived and how the gender-conditions are in an organisation, in a society and how that, then, affects us. (…) And not at least how we can, by taking a gender perspective, can learn something about how society works and, possibly, how we can, well – do not get me wrong – exploit that in military operations" (interview with "Roger").

Several informants, for instance "Albert", "Fred" and "Brian" associated the concept of gender perspective primarily with women in different ways. "Morgan" stated that he

considered the gender perspective to apply to both men and women. At the same time, he said: "But I have to admit that I have an impression that for many this gender perspective has become a prolongation of – I almost said – the women's liberation into another aspect" (interview with "Morgan"). Here, a more radical, transformative and feminist interpretation of the WPS norms is highlighted, but that is not recognised as the most adequate way to understand the norms by this informant. However, he was concerned about what we might call the politicisation of the gender perspective, because it made it difficult to discuss for instance the implications for the Armed Forces of the differences in physical strength between men and women[20]: "to say that it is not true that men are stronger than women, when it becomes wrong to say that, then we have, in a way, made it into politics. And that is very unfortunate" (interview with "Morgan").

The cultural understanding of WPS resembles an instrumental approach, where the gender perspective is considered a tool to increase military effectiveness or conduct operations in a more considerate way. The gender equality understanding reflects the rights-based approach to the WPS norms, which concentrates on women's right to participate (see Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad 2011; Egnell, Hojem and Berts 2014:14).

### 5.2.2 Gender as a Factor in the Planning and Carrying Out of Operations

However, the gender perspective is closely connected to including gender as a factor in the planning and carrying out of operations. Several informants argued that it was challenging to know how to turn the WPS norms into practice. "Richard" said that: "I do not have a clear picture of how I would have implemented this to get the effect we are after" (interview with "Richard"). "Morgan" said about the gender perspective in planning and carrying out of operations in a national setting: "Even though we have received instructions to do it, well, what shall we do, then?" (interview with "Morgan").

Nevertheless, several informants gave interesting examples where gender had been included as a factor in the planning and carrying out of operations abroad. "Steve" and "Roger" explained that in operational planning, gender is included as part of a factor analysis, where

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[20] For more on this, see Høiback (2016:57-64), Teien et al. (2020) or *Dagsnytt 18* from 28 November 2017 (Høiback et al. 2017).

the political, military, economic and social factors as well as infrastructure and information factors of the area of operation are assessed. In other words, gender is one among many factors, and it is not necessarily so that gender is a factor that is important enough, a so-called key factor, in all contexts.

As regards the use of the gender perspective and the WPS norms, several informants pointed out that it was often included or dealt with to tick of the box and go on with other things. "Sebastian" explained that his impression was that WPS related provisions often were included in the planning of operations to tick of a box, but that he was uncertain about the effect on the ground. When asked about how well he thought the Armed Forces had solved the WPS related tasks they had received, "Richard" said that:

> "My experience of it is that one has somehow tried to convert it into some concrete measures. And then one has implemented those measures and then it is, like, check in the box" (interview with "Richard").

In a similar vein, when discussing how his colleagues reacted to focus on the gender perspective or gender issues and why it sometimes was met with laughter or ridicule, "Steve" said that topics related to the gender perspective was a bit exhausted and described that it was important to include it, but not spend too much time on it.

Some also provide more concrete examples of how gender was included in the planning and carrying out an operation. "Brian" explained how he had experiences where it had been necessary to only talk to the men in the area of operation in the cases where the forces did not have female personnel that could talk to the women in the area. This was necessary to avoid provoking negative reactions if they, as men, attempted to talk to women. Furthermore, he explained that in some particular situations, they could not bring female personnel, or they had to keep them in the car: "in some areas (…) we did, on purpose, not bring girls because we knew it would simply provoke" (interview with "Brian"). "Christopher" told a similar story, where he and his team had brought a female colleague when they were visiting an area where there had been instances of sexualised violence, to be able to talk to the female survivors. "Robert" argued that it was difficult to solve missions without having women in the force, and described women as a "huge force multiplier" (interview with "Robert").

"Charles" was critical towards the approach to including gender as a factor that often was used at a place he had been working abroad. Including gender as a factor was often connected to analysing the special needs of women and having enough female personnel in the operations to interact with women in the area of operation. However, he missed a stronger emphasis on the root causes of the challenging situation in which many women found themselves and the fact that men played a key role in this. He argued that it is important "that one actually also addresses *men* to a much larger extent, that the *men* in the force must address the men in the area of operation" (interview with "Charles", emphasis by informant).

Likewise, "Christopher" also highlighted the importance of not limiting the gender perspective to women, but also look at the men in the gender roles of the area of operation. This is an important nuancing of the above-mentioned representation and understanding of the gender perspective as something that is considered to primarily, or at least often, relating to women. These examples of how the gender perspective is used in practice reflect the instrumental approach to WPS, but the argument about root causes also hint at more rights-based or transformative understandings of the gender perspective norm and concept.

### 5.2.3    Including and Protecting Women in the Armed Forces

Several of the officers understood the participation norm as referring to women's equal right to participate. Some associated participation with women's possibility to be part of the Armed Forces and the Armed Forces' need to have female personnel. For instance, "Christopher" said that "for me, it is completely natural that when we plan an operation, women participate in the same way as men" (interview with "Christopher"). "Charles" represented it as a prerequisite for accessing women in the area of operation. When asked about how he understood "protection of women, and women's participation", "Roger" told me, being in doubt about whether he understood the citation from the Letter of Implementation correctly, that "women's participation, that is in the operation, right. That we secure that it is women participating in the operation from our side" (interview with "Roger").

"Morgan" emphasised the point that participation was about women participating in the operations in the same way as men, with the same risks. According to him, protection could not be understood as particular protection of female military personnel in one's own force.

When asked about military effectiveness, "Morgan" argued that an increased number of women in the NAF contributed to greater "cognitive diversity" among the personnel, which would give a better basis for analysis and decision-making (interview with "Morgan"). Here, cognitive diversity refers the getting people with different background and perspectives, which can improve the analytical abilities as the NAF as an organisation.

Opening up the participation aspect to women in the area of operation and envisioning a wider understanding of participation than just in military operations, "Steve" said that:

> "Generally, the way I interpret it, it is that they [i.e. women, my comment] shall be able to participate in society in the same way as the male part [of the population, my comment]. Not necessarily in operations or militarily. Now I think in broad terms, after all. They shall have the possibility to vote and the possibility to do what the male population do. Go to school, get an education, and those things. Get a job, and become in a way a bit more independent and freer as a result" (interview with "Steve").

However, few informants mention the participation of women in the area of operation as political actors in the handling of conflict rather than as instruments for, for instance, information gathering. The informants focus much more on women's participation in one's own force, and how this is necessary to interact with women in the area of operation and improve the cognitive diversity of the force. However, "Steve" covered both aspects, when he pointed out that "a Female Engagement Team is a very good example of how one could conduct an operation also with involving the female part" of the population (interview with "Steve"). The Female Engagement Team consists of female personnel, which can talk to women in countries where this is challenging for male personnel. It is indeed possible that the officers consider the more political aspects of participation as part of gathering information from women in the area of operation. Moreover, this participation is maybe more explicit in peace processes and the building-up of society after conflict. However, this aspect of participation does not seem to be at the front of the informants' understanding. Again, it might seem as if the officers have a narrower understanding of the WPS norms than what the agenda opens for. This might contribute to narrow down the WPS norms, at least the way they are understood and used by the officers. This, in turn, might contribute to making it difficult for the transformative dimensions of the resolution.

"Ronald" seemed to consider participation, protection and gender perspective together. He understood the gender perspective as "adapt[ing]" and "tak[ing] consideration to both genders" so that gender does not constitute a "barrier" for participation, and to make the "'the weak' in quotation marks" in a conflict situation feel safe (interview with "Ronald"). According to "Ronald", protection and participation meant both protecting women in one's own force from sexual harassment and to promote gender equality, as well as women's protection in the area of operation through cultural understanding and assessment of the force's impact on people living there.

This interconnectedness is also visible in the officers' understanding of the protection norm. "Steve" understood protection in this context as the protection of women and girls, and that vulnerable groups are not supposed to be put at risk. "Roger" considered protection, as expressed in the Letter of Implementation with regards to WPS, to be that "through what we do, we shall seek to protect women, if that is the vulnerable group" and that this makes "our actions contribute to protect women" (interview with "Roger", "actions" used in English by informant). To do this, however, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of the area of operation (what we might refer to as gender roles) and include this in the planning, as "Christopher" argued. "Albert" also considered the participation and protection parts together, as understanding the area of operation. As such, the gender perspective and protection were understood as interconnected.

"Robert" gave a useful illustration of this interconnectedness. He argued that it in certain cultural settings, like in certain Muslim countries, it is not possible to protect women in the area of operation without having female soldiers in the force who can communicate and interact with them. He used the example of simple medical services that the military offer to the people living in the area of operation. He argued that during these medical service sessions they needed female medical personnel to receive women that lived in the area of operation: "without that, it is completely impossible to manage. And that way, we attend to the protection of the local women with whom we have dealings" (interview with "Robert"). "Ronald" also pointed at the need to apply a gender perspective while providing medical assistance in areas with different gender roles than in Norway.

This way, the gender perspective and the participation norms can also help improve for instance information gathering, by making sure that there are enough women in the force to communicate with women in the area of operation and run the medical service sessions. As pointed out by "Robert", these medical service sessions are also a possibility to gather information about the conditions of women in the area of operation and what is going on there. The consequence of not managing this during the phase after the combat operation, in the words of the informant, is that: "we exclude the entire female part of the population in an area of operation" (interview with "Robert").

## 5.2.4    Finding the WPS Norms' Relevance in a Military Setting

The officers' understanding and use of the gender perspective and of the norms related to participation and protection as well as of the inclusion of gender as a factor in the planning and carrying out of operations seem to overlap and converge in a question of relevance. This question concerns the WPS norms' relevance for military tasks and daily work, for combat and stabilisation operations and for settings abroad or at home. Moreover, in this question of relevance, several norm sets and frames of meaning come together in relationships of friction.

### Limited Relevance for Many Military Tasks and Daily Work

"Brian" argued that for a typical Norwegian contribution abroad, the WPS norms, such as participation and protection, are not relevant for the daily tasks that the personnel conduct:

> "When you come down on that low level (…) it [is] not relevant for what they do on a daily basis. Well, it is like, we drive from A to B in some village in [name of country omitted] or [name of country omitted], we solve a military tasks which often is to talk to someone, or, well, uh, just [go] out and see just to get a picture of how things are, to understand the situation on the ground. Or one is looking for someone or some equipment or some enemy stuff. And, then is not gender something one thinks about. So, if we are shot at, we shoot back" (interview with "Brian").

Similarly, "Fred" few practical implications of the WPS norms in the field in which he was an expert, and he considered the operational planning to be gender neutral. He also pointed out that in his work, he did not operate close to civilians, something which made including gender

as a factor in the planning and carrying out of operations less relevant. Two other informants gave examples that illustrate how the use of the gender perspective varies with type of operation.

"Ronald" had limited experience with using the gender perspective in operations because he had mostly been engaged in operations where the interaction with the population in the area of operation had been very limited. As he put it: "You do not come in contact with those cultures in the same way (…) The warfare and the operations become so distanced from the local population" (interview with "Ronald"). Nevertheless, "Ronald" described gendered dynamics that had been at work during one of the operations. The force only met local men while operating, except from during sessions where the force had offered medical assistance to people living in the area of operation. This had allowed them some contact with the female part of the population. These medical assistance sessions demonstrated that it was important to have both male and female medical personnel to accommodate both the men and women they treated, as "Ronald" pointed out.

"Oscar" pointed out that the gender perspective had been of limited relevance for one of the operations in which he had participated, because they had very little contact with people in the area of operations during the mission. Beyond ensuring an inclusive working environment in one's own force, ensuring decent conditions for local people working for the force and sending own female personnel to meetings etc. to state a good example for others in the area of operation, the WPS norms were simply part of a set of focus areas that the personnel had to "keep (…) in mind" (interview with "Oscar", original wording in English). For instance, the force was ready to react to violence and sexualised violence among civilians if they encountered it when moving around in the area of operation, or if they saw examples of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by military personnel, according to "Oscar".

These three examples are from very different types of operations, but all informants argue that the various provisions of the WPS norms have limited relevance for their work or that they have had limited experience with it. The gender perspective is often considered relevant in operations where one interacts with people in the area of operation. Still, the gender perspective does also seem to have limited relevance for traditional on-ground operations as well as suggested by the examples provided by "Brian".

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Several informants argued that they had limited possibilities to deal with WPS from the position and level of command at which they were working. Interestingly, the informants on different levels of command in the military organisation point at each other when discussing how the practical implementation of the resolution is done, who is supposed to do it and where it is relevant. Informants on higher levels, point at the lower levels for implementing the resolutions in practice. The higher levels can only give general guidelines and point out that the provisions of the WPS agenda should be taken care of. It is those who plan and carry out the operations who must translate the resolutions into practical action. At the same time, as I pointed out above, some informants questioned the relevance of the WPS norms for many daily military tasks at the lower levels (this argument is based on information provided by several informants, but to ensure anonymity I have chosen not to specify it, as it might connects the informants to level of command).

## Combat and Stabilisation Operations

"Robert" distinguished between combat operations and the operations and period that comes after, when I asked him about problems and dilemmas associated with including gender as a factor. He pointed out that the purpose of the operation influences how gender is included as a factor. He used an operation in a country where gender dynamics are very visible as an example. He argued that in combat operations to improve the security in the area,

> "it is, after all, demanding to include this [i.e. gender as a factor, my comment] because it does not have any practical significance if we try to take control of an area together with the [national adjective omitted] forces to, let us say, increase the area where the security forces have control themselves. However, if we have succeeded in doing that, then the next phase comes. And that is more about presence and making sure that what we just have achieved does not disappear (…) at once. Then this gender perspective comes in handy" (interview with "Robert").

"Morgan" made a partly similar argument, when I asked him about how the use of a gender perspective in the planning and carrying out of operations affected the Armed Forces' ability to be effective or produce good military results. He argued that in military operations – the core of which he defined as "the use of violence, primarily at the biggest possible distance" –

the gender perspective was not among the most important factors (interview with "Morgan"). Then "Morgan" explained that the cognitive diversity following the increased gender diversity in the Armed Forces is a positive thing in terms of improving analysis and decision-making. However, he doubted whether a gender perspective would give any increased effect "in the receiving end (…) in *war*", as opposed to "peace support operations" where the gender perspective is "much more important" with regards to protection (interview with "Morgan"). In this situation, it was not relevant in terms of effect, but in terms of providing protection to the civilians in the area of operations, according to him.

Similarly, "Sebastian" pointed out that the gender perspective could improve the Armed Forces' ability to find the best solutions in international operations, but not that much in national operations. He said that one of the types of operations where the gender perspective could be used was in operations aimed at protection of civilians.

## International and National Operations

Several informants associate the gender perspective and the WPS norms with operations abroad rather than with operations in Norway. Here, identity constructions play into the understanding and use of the norms, something to which I will return in the chapter on identity construction. For instance, "Sebastian" associated protection of women and women's participation with "the international operations track" (interview with "Sebastian"). He did not consider the WPS norms to be that important in operations in Norway, at least the way he worked with it in his job. He felt an expectation that the gender perspective should be addressed in international operations, but not in national operations. When asked about some practical examples of how gender could be included as part of the planning and carrying out of operations, "Steve" added that including gender as a factor in national operations was not as critical as in international operations, and pointed out that one cannot pursue all factors in a plan.

"Albert" said that it was "crucial and natural" that the NAF kept up with and reflected society's goals for gender and diversity (interview with "Albert"). However, he argued that "much of" the WPS agenda "comes from some experiences with international operations that I have some problems with seeing as universal, and particularly in a national defence context" (interview with "Albert"). Similarly, "Ronald" said that he had worked with gender equality

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and the number of women in a national setting, but that he was uncertain about the role and relevance of using the gender perspective in planning and carrying out of operations in a national setting. As he put it, he associated the gender perspective with "operations on the ground in distant countries" and thought that the gender perspective had become relevant due to experiences from operations abroad (interview with "Ronald").

In a similar vein, "Roger" stated that the relevance of the gender perspective depends upon the goal of the mission in question by saying that "it is the operation's goals that are important to us" and that, by consequence, "in certain situations" the "gender perspective can be reasonable to adopt in an operation" (interview with "Roger"). Here, the WPS norms are represented as instruments for increasing the Armed Forces' ability to solve the mission.

However, the informants also gave examples of how the WPS norms can be relevant in a Norwegian setting, but then mostly with regards to practicalities rather than directly linked to operations. "Charles" said that he had had to think about gender when quartering foreign personnel during a multinational exercise in Norway and when dealing with interaction between soldiers from different countries during this exercise. Here, we can see that gender becomes relevant when different cultures and sets of gender norms meet. "Fred" also pointed at similar practicalities linked to women and men living together both in camp and in the field, but not necessarily in a multinational setting.

The WPS resolutions highlight the importance of gender mainstreaming and gender perspective precisely in peace operations, peacebuilding and similar types of processes and operations (UNSC 2000: eight preambular paragraph; UNSC 2009b: operative paragraph 8). These typically take place in operations outside of Norway. However, the National Action Plan for WPS emphasises that the plan and its provisions are also relevant to operations in Norway, even though it retains an emphasis on international operations (Norwegian Ministries 2019:28). Likewise, the Letter of Implementation does not distinguish between national or international operations, and asks the that "Norwegian Armed Forces' operations shall be planned and carried out in way that they also attend to both protection of women, and women's participation" and that the Armed Forces implement the gender perspective in "all Norwegian contributions to multinational operations, training and exercising"[21] (Norwegian

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[21] Original wording in Norwegian: "alle norske bidrag til flernasjonale operasjoner, trening og øving".

Ministry of Defence 2019a:29-30, 44 (citation), my translation). The letter of implementation also states that gender is a factor in national planning work (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:30).

Furthermore, the WPS is considered important in NATO operations (von Hlatky 2019:364). NATO's Heads of State and Governments have stated that WPS, more female NATO personnel and mainstreaming of gender are important for NATO's core tasks[22] and for NATO's effectiveness (North atlantic Treaty Organization 2016: paragraph 131; North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2018a:75) Moreover, NATO's 2018-2020 policy and action plan for WPS state that the gender perspective should be used in NATO's operations within crisis management. The policy and action plan also sets out the outcome that the gender perspective improves NATO operations (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2018b:12, 21; von Hlatky 2019:396-370).

Hlatky (2019:373-374) argues that it is more challenging to make the WPS relevant for deterrence and the defence of Europe against territorial threats (as in for example the Enhanced Forward Presence missions), than for operations in for instance Afghanistan. Such tasks that focus on European territorial security is getting more and more important for NATO. However, given NATO and Norway's emphasis on gender, it might be helpful to consider the norms of the WPS resolutions to be deeper and more comprehensive than what the focus on peace operations, peacebuilding, etc. in resolutions themselves might suggest.

"Steve" also pointed at problems with putting the norms into action:

> "many have tried, but we have, in a way, not gotten the hang of it so it is a bit difficult to take further. There are also examples (…) where our good motives end up in catastrophe for individuals" (interview with "Steve").

"Morgan" told about similar experiences where attempts to use the gender perspective had serious and negative consequences for individuals in the area of operation. I suggest that such

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[22] NATO's core tasks are collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2010:7-8).

negative experiences might also indicate that there is uncertainty about how the WPS norms should be translated into practice, or operationalised, in a good way.

These are indications of the difficulties with filling the WPS norms with practical meaning for the daily operation of the NAF as an organisation and when Norwegian officers participate in planning and carrying out of operations. The examples above have demonstrated that several informants thought that the concepts of gender perspective and participation was difficult to grasp and that different actors understood them in different ways, as exemplified by for instance "Albert", "Steve", "Roger" and "Morgan".

However, this question of relevance is also important because it demonstrates an important point: all the informants I spoke to had some degree of interest or quite much interest in gender issues and WPS, and they engaged in a discussion with me about these issues. I did meet some scepticism among certain informants and that the informants described scepticism etc. among others in the NAF. However, there was little evidence of outright opposition or strong reluctance towards WPS and gender issues among my informants. Rather, it seems as if these officers struggle with seeing the relevance of the WPS norms in many situations. As "Brian" put it, gender issues are "assessed seriously", but it is not necessarily suitable in all situations and it does not receive any particular attention compared to other factors in a plan (interview with "Brian"). "Roger" said, "I do not prioritise the gender perspective particularly in planning and carrying out of operations unless when I see that it affects the operation" (interview with "Roger"). "Robert" argued that "gender – now I am speaking in very broad terms – is not a very *popular* topic in [name of branch omitted], at least. (…) But that does not mean that we are not concerned about it [i.e. gender]" (interview with "Robert").

## 5.3  Inter-Discursive Friction: Fitting the WPS Norms with Existing Norms in the Military

The WPS norms are filled with content by the officers as these practitioners link the WPS norms to existing sets of norms in the military organisation. The WPS norms can resemble or fit well with existing norms, or there can be points of tension between these new WPS norms and already existing norm sets. This is an external source of norm dynamism (Krook and True 2010:109), or what I call inter-discursive friction (see e.g. Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:84).

This process of linking the WPS norms to existing sets of norms might influence the practices that the WPS norms cause, to what extent they spread and how they are framed (Krook and True 2010:110-111). In the context of this thesis, the important aspect is to see how the WPS norms interact with existing norms and how the WPS norms complement (or not) these existing norms in the view of the officers I have interviewed.

There are several examples of linking of the WPS norms with various existing sets of norms. In the discussion of relevance and intra-discursive friction (internal dynamism), I already touched upon how several norm sets and frames of meaning come together in relationships of accordance and tension. In this section, I consider more explicit examples of external dynamism in the interview material. I concentrate on the linking to international humanitarian law, norms of prioritisation and the implicit linking to Norwegian gender equality norms that is embedded in the natural basic discourse. This natural basic discourse is discussed in the chapter on identity construction.

### 5.3.1 International Humanitarian Law

In the WPS resolutions, sexual violence is represented as a breach of international law, infringements of the human rights of the survivor (or victim) and as a war crime. The WPS norms are connected to other existing discourses and texts, which we might refer to this as intertextuality (see e.g. Dunn and Neumann 2016:104). The resolutions connect norms of the resolutions to existing legal documents and discourses. For example, the normative ideas about protection of women and girls from sexualised violence contain references to different "justice and reconciliation mechanisms", states' obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (UNSC 2008: fifth and ninth preambular paragraphs, ; UNSC 2009a: fitfh, sixth, eighth, ninth and tenth preambular paragraphs (citation from eighth preambular paragraph) ; UNSC 2009b: operative paragraph 3;  see also UNSC 2000: sixth preambular paragraph). Moreover, sexual violence is represented as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The need for legal prosecution of perpetrators and fighting of impunity is emphasised (UNSC 2013a: operative paragraph 2).

In my interview material, the WPS norms are linked to, and in a somewhat tense relationship with, the rules of the law of armed conflict (the *jus in bello*). The law of armed conflict is often referred to as international humanitarian law, and these can be used as synonyms (Fleck 2013:xv; Cooper and Larsen 2020). I use the term international humanitarian law here. When discussing how protection of women and women's participation are included in plans for operations, "Steve" pointed out that "those things are, after all, somehow universal for us. It is part of international humanitarian law also" (interview with "Steve").

The WPS resolutions give particular attention to women and girl's (while also recognising the gendered effect of war on men and boy's) participation and protection, and the prevention of violence against them. The protection aspect is, among other things, linked to the provisions of international humanitarian law, which grants protection to civilians in combat situations (UNSC 2000: operative paragraph 9; Ruud and Ulfstein 2011:262-263; Hultman and Sellström 2019:602). Simply put, international humanitarian law provides protection to all civilians, in the sense of non-combatants (for a more thorough discussion of this, see Johansen and Staib 2009:190-192). Gender does not matter. The officers do seem to be in line with the gender-neutral provisions of international humanitarian law with regards to protection. Several of the officers argued that they did not think that gender makes a difference here: a civilian is a civilian according to them. It seems as if the WPS norms, *if understood as giving extra protection to women*, is considered as problematic by certain of my informants.

For instance, when I presented one practical measure that could be taken to protect women within his field of military expertise, "Fred" said that "the first thing that strikes me is that it is a bit, kind of, super-optimisation. Whether there are women or men there does not matter. It is civilians who shall not be hurt" (interview with "Fred"). "Robert" argued, with regards to physical protection of civilians during combat, that "it does not matter whether you are woman or man. If you are a civilian, you are entitled to protection when it comes to combat situations. And, of course, we do our outmost to achieve that" (interview with "Robert").

When discussing how protection could be done during an operation, "Steve" said that one had to avoid damaging areas with women, children and vulnerable groups. At the same time, he argued that

"But also, I also think about civilians. There is, after all, no difference in that respect, whether it is an old grandfather or whether it is a mother or whether it is a child. One shall not, after all, conduct the operation in a way that they are hurt during attack" (interview with "Steve").

Similarly, "Morgan" argued that "we have a duty to protect the civilians, regardless of their gender" before pointing out that one had to have a particular focus on women, as "historically, we have seen that women's sexuality is used as part of the warfare" (interview with "Morgan").

## 5.3.2　Challenging Traditional Principles of Prioritisation in Military Operations

As illustrated above, many informants considered the WPS norms to be more relevant in operations abroad than in operations in Norway. Several informants did not see much relevance of the WPS norms for their work and many of the tasks they were conducting. Moreover, some informants linked the use of a gender perspective to operations to stabilise and protect civilians (or phases of operations where this was in focus) rather than combat operations. Here, there is friction between the WPS norms and how the informants seem to perceive of their task and the prioritisations needed to fulfil this task. Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:27-28) point out that the WPS agenda challenges the traditional perceptions of military tasks (for instance through its shift in emphasis from state to human security) and, as a consequence, measures of effectiveness. The above-mentioned points of view from the interviews touch upon the same dynamics, and can help us grasp how the WPS norms are linked to existing sets of norms in the military organisation and the friction between different sets of norms and frames of meaning.

On the one hand, "Robert" provided an important example of how the WPS agenda can be implemented in practice, contributing to both fulfilling the WPS agenda in terms of participation and reach Norway's strategic goals within WPS and demonstrate commitment to Norway's partners in the operation. He referred to experiences from assessing and planning the training of female units in a local security force, and argued that "then, we could both use our female soldiers to the absolute uttermost culturally, and, not at least, we could obtain, let

us say, small wins, for Norway in strategic terms also in an 1325-context" (interview with "Robert"). From this perspective, the WPS norms can be considered part of military tasks.

On the other hand, the distinction between the WPS norms' relevance in combat operations and stabilisation operations, and in operations abroad and in Norway, suggests that the norms are not compatible with all existing norms in the military organisation. To make sense of this, I suggest that we consider the inherently extreme situations in which one might end up in a military operation. Following a Clausewitzian approach, "war is (…) an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will" (Clausewitz 1984:75). In other words, one might end up in a situation where one must use lethal force to impose one's will upon another. This frame of interpretation has some particular implications for how military activity, its goals and ethics should be perceived. As "Morgan" put it, it is important to keep in mind the nature of military operations:

> "there are enormous consequences of doing things the wrong way. It is about the life and death for very many people, and, in that perspective, this [the gender perspective, or gender issues more broadly, in my interpretation, my comment] becomes, in fact, a bit secondary" (interview with "Morgan").

Moreover, in many ways, the Armed Forces are charged with a demanding task. According to Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:7 (citation), 22), the Armed Forces should "fight and win the nation's wars". If we think of the NAF's operations in Norway, it is about defending the state's territory towards actors that are willing to use lethal force to impose their will on the state. If we take this traditional state-centred understanding of security, and thus what the Armed Forces should deliver, the provisions in the WPS agenda are easily considered an add-on that is put in second row of prioritisation.

In the prolongation of this logic and the arguments the informants provided, it seems as if combat operations (as opposed to stabilisation operations) operates under a specific set of norms and logic. A battle situation is short and, in many respects, extreme. Solving the mission is what matters in this situation. The high stakes and risks involved, and the serious consequences of making mistakes, allow for a narrowing down of the things one can take into consideration. Civilians are civilians, and they should be protected. At the same time, military

operations, and the choice to use it, carry in them a destructive potential. It will affect the people who live in the area of operation, and one must make a proportionality assessment that weights the negative impact against what one achieves, as pointed out by "Steve".

Afterwards, in the stabilisation phase, particular attention can be paid to women and other particular tasks. I suggest that this demonstrates how the frames of understanding that are used to justify and make sense of military tasks in a military setting and among the officers are not necessarily compatible with the WPS norms and their call for a new understanding of peace and security. It is, however, possible to argue that military operations might be necessary to create a security situation from which one can work with other challenges in the society or from which there can be civil activity in the area of operation, as suggested by "Steve".

As such, even though the WPS norms might be considered an add-on when military activity is understood through the prism of state security and defence of the homeland, it is possible to argue that WPS can contribute to this as well. Norway's contributions to international operations are to a large extent the result of a perceived "self-interest" in securing support from NATO in case of an attack on Norwegian territory (Børresen, Gjeseth and Tamnes 2004:378; Matlary 2014:76-78). The WPS norms can help Norway solve these missions better, thus, indirectly contribute to Norwegian security in a more traditional sense if solving the mission in a better way improves Norway's standing in the alliance.

### 5.3.3 Fitting WPS with Masculinities in the Norwegian Armed Forces

Certain of my informants considered some of the WPS norms to be Norwegian good manners, or in other ways a natural part of being a Norwegian. Some also considered the provisions of the WPS agenda to be an integrated part of the work that Norwegian officers already do. I discuss this further in chapter six,  I would argue that there is an implicit linking to existing sets of norms in these types of argument, what Krook and True (2010) call external dynamism. The WPS norms are linked to the gender equality or gender sensitivity norm sets that are a natural part of Norwegian society. However, I would argue that there are several points of inter-discursive friction between this perception of the WPS norms and the masculine ideals, cultures and identity constructions that existing literature find in the NAF.

First, existing literature has identified expressions of masculinities and masculine culture in the NAF, which suggests that it might be necessary to reconsider the natural ideal discourse. In a study of an all-male unit of enlisted soldiers, Totland (2009:iii) finds a masculine operative community constructed around operative values such as manhood and the male body's physical characteristics and a gendered understanding of what it means to be a soldier. The "hegemonic, operative and masculine discourses" makes it difficult for persons who are non-operative or do not have the adequate gender, body or sexual orientation to be part of the operative community and its practices (Totland 2009:iii).

Likewise, in a study of a Norwegian conscript unit with both male and female personnel, Gussgard (2018:95-97) finds exclusionary identities, where the ideal soldier is a male and where masculine warrior ideals are important. He finds little change in the hegemonic masculine culture in the unit he studies even though the number of female conscripts has increased (but still clearly being a minority) in the NAF, and argues that the gendered military identity is reproduced by military personnel.

The masculine military identity and the gendered nature of the NAF have also been pointed out by Kvarving (2019). She argues that the organisational culture of the NAF is one of the factors that prevent the implementation of the UNSCR 1325:

> "gender policies are incompatible with a military identity shaped by hegemonic masculine culture, which has led a majority of the Norwegian military leaders to ignore assignments associated the WPS agenda, confirming the gendered nature of the organisation" (Kvarving 2019:236).

Second, it seems as if the linking of the WPS norms to Norwegian gender equality is in a relationship of friction with the soldier ideals in the NAF. Rones (2015a:55, 69, 72-77) argues that the Norwegian defence tradition has emphasised the rugged outdoorsman as a military ideal. This ideal soldier represents a form of hegemonic masculinity (a term often associated with the scholar Raewyn Connell) and have reached the status of *doxa*, which means that it is taken for granted. This has made it more difficult for women, and men who do not meet this ideal, to participate in the NAF. The ideal is now shifting towards the warrior. Still, the ideal

retains masculine values (Bjørnstad 2011 in Rones 2015a:77). We can see these ideals as constructions, or particular representations of the Norwegian soldiers and what they should be like. From this perspective, there might be friction between the gender equality norms sets in the Norwegian society and the traditional Norwegian ideal of a soldier.

Furthermore, complicit masculinity in the NAF is another reason to nuance and problematise the linking of the WPS norms to gender equality norms in Norwegian society. Complicit masculinity, another term that is often associated with Raewyn Connell, refers to a position in which one acts in accordance with the ideals and interests of the group that dominates the social order because one can gain from this (Connell 2005 in Rones and Fasting 2017:151). According to Rones and Fasting (2017:154-156), this complicit masculinity is present at the political level in Norway, as Norwegian defence discourse has had a strong emphasis on status seeking among NATO allies and contribution in international operations to ensure allied military support in Norway if needed. In addition, they find a dimension of complicit masculinity among Norwegian enlisted military personnel's shift towards a warrior identity. This can be seen in Norwegian soldiers' effort and wish for being recognised by British and American soldiers and their standards, which are considered the dominant group in the alliance's social order. The Norwegian strategy of status seeking and Norwegian soldiers' status seeking among British and American personnel is an expression of how Norway and Norwegian military personnel benefit from playing by the rules of the dominant military actors in the alliance and their interests, which in turn upholds these dominant actors' traditional ideals, also in the field of gender. This suggests that the WPS norms are not necessarily compatible with ideals and idols, at least among enlisted personnel, in the NAF and with defence policy. Even though Haaland (2008:250) does not find the same admiration for British and American personnel among Norwegian officers, there is reason to suspect that this might be the case with officers as well, which are supposed to lead.

Third, we can consider the typical gendered war roles and masculine ideals and values that play an important role in military organisations and in military life. Goldstein (2004: chap. 5, see esp. pp. 251, 331) argues that military organisations use masculinity ideals and identity to make men fight. Often, these masculine values and ideals are defined in opposition to values and ideals that are considered feminine and in opposition to women, who play a role in various support functions for war-fighting. Rones (2015b:302-303) and Rones and Fasting

(2017:156-158) also argue that women, with their gender, feminine physique and the ideas attached to it, challenge the concept of the chosen body, which play an important role in the belief system underpinning traditional military identities. The chosen body, which meets the physical requirements and passes the physical tests of the Armed Forces, is an ideal and gives authority and a certain identity to military personnel. Together with the principles for recognition that are baked into the status seeking discussed above, this can be considered a form of symbolic violence. Here, the dominant group (men in the NAF and British and American soldiers) inflicts its ideals and values on a lower-ranking group in the social system through signs of recognition or non-recognition (Rones and Fasting 2017:150-151, 159). There are also women in the NAF who defended the traditional concept of the chosen body by arguing in favour of hard physical tests. As such, they engaged in complicit masculinity, and demonstrates that the masculinity ideals can also be upheld by women (Rones and Fasting 2017:157). For the purpose of this thesis, this might contribute to confirm the masculine dimension of the NAF and question whether the provisions of the WPS resolutions really come natural to Norwegian military personnel.

However, not all studies find clear examples of military masculinity in the NAF. In a study of official reports, memory books and other documents from Norwegian international operations in the 1990s and early 2000s, Haaland (2012:63-64, 72-73) finds few expressions of military masculinity, in the sense of violence or racist, misogynist and homophobic attitudes. However, that does not mean that such attitudes do not exist. Furthermore, Haaland (2012:64, 73-74) argues that the NAF have a conservative view of its female personnel and women living in the area of operation and that there is a tension between military masculinities and gender mainstreaming.

Fourth, it is possible that gender equality and other values that are considered a natural part of Norwegian society (and which is an important component of the natural ideal discourse) do not carry over into the NAF or do not play out in the same way. Indeed, Lilleaas and Ellingsen (2014:132, 141-142) find that men in the NAF are as positive to gender equality as Norwegian men outside the military. They do not find that Norway's armed forces are characterised by more conservative masculinities than Norwegian society in general. However, there seem to be fewer men inside than outside the NAF that hold modern idealistic values, which are often correlated with a positive attitude to gender equality (Lilleaas and

Ellingsen 2014:128), and which might suggest that military personnel is not that positive to WPS. Moreover, Rones and Fasting (2017:155-156) identify a clash between (1) the warrior ideal and identity found in the NAF, and (2) the Norwegian society's soldier ideals and perception of military activity in the late 2000s. This suggests that the Norwegian gender equality discourse does not necessarily reflect in military and defence political frames of meaning where status-seeking among allies and allied soldiers are key components. In other words, the masculinity ideals that existing research point out might suggest that Norwegian military personnel's background from a gender equal society does not necessarily mean that the NAF will implement the WPS resolutions by itself.

Most research on masculinities that I have reviewed here suggests that there are clear masculine characteristics to the culture, identity constructions, ideals and discourses within the NAF. However, that does not mean that the link between Norwegian gender equality norms sets and the WPS norms is not a part of the frames of meaning-making and the identity constructions that are visible in my interviews. Rather, it means that these frames of meaning-making are in a tense relationship with other frames of meaning-making and norms in the NAF.

## 5.1    Filling the WPS Norms with Content

The above sections demonstrate how the officers, as practitioners, fill the WPS norms with content and, thus, contribute to shape these ambiguous and dynamic norms. My interviews provide concrete examples of how the officers understand the norms, what to do about them and apply them in operations and daily work. At the same time, the material also contains expressions of uncertainty as to how to understand and use the norms in a military setting, as well as examples of the tensions between the WPS norms and existing norms in the military organisation.

The officers voice understandings of the WPS norms, particularly the gender perspective, that emphasise a need for cultural gender sensitivity rather than promoting gender equality (indeed, the material expressed support for gender equality, but promoting gender equality was not how *the purpose of the WPS norms* were primarily understood). The interviews provide examples of how the participation norm is understood as women's participation in

one's own force. At the same time, there are examples where officers understand the participation norm to cover the participation of women in the area of operation as well. The interviews suggest that the officers understand the protection norm as protection of vulnerable groups, but women and girls are not seen as vulnerable groups *per se*. Furthermore, the interviews clearly suggest that the officers understand WPS norms to apply abroad rather than at home, even though this is not a limitation in the norms or in the most recent Norwegian policy documents. More specifically, some of the officers seem to consider the WPS norms to be more relevant in tasks related to protection of civilians and stabilisation than in combat operations. From these perspectives, the officers seem to have a narrower understanding of the applicability of the WPS norms than the resolutions and national policy documents suggest.

This suggests that the officers consider the WPS provisions to apply first and foremost to a limited group of settings, and, partly isolated from combat (and hard security) in the view of some informants. These understandings of the norms are reflected in the officers' examples of how the norms can be turned into practice and used in daily work and in operations. First, the WPS norms are used mostly in operations abroad where one operates in a different culture. The gender perspective can, for instance, help improve and enable information gathering, body searches, interaction with and the provision of medical services to people living in the area of operation. Second, the participation of women in one's own force might be necessary for realising these activities in a gender sensitive way. As such, the use of the gender perspective and participation norms is instrumental. The focus is on how the norms can strengthen military operations. This decides the WPS norms' relevance for the military organisation and military activity. This understanding and use of the WPS norms fill the norms with a particular and largely instrumental content, that puts the transformative aspects of the WPS resolutions in second row.

Finally, in the interview material, the officers articulate links between the WPS norms and the existing norm sets in international humanitarian law as well as Norwegian gender equality norms. This is an expression not only of how the new WPS norms fit with existing norm sets. It is also an expression of what contribution the WPS norms can make in the military organisation. The interview material suggest that the officers saw some friction between the protection norm and International Humanitarian Law, which the officers considered gender

neutral. This might contribute to blur the point that the protection of women and girls need extra attention. However, together with the distinction between combat and stabilisation operations (or phases of operations), it also highlights the difficulty with which the WPS norms can be linked to different forms of operations. The friction between the traditional understanding of military activity and the new WPS norms suggest the same. The link to Norwegian gender sensitivity and gender equality norms through the idea that WPS is a natural part of Norwegian identity give the norms a certain content. At the same time, the gender sensitivity norms and gender equality norms in Norwegian society does not necessarily fit well with the masculine ideals and cultures or the military organisation. This feeds into the question of finding the WPS norms' relevance in a military setting, and, thus, contribute to shape the content of the WPS norms by narrowing them down.

# 6 Constructing Identity and Subject Positions: Giving Meaning to the WPS Norms in Relationship to the Other

In this chapter, I analyse how the officers construct collective identity as part of the process of giving sense to the WPS norms. Moreover, I illustrate that officers' identity construction constitutes a prism through which new important dimensions of the officers' understanding and use the WPS norms become visible. I suggest that the WPS norms become more concrete and understandable in relationship to the Other. The officers' accommodation of the emerging and imported WPS discourse and its norms seems to entail a form of identity construction that resembles Lene Hansen's (2006) theoretical arguments about identity construction. When the officers address how they should relate to (i.e. understand and use) the WPS norms, they also define who "we" are (a Self) and who "we" are not (an Other). Moreover, the officers "ste[p] into" subject positions that contribute to define their identity (Epstein 2008:14-15 (citation p. 14)).

I find that the officers constructed their identity through processes of linking and differentiation. Put simply, during the interviews the officers used different explicitly articulated terms and concepts to describe a Self – the NAF, Norwegian officers and the Norwegian society – as opposed to an Other – typically non-Norwegian or non-Scandinavian military organisations and societies – with regards to WPS. In some instance, I have had to formulate concepts that cover different explicit articulations, or which capture implicit axes of juxtapositions in the interviews with the officers. The table below illustrates the explicit articulations and terms that go into the process of linking and differentiation. A set of concepts are linked together in a characterisation of the Self, which in turn, is juxtaposed to a set of concepts that characterise the Other (see Hansen 2006:41-46).

*Table 2 Linking and Differentiation*

| The Self | … juxtaposed with … | The Other |
|---|---|---|
| Norwegian | ←————————→ | Non-Norwegian |
| WPS is natural part of identity | ←————————→ | Less progressive to WPS, or different attitude towards WPS |
| Non-Muslim (implicit) | ←————————→ | Muslim |
| WPS is not relevant | ←————————→ | WPS is relevant |
| Not influential | ←————————→ | Influential |

A Self to which WPS is natural is juxtaposed to an Other which is resistant or less progressive to WPS. The Other is characterised as Muslim, and is implicitly juxtaposed to a non-Muslim Self. Furthermore, WPS is not considered as relevant to the Self as for the Other (this is also reflected in my discussion of inter- and intra-discursive friction (internal and external sources of norms dynamism). The interview material also creates the impression that the Self is non-influential with regards to WPS, whereas the Other is influential.

This creates different axes along which identity is constructed. However, it is important to note that these axes and basic discourses that emerge from this process are ideal types – or prisms – meant for analytical purpose (Hansen 2006:52). For instance, the Self and the Other are not unitary entities. There are nuances to the degree of "naturalness" within the identity construction of the Self (for instance, some officers are positive towards WPS, others are less so). Similarly, the Other can both be societies in which one operates (e.g. societies in which there are particular gender roles) or allies with different attitudes towards gender issues or more influence over allied or coalition operations. Moreover, it is important to note that these are *identity* constructions. When I suggest that the material have elements that construct a Self to which WPS is natural, it refers to WPS being constructed as a natural part of the identity of the Self. "Natural" does *not* refer to any congenital or biological factors. In the following, I explain the identity construction in the interview material and these axes more in detail, by looking at the concepts and how they are juxtaposed to each other. This stylised form of analysis of the interview data complements the analysis of inter- and intra-discursive friction, as it highlights important dimensions of the officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms.

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## 6.1 Less Progressive or Different Other and Natural Self

A characteristic that defines the Other in the interviews is that women's rights, gender equality and similar societal characteristics linked to gender are not as progressive or advanced as in Norway, or simply different from the ones in Norway. The explicit terms varies, but I think the term less progressive and different captures the informant's meaning well. The Other is characterised as culturally different from Norway and the West and, therefore, not necessarily ready for Western gender policy standards. The Self, Norway, is characterised as having a natural or default positive inclination towards and ability to follow up on the WPS norms because the Self is more progressive, gender sensitive and gender equal. Using Hansen's (2006) vocabulary, we can think of this natural discourse as a basic discourse.

"Brian" explained how the society in which he had been operating was very different in terms of gender equality and women's rights and that the personnel in the local force he was helping to train were not at all susceptible to the gender issues and norms that Western forces were promoting. He said that:

> "They were not ready for it. They need more softening, a more gradual approach. Because what it actually led to [the Western forces' attempts to promote gender policies, my comment] was that they [the people of the local partner force, my comment] resisted, went into the trench and entrenched themselves against this";

and that:

> "It produced the reverse of its desired effect, because it was pushing it too far with regards to the [national adjective of country in question omitted] culture" (interview with "Brian").

"Robert" used the difference in gender culture of the Other to justify the need to focus particularly on women. He explained that:

"to succeed with some of our operations – and in particular stabilising operations – we need access to first and foremost the best persons of all and, not at least, access to the female population and in particular in the operational areas that have an entirely different gender culture than what we have in Norway and the Western world for that matter" (interview with "Robert").

A similar representation of the Other as culturally different from and less progressive than the Self with regards to gender questions can be found in the story of "Morgan". When I asked him about how one might include gender as a factor in the planning and carrying out of operations, he told me that this would vary with the country in which one is operating. He argued that one had to include gender as a factor in situations "in Norway or in Western Europe" but that it "do[es] not have to be at the centre of your attention in the same way" as in for instance Muslim countries, where it is important to "respect the patriarchal culture" to avoid negative consequences for those who are supposed to be protected (interview with "Morgan"). According to him, people in Norway and in Western Europe is part of a "a Western cultural group, where this [gender, gender perspective my comment] is taken care of to a larger degree" by itself (interview with "Morgan").

However, the Other is not necessarily conceived within a Western and non-Western dichotomy. Rather, I find that the Other is constructed as non-Scandinavian or non-Norwegian in contrast to a Scandinavian or Norwegian self. "Charles" told me about his experience with the WPS agenda and the gender perspective in an international operation with personnel from different continents. Even though he met people with good knowledge and competency on these issues, he experienced that the interest and competency on WPS issues in regional military organisations was low. However, this was also the case for Western forces: "It is, as a matter of fact, the case with many Western forces as well. There is an *attitude*, one might say, to this that does not give evidence of it [WPS or gender issues more broadly, my comment] being considered as particularly important or urgent" (interview with "Charles", emphasis by informant). His colleagues were interested in his analyses where some sort of gender perspective was included or some sort of gender issue addressed, as long as it was relevant for concrete operational planning (even though the follow-up in the carrying out of the operations was often poor). At the same time, it was more difficult to talk about integrating the gender perspective into the running of the organisation or creating teaching

settings: "It is almost not welcome and it is a bit made light of, and particularly from Western forces that feel that they really know about this: 'We know this already, after all, so why shall we do it again?'" (interview with "Charles").

Similar identity constructions can be found in what two other informants told me. "Fred" told a story about an officer from a Western European country who was lecturing on pre-deployment training for international operations the informant had participated in. "Fred" describes it as a "culture shock" when the foreign officer explained how one should buy sex in the country to which they were deploying (interview with "Fred"). As "Fred" put it with an understatement: "That is slightly different attitudes than what we have, than what we are used to" (interview with "Fred").

"Steve" told me about the reactions from male colleagues, subordinates and leaders if he puts a gender issue on the agenda or suggests using a gender perspective. He explained that it varies with nationality and that different individuals reacted in different ways, before saying that:

> "But most who have – how to put it – the culture that we have see the importance of it [i.e. gender perspective, gender issues, my comment] particularly in [name of country omitted] and nations where the view of humanity is completely different than ours" (interview with "Steve").

"Steve" also pointed out that he had experienced ridicule from colleagues abroad with regards to gender issues and the gender perspective. He argued that many countries are at "a different level with regards to male-female soldiers" (interview with "Steve"). He had experienced the gender culture in another Western, non-Norwegian army staff where he had been working as a "very odd culture compared to what we have in Norway" as male and female soldiers were much more segregated (interview with "Steve").

### 6.1.1 Gender Equality is a Natural Part of the Norwegian Self's Identity

Gender equality and gender issues are described as "natural" or with similar concepts for Norwegians and in Norwegian society, whereas the Other is characterised as less progressive.

This differentiates the Self's attitudes and approach to the WPS norms as different from the ones of the Other.

For instance, "Sebastian" told a story about the differences between various nations' approach to gender issues when I asked him about how the gender perspective was relevant in his work. He explained how the codes of conduct of an ally could give detailed guidelines with regards to gender issues that, in "Sebastian's" personal opinion, was "natural" to Norwegian personnel and would be perceived as a "no-brainer" (interview with "Sebastian").

"Fred" told me that he did not know the UNSCR 1325, but that he had received training in gender issues as part of pre-deployment training before operations abroad. He said that "seen from a Norwegian perspective it is about altogether standard Norwegian good manners", that the training was aimed at personnel from countries with different views on women and gender equality, and that "when we have to go through an equivalent programme, we consider it rather trivial. Well, there is nothing revolutionary, there is nothing that we must work with ourselves to manage" (interview with "Fred").

"Sebastian" exemplified a similar point with the challenges associated with multinational training in Norway, where the attitudes of personnel from allies on WPS related topics can be different from the ones in Norway. This might lead to strange situations when they are supposed to tutor Norwegian personnel on gender issues. As he put it:

> "I think the ideas and the theories and what forms the basis of 1325 are much more incorporated in a Norwegian soldier, a Norwegian officer, regardless of gender, than it is in many other, well, NATO countries or, not at least, UN nations" (interview with "Sebastian").

Similarly, "Brian" said that he was "not worried that our soldiers do not treat everyone with respect, also girls. Because we are used to do it at home" (interview with "Brian"). He also argued that "it is not us who wipe out a village and drive women away and rape women. That is not us" and that "it is, after all, poorly trained insurgents and militias who usually do such things" (interview with "Brian"). "Morgan" said a similar thing when explaining why the norms and ideas of the WPS agenda was taken care of in areas where Norwegian forces had

control in a conflict situation: "Well, after all, we do not loot, we do not rape. We stopped that 1000 years ago" (interview with "Morgan"). He also suggested that, in the case of operations in Norway, it is possible that the elements highlighted by the 1325 resolution are already, and should be, integrated into how the NAF operate rather than explicitly concentrated upon. The underlying ideas is that Norway is on another "level of maturity" than what the resolution is aimed at (interview with "Morgan").

Two other informants expressed two different aspects of the "natural" basic discourse. "Roger" said that Norway's influence and possibility to promote women's participation when interacting with male-dominated actors is limited. However, according to him, it is possible for Norway to show that it is "natural" in a Norwegian setting that Norwegian forces consist of both men and women who operate together, also on the higher levels, and that this can serve as an example for others (interview with "Roger"). When asked about whether he felt any expectations to use the gender perspective or put gender issues on the agenda in his job, "Robert" said he had felt this clearly in a position he had held abroad. He argued that gender issues were implicitly a part of his mandate and the mission, "because Norway is the nation it is" (interview with "Robert").

In these stories, what is considered natural and normal to Norwegians, or Scandinavians – the Self – is represented as something new, not yet normalised by or different from certain Western European allies – the Other. The Norwegian society is characterised as geared towards taking care of gender equality and WPS issues and as having military personnel that are naturally good at gender equality and other aspects of the WPS agenda.

## 6.2    Muslim Other and Non-Muslim Self

"Muslim" is a recurring concept in the description of the Other. Different forms of gender topics have been relevant for the officers when they have been on a mission in countries or areas where Islam is an important religion. The Self is not explicitly framed as non-Muslim in the sense of belonging to another religion in my interview data. In other words, the juxtaposition between the Muslim other and a non-Muslim Self is therefore implicit.

"Christopher" said that he had experienced some expectations to use the gender perspective or put gender questions on the agenda when he was posted in a country where Islam was an important religion:

> "Because they are Muslim, you only met *men.* And I remember that we discussed this quite a few times: Well, now we only meet men, what can we do to meet the other half of the population?" (interview with "Christopher", emphasis by informant)

Similarly, when asked about how he understood the concepts "protection of women and women's participation" used in the Letter of implementation, "Robert" argued that these were specific approaches to take into consideration in the planning and carrying out of operations, not only, but "particularly in Muslim countries that we have been to" (interview with "Robert"). In an already mentioned example, "Morgan" claimed that including gender as a factor in the planning and carrying out of operations is more important in for instance Muslim countries than in Western Europe. "Ronald" said that "when we have come to countries, for instance Muslim countries, one must understand that cultural difference and the gender perspective in it [and] that women's role in the countries one comes to is different from their role at home [i.e. in Norway, my comment]" (interview with "Ronald").

Furthermore, the WPS agenda or various forms of gender issues are typically associated with operations in Muslim societies. "Richard" used a "Muslim country" as one of several *examples* of where the gender perspective could be relevant (interview with "Richard"). When asked about whether and how the gender perspective in planning and carrying out of operations can affect military effectiveness, "Albert" referred to an example of check-points in Afghanistan, where a female soldier is needed to conduct body searches on civilian women.

What makes the WPS norms relevant in certain societies is their *gender roles, not the society's prevalent religion in itself*. The association of the WPS norms with Muslim societies should not be interpreted as indicating that the informants see no nuances between and within Muslim societies with regards to gender roles, or that they do not think the WPS norms apply elsewhere. This is simply one dimension of how the officers make sense of the WPS norms. It is important to remember that the linking and differentiation analysis creates stylised ideal

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types that serve an analytical purpose rather than reflect all nuances of reality (Hansen 2006:52).

It is possible that the association of WPS with Muslim societies is linked to the fact that personnel from the NAF met a different gender culture when operating in Afghanistan in the 2000s and 2010s. One can find examples of highly conservative attitudes towards gender issues among Afghan men, and one can find examples of highly traditional gender roles, gender inequality and oppression of women in the Afghan society. That said, policies, gender roles and attitudes and women's situation varies greatly in today's Afghan society and have done so throughout Afghan history (Alozie and Manganaro 2014:2454; Ahmed-Ghosh 2003:1-2, 11-12; Zulfacar 2006; Schütte 2013).

## 6.3    Nuances to the Natural Basic Discourse

As basic discourses work as an analytical prism through which we can highlight nuances and variations in the interview data, it is necessary to problematise the natural basic discourse (Hansen 2006:52). My material suggests that the Self at hand is not one, clearly defined entity with unitary attitudes.

The openness to and attitude towards gender issues, the gender perspective and other dimensions of the WPS norms in the NAF (the Self) vary with age and education. Several informants express an impression that younger officers often have a more positive attitude towards, or a better understanding of, the gender perspective and other provisions of the WPS agenda than older officers. For instance, "Sebastian" said that many of his colleagues, which are predominantly middle-aged, elder men, consider the need to engage with issues related to UNSCR 1325 as a consequence of what is considered politically correct rather than the operational needs. He also told me that his impression was that the examples of "moan and groan" with which these topics have been met are changing in a positive direction as the number of younger officers with a different education is increasing (interview with "Sebastian"). When discussing the problems associated with implementation of the WPS agenda, "Charles" thought part of the problem was that:

> "among men in the Norwegian Armed Forces, at least including my own generation
> and older ones, the attitudes are not good enough with regards to the idea that women
> shall be part of all parts of the Armed Force. And it is still, after all, my generation and
> elder that makes decision and to a great extent direct how the Norwegian Armed
> Forces develop" (interview with "Charles").

"Robert" gave a slightly different description, where he argued that attitudes towards these
issues mature with education, experience and age.

The stories of ridicule and lack of interest which seems to exist among Norwegian personnel
is another reason to nuance the natural discourse (see also Kvarving 2019:9). "Albert"
explained that he had experienced that WPS is made fun of or not taken seriously. He said
that "unfortunately, I have to say that it is not taken seriously enough by some, that is a bit
made fun of, in a way" and that "it might be that if one simply mentions the gender
perspective people begin to smile" (interview with "Albert"). "Brian" said he had experienced
chauvinism among individuals at lower levels of command, but not experienced ridicule of
WPS (which he rather argued was taken seriously), even though he did not exclude that it
might existed. Likewise, "Roger" had not experienced ridicule or joking in his current
working environment. "Steve" had experienced ridicule, but that was typically experiences
from abroad.

## 6.4    Influential Other and Non-Influential Self

Another dimension that is used to describe the Self, is that Norway has limited influence. This
is juxtaposed to a more influential Other, in this case the coalition, alliance or the USA.
Norway's possibility to influence the WPS agenda in typical operations is represented as
limited. The explicit articulation in the interview material vary, so I have used "influential" to
capture the content and intention of what is said.

Several informants have pointed out that Norway is typically operating within an alliance like
NATO, a coalition or the UN (see also Heier 2014:23). In these situations, Norway's
possibility to influence the use of the gender perspective and the ways in which the WPS
norms are taken into account in the planning and carrying out of operations is limited,

according to "Oscar". "Sebastian" pointed out that "we contribute with the staff officers" and, that "the operational planning itself on how one solves the missions, that is done in the coalition or in the alliance" (interview with "Sebastian"). He also said that what the NAF can do with regards to protection and participation is mostly to make it "part of the education and training, because we do not steer the operations out there [i.e. abroad, my comment]" (interview with "Sebastian"). "Roger" and "Oscar" made similar arguments.

In other words, the very nature of the operations in which they usually take part does not give much room for the Norwegian officers to influence the planning and carrying out of operations. The work of individual officers, can, nevertheless, make a difference, as illustrated by the story of "Charles", who felt that he was carrying a lot of the responsibility, alone, for setting the gender perspective on the agenda in the international operation he was part of.

"Steve" argued that, in an international perspective, the problem of properly implementing the gender perspective is not Norway or other Scandinavian countries. To get real change, it is necessary to get the other states on board. After all, Norway is a small country with limited influence and limited contributions internationally, as pointed out by "Steve". Norway's small size was also cited as a reason for the argument that Norway's possibilities to promote women's participation in other forces, delegations, etc. was limited to being a good example of women and men working together. As "Roger" put it: "who are we, after all, from small Norway, to demand that 'when you talk to us, there shall be 50 percent women and men'? That does not work" (interview with "Roger").

Similarly, when we were discussing the role of the gender perspective in a comprehensive approach (explain term) and the work for reducing the impact of war on women and girls, "Brian" pointed out that it depended on the powerful states' plan for the campaign in question. According to him, Norway contributed with "tiny units into the big campaign plan" and that they "are entirely dependent upon that, often, the Americans are planning with this [i.e. planning with the gender perspective, my comment]" (interview with "Brian").

## 6.5    The WPS Norms Become Easier to Understand and Use in the Meeting with the Other

Based on the identity construction that is voiced by informants in the interview material, I suggest that the ambiguous WPS norms become tangible and relevant for the officers when they are understood in relationship to the Other and the practices of the Other. The identity construction thus constitutes a prism that highlights an important dimension of how the officers give meaning to the WPS norms and turn them into practice in a military setting. The idea that gender equality and gender sensitivity are natural parts of the Norwegian identity might suggest that it is difficult for the officers to find the relevance of the norms in a Norwegian setting or within the Norwegian military organisation and its activities. However, in instances where the NAF is interacting with the Other, it is easier for the officers to fill the WPS norms with meaning and find a relevance for the norms in military activity. As both this chapter and the previous one demonstrated, it is easier for the officers to find the relevance of the WPS norms in operations abroad, where one interacts with this Other. The subject position that is woven into this identity construction provides the officers with a platform from which to speak and give meaning to the WPS norms. It also links the officers' identity to the collective identity of the Self (for more on subject positions, see Epstein 2008:6, 14-15).

Here, the interview material points the idea that WPS is a natural part of Norwegian identity. This suggests that the norms are seen by Norwegian military personnel as so natural that it is challenging for them to give the WPS norms content and find ways to make them relevant in the context of the NAF's operations. This can shed light upon findings in existing research, which points at obstacles and shortcomings in the NAF's implementation of the WPS norms (see introduction and literature review chapters). One of the reasons for these obstacles and shortcomings might be that norms and values similar to the WPS norms are considered natural and integrated into Norwegian identity and, thus, Norwegian military identity. This might suggest that there is a perception about military personnel that the NAF do not have to do much to implement the resolution as it is already implemented through the incorporated and natural position of gender equality in Norwegian identity and the values of the Norwegian society. It might also suggest that it is challenging for the officers to know what to do with these norms and how to use them, when the norms, in many ways, are considered so natural. My interview material suggests that it becomes easier to give content to the norms and use

them in the context of international operations, where one interacts with the Other, even though there are challenges associated with turning the norms into practice in international operations.

# 7 Conclusion

I have discussed two research questions in this thesis. The first asks how Norwegian male officers understand and use the norms of the WPS resolutions. The second asks how identity is constructed in the officers' discourse on WPS. The identity construction of which I find elements in the interview material helps me illustrate important dimensions of how the officers use and understand the WPS norms. In short, I argue that the officers have an instrumental understanding and use of the WPS norms, and that they struggle to find the norms' relevance and meaning in many contexts and situations of planning and carrying out of operations. At the same time, the WPS norms seem to become easier to understand and is perceived as more relevant to use in the meeting with the Other, typically in international operations. In this concluding chapter, I sum up and discuss the main points in my analysis of the interviews as well as the implications of these findings.

### 7.1.1    Understand and Use: Finding Relevance Abroad

The officers' understanding (interpretation) and use (practice) of the WPS norms overlap in many ways. I therefore discuss them together. My discussion of intra-discursive friction (the internal source of norm dynamism) looks at how the WPS norms are interpreted by the officers and how the officers understand what to do with them in practice. In short, in the interview material, there are examples of the understanding of the gender perspective as cultural understanding and sensitivity, protection as the protection of vulnerable groups and participation as women's participation in one's own force. To a large extent, the understanding and use of the norms are instrumental, where the norms are used to improve the NAF's ability to solve missions. For instance, the gender perspective and participation norms are used in the planning and carrying out of operations to know how to act, how to get information, and interact with the people in the area of operation and secure that the force has women to be able to do so. Moreover, the interviews also demonstrate that the gender perspective, participation and protection norms are understood as interconnected. For instance, the use of a gender perspective and women's participation in one's own force is necessary to provide protection for women in the area of operation.

However, the interviews also contain many examples of uncertainty about what to put into the norms as well as examples of the difficulties associated with understanding and using the

norms in a military setting. Several of the officers express that they feel they work on the wrong level of command or with the wrong type of tasks for the WPS norms to be directly relevant for their work. However, the interviews also give indications that the WPS norms are kept in mind and included in daily work, even though is challenging to find situations in which they are relevant to use.

The material gives examples of that, as a group, the officers associate the gender perspective more with operations abroad than operations at home. The gender perspective is linked more to stabilisation operations, peace support operations, etc. rather than combat operations. Furthermore, several of the officers point out that they have limited possibility to deal with these norms in their daily job, that these norms are not necessarily relevant for the daily job of Norwegian forces abroad, or that the officers work on the wrong level of command or in the wrong type of units for the WPS norms to be relevant for them.

As regards extra-discursive friction (the external source of norm dynamism), some officers link the WPS norms to International Humanitarian Law. However, they think that it does not matter whether you are male or female. The point is that you are a civilian that is entitled to protection. This exemplifies the difficulties associated with making gender adaptions during combat. The interviews contain illustrations of how the combat situation and International Humanitarian Law can be understood as gender neutral in the sense that there is not necessarily room for or use of gender perspectives. It is possible that the WPS norms are considered of little relevance in a combat operation because there is little close interaction and contact with the Other, and this affects the understanding and use of the gender perspective. Moreover, Following the interpretation of the norms and question of relevance outlined above, it seems as if there are points of friction between the WPS norms and the frames of meaning-making that the officers use to understand their job and the prioritisations they must do in their job. Gender issues and the WPS norms are not necessarily understood as relevant in all parts of the range of military activities.

### 7.1.2    Identity: WPS Natural Part of Norwegian Identity

Using Hansen's (2006) theory of linking and differentiation, I found that identity in the officers' discourse on WPS was constructed along a set of axes. The Norwegian Self is juxtaposed to a Non-Norwegian Other, where many of the dimension of the WPS norms are

constructed as a natural part of the Self's identity, as opposed to the Other, which is constructed as less progressive with regards to the WPS norms or with different attitudes to the WPS norms. The Other is characterised as, for instance, Muslim, or societies with gender roles that are associated with certain versions of Islam. Furthermore, the WPS are not considered to be as relevant to the Self as to the Other. Likewise, the Self is understood as much less influential in the field of WPS than the Other. This leaves us with a natural basic discourse, where WPS is considered a natural part of the Self's identity. There are many nuances to the ideal type characteristics involved in such an analysis of identity construction. Nevertheless, it contributes to understand the subject position from which the officers talk about the WPS norms and it contribute to map out important dimensions of how the officers make sense of these norms.

Many of the above-mentioned elements suggest that the officers' understanding and use of the WPS norms, as expressed in my material, become clearer when conceived of through the prism of identity construction. For instance, the gender perspective is understood and used as a cultural perspective, which helps the Armed Forces operate in a better way. Here, the WPS agenda is conceived of within the relationship with the cultural Other. Similarly, women's participation in one's own force is considered necessary, among other things, when operating in societies with different gender roles. As already pointed, my material illustrates that the WPS norms often are associated with operations abroad rather than operations at home. This suggests that the WPS norms are understood as and used in the meeting with the Other, or in situations where one must interact with the Other.

Finally, the material implies that the WPS norms are linked to Norwegian norms of gender equality and gender sensitivity through the idea that WPS is a natural part of Norwegian identity. However, I suggest that there is friction between the identity construction involved in this idea and the masculinity ideals, discourses and identities that we can find examples of in the NAF. Therefore, it is worth questioning the logic of the natural basic discourse that the gender equality and gender sensitivity norms of Norwegian society and identity necessarily carry over into a military setting and into military identity.

## 7.2     Implications

This in-depth qualitative study cannot provide externally valid generalisations. Discourse analysis is an interpretative form of analysis (Bratberg 2017:37-38), and using discourse analysis to explain outcomes and engage in causal explanations are not a straight-forward undertaking (Hansen 2006:28; see also Dunn and Neumann 2016:12). However, Bratberg (2017:58-60, see also pp. 37-42) claims that we should take a pragmatic stance to the challenges associated with causality and explanation. It is possible for a discourse analyst to contribute to explanation by examining how collective ideas or understandings affect practice (individuals' choices and actions). It is also possible to make propositions that might be valid also outside the sample I have studied. However, these explanations and propositions should be conceived as suggestions, hypotheses and reflections. In other words, it is possible for me to discuss the implications of my findings for existing research and make suggestions or hypotheses that can tested further. With these limitations to external validity and causal explanations in mind, my thesis contributes to fill two gaps in the literature.

### 7.2.1     WPS in a Military Context

First, the thesis contributes to build knowledge on how the WPS norms as a work in progress and as dynamic processes are understood and used, in turn shaped, by military practitioners (see Davies and True 2019:6, 11; Krook and True 2010:109, 123). Despite the military being an important institution in the implementation of the norms in the field of security, the relationship between the military domain and feminism is strained and the interaction between them limited (Egnell, Hojem and Berts 2014:2, 38-39, 142). Through my interviews, we get more knowledge about how Norwegian male officers understand and use the WPS norms, and how these norms as well as the WPS agenda interact with military organisations and activity.

In my interviews, the officers articulated understandings of the WPS that were oriented more towards the cultural perspective on gender as a tool to analyse the area of operation. Similarly, I found examples that women's participation in one's own force was considered a tool to interact with people in the area of operations. This suggests that the WPS norms are pulled towards an instrumental understanding and the norms improves the NAF's ability to solve the mission. That said, the material contained many examples of support for gender equality and women's right to be part of the NAF. However, the understanding and the use of

the *WPS norms* were more oriented towards a cultural perspective. Moreover, my interviews suggest that the officers find that the content of the norms is difficult to grasp and that it is challenging to find relevance of the norms for military activity especially outside of the meeting with the Other. The limited relevance that is expressed in the interviews suggests that there are challenges associated with bringing the military and the feminist fields closer together, as Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:142-143) suggest is a fruitful and needed way forward. The limited relevance also suggests that using the WPS norms in a military context involves a narrow down the agenda in an instrumental, and not transformative, direction.

At the same time, this suggests that the way to promote the implementation of the norms must be instrumentally oriented. This is similar to what Egnell, Hojem and Berts (2014:6-7) find in the Swedish case, where emphasising the WPS norms' importance for military effectiveness turned out to be a successful way of starting implementing the WPS agenda. The emphasis on relevance, and the challenges associated with finding the relevance of the WPS norms that I find examples of in the interview material, demonstrate that showing how the WPS norms are useful for improving military activity is key to improve the implementation of the norms. At the same time, it might be necessary to challenge the idea that gender equality and gender sensitivity is natural to the Norwegian identity. Together with making military personnel more conscious about the transformative aspects of the WPS agenda, this might contribute to improve implementation. The willingness to engage in discussion about the WPS norms that I fund in my interviews might suggest that this is possible.

### 7.2.2    The Implementation of the WPS Norms in the NAF

Research has pointed at different aspects of poor implementation of the WPS resolutions in the NAF. Several of the informants I have interviewed, see limited relevance of the norms for the tasks they perform and limited possibility for them to do something to promote the norms in their position. Also, the idea that gender equality is a natural part of the Norwegian identity, and thus, natural to Norwegian personnel, might suggest that the focus on doing something about this topic is limited and that it is difficult to know what to do with these norms when they are considered being so natural. This contributes to nuance and expand Kvarving's (2019:236-237) argument that the masculine characteristics of the military organisation, and the military leaders lack of sensibility towards this fact, hamper the implementation of the WPS norms. Furthermore, the instrumental approach focused on the

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WPS norms' relevance and how they can improve the Norwegian Armed Forces' ability to solve the mission give hope that I find in my interviews suggest that the NAF are on the right track, according to Egnell, Hojem and Berts' (2014:6-7) findings.

I have concentrated on male officers because men make up the majority of the military organisation and, thus, the majority of the implementers of the WPS norms (Norwegian Armed Forces 2020:3, 86; Solhjell 2010:11), because they probably hold formal and informal power in the organisation (Andreassen and Ingalls 2009:268) and because they can be considered gatekeepers (Connell 2005:1801-1802). Officers play an important role as they are leaders and hold senior positions. In my interviews, I find that individuals belonging to this important group of actors in the military organisation understand the WPS norms in an instrumental manner and that these norms apply to and are relevant in a limited selection of settings and situations. However, my interviews also suggest that there is an interest among this group of personnel to engage with these norms, even though some of them see a limited relevance and many problems with them. Moreover, there are clear examples in the material of officers who have gender issues and WPS in mind when they conduct their tasks, even though there also are officers who do not think much about this. From this perspective, the male officers cannot necessarily be considered gatekeepers that close the gate to the military organisation for the WPS norms. Rather, in my material, the officers expressed openness to these norms, but they struggled with making them concrete and finding a relevance for many of the norms' dimensions in a military setting. This might be one of the reasons why the NAF have experienced problems implementing the WPS resolutions.

### 7.2.3    Future Research

I would like to suggest three main avenues for further research on the WPS norms and their use in the NAF. First, it would be interesting to study how the officers in the new specialist corps understand the WPS norms. These non-commissioned officers are supposed to be the carriers of practical and technical expertise as well as competence and experience in the military organisation. They represent continuity and they are carriers of culture (Prop. 111 LS (2014–2015):6, 8, 27; Strand et al. 2016:16). This makes them interesting to study with regards to the implementation of the WPS norms. Second, it is necessary to continue to study how the WPS norms can be made relevant for and used in practice in the planning and carrying out of operations. Studying specialist officers, who are supposed to be carriers of

practical expertise, might be a fruitful way of doing this. Third, it would be interesting to study the understandings and use of as well as the attitudes towards the WPS norms among officers and other categories of military personnel through survey and statistical analysis, to improve our understanding, and possible, test the generalisability if this study.

### 7.2.4    Pragmatism as a Way Forward for the WPS Agenda

Even though I have approached the WPS norms as a work in progress and as dynamic processes shaped by practitioners, the WPS agenda still seeks change in a certain direction. The agenda highlights the gendered impact of conflict and promotes improved participation and protection of women and their rights as well as the use of a gender perspective. In this thesis, I have contributed knowledge on how these norms are understood and filled with content and practical action in a military setting, contributing to connect the WPS agenda with the military domain and institutions.

My findings suggest that the pragmatic approach outlined by Davies and True (2019:5-7) is conducive for the promotion of the WPS agenda. The pragmatic approach is interested in what works and what gives substantial change. It is open to compromise and incremental change as a better way to promote the norms than revolution. The analysis of my interviews suggests that such incremental change, through the careful work of finding the WPS norms' relevance in military activity by demonstrating how it can help the NAF to operate better, is a fruitful way forward. At the same time, making military personnel more conscious about the transformative aspects of the agenda and question the idea that gender equality and gender sensitivity come natural with a Norwegian identity seem to be important to avoid diluting the agenda with too much instrumentalism (see Kirby and Shepherd 2016:385-392). In other words, pragmatism seems to be the approach that will shape the WPS norms in a military setting and contribute to promote the realisation of the WPS agenda in military organisations.

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Zulfacar, M. (2006). The pendulum of gender politics in Afghanistan [Online]. *Central Asian Survey,* 25 (1-2), 27-59. DOI: 10.1080/02634930600903007

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: List of Documents included in Document Analysis in Section 5.1.

- UN Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122 on WPS (resolutions 2242, 2467 and 2493 are included in the short description of the WPS norms in the literature review chapter)
- Norwegian National Action Plans for WPS for the periods 2006-2010, 2011-2013, 2015-2018 and 2019-2022.
- Long-Term Plan for the Norwegian Armed Forces for the periods 2005-2008, 2008-2012, 2013-2016 and 2017-2020.
- Letters of Implementation for the periods 2005-2008 (version 1), 2009-2012 (version 1), 2013-2016 (versions 1 and 22.0) and 2017-2020 (versions 1 and 8.0).

Complete references can be found in the bibliography.

As of August 2020, vr. 8.2. of the Letter of Implementation for the period 2017-2020 is the latest version. However, the guidelines concerning gender and Women, Peace and Security are the same as in vr. 8.0., which is the one I have used on this thesis (compare Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019a:29-30, 44 ; with Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2020:30, 44).

I have not included the Long-Term Plan for 2021-2024 that was re-launched in October 2020, because it will be discussed the Parliament and enter into forces after the end of this research project.

# Appendix 2: Comments on Referencing Style and on the Numbering of Paragraphs in UN Resolutions

I follow the Harvard reference style. In the in-text (parenthesis) references, I separate the name of the work's author and its year of publication from the page number by a colon. When the colon is followed directly by a page number, I do not add any space between the colon and the page number, to keep the references as short as possible (for example, "Author 2010:5"). When the colon is followed by text or ordinal numbers in letters, I add a space to make the reference easier to read (for example, "Author 2010: chap. 2" or "Organ 2010: fifth preambular paragraph"). Similarly, I add "p." or "pp." before the page number(s) when the page number is preceded by text, to make the reference easier to read and avoid misunderstandings about what the number refers to (for instance, "Author 2010: chap 2, esp. pp. 15-17").

UN resolutions, such as the Women, Peace and Security resolutions from the Security Council, are typically divided into a preambular (the preamble) and an operative part. The operative paragraphs are numbered, whereas the preambular paragraphs are not (United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library 2020). I refer to the preambular paragraphs by using ordinal numbers (for instance, first preambular paragraph), counting them from the first preambular paragraph of the resolution in question (this follows the editorial guidelines for UN documents, see United Nations Department of Conference Services 1983:179). The first preambular paragraph is the paragraph that follows the mentioning of the name of the organ (in this case the Security Council). As other preambular paragraphs, it starts with "a verb in the form of a present, past or perfect participle or an adjective in italics" (United Nations General Assembly - Second Committee 2015). I refer to operative paragraphs by their respective numbers (for instance, operative paragraph 1). I specify that it is an operative paragraph to avoid confusing preambular and operative paragraphs, even though this is not common practice in the UN documents themselves (see United Nations Department of Conference Services 1983:179).

# Appendix 3: Words used to Query Governmental Documents

I have searched the governmental documents (long-term plans and Letters of Implementation) for the following words in Norwegian (English translation in parentheses):

- "1325"; "1820", "1888", "1889", "1960", "2106", "2122", "2242" (the numbers of the Women, Peace and Security resolutions from the UN Security Council);
- "gender";
- "*kjønn*" (gender or sex);
- "*genderperspektiv*", "*genderperspektivet*" (gender perspective, the gender perspective);
- "*kjønnsperspektiv*", "kjønnsperspektivet" (gender perspective, the gender perspective);
- "*kvinne*", "*kvinner*" (woman, women);
- "*kvinnelig*", "*kvinnelige*" (female, womanly);
- "*jente*", "*jenter*" (girl, girls);
- "*mann*", "*menn*" (man, men);
- "*mannlig*", "*mannlige*" (male);
- "*gutt*", "*gutter*" (boy, boys);
- "*kvinner, fred og sikkerhet*" (women, peace and security);
- "*likestilling*" (gender equality);
- "*mangfold*" (diversity);
- "*seksualisert*" (sexualised);
- "*kjønnsbasert*" (gender-based); and
- "*voldtekt*" (rape).

# Appendix 4: Interview Guide

As I conducted semi-structured interviews, the choice of questions, their wording, the order of questions etc. varied in the different interviews. The interview guide below contains the core components and an outline for a proposed structure of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian, which is why this interview guide is in Norwegian. I can provide a translation upon request.

I have summed up the standard information I gave at the beginning of the interviews in bullet points. I also brought some notes with key words on concepts such as human security, gender perspective and military effectiveness to the interviews to have a starting point for these questions in case the informants were unfamiliar with the terms. I also brought telephone numbers to services that could help the officers in case the interviews made them relive traumatic experiences.

### Core components of Interview Guide

### Innledende informasjon og avklaringer

Oppsummering av innledende informasjon:

- ➢ Be om tillatelse til å ta opp lyd.
- ➢ Presentasjon av meg selv, min erfaring med Forsvaret, prosjektet og prosjektets formål.
- ➢ Spørre om informanten har noe erfaring med forskningsintervju fra tidligere.
- ➢ Forklare hvordan intervjuet foregår: Jeg har noen spørsmål, men målet er å ha en dialog der informanten står fritt til å påvirke gangen i samtalen og at jeg får høre informantenes innsikt. Forklare kort hvilke hovedtemaer spørsmålene dreier seg om.
- ➢ Presiseringer om anonymitet.
- ➢ Presiseringer om at informanten ikke må oppgi gradert eller på annen måte taushetsbelagt informasjon.

Innledende avklaringer:

- • Har du deltatt i forskningsintervjuer tidligere?
- • Har du lest informasjonsskrivet? Har du noen spørsmål om det?
- • Har du noen spørsmål før vi starter?

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*Det er frivillig å delta i intervjuet, og du kan når som helst trekke deg.*

**Innledende spørsmål og sikkerhetsbegrepet**

*Først vil jeg høre litt om deg og hvordan du ser på Forsvaret sine oppgaver.*

- Kan du fortelle om jobben din, og hva du gjør til daglig?
  - Kan du gi et eksempel? Kan du beskrive nærmere?

- Hvilken type stilling har du hatt i internasjonale operasjoner? Hvilken stabsfunksjon hadde du?

- Hvem eller hva skal Forsvaret forsvare, slik du ser det?
  - Kan du forklare hvorfor du ser det slik? Kan du gi et eksempel?

**UNSCR 1325 og kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen**

- Kjenner du til FNs sikkerhetsråds resolusjon 1325 om kvinner, fred og sikkerhet, og hva vet du eventuelt om den?

- Har 1325-resolusjonen truffet deg i din jobb?
  - Hvordan?
  - Har du fått noe opplæring i det eller føringer for hvordan det skal gjennomføres?

*I stad snakket vi om hva som er Forsvaret sine oppgaver. Kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen er knyttet til ideen om menneskelig sikkerhet.*

- Er du kjent med begrepet menneskelig sikkerhet, og hva legger du eventuelt i dette begrepet?
  - Det utvidede sikkerhetsbegrepet
  - Individ-fokusert, utvikling, frihet fra forstyrrelser i dagliglivet.

- Har denne forståelsen av sikkerhetsbegrepet vært relevant for deg i din jobb? Hvordan?
  - Kan du gi et eksempel?
  - Hvorfor er det relevant/hvorfor ikke?

*Et sentralt begrep i kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen, er kjønnsperspektiv.*

- Hvordan forstår du kjønnsperspektiv, eller genderperspektiv?
  - Hvordan forstår du det med hensyn til kvinner?
  - Hvordan forstår du det med hensyn til menn?

*I siste utgave av iverksettingsbrevet som Forsvarsdepartementet sender til Forsvaret, er det gitt en beskrivelse av Forsvarets oppgaver på kvinner, fred og sikkerhets-feltet. Nå skal jeg lese opp beskrivelsen:*

> «I tråd med regjeringens handlingsplan for kvinner, fred og sikkerhet 2019-2022 skal Forsvarets operasjoner planlegges og gjennomføres på en slik måte at de også ivaretar både beskyttelse av kvinner, og kvinners deltakelse. Videre skal Forsvaret vektlegge et genderperspektiv ifm. denne innsatsen ved at kjønn tas med som en faktor i både planleggings- og gjennomføringsfasen» (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2019b:29).

- Hvordan forstår du «beskyttelse av kvinner, og kvinners deltakelse»?

- Brevet sier altså at «Forsvarets operasjoner [skal] planlegges og gjennomføres på en slik måte at de også ivaretar både beskyttelse av kvinner, og kvinners deltakelse» og at «Forsvaret skal vektlegge et genderperspektiv ifm. denne innsatsen ved at kjønn tas med som en faktor i både planleggings- og gjennomføringsfasen». Hvordan forstår du å ta «kjønn (…) med som en faktor i både planleggings- og gjennomføringsfasen» av operasjoner?

- Hvordan tar du «kjønn (…) med som en faktor i både planleggings- og gjennomføringsfasen» av operasjoner i din jobb?
  - Hva med i internasjonale operasjoner?
  - Støter du på noen dilemmaer eller problemer i den forbindelse?

*Nå vil jeg trekke inn begrepet militær effektivitet. Først:*

- Hva legger du i begrepet «militær effektivitet» i din jobb?
  - «Operativ evne»
  - Har du noen eksempler? Hvorfor forstår du det slik?

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- Kan anvendelsen av et kjønnsperspektiv i planlegging og gjennomføring av en operasjon påvirke Forsvarets evne til å produsere gode militære resultater?
  - … evnen til å løse oppdraget?

- I moderne operasjoner snakker man ofte om «helhetlig tilnærming». Påvirker bruken av et kjønnsperspektiv Forsvarets evne til å bidra til en slik helhetlig tilnærming? Hvordan?
  - Kan du gi et eksempel fra din karriere?
  - Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?
  - Er det forskjell på operasjoner i Norge og i utlandet? Hvorfor?

- Spenningen mellom anti-militaristiske tilnærminger til kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen og krigerkulturen i Forsvaret: Ser du noen spenning mellom en krigerkultur, på den ene siden, og kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen, på den andre?
  - Hvis kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen innebærer å tenke nytt om konflikthåndtering.
  - Essensialisme.

### Prioritering av kjønnsperspektivet og forventninger fra omgivelsene

- I hvor stor grad vil du si at du prioriterer kjønnsperspektivet i planlegging og gjennomføring av operasjoner? På hvilken måte prioriterer du det? Kan du gi et eksempel?
  - Er det noen utfordringer knyttet til det? Hvordan er det utfordrende?
  - Hva med i internasjonale operasjoner?
  - Hvorfor er det slik?

- Opplever du at det er en forventning til deg at du skal anvende et kjønnsperspektiv eller sette kjønnsspørsmål på agendaen?
  - Er dette en forventing fra samfunnet?
  - Er disse forventningene formelle, altså at du må rapportere om det eller er det uformelle forventninger fra kollegaer eller miljøet rundt deg?

- Hvordan opplever du at mannlige kolleger, ledere eller underordnede reagerer, eller hvordan tror du de hadde reagert, dersom du setter fokus på kjønnsspørsmål, foreslår å bruke et kjønnsperspektiv eller lignende? Hvordan opplever du at kvinner reagerer?
  - Hva syns du om den på måten å reagere på?
  - Hvorfor tror du de reagerer slik?
  - Hvordan opplever du at andre mannlige offiserskollegaer ser på utdanning eller kurs om kjønnstematikk?

- De fleste som jobber i Forsvaret er menn, og Forsvaret omtales ofte som en maskulin organisasjon. Hvordan ser du på din rolle som mann i Forsvaret?

### Debrief

- I hvor stor grad opplever du at Forsvaret klarer å løse de oppgavene organisasjonene har fått i forbindelse med kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen, for eksempel å bruke et kjønnsperspektiv i planlegging og gjennomføring av operasjoner?

- Ifølge forskningen klarer ikke Forsvaret å løse de oppdragene organisasjonen har fått i forbindelse med kvinner, fred og sikkerhetsagendaen på en særlig god måte. Tror du det er et problem? Hva er problemet ifølge deg?
  - Hvorfor tror du forskerne finner det?
  - Hvordan kunne det vært gjort bedre?
  - Sees kjønnsperspektivet på noe som kommer utenfra, og ikke følger av de militære behovene?

<u>Avsluttende avklaringer</u>

- Er det noe du har lyst til å legge til eller spørre om?
- Hvordan opplevde du intervjuet, og kan intervjuet eller studien kan forbedres på noen måte?
- Er det noen du mener jeg bør snakke med i studien?

*Jeg vil nå transkribere intervjuet, og benytte det som datamateriale i analysen min i masteroppgaven. Jeg vil analysere både innholdet i det du har sagt, språket du har brukt og hvordan du forstår og gir mening til jobben din som offiser. Tusen takk for at du hadde tid til å delta!*

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# Appendix 5: Information Letter and Consent Form

**Information letter to Primary Informants in the Project** *The Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Norwegian Armed Forces: A Study of Military Men's Understanding of Security and Military Effectiveness*[23]

This letter is an invitation to participate in a research project on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in the Norwegian Armed Forces. The project analyses the implementation of this resolution based on military men's experiences, opinions, insights and knowledge. Since you are a man in a military position, we consider you to be a relevant informant. The research is conducted by master's student Sindre Bæk, who is affiliated to the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme at the University of Oslo and the Centre for Civil-Military Relations at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies. The master's thesis resulting from this study will be written in English, but the interviews will be conducted in Norwegian. This letter contains information about the project, its purpose and privacy concerns.

**Purpose**
This master's project examines how male military personnel in the Norwegian Armed Forces understand the concepts of security and military effectiveness as well as how these concepts are related to the implementation of a gender perspective and an increased number of women in the Armed Forces. Based on these findings, the study discusses the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the other resolutions in the women, peace and security agenda in the Norwegian Armed Forces. The preliminary research question is:

> How do male military personnel in the Norwegian Armed Forces understand the concepts of security and military effectiveness, why do these men understand these concepts the way they do, and what can this tell us about the Norwegian Armed Forces' process of implementing the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security?

The project is part of Nordforsk project no. 88041 *Gender Equality, Diversity and Societal Security*, and has received a scholarship from the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies.

**Who is Responsible for the project?**
The Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Social Science, University of Oslo is responsible for the project. The project is supervised by professor Inger Skjelsbæk at the Centre for Gender Research, University of Oslo.

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[23] This information letter is based on the Norwegian Centre for Research Data's (2018) template and the permission form in Kvarving's (2019:271) study. The translation into English is inspired by the information letters in the studies by Lygren (2019:76-77) and Klashaugen (2019:95-96).

**Why are you Asked to Participate?**
You are asked to participate because you are a man working in a military position in the Norwegian Armed Forces. We have received your contact information from the Norwegian Armed Forces, in understanding with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. It is also possible that we have been recommended to speak to you by another informant. Your contact details will be deleted if you choose not to participate.

**What does Participation Imply?**
Participating in the study means taking part in an interview. The interview will concentrate on the concepts of security and military effectiveness as well as how these two concepts are related to the implementation of a gender perspective and the increased number of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces. The interview will have the form of a discussion starting from a set if predefined questions. We will record the interview and take notes. The interview will take approximately one hour. It is possible that we would like to conduct a second interview, if that is necessary and possible for you.

The information from the interview will be used in Mr Bæk's master's thesis and might also be used in other publications (journal articles, opinion pieces, etc.) and in future projects.

**Participation is Voluntary**
It is voluntary to participate in the research project. You can withdraw your consent at any time without specifying any reason.

**Privacy, Storing and Deletion of Data**
The project is approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data and the committee at the Norwegian Defence University College charged with approving data collection in the Norwegian Armed Forces. Mr Bæk and his supervisor(s) will have access to the data that is gathered during the project.

The recording and the notes from the interview will be used to make a transcription of the interview. The names, addresses, phone numbers, etc. used to conduct the research project will be stored on a list that is kept separated from the rest of the data. In the transcribed version of the interview, your name will be replaced with a code referring to this list. The list with contact information and the recordings will be deleted once the project is finished. The project is planned to finish approximately 30th November 2020. The anonymised transcriptions will be kept beyond this date for future research projects.

The information provided in the interviews will be anonymised when this information is used or referred to in the master's thesis and in other publications based on the project.

As this study will be made publicly available, we ask you not to reveal any confidential or classified information.

**Your Rights**

If you are identifiable in the data gathered during the interview, you have the right to

  i.   access personal information that we have registered on you;
 ii.   have your personal information corrected;
iii.   have your personal information deleted;
 iv.   get a copy of your personal information;
  v.   register a complaint about the treatment of your personal information to the *Personvernombudet* or to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority.

**What Gives us the Right to Treat your Personal Information?**

Personal information is treated based on your consent as a participant.

**Where Can I Get More Information and Use my Rights?**

If you have any questions about the project, or want to use your rights, make contact with

- The University of Oslo through Inger Skjelsbæk (the responsible for the project) at inger.skjelsbak@stk.uio.no or Sindre Bæk (student) at sindrba@student.sv.uio.no;
- Norwegian Centre for Research Data at personverntjenester@nsd.no or 55 58 21 17.

Best Regards,

Prof. Inger Skjelsbæk                                                                              Sindre Bæk

Supervisor and responsible for the project                                           Master's student

### Statement of Consent – Primary Informants

- I confirm that I have received and understood the information about the project *The Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Norwegian Armed Forces: A Study of Military Men's Understanding of Security and Military Effectiveness* and that I have had the possibility to ask questions about the project, data treatment and privacy.
- I consent to participate in the research interview, and I consent to personal information from the interview being used in the thesis and in other publications related to the research.
- I consent to the interview being recorded and transcribed.
- I agree that my personal information is stored until the end of the research project, which, according to the plan, will be approximately 30th November 2020.
- I am aware that an anonymised transcription of the interview(s) will be stored beyond 30th November 2020 for future research projects.

Respondent's position: _____

Respondent's rank/title: _____

Date, place and respondent's signature: _____