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Understanding the Slow Progress in Appointing Women as Mediators to Formal Peace Processes

*– An investigation of Norway's process from
words on paper to action*

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Summary

In October 2020 the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) celebrated 20 years of existence. The resolution emphasises the important role women play in peace building and peace processes. Yet remarkably little have improved for women in mediation. An average of six percent of mediators in formal peace processes between 1992 and 2019 were women. From 2015-2019 there was an increase to eleven percent. This thesis investigates the slow progress in getting women to the mediation role. It does so with the case of Norway, a potential outlier in comparison to the global average. In both 2016 and 2018, Norway had to two formal peace processes where both mediators were women. By using feminist institutionalism theory and expert interview as method, this thesis investigates how the institutional structure of the Section of Peace and Reconciliation in Norway supports, or hinders, women's inclusion to the most formal peace processes. This is a contribution to the research gap concerning women mediators and to the theoretical field of feminist institutionalism on the WPS agenda.

Conclusion: National Action Plans may be helpful in creating awareness in a system and are important in changing the formal institutional structure. Yet, mediation is a gendered profession, affecting men and women differently. There are informal institutional barriers affecting women in taking the role as the special envoys to the most formal peace processes. Informal institutions are present in diplomats' narratives, access to relevant work experience, old perceptions and expected gender norms towards women in mediation. However, as formal and informal institutions are social constructions and may change, it is possible to make a claim that there will be more women mediators and special envoys in the future, if there is continuous awareness in the system and people are actively working to push for a change. It is not enough to say that politically actions must take place.

Preface

This master's thesis marks the end of my academic journey at the University of Oslo. I will summarise this process as honoured, humbled and proud. Honoured to have talked to the different experts, humbled that they wanted to make room in their busy schedule and participate, and proud to have been able to conduct research alone during a pandemic.

However, this research would not been possible without help. Therefore, I would like to give a special big thank you to:

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Introduction

In October 2020 the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) celebrated 20 year since its adoption by all member states in the UN. The UNSCR 1325 calls for women's increased representation in decision-making in conflict resolutions and peacebuilding, their protection against conflict related sexual violence, and the adoption of gender perspectives (UNSC/Res/1325/2000). Since year 2000, nine follow-up resolutions have been established, and together they constitute the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS) (Lorentzen, 2020, p 16; Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). Yet, 18 years in, a UN Women report (2018) from an expert meeting stated that women's participation in negotiating peace and conflict resolutions "remains one of the least advanced areas and one where advances are highly vulnerable to regression" (UN Women, 2018, p. 3).

Nowhere is the unfulfillment of the WPS agenda more present than in the implementation of women mediators. Mediation can be understood as;

A means for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is a process where a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements (United Nations Department of Political Affairs (UNDP), 2017, p. 5).

Between 1992 and 2019 only 6% of mediators in peace processes were women (Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), 2021). Some progress has been made over the last few years where women made up 11% of mediators between 2015-2019. Yet, as of 2020, only one woman, Stephanie Williams, acting head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, is acting as a chief mediator in a peace process (CFR; 2021). This is despite clear policy commitments throughout WPS resolutions, adopted by the Security Council, with a call for greater representation of women. UNSCR 1325 (2000), 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015) all emphasize the importance of including women as mediators and special envoys to peace processes.

Women's involvement in peace processes is important, not only because women contain of fifty percent of the world population, research have found that women's involvement in peace process improves the quality of the peace agreement (Krause et al., 2018). A

significant body of research has emerged analysing the importance of women's participation in peace negotiations. This work highlights the benefits of including women and emphasize the different roles that women play within peacebuilding (Bell, 2016; Krause et al., 2018; Paffenholz et al., 2015). However it has largely overlooked the specific category of women in the role of mediators (Aggestam & Towns, 2018; Turner, 2018). This research aims to fill the identified research gap by exploring the reason for the slow progress in appointing women as mediators and special envoys to the most formal peace processes.

Nevertheless, there are success stories where the inclusion of women as mediators and special envoys has progressed considerably faster than the global average. One such case is Norway. Norway has high numbers of women mediators and special envoys. In both 2016 and 2018, Norway had two active formal peace processes, and both years the special envoys were women (Norwegian Ministers, 2016; 2018). Norway is arguably an outlier when discussing the implementation of women mediators. Norway as a case is not representative due to different socio-political characteristics, such as historical background, culture and a strong civil society. Thus, Norway is not the "typical" case in the international system. However, in terms of peace processes and mediation, Norway is a big contributor (Nissan, 2015). Having said that, it took Norway 14 years to appoint their first female special envoy. Furthermore, Norway did not manage to reach its targeted goal of 40% women in their mediation teams. As can be seen, Norway is also experiencing challenges in their mediation teams. This indicates that having women in teams or as special envoys is a delicate matter.

This thesis will investigate why there has been such a slow progress in promoting women as mediators. It will do so with the case of Norway, where both the success story of Norway and its challenges are being investigated. As a result, the findings may suggest what other states can do in order to increase women mediators. Furthermore, provide insights in challenges that even a country with political priority on the matter still struggles with. The research question is;

Why has there been such a slow progress in appointing women as mediators and special envoys?

It will investigate how and what Norway is doing to overcome potential barriers and investigate the challenges, with a special attention to the Section of Peace and Reconciliation in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). By investigating the Norwegian

institutions, both formal and informal it might be possible to find structures that are unique for Norway and how they differ from other institutions such as the UN. Additionally, this research provides insight from women with experiences from the most formal peace processes, something also currently lacking in the literature. Additional sub questions to the research questions are; *What barriers have Norway overcome? What challenges still exist?*

The theoretical framework of feminist institutionalism is used while exploring the slow progress. This theoretical framework is useful for the research question as it highlights the institutional set up. With this theory it is possible to investigate why formal institutional changes does not bring about the intended change. Feminist institutionalism argues that institutions matter. The set-up of political institutions creates differences. These differences are gendered, affecting men and women differently (Kenny, 2014). With this theory one may expect that peace processes are gendered, where women meet informal structural challenges that hampers women's inclusion to the most formal peace processes. This thesis will investigate this expectation and attempt to identify what structural barriers exist.

Additionally, the thesis investigates a topic with a prominent research gap and a lack of existing literature. Thus, this thesis holds an exploratory approach. In an attempt to gather more data on the subject, with a particular focus on the Section for Peace and Reconciliation in Norway, semi-structured expert interviews is the most appropriate method. In order to understand the slow progress of women in mediation, it is central to talk to people with decision making power in order to understand what happens in the process from National Action Plans (NAPs) to actions. This research contains of six experts with experiences from peace processes, mediation, special envoys, senior advisors working close to the implementation process of the different NAPs and experts with experiences from the United Nations (UN).

It was found that mediation is indeed gendered in the way in which it is structures. The Section of Peace and Reconciliation in the Norwegian MFA do have some gendered expectations toward women. Additionally, there seems to be some traces of an idea of exceptionalism in the Section, where Norway is doing best and the rest needs to follow. This can be a challenge as the focus shifts from improving within to women's inclusion being an issue "out there". Conversely, because Norway promotes gender abroad, there has been a need to "keep it clean" in own delegations. Thus, there is no one who directly hamper

women's inclusion. Yet, old perceptions and gender expectations make it more difficult to have a self-driven change in the institution.

The thesis is structured as followed; Firstly, a review of the existing literature. It is not sufficient to solely focus on women mediators while investigating the case. Peace mediation is a small component to the bigger topic of women in peace processes, and it is important that it is recognized accordingly. Thus, the literature review will start with the introduction to women in peace processes, its masculine environment before it narrows down to women in mediation. The next chapter discusses theory of feminist institutionalism. This theory argues that although one changes the formal institutions character, the informal institution within the institution might hamper the change. This change is gendered affecting women and men differently. This argument will be further developed in the chapter. Chapter three is the method chapter. This chapter discusses the weaknesses and strength with expert interviews, the thesis validity and reliability, selection and recruitments and its ethical considerations. Chapter four investigates and analyses the data. This section is divided in three parts. First a discussion for formal institutional change, then it goes in depth with informal institutional set-up in the Section for Peace and Reconciliation. The chapter ends with a discussion of the main findings. It ends with a concluding chapter that summarizes the main findings and arguments.

Literature Review

This section reviews the literature on women in mediation. It will do so in two parts. In order to understand peace mediation and women, one needs to understand where it is placed in the bigger contexts of peace building and peace processes. Secondly, it will narrow down to women in mediation. Due to the lack of prior research in this area the literature review draws quite heavily on a smaller selection of articles. Nevertheless, this section places the thesis in the current literature.

Peace Process

A peace process is an attempt to bring political and/or military elites involved in conflict to some sort of mutual agreement as to how to end a conflict (Bell, 2015, p. 5). Compared to other conflict management approaches, which either preclude obligatory solutions (arbitration and adjudication), or primarily rely on constraint and force (sanctions, peacekeeping, and military interventions), mediation has proven to be a particularly attractive option due to its ad hoc, voluntary, legally non-binding and non-coercive nature (Vukovic, 2019). Since the end of the Cold War, mediation has been used in about fifty percent of all international crises. It represents one of the most cost-efficient foreign policy tools that can be used to promote and protect certain interests without provoking any significant resistance on the international level (Vukovic, 2019). Mediation leads to a greater probability of reaching an agreement and a better probability of long-term tension reduction (Mason, 2007).

While women are often at the forefront of informal, behind-the-scenes, peace initiatives, peace agreements are usually negotiated predominately by men (Dayal & Christein, 2019; Lund & Mitchell, 2015; O’Rielly & Suilleabhain, 2013). As one attempt to understand the lack of women, a study by O’Rielly et al. (2015) highlighted the structure of peace negotiations as a reason women are not present. They argued that, traditionally, peace processes have focused on bringing the belligerents, who rarely are women, to the negotiating table (O’Reilly et al., 2015). It is important to remember that peace negotiations is mostly a “power game” and most conflicting parties do not want to share their power. This leads many peace processes to be highly undemocratic. Some fear that they will be wasting political capital with the negotiating parties if they insist on a more inclusive process “risks and challenges of overloading the peace table” (O’Reilly et al., 2015).

Consequently, women's participation creates a quandary about the end goals of peace making: is a peace process primarily a forum for ending the violence, or should its focus be on building sustainable peace? Those who prioritize stabilization often think that the violent parties—whether state or nonstate actors—are the only legitimate participants, making women's participation less likely (O'Reilly et al., 2015). On the other hand, if the goal of a peace process is to build peace, then it makes sense that individuals and groups who seek peace and who represent the diversity of the citizenry participate. It has been argued that belligerents and mediators perceive a trade-off between the goals of ending violence and building peace, and pursue mediation in a way that emphasizes favourable short-term results even if it ultimately increases the probability that crisis will recur in the long term (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Women's participation in peace processes matter, not only because equality and equity, but also because the peace agreements they generate set the structure and direction for post-conflict reconstruction and politics, which affect lives of the society as a whole (Krause & Olsson, 2020; Lund & Mitchell, 2015; O'Rielly & Suilleabhain, 2013). Studies have found, that there is a robust relationship between women being signatories to peace agreements and the durability for peace (Krause et al., 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2015). Yet, numbers from Council of Foreign Relations (CFR, 2021) illustrates that women are almost never included in the most formal peace processes.

The consequences of women's exclusion is multidimensional. Some argues that when women and civil society is absent, they are not able to include their needs and concerns during pre-negotiations (Lund & Mitchell, 2015; Krause & Olsson, 2020). Armed conflicts involving human rights abuse or systematic sexual violence reveals why women and men need different forms of protection in order to become equally secure when peace is to be created after war (Krause & Olsson, 2020). When a negotiation is set to happen and the parties are to discuss "what the conflict is about" most conflicts sets to end the political violence and fail to address the different kinds of violence women and indigenous groups are experiencing (Lund & Mitchell, 2015; O'Reilly et al., 2015). Hence, the peace process fail to address the security concerns to half of the population. This means that even if the political violence ends, violence against women continue to happen (Krause & Olsson, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2015). The multidimensions of women's experience of war is one way to understand why women's perception of peace differ from those of men. Additionally, why women's presence at the peace table is important.

The effect of women in peace processes

Research such as Krause et al. (2018) and Paffenholz et al. (2016) have indicated that women improves the negotiation process, contributes to a more comprehensive peace agreement and bolster the prospects for sustainable peace (O'Reilly & Suilleabhain, 2013). Research suggests, that women's participation in peace processes can increase the probability of peace agreements lasting at least two years by 20%. It can also increase the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years by 35% (O'Reilly et al., 2015). This has initiated the idea that the inclusion of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution will lead to a more robust and sustainable peace (Aggestam, 2018; Hansen et al., 2017; Paffenholz, 2016). However, it is important not to make assumptions that women should be included because they are inherently more peaceful. Highlighting and drawing on argumentation by Diane Otto (2006)

If women are admitted on the understanding that their special contribution arises from their womanly instincts, it follows that their political agency will be limited to what is made possible by that representation and restricted to 'feminized' tasks involving nurturing and mothering (Otto, 2006 in Goetz & Jenkins 2015, p. 215).

It is problematic to judge women on their gender expectations in peace processes (Lund & Mitchell, 2015; Turner, 2020; O'Rielly et al., 2015). Women improving peace processes is not necessarily because women are inherently more peaceful, but because of a diversity of perspectives have been included in discussions about what a peaceful society should look like (Hansen et al., 2017; O'Rielly et al., 2015). As highlighted by Slåttum (2018) it is not about the gender, but about finding the right *person* for the job. She points to the math. If you double the number of candidates you increase the chances of finding the best person for the job. Although her argument is in the context of women mediators, it applies in this context too, since it is about what people bring to the table and not their gender.

Likewise, research that have interviewed women who were present at the peace tables have found that few of the women actually promoted the WPS agenda or that presence does not mean influence (Aggestam, 2019; Ellerby, 2016, Krause et al., 2018; Turner, 2020). Thus, it is important to distinguish women's presence in the peace process, those who are present on behalf of women organisation, and those acting as political representatives (O'Rielly et al., 2015). Additionally, it is important to move beyond an understanding that women are more peaceful to instead understand the underlining causes that makes women's diverse experiences important for the durability of peace.

Thus, the focus should be at women's involvement in peace processes due to the diversity they bring, and not simply because of their gender. Highlighting this argument further, women bring in different perspectives and argumentation because they, as highlighted with the first UNSCR 1325, experience war and peace differently (O'Reilly et al, 2015). Therefore, their perspective will not only be different from these of the men, but also from other women (Buvinic et al., 2013). The more perspectives included in a peace process will most likely lead to a more comprehensive peace agreement. Which is probably why there is a correlation with women and lasting peace agreements. It is important to note that while discussing diversity, this includes having civil society, youth, people with disabilities, rural groups, ethnic minorities and political elites together, not simply adding women. However, as the focus of this thesis is women, who contains of fifty percent of the adult population, this is what are being emphasised.

Making women count, not just counting women

Women's inclusion in peace processes have been justified and denied based on normative attitudes, both for women's inclusion and their exclusion. One of the reasons women were missing from the peace processes was due to lack of evidence-based knowledge on the modalities of women's inclusion and their impact on peace processes. Consequently, political negotiations and peace processes were often designed on untested hypothesis and normative arguments rather than empirical evidence (Paffenholz et al., 2015, p. 9). This was something Paffenholz et al. (2015) wanted to change. Paffenholz lead a research that aimed to provide UN Women and other organisations with direct comparative evidence on women's inclusion. The research found that direct inclusion of women does not per se increase the likelihood that more peace agreements are signed and implemented. What makes a difference is the influence women actually have on a process (Paffenholz et al., 2015, p. 7). Consequently, making women's inclusion count is more important than counting the number of women included in a peace process (Paffenholz et al., 2015, p. 7).

There were six key findings that reinforces the overall conclusion. For instance, it was found that women's inclusion is not limited to direct participation at the negotiation table. Women's inclusion has occurred in the past through multiple modalities, along several tracks and throughout the different peace process phases (Paffenholz et al., 2015, p 8). It was argued that the use of quotas, as part of selection criteria for negotiating delegation are effective in enlarging women's representation. However, quotas alone do not lead to women's influence

as findings show that political party loyalties often trumped genuine women's interest (Paffenholz et al., 2015, p. 8). This finding correlates with arguments by Ellerby (2016) and Bell & O'Rourke (2010) who found that just because women were at the table, it did not mean women will advocate for women's issues. Ellerby (2016) found that in the peace process in El Salvador, women were at the table as ranking members of the El Salvadorian rebel movement FMLN (Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation). These women did not advocate for women's issues during the process.

Paffenholz et al. (2015) did not include women as mediators nor negotiators in their study. However, the study did find that experienced senior women mediators with a strong understanding of gender can be very effective in support of women. Strong and supportive guidance by female mediators and women leaders played a decisive role in supporting women during peace processes. Yet, "despite the importance of female mediators in initiating and supporting women's inclusion, the international community still consistently selects men for mediation positions" (Paffenholz et al., 2015, p. 37). Based on the findings from Paffenholz et al. (2015) an argument can be made that if one were to have more women mediators, this could create a domino effect for women's positive influence in peace processes. This argument increases the thesis relevance for the literature on women's meaningful participation in peace processes.

Other research has reiterated the call to make women count rather than counting women (Aggestam, 2019; Aggestam & Towns, 2018; Hansen et al., 2018; Turner, 2017). Several academics after the article from 2015 agree that it is not sufficient to solely pay attention to percentages of women in peace processes, one need to look closer into what kind of roles and influence women holds. Turner (2017) have highlighted that it is important to move beyond a system where women are simply "added" to the existing structures that focus on power and authority. Instead one need to focus on considerations for how we understand peace processes and its function. Furthermore, she suggests that as a starting point one should break the distinction between the "soft" work of community peacebuilding and "hard" work of international peace making (Turner, 2017, p. 6).

Peace Processes and Masculinity

Since women have been absent in the peace processes for so long, researchers such as Dunanson (2016), Haastrup (2018), Puechguirbal (2014), Standfield (2020) and Turner

(2017) have all pointed to an hegemonic masculine environment that has developed in peace building and peace processes. Hegemonic masculinity may be understood as

a set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy (Jewkes et al., 2015, p. 40).

Haastrup, in her article (2018, p. 223) stressed that research have consistently shown how women not only are systematically excluded from participation, negotiations and dialogue, but often also excluded from the stories we tell about the mediation process. Consequently, the masculine environment in peace processes have continued to grow.

Puechguirbal (2014) and Standfield (2020) have investigated the discourse in the 1325 resolutions. Arguing that due to the hegemonic masculinity of the wording in UN documents, women are portrayed as victims in need of help rather than rational actors. Standfield (2020) emphasize that when women were to advocate for the 1325 resolution they had to do it within the framework of the neoliberal terms, in order to hold the interest for international policymakers. Therefore, the focus shifted from the political question of gender relations to a depoliticized and essentialized concern with women (Standfield, 2020). This discourse have major consequences for the way in which one understand who the women are and their needs. Something that Puechguirbal (2014) illustrates further. She argues that language sets the framework that defines how women are seen and treated in post-conflict environments. It sets the stereotype of what men and women are expected to do. As victims, women are set beside children, elderly and disabled. Therefore, since women are always set beside children, as a vulnerable group in need of protection, it removes women's agency as actors in charge of their own lives. Instead, women are seen as someone depended on male actors for protection. This victimization is reinforced trough the rhetoric of the "protected" versus the "protectors" (Haastrup, 2018; Puechguirbal, 2014, p. 255). Arguably the hypermasculine environment of peacekeeping operation foster this kind of definition of security that prevents women from being seen as key stakeholders in peace processes (Puechguirbal, 2014, p. 255).

This component is something Berry (2018) have highlighted further, women and war tend to be illustrated in a destructive matter, either victims of sexual violence or refugees.

Additionally, men are portrayed as “active” subjects meant to protect “passive” subjects such as women and children (Berry, 2018). Such depositions does not reflect the robust literature on the active role women play during and after conflict (Berry, 2018; Lorentzen, 2020; Sjoberg, 2012). An argument may therefore be made that, regardless of the adoption of UNSCR 1325, a structural barrier with the wordings of the UN documents may be one factor that prevents women from being included in peace processes, because they do not fit the expected gender norms, nor the “rules of the game”.

Budling on the masculine idea of peace processes, Lorentzen (2020), in her doctoral dissertation, focused on the WPS agenda and norms. Her studies is a good illustration for how the masculine norms and beliefs about peace processes still are active today. She investigated the encounter between “global” and “local” norms, actors and discourses that take place when the international community and women’s rights activists work to promote the WPS agenda. Her findings are interesting, regarding who, which, and when, women should be included in the process. During the process there were both disagreement about who the women were and which women should be included (Lorentzen, 2020). Her research further illustrated how women had to fight for their right for inclusion, regardless of the common understanding of the WPS on the international level. She identified widespread practices of resistance to the inclusion of women to the peace process. This correlates with the same findings from Paffenholz (2020, p. 175) who found in her sample that women’s inclusion to the peace process was either contested or met with indifference. Women had to rely on their own effort in order to be included. This indicates that there is indeed a gap between the rhetorical commitment and acceptance of the WPS agenda at the international level and its implementation in practice (Lorentzen, 2020, p. 15). Even though this research is not directly connected to mediation, it might be possible to make an argument that builds on the findings from Lorentzen (2020). An argument that regardless of resolutions and political rhetoric to appoint women as special envoys at the international spere, there is a lack of understanding for how to actually put rhetoric into action. The mediation environment is a site where hegemonic masculinity prevail (Aggestam & Svensson, 2017; Haastrup, 2018).

Mediation

This next section focuses more narrowly on mediation. There is, as seen above, a significant body of literature that explores the contributions that women make in peace processes. Yet, this focuses mainly on women as participants in the process, rather than on women as mediators (Turner, 2017). As indicated above, women in peace processes are well contested in the literature, there is some improvements for women's involvement in recent years, but the numbers of women in peace processes remain low. Nowhere is this more visible than in peace mediation (Hansen et al., 2017). Mediation can be understood as a process where disputants are seeking a third party to help them resolving the conflict. A third party to a conflict are not a direct participant in negotiations, but who's role is to assist the conflicting parties to reach an agreement in what is otherwise a bilateral agreement (Hopmann, 1996). There are three ways of doing mediation, mediator as a facilitator, mediation as a formulator, and manipulative mediation (Beardsley, 2006). A mediator and a special envoy are a third countries representative to a conflict. The special envoys is the formality of a mediator sent to host the track 1 peace process.

Today it exist an impressive amount of advocacy for women in mediation and peace building. In the UN, who has The UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), which supports women in leadership and diplomacy and pushes for gender expertise and the appointment of more women to peace negotiations. In 2013, the UNSC restated and passed a new resolution, UNSCR 2122 (2013), which requested the UN Secretary General to mobilize support for an increase in appointments of women as chief mediators. Additionally, women networks have launched the Global Alliance of women Mediators (Aggestam, 2019). Yet, regardless of the initiatives taken, women continue to play marginal roles in formal peace negotiations (Aggestam, 2019).

To understand the thesis, it is important to understand the different peace mediation tracks. Most commonly is track 1, track 2, and track 1.5. By definition, track 1 diplomacy is carried out by official representatives of states or international organisations (Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution, NOREF, 2021). The most important feature that distinguishes Track 1 from all other forms of diplomacy is its formal application at the state-to-state level (Mapendere, 2005, p. 67). It is carried out by diplomats, high-ranking government officials, and heads of states and is aimed at influencing the structures of political power (Mapendere,

2005). The typical mediator in a track 1 are drawn from a limited pools of senior officials, most often with a diplomatic or senior political background. They could be former ministers, prime ministers, presidents, generals and top diplomats (Potter, 2005; Turner, 2017). The mediator is typically between 55-75 years old (Potter, 2005). When discussing women mediators and the most formal peace processes, the focus is one the mediators in track 1 peace processes.

Track 2 diplomacy can be defined as the practice of facilitating non-governmental, informal and unofficial contacts between non-state actors and offer alternative routes to peace and stability (NOREF, 2021). Track 2 parties are not reserved by political or constitutional power - they may express their own viewpoints. Additionally, track 2 empowers the socially, economically, and politically excluded groups by giving them a platform from which they can air their views on how peace can be achieved. It involves grassroots and middle leadership who are in direct contact with the conflict, and are not affected by electoral cycles (Mapendere, 2005, p 68). However, the process often suffer from lack of political power, influence and funding (Mapendere, 2005, p. 68).

Track 1.5 is something of a mix between track 1 and track 2 processes. The conflicting parties are official representatives, but the facilitator is an ordinary citizen (Mapendere, 2005, p. 69). The features that distinguish 1.5 from track 1 is the facilitator, who is not a political institution. The feature that distinguish the track from track 2 are the parties to the conflict. In track 2 the representatives are influential citizens, in 1.5 it is the parties involved in the conflict resolution process are official representatives of the conflicting groups (Mapendere, 2005, p. 70).

Where are the women mediators?

While discussing women mediators, there are a distinction in the literature between the important role a mediator may have in promoting the WPS agenda and the discussion about the mediator actually being a woman. In the latter case, the research is lagging behind. There is indeed a focus on mediation and gender, but not so much on the mediator in a Track 1 process actually being a women. According to Aggestam & Svensson (2018, p. 150) there is nearly no studies that empirically have mapped where women are at located at the mediation process. Yet, The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, GIWPS, with Dayal and Christien (2020) recently undertook the first systematic effort to identify women's involvement in Track II peace processes. They found that 38 out of 63 post-Cold War peace

processes have identifiable informal initiatives by women. Additionally, almost three-fourths have clear evidence of involvement women's groups. More than half of all peace processes are therefore accompanied by informal efforts by women. The majority of informal peace processes involve determined efforts by women's groups to forge peace. Thus, women are not simply passive while men attempt to forge peace. Instead, women are active in the informal or track two processes that accompany the formal track one processes (Dayal & Christien, 2018). Thus, there are empirical evidence that women are involved in informal peace processes. The question for why so few women are mediators in track one processes becomes even more puzzling.

What are the barriers to women's involvement?

Turner (2018) argues that the first barrier to women's role as a mediator is definitional.

Defining the mediator is not straight forward while conducting research. In the literature, it is possible to define the mediator based on the work that they do. However, research that investigates the number of women mediators mainly look at the role of a special envoy – the third party at the formal peace process. This creates bias and confusion in the literature as, dependent on the definition, you can either find many or no women mediators. This issue may be exemplified. Aggestam & Svensson (2019) found that between 1991-2014, 38.5 % of mediators were women. They had a wide definition for the role of a mediator, in this way they capture the supporting roles women might have in a peace mediation process, such as the gender special advisor. On the other hand, UN Women (2012) found that between 1992-2011 no women had been a mediator to a formal peace process. This is most likely because they only focused on the role as a special envoy to a formal peace process. The most updated number by CFR (2021) finds between 1992-2019, women accounted for 6%. The conflicting numbers may be explained with the definition and focus researcher choose while conducting research.

As argued by Turner (2018), understanding the limited definition of who is a mediator might be the first step in understanding the low number of women mediators. If the understanding of *mediation* is a broad definition but the role as the *mediator* is solely the special envoy to track 1 processes, it might create the impression that women are absent as mediators (Turner, 2018). The consequences of the conflicting definitions are problematic as the conflicting ideas for mediation and who is a mediator makes it challenging to articulate a clear strategy for increasing the number of women mediators. However, something that is clear, despite the

conflicting numbers, women are acting as mediators, but when the process moves to track 1 and one investigates the special envoy, women are lacking. This finding correlates with findings from Dayal and Christien (2020). Women are mediating at informal peace processes, but once the process moves to track 1, women are left out.

Stanfield (2020) argued that women are caught between the art and science of mediation. UN mediation has moved from being seen as a diplomatic art to being seen as a professionalized science. Traditionally, mediators thought of their work as a diplomatic “art, not a science”: something that could be learned through experience rather than structured training (Stanfield, 2020). The narrative of mediation as a science constructs a linear process with little room for complexity. Reaching a peace agreement is more important than gender equality (Stanfield, 2020, p 629/637). On the other hand, mediation as an art, values experience, consent and trusting relationship. Consequently, including gender and women issues appear risky because it endangers consent (Stanfield, 2020, p. 629). However, there might be a fallacy in the last argument as UN Women (2012, p. 26) finds that lack of consent of the mediator have been one of the leading causes of negotiation failures in the past, and mediators have unchangeably been male (UN Women, 2012, p. 26). Despite this, these relationship traps women’s inclusion, where women on the one hand meet challenges with the gendered dimension - as second to the importance of reaching a peace agreement. On the other hand, women experience practical challenges such as women taking up a space originally held by a man - and thereby jeopardizing consent (Stanfield, 2020).

Turner (2017; 2018; 2020) have conducted plenty of research on women mediators. She not only argued for the definitional problem with mediation. But have also found that it is not enough to simply “add women and stir” (Turner, 2017). Greater emphasis should be placed on taking positive action to address the reason why women remain relatively invisible to international peace and security decision making (Turner, 2017, p 6). She highlights that more should be done on the investigation of the power structures in peace negotiations in an attempt to identify the structural barriers that hampers women’s inclusion (Turner, 2017). The UN cannot do the work alone. Research that investigates how single countries are appointing mediators is currently lacking in the literature, or has not been found. There are research that focuses on women and single peace processes, such as Turner in 2020. She conducted an empirical study on women mediators from Northern Ireland where she placed great value to the motivations of women mediators (Turner, 2020). However, Turner’s (2020)

research does not include women mediators at track 1 processes, because no indigenous women mediators were given access to formal mediator roles at that level. Apart from the fact that research investigating the formal institution of a state with an emphasis on gender currently lacking in the literature, research that investigates women holding the role as the special envoy to the most formal peace process is not present either. Therefore, investigating how Norway work in recruiting special envoys will be a contribution to the field of mediation with a gendered lens. Conducting a case study on Norway is a an unique way to conduct qualitative research on institutional setup, with the possibility of identifying barriers for women's inclusion. Additionally, focusing on Norway gives the opportunity to investigate the values of women who have been special envoys to track 1 peace processes.

Something that becomes evident while reading the literature on both women in peace building and women in mediation, is that it is mostly written by women. There seems to be less attention from men and how to get the people in power active in this process. This is something the Mediation Support Unit (MSN), a global network of primarily non-governmental organizations discussed (Limo & Baumann, 2018). They argued that the Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies launched in 2012 from the UNDPA is strongly focused on the inclusion of women in the mediation process. Highlighting further that

it is not sufficient to provide for space for the non-powerful to express themselves, as the ability and willingness of the powerful to listen is also needed. More efforts and reflections are needed to show how to work with men on gender issues, rather than focusing primarily on how to work with women (Limo & Baumann, 2018, p. 10).

Therefore, it would be valuable to include people with decision making power in this research to investigate how one can work with men and people with power. Thus, investigating Norway and people within who have or holds a great deal of power in decision-making is an attempt to fill in this research gap.

To summarize, there are several challenges while investigating the seemingly low number of women mediators in peace processes. Due to the currently little research on women mediators, finding comprehensive data is challenging. Yet, some of the structural barriers identified in the literature is the discourse in the different UNSC resolutions, some are definitional, other are the practical work of a mediator. With the evidence of the different women mediator networks, countries NAPs, and high focus in the UN, it is evident that there

are several normative agreements that women should hold the roles as special envoys and chief mediators to peace processes. Yet, according to global numbers, very little is happening in practice. Additionally, less focus have been placed to the people holding decision making power, women's experiences from track 1 peace processes and men. Thus, this thesis will fill this research gap by exploring how Norway are able to have more women mediators, how they have made NAPs into actions and why there are still challenges regardless of a political priority on the subject.

Theoretical Framework

In order to address the questions listed above, this thesis uses feminist institutionalism (FI). FI argues that institutions are important in order to understand society. There are formal and informal institutional structures, whereas there are advantages to some and disadvantages to others. The institutions are gendered, affecting men and women differently. The informal institutional structure of mediation might be gendered, preventing women from taking the role as a mediator or special envoy to the most formal processes. The chapter is structured as follows; First a small outline of the feminist approach in International Relations (IR). Then an outline and comparison of the difference between institutionalism and FI. Thirdly, a small discussion of how FI plays out in practice and how it affects women in mediation. Lastly, it ends with a small summary and expectations to research.

The emergence of feminism in IR was arguably around the late 1980s and early 1990s (Prugel & Tickner, 2018). Feminist scholars seek to make gender visible in international politics. Yet, it is important to highlight that the way in which feminism is defined, conceptualized and understood, is itself contested (Dahmoon, 2013). What started as a research field by mainly scholars from the Global North, have now become a vast diversity of feminist scholars from both the global North and the Global South. Black, Global South, indigenous and queer feminists have introduced new issues and new perspectives to the field (Prugel & Tickner, 2018, p. 4). It is no longer possible to speak of one feminist international relation theory (Prugel & Tickner, 2018; Sjoberg, 2009). While today, it exist a feminist perspective to nearly all fundamental international relations theories, this thesis uses the theoretical framework of FI. In relation to the WPS agenda, remarkably little attention has been placed on the role political institutions have on the implementation process, in addition to how institutional design, and women's participation within political institutions might affect the interpretation and focus of the WPS agenda (Thomson, 2019). This research is thus a contribution to the research field of FI.

The original institutionalism studied the formal institutions of government and defined the state in terms of its political, administrative and legal arrangements (Schmidt, 2006). Institutionalism was mainly comparative in its approach and compared different state arrangements to demonstrate similarities or differences in how governments worked (Schmidt, 2006). However, institutionalism came under attack for ignoring the importance of human agency and was largely criticised by Marxism. The concept of the state was replaced

by political systems. The New Institutionalism (NI) emerged in the late 1970s bringing institutions back (Schmidt, 2006). The basic premise for NI is that institutions “matter”, stressing how the organisation of political life makes a difference (Mackay et al., 2010). NI is concerned with how institutions are shaped by the political, economic, and social forces within which they are embedded. Feminist scholars have critiqued NI of being gender blind. Highlighting how NI failed to engage with the feminist literature concerning women and institutions, the gendered dimension of political institutions, and gendered processes of political change (Holmes, 2020; Mackay et al., 2010; Thomson, 2019). FI critiqued the gender blindness of the field of NI and highlighted how the gendered lens provide a fresh insight to the academic approach (Mackay et al., 2010; Thomson, 2017). FI highlights how the “rules of the game” – being related to legislature, courts, bureaucracies or federal structures- contain gender bias (Mackay et al., 2010). Where NI argues that “the rules of the game” provide different actors with asymmetrical access to resources, FI emphasize how this access is also gendered, affecting men and women differently.

Institutions can be understood as “any form of constrain that human beings devise to shape human interaction ” (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 604). There are both formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions involve rules and procedures that are “created, communicated, and enforced through channels widely accepted as official” (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 605). Informal institutions are more complex to define, can however be understood to “come from socially transmitted information and are part of the heritage that we call culture’ and are the ‘traditions, customs, moral values, religious beliefs, and all other norms of behaviour that have passed the test of time ” (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 605). By their very nature, informal institutions are hidden and embedded in the everyday practices that are disguised as standard and taken-for-granted (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 605; Thomsen, 2019). Hence, informal institutions can be difficult to identify. Consequently, one may imagine that mediation as an institution contains hidden informal institutions where many of structures in the system favours men or masculine components that directly or indirectly hampers women’s inclusion.

Feminist Institutionalism

There is no consensus for a comprehensive definition of FI, because FI is mostly a social constructivist in its approach to its analysis of institutions and depends on the way in which

one chose to define institutions, gender and power. However, FI is focused on the “rules of the game” in political institutions, and explore how institutions create gender just conditions in terms of actions and policies they undertake (Thomson, 2017; 2019). To say that an institution is gendered means that constructions of masculinity and femininity are intertwined in the daily logic/life of political institutions (Holmes, 2020; Mackay et al., 2010; Thomson, 2019). FI is especially concerned with both the formal and informal institutions, and their interplay. By investigating the dynamics and interplay between formal and informal institutions, it is possible to understand why changes to formal institutions not always leads to the changes intended - because the structures of the informal norms, rules and procedures are still intact and undermine the formal deviations (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). It is therefore important to investigate both the formal and informal structures in an institution.

Gender is a contested phenomenon, however, for simplicity this thesis use the definition provided by United Nations Department of Political Affairs, UNDPA (2017)

Gender is the social attributes, challenges and opportunities as well as relationships associated with being male and female. These are constructed and learned through socialization; they are context- and time-specific and changeable (UNDPA, 2017, p. 7).

The significance with this definition is the attention in how gender is constructed and learned through socialisation. Gender is learned, not given. Importantly, gender affects power relations in society and determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman and a man in a given context (UNDPA, 2017, p. 7). Yet, gender is not only a phenomenon on the individual, but is something that plays an important role on the structural level as well. It is a gendered structure that determines the way in which masculinity and femininity is perceived and how this again shapes the way men and women are assumed and expected to behave (Acker, 1992). Stereotypically, women have been given feminine expectations, such as emotions, interdependence and sensuality. Whereas men are stereotypically expected to behave within the masculine domain associated with rationality, aggression, strength and autonomy (Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Sjoberg, 2012). However, as social constructions, gender expectations and norms do not determine the way a man or a women will act in a given context. Yet political actors, traditionally men, have acted as if sex and gender are mapped together (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). Arguably, this logic of gender expectations, is what determines acceptable behaviour for men and women in an institution.

The institutions prescribe “acceptable” masculine and feminine forms of behaviour, rules and values for men and women which again help to re-produce broader social and political gender expectations (Mackay et al., 2010). Being able to identify these structures and the asymmetry between power relations makes us look at *how* and *what* resources are allocated and *who* gets to do the distribution (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). It has been argued that although the construction of both masculinity and femininity are present in political institutions, the masculine ideal underpins the institutional structures, practices and norms shaping “the ways of valuing things, the ways of behaviour and the ways of being” (Mackay et al., 2010, p. 580-581). Thus, women, being most commonly associated with feminine traits are thereby disadvantaged in the power play within institutions (Mackay et al., 2010). Arguably, regardless if one were to swap men with women bodies in an institution, women would still be operating in a traditionally masculine arenas. These arenas does little to disrupt the symbolisms or practices of the gendered order because this goes much deeper in the fundamental function of the institution (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). With this logic, it is possible to ask if women are not selected as special envoys, on the basis that it has been male dominated for so long, and as a result it is taken for granted that the mediator is male.

To summarise the small discussion above with the theoretical framework of FI, FI is not only interested in how institutions change, but also how they might resist change (Thomson, 2017). Four important insights has been provided by the FI approach. Firstly, it has highlighted the gender relations and gender norms and its institutionalised forms. Secondly, how gender norms of masculinity and femininity provide important mechanisms where certain arrangement of power asymmetries are naturalised and institutionalised. Thirdly, how change to the structure of gender relations are important potential causes for institutional change – as structures of gender are constructed is it also possible to re-structures the system. (Mackay et al., 2010). Lastly, the gendered power dynamics that frame decision making and hierarchy within institutions (Thomson, 2017). In what follows the consequences of the gendered institutions will be illustrated, how this can be identified in practice, especially how the gendered nature of institutions affect women and men differently. It is important to bear in mind that theory is a gross simplification of reality (Buzan and Hansen, 2009). While discussing gender norms and expectations it is therefore important to emphasize that these are stereotypically what one would expect, however men and women have a diverse set of agencies and behavioural patterns that often do not fit with their given gender expectation.

How FI plays out in practice

In order to understand the lack of progress in implementing more women mediators, it is important to understand the underlying dimensions of the gendered structure of war and peacebuilding. Empirically, men and women experience war differently. Women have always been at risk in war – as civilians and refugees- arguably even more today as “new wars” are actively targeting civilians (Duncanson, 2016, p. 21). Research have found that men are more likely to die during conflict whereas women die more often of indirect causes after the conflict has ended (Berry, 2018; Buvinic et al., 2012; Duncanson, 2016; O’Reilly et al., 2015). Additionally, women are more likely to be targeted in sexual violence than men, although it happens to men too. However, this illustrates that both genders lose in war, although they lose in different ways (Duncanson, 2016). During war and peace time, men and women are given expected gender roles. Yet, as highlighted in the literature review, Berry (2018) criticised the construction of gender expectations in times of war where women’s active agency are rarely discussed. Additionally, researchers such as Buvinic et al. (2012), O’Rielly et al. (2015) and Sjoberg and Gentry (2007) have all identified the diverse roles women play during times of peace and war. The gendered roles are much more diverse in the “new wars” where both men and women fight, men and women acts as terrorist, and men and women are targeted as civilians (O’Reilly et al., 2015; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). There are many dimensions to “gendered conflict” but due to the focus of this thesis, this will not be further discussed. However, as discussed in the literature review above, women are centred around civil society or grassroot movements for peace, whereas (some) men are most often in formal peace talks, where women have, stereotypically, been excluded.

With the framework of FI one may argue that WPS and NAPs has been attempts to change the formal institutions, and practice of post-conflict situations. As seen with the total amount of women participating in formal peace process, the progress is slow. Looking at the FI framework it is possible to suggest that change have not happened due to the lack of change with the informal institutions. As highlighted by Aggestam and Towns (2020, p. 3-4), peace negotiations tend to have specific institutional characteristics. Women’s participation is restricted to the gendered expectations which may prevent them for taking part in the peace process. Women’s exclusion from peace talks may be easily justified because women, stereotypically framed, have not been “doers” in wars (Duncanson, 2016; Iwilade, 2013;

Porter, 2003; Rojas, 2004). Ellerby (2016) found that women were not welcome in the peace process because the government “had not been fighting women”. Thus, the informal institutions and customs have strong roots that may not be easy to change regardless of the change in formal institutions, and the way in which wars are fought.

The dynamics of the informal institutions and its gender expectations is something that has been identified within the Northern Ireland’s formal institutions. Turner (2020) interviewed women acting as mediators in Track 2 and Track 1.5 processes in the Northern Ireland’s peace processes from 1994-2004. She found a problematic nature of the conflation of “women” with “gender” in the WPS literature. She argued that if women’s inclusion is dependent on gendered advocacy, then the contributions of women who do not self-identify as feminist, who does not support feminist movements, becomes ignored (Turner, 2020). Thus, for those women who do not fit gender expectations, they become disadvantaged in the system. Additionally, if women mediators are expected to act as a mediator and as an agent for the feminist agenda, then their role as a mediator is no longer partial nor neutral. If women are expected to act on gender issues, then women mediators might lose credibility as neutral mediators, and as a consequence not be accepted as the leading mediator to a process.

Similarly, Thomsen (2017) found in her study on abortion in Northern Ireland, that gender expectations on women does not hold in practice. She found the use of informal institutions disadvantaged in the mass movements of liberal women. With a focus on critical actors within institutions, she discovered that women are not one critical mass with one agenda. Rather, it was enough with a few conservative critical actors, with support within the formal institution and legislators. This helped restrict liberalising movements on abortion. A few critical actors knew the “rule of the game” and they were able to restrict a whole movement. Thus, in the case of Northern Ireland the informal institutions was crucial for the outcome. Arguably, the religious customs trumped formal institutional change. It advantaged a critical few women who took advantage their knowledge and influence in power, gaining support from people within a formal institution. This example, although not related to mediation, illustrates how it is not necessarily a need for mass public support for change in an institution. Therefore, building on the finding from Thomsen (2017), the need for a critical few actors having knowledge and influence in the system might be what is needed to make a change in the existing structure of implementing more women mediators.

While investigating the low number of women mediators, Klein (2012, p. 293) found explanations for why women are not chosen as mediators, as some people argued that “women are not as good as men at negotiating”. This argument lead women to react towards the stereotype. As a consequent, women pursued higher goals than they would normally, leading them to become more aggressive and persistent in achieving. However, when women broke these stereotypes, having a task oriented style, women suffered a backlash where they were perceived as less likable, socially inept and incompetent (Klein 2012; Schneiker, 2021; Turner, 2020). Subsequently, women became less likable as a mediator. An argument may be made that women are being trapped regardless, due to gender norms and gender stereotypes. If women stay within their gender expectations they are seen as too “feminine” to hold the role as a mediator. However, if they break the stereotype, they are too aggressive and less likable. Thereby, less like a stereotypical woman. Drawing on this, women face barriers as being selected because of the gender expectation put on women. This argument correlates with the same findings by Schneiker (2021), who stated that women are trapped regardless, either they fulfil their gender expectations at cost of acting within the assumptions and expectations by the international society or she fail to adopt a masculine identity. Again, women are disadvantaged by the structure of the institutions.

Lastly, although the establishment of women mediator networks (WMN) is important in making women visible, and to undermine the argument of no women capable of doing mediation work, there are pitfalls that needs to be highlighted. Möller-Loswick et al. (2019) identified challenges to the establishments of mediator networks, being both practical and strategic. They highlighted that, instead of receiving the necessary support to gain access, WMN must continue to be offered capacity building. Emphasizing the importance of working against the risk of “men get opportunities and women get training”. The strong focus on capacity building might remove attention from the real problem, which is lack of access (Möller-Loswick et al., 2019). With this in mind, there seems to be an idea that men are naturals at mediation whereas women need training. This notion itself is a result of informal institutions and “masculine” ways of doing negotiation and talking. Indicting the domination of gender in institutions, both in the formal and informal institutions - where women are given capacity building, in addition to an expectation of needing formal training. Regardless, men are not “burdened” with this. This becomes even more evident with O’Rielly et al. (2015, p. 4) where in discussions with women from civil society, one argued “I thought my experience from what is happening on the ground would be useful, but they seemed to want

people with PhDs in negotiation”. There seems to be set a higher bar for women in negotiations. Women are expected to be both prominent leaders with technical experience and activist with large grassroots continuities. Contrasting this with the expectations to men, which is largely based on their participation in fighting - the gendered expectations and unbalance to expectations becomes even more evident.

As the discussion above illustrates, informal institutions might provide an indication for the lack of women mediators. When women try to escape gender expectations, they break stereotypes that makes them less likeable. However, if women are expected to act as one gendered women unity, then the essentialisation ignores the diversity of women and their different tasks within a formal institution. As a consequence, some women are being ignored. Thus, no matter which way one argue about women and their gendered expectation, someone in the system will be disadvantaged.

Arguably, gendered expectations on women mediators judges them for *what* they are and not *who* they are, ignoring women’s distinct background and expertise. Thus, in order to understand institutions and how gender rules, norms and expectations stay the same or change, one need to investigate political institutions, both at the formal and informal level. On the practical institutional set up, nevertheless on what happens in the everyday work environment the men and women have to work in (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). The advantage of adopting a gender and institutions approach, is that it allows NIs to better explain the origins, enforcement, and outcomes of institutions. Furthermore, it helps feminist scholars understand why even the most well-designed formal gender equality rules, such as efforts to increase the number of women in the public sector, often fail to produce their intended effects (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). This framework may also explain the diversity between different institutions. Thus, also explain why some states such as the Nordic states have a higher amount of women mediators than the global average (Larsen et al., 2021).

Norway and the implementation of WPS

In order to investigate formal and informal institutional structure, Norway and the Section of Peace and Reconciliation is used as a case study. For several decades, Norway has played a central role as a facilitator between parties to a conflict. Most notably in Colombia and Philippines, but also in South Sudan and Sri Lanka (Nissan, 2015; Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad,

2018). Norway usually use the strategy of a facilitator while acting as a third party to a conflict (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). Since Norway is not a superpower, nor a part of the EU, Norway can stand out as an even more neutral third party to a conflict (Baard-Drange, 2018).

National Action Plans (NAPs)

One way in which the WPS agenda and its stipulations on women mediators has been implemented, is through the development of NAPs. NAPs were seen as a way of bringing an international agenda to national levels for member states (Doeland & Skjelsbæk, 2018; Hamilton et al., 2019). NAPs has a fundamental purpose in this thesis, as NAPs are understood as a formal institutional change, where an attempt to change the institutional set up for national peace processes have occurred. Thus, NAPs are a formal institutional change, the expert interviews is an attempt to identify informal institutional structure.

In 2006, Norway became the second country in the world to adopt NAP on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2018; 2021). Today, Norway have four NAPs on the WPS agenda, where the NAP for 2019-2022 is the only active. In the recent NAP, Norway shows higher focus on women's participation and rights in both informal peace talks and in formal peace negotiations (Norwegian Ministers, 2019, p. 5). One of Norway's goals is to increase the number of women facilitators in peace mediation internationally, and to ensure that men also promote women's participation and influence (Norwegian Ministers, 2019, p. 8). Norway expect gender parity in their own delegations, at least 40% women and 40% men. The focus on strengthening women's participation in own delegations and as special envoys have provided results. As of 2013, there were no women special envoys from Norway, whereas in 2018 both special envoys - where Norway had a facilitator role - were women (Ministry of Culture, 2019, p. 56). In Norway's current NAP they have adopted a policy of more focused and strategic engagements, identifying women's participation in peace mediation and peace-building processes as particularly important, and a neglected dimension of the WPS agenda (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2019).

In an annual report from 2019, the percentage of women who participated in Norwegian peace and reconciliation teams was 34%. In 2019, Norway had two special envoys to processes in which Norway were a facilitator, consisting of one man and one woman (Norwegian Ministers, 2019, p. 9). Altogether, Norway have eight special envoys involved in

peace processes in different capacities, three women and five men (Norwegian Ministers, 2019, p. 9). In a statement from Norway's permanent mission to UN and WTO/EFTA in Geneva (2020), it was stated that Norway's focus the last couple of years has been to ensure that Norway not only has policies and plans in place, but also guidelines, check-lists and procedures that enable follow-ups. Ambassador Tine Mørch Smith stated that "We must learn from one process to next. We need to know not only what to do, but also how to do it" (Norway in Geneva, 2020). Thus, holding employers accountable for the work they do, might be one explanation for the "success" of Norway's strategy. This needs data and evidence to be backed up, but is an interesting assumption that will be followed up in the interview guide.

Together with the other Nordic countries, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland, the Norwegian government decided in 2015 to create a regional network of Nordic Women Mediators (NWM) (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). The NWM was inspired by the women's mediator network, initiated by the South African government in 2013. Establishing such networks has been needed to address the lack of women's access to a specific national peace process (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). Then again in 2019, Norway was a part of the launch of the Global Alliance (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). The establishment of regional women mediator networks across the globe is a reflection of women's common aspiration and commitment to participate in and lead peace processes (NOREF, 2019). The establishment of such networks make women more visible. Making the argument that there are no women capable of the job, incredible.

In an attempt to understand why Norway are an outlier in bring women to the peace table, one may look at older research by Neumann (2008). In relation to institutional set up and gender, Neumann (2008) did a comprehensive study on the Norwegian Ministers of Foreign Affairs (MFA), investigating whether a gendered dimension of diplomacy affected male and female diplomats. He found that gendering and classing of diplomats' bodies is a constitutive factor of the MFA hierarchic order and differentiates diplomats' life chances. He drew two conclusions : Firstly, the Norwegian MFA is a gendered organization. Secondly, gendering has undergone interesting changes during the organization's centennial history. Furthermore, the gendering is not atypical for a European country. He concluded that since gender is relational, the entry of women diplomats above the threshold of tokenism was certain to bring about changes in all the organization's gendered scripts. The gendered scripts of intellectual masculinity and new femininity have destabilized traditional diplomatic gender hierarchies

for decades, and are still not empty of reconfiguration potential. However, for traditional civil servants, masculinity rules the roost. Thus, it is therefore interesting to investigate this further, if the gendered idea is still persistent in the MFA and mediation, or if, since 2008 the MFA has undergone such a transformation, that the gendered element Neumann found is no longer persistent.

Additionally, Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad have conducted lots of research on Norwegian peace processes and gender (Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad, 2016; 2019; 2020; 2021). In 2021 they conducted a study in an attempt to fill some of the research gap for how gender norms came to be intergraded in the Norwegian peace engagement in policy and in practice (Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad, 2021). Additionally, they have compared the different NAPs to the Nordic states, finding that Norway, although a champion for the WPS agenda, tend to hold back their rhetoric in the international sphere, letting Sweden flag the feminist agenda while Norway stays in the background. Arguably, this is done because Norway want to uphold its neutrality as a facilitator. Flagging high on the feminist agenda might hinder Norway's neutral image and instead be seen as a country imposing gender norms (Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad, 2021). Furthermore, they found that for a long time, there has been a gap between practice and rhetoric of peace mediation. Finding that from Norway's engagements from the Middle East, to Guatemala, the Balkans, Sri Lanka and Sudan, neither women's participation in peace processes nor the inclusion of gendered language in peace agreements has been high on the agenda. However, in more recent conflicts, such as Colombia and the Philippines, a change can be observed. There is a balance on including gender-equality norms as part of a pragmatic approach to mediation design, while at the same time downplaying any suggestion that it should be seen as a feminist transformative value-based project (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021).

Expectations to Research

In the case of women mediator and Norway, within the theoretical framework of FI, it is possible to assume that although there has been a change with the formal institution of peace negotiations, where women's important contribution has been pushed forward with the WPS in NAPs, there are still challenges to implement NAPs. This as a result of informal institution within mediation still being intact. The field of peace processes has been dominated with masculine ideas of the "structure of the game" for so long, that it disadvantages women. However, in the case of Norway, who has had a liberal foreign policy

for a long time, this might not necessarily be the case. Nevertheless, it is still expected that the way of which one talk about peace negotiations, the role of the mediator and the dynamics of the peace talks, will still be a masculine environment. As of the formal and informal institutional structure, due to the liberal politics of Norway, it is expected that the gendered attitudes in the Section of Peace and Reconciliation might be more favourable towards women's inclusion. This might explain why Norway are an outlier to the rest of the world, as the informal institutional structure does not hamper women's inclusion. Yet, due to mediation being a field depended on a global context, it is expected that the informal institutional structure to mediation have gendered disadvantages to women's inclusion.

On the other hand, every peace negotiant is different and not one peace process is alike. It is therefore expected that, as also stated by Thomsen (2017), with the help of a few critical actors familiar with the "rules of the game", change still occurs regardless if the masses are "negative" to the idea of including women as peace mediators. If a key critical actor, with influential knowledge, pushes forward the agenda, he/she is able to produce a change in the structure that makes way for women to participate in the most formal peace processes. Similarly, if there is an institution without a critical actor who pushes for the changes in the formal institutions, then the intended change will not happen, because the informal "structure" of the game is still active.

By analysing gendered norms, rules and practices that shape the negotiators' strategies and preferences, it is possible to gain greater insight to the formal and informal institutional setting and design of the negotiation process, and by then identify the structural barriers that hampers women's inclusion (Aggestam, 2019). In the case of Norway, within its peace and reconciliation, it is worth investigating the formal ways of doing things, with its action plans, implantation results and structures. Furthermore, investigate the informal ways of doing things. Interviewing the actors who works in the field, investigating how they value the work they do, how they understand their role, and to what extent they believe in the WPS agenda. The interviews will say something about the informal institution. It is therefore interesting to investigate the role of women in mediation teams in Norway. The values of people working within the section of Peace and Reconciliation, how they see themselves compared to the rest of the global community, and how they view the global numbers of women mediators versus the Norwegian numbers. Questions as these might identify some of the informal, gendered, structures of the Section. Relatedly with Paffenholz et al. (2016) this research will provide

the research field an empirical study in order to move away from the normative argumentations. More evidence based data help researchers understand the practical hindrances of the appointment of women as mediators and special envoys to the most formal peace processes.

Methodology

This chapter will clarify the methodology of the thesis, the specific steps and techniques that allow one to carry out an analysis. This chapter is structured in two parts; A justification of chosen method, which is semi-structured expert interviews. Continuing with the challenges and limitations to the method, that being ethical considerations, positionality, validity and reliability. All concepts and approaches will be accounted for in each part.

Methodology

This thesis use qualitative methods to answer the research question. A qualitative research places emphasis on understanding through observation, careful documentation, and thoughtful analysis of people's words, actions, and records (Eijmabo, 2015). This thesis is primarily based on expert interviews, complimented with an analysis of the last NAP (2019-2022). The document analysis is done briefly in the theory section. The outline of the formal institutional change was provided with the NAPs expectations, versus what the section of Peace and Reconciliation was able to achieve in 2018-2019. As of the rest of the thesis, the main form of data, expert interviews, will be discussed in more detail.

The expert interview is a method of qualitative empirical research, designed to explore expert knowledge (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). The quality of this method is the possibility to “see through the eyes of the beholder” (Bryman, 2016). In this case, see through the eyes of the people working in peace processes. Thus, gain an insight in the way of which decisions are made. Furthermore potentially identify if gendered informal institutional plays a role in how mediator teams are selected. The interview will be conducted thru a semi-structured manner, with the flexibility of asking follow-up questions. This is a great advantage with this method as the interview can change direction, providing the researcher with information not considered in the interview guide. With the NAPs in combination with expert interviews, it is possible to investigate both the formal institution – what people are supposed to do, as well as informal institutions – what is actually happening. Thus, investigating both formal and informal institution – its interplay and dynamic.

Experts may be considered people who possess special knowledge that relates to a clearly defined problem (Bogner et al., 2018). The social relevance of experts in modern life and their ability to affect people’s practices to a significant degree, is what makes experts interesting to study (Bogner et al., 2018). An advantage with expert interviews is its ability

to establish an orientation in a field that is either substantially new or poorly defined. Expert interviews may guide the researcher to develop a clearer idea of the problem (Bogner et al., 2018). Since expert interviewing is the main form of data collection, it is not the expert themselves that are the object of investigation, rather they function as informants, providing information about the actual object of investigation (Bogner et al., 2018). In this case concerning women mediators, where there currently is little existing research, conducting expert interviews serves as a good way for acquiring new knowledge regarding the process of implementing women as mediators and special envoys.

The expert knowledge is characterised by the chance to “become hegemonial in a certain organisational and functional context within a field of practice” and, “to be influential in structuring the conditions of actions for other actors in a relevant way” (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). This definition of an expert knowledge distinguishes the expert from other types of knowledge; “The expert”, “the man on the street” and “the well-informed citizen” (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). There are several considerations that should be taken while using expert interviews as a method (Bogner et al., 2018; Meuser & Nager, 2009). The debate concerning experts contains issues with what constitutes an expert, the differences with the various forms of expert interviews, their role in research design and what kind of knowledge one may receive out of the experts (Bogner et al., 2018; Meuser & Nager, 2009). However, in the exploratory phase of a project, interviewing experts is regarded as a more efficient and concentrated method of generating data (Bogner et al., 2018). Expert interviews also lend themselves to those kinds of situations in which it might prove difficult to gain access to a particular social field (Bogner et al., 2018).

The goal of a semi-structured interview is to generate data on how researchers understand social organisation and processes. If this is done correctly, the interview method pursues its goal by exploring how respondents assign meaning to particular experiences, events and themes (Johnson et al., 2019). An advantage to this method is the possibility of change in direction of the interview. The researcher has already made a “path” with the interview guide for where the conversation is headed. With the possibility of asking follow up questions the “path” can change direction. In this way, the researcher is more likely to uncover unexpected topics or issues (Bryman, 2016, p. 493).

Another benefit with expert interviews is the possibility of identifying gender components. Gender is not easy to identify in institutions (Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Kenny, 2014). It is

not enough to assert that gender bias exist in institutions, instead, researcher must move beyond the descriptive stage and systematically identify potentially gendered institutionalised processes and mechanisms and identify the gendered *effects* (Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Kenny, 2014). Thus, it is important to not only map the formal and informal architecture, but also stay attentive to the ongoing and active ways gender is reinscribed in these institutions (Kenny, 2014). To gain this access requires an in-depth qualitative research. Most preferably ethnography, because it would have provided the research with a more robust in-depth data collection with a true representation of the participants original setting which goes beyond the participants potential contextual bias by participating in an interview (Ejiambo, 2015). However, considering the time limit and difficulty in obtaining the time of an expert, it is not possible in this thesis. Nevertheless, a way to overcome this issue is through semi-structures interviews with a possibility of discussing “how things are done around here” and “why do you do X and not Y” (Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Kenny, 2014). In this way, the expert are given the opportunity to provide examples of experiences or situations which will provide more depth to the discussions. This approach may identify informal rules, but also whether or not formal rules found in official documents really do structure behaviour on the ground (Kenny, 2014). Thus, as there is not much research on women mediators and due to time limitations, conducting expert interviews with people working close to the implementation of the WPS agenda and the NAPs was considered to be the most adequate method. Consequently, due to the exploratory aim of this research, conducting expert interviews seemed like the most adequate approach.

The Case of Norway

The case of Norway was chosen based on three circumstances; Its impressive records of working in formal peace processes. Norway have experience on peace mediation and holds a great deal of power while appointing facilitator teams, particularly now that Norway have entered the United Nations Security Council (2020-2023). Furthermore, Norway is interesting to study due to its impressive number of female mediators and special envoys in formal peace processes. However, this makes Norway rather an outlier compared to the other countries making it more difficult to generalise findings from this exploratory study. Yet, as highlighted above, Norway have a close collaboration with other institutions, such as the UN, and it is therefore beneficial to investigate what experts view as the biggest difference from Norway to other institutions. Lastly, according to numbers from their implementation report on the NAP on Women, Peace and Security (2019), the Section of Peace and Reconciliation

did not meet its goal on having 40% women as mediators. Questions then arise on the challenges Norway, with such a high pressure on the WPS agenda, meet. Norway's challenges might stand as a lesson for other countries. Thus, conducting research on Norway provides interesting data. It is also worth mentioning that this research is conducted during a pandemic, and considerations towards achievable, safe and collectible data were made in choosing Norway as a case.

There are several challenges associated with expert interviews, some practical and some more scientific. In relation to practical challenges, the biggest challenge is considered to be obtaining participants. Finding an expert to participate in a master thesis is difficult, which could potentially create a degree of measurement validity, as one might end up talking to the people available instead of the people with the most knowledge on the subject. Secondly, some interviewee's statements may be influenced by various subject-related variables, such as age, gender, professional status and power dynamics (Bogner et al., 2018). Experts in the Section of Peace and Reconciliation might be influenced by the Norwegian agenda with WPS, and talk according to their guidelines instead of what is actually going on. Thirdly, social and political status, personal history, and political conviction, are all factors that influence what different actors will share. People's unique experiences, based on different intersection socio-economic and socio-demographic factors, will differ, in addition to treating the interviewees as embedded in institutions and political context with certain norms and context. Caution must therefore be placed when analysing that data, as to their socio-economic and socio-demographic factors and the political context in which they are embedded. Meaning that greater attention is placed to the experts background and work areas in light of their arguments. Lastly, conducting a comprehensive research during a pandemic brings new unforeseen challenges, both internal and external. Thus, getting access and upholding the full attention from the interviewee might be difficult when there are other seemingly more important tasks.

Challenges is one thing in this thesis, limitations is another. This study offers an in-depth glimpse into a much bigger phenomenon. It aims to inspire further research in other contexts. The focus, being how the Section of Peace and Reconciliation work in order to implement women mediators, is a very small piece of a much bigger picture, regarding Norwegian peace mediation and the WPS agenda. This research is only a very small piece of a much

more complex puzzle. Additionally, questions can arise on how representative this research is. There are many people working with mediation in Norway and only a few have been included in this research. Questions can also be asked to what kind of experts agrees to participate in this research. Some bias arises if only experts interested in the WPS participate rather than a random selection. However, limitations like these are present in almost all qualitative research and is thereby an overall limitation to the qualitative method.

Selection and recruitment

Sampling of expert interviews has been done through strategic choice. Selections of experts was done through the individual's work experience on the subject of mediators. Three institutions seem to fit the criteria of being an expert in the field of mediation in Norway; People working in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), especially the Section of Peace and Reconciliation, Norwegian Centre of Peace Resolution (NOREF), and Nordic Women Mediators (NWM). Because of NAPs, the main focus are people working in Norway's Section of Peace and Reconciliation, with the focus on how they do their job and their values. Individuals working in NOREF was invited to participate, as it would be interesting to see if there is a special culture in the Section, or a culture relating to mediation in itself. Individuals connected to NWM was invited to participate in an attempt to get both sides of the spectre related to work environment of a mediator.

In order to reach different expert, contacted was made with the different institutions through e-mail. Contact with an employee in the Section of Peace and Reconciliation in the Foreign Ministry was established, and was very helpful with proving an introductory meeting about Norwegian peace mediation, as well as also obtaining contact with further relevant experts. Eleven experts were contacted and six people were able to participate. This research contains experts from the Section of Peace and Reconciliation of the Norwegian MFA and one external expert with expertise in peacebuilding. The group of experts in this research are mediators, special envoys and senior advisors. Some currently worked in the Section of Peace and Reconciliation, others had moved Sections, some were no longer active in their job. There is a mix of both men and women. Thus, the sample consist of experts with different institutional background. The external expert was included as a contrast to the people inside the MFA, in order to investigate whether there were any collective attitudes inside the MFA. The study could have been more comprehensive with more experts. Adding to the limitations

while conducting expert interviews. There were only a handful relevant people, and only few of them were able to participate in the study. Contact was not achieved with any person within NOREF. They are therefore not included in this study.

Ethics: Consent, anonymity and confidentiality

“Research is valuable, but it can also cause harm” (NESH, 2021). Conducting qualitative expert interviews involves several ethical challenges and considerations that need to be addressed and discussed. This thesis follows the Guidelines for research ethics by the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (NESH).

Before conducting the interviews, approval from Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) and the Norwegian MFA was obtained to conduct research. Selected experts were given a formal invitation to participate through mail. All experts who wanted to participate were given a letter of consent which provided them with more detailed information about the research and their rights, such as their right to withdraw at any moment and their right to control how much information that could be shared in the research. A signed letter of consent was received before starting the interview. For some participants this was not possible as some were on travels while conducting the interviews. In these cases it was made sure I had their written consent to conduct interviews. Before the interview I asked a second time if I was allowed to record the interview. After the interview it was informed about the processes going forward. For the people who did not respond to my first invitation to participate, I sent them a follow up request after the summer break.

NESH highlights how “from a legal perspective, the protection of privacy is linked to the processing of personal data ... However, privacy also has a wide scope in research ethics, and researchers must exercise due caution and responsibility” (NESH, 2021). This is especially important if individuals can be identified, directly or indirectly, either as participants or as parts of communities recognisable in publications or in other dissemination of research (NESH, 2021). For my research, conducting expert interviews, with only a handful relevant people in a small community, this was especially a central ethical consideration. For several of my informants, being the expert that they are, it was evident that keeping them anonymous would be challenging if I were to discuss their professional background in my method section, in order to justify their relevance to the research. Due to

the small community and as peace processes and mediation is a sensitive topic, it was decided that keeping the experts anonymous were more important than discussing their relevance in being invited to participate. In the data section there are no identification on the context of who said what or from which profession, because this could indirectly lead data back to the experts. Thus, in the text, the different expert will be referred to as “the expert”. Thus, whether it is a man or women, senior advisor or a mediator will not be possible to know for the reader. The experts that asked to be involved in the writing process were sent drafts of discussion and analysis of data from their interviews. In this way, it was made sure that the experts were in full control of their data and anonymity. This could potentially provide some bias where the expert could influence the analysis. However, considerations were only taken to the experts feedback on anonymity in the text, not on the discussions of the findings. Thus, this possible bias was limited as much as possible. Quantitative notions of replicability do not apply to qualitative research, especially when it is based on anonymous interviews, due to ensuring anonymity of research participants, and as no two qualitative researchers would identify exactly the same themes and arrive at exactly the same conclusions. Instead, in qualitative research it is all the more important to be as transparent about the analysis process as possible. This is why the interview guide is included in the appendix, and it is provided as much detail as possible on how the data is analysed.

Validity and reliability

In relation to scientific challenges to expert interviews, concerns such as measurement validity, positionality, subjectivity and reliability are central. Validity refers to whether “you are observing, identifying, or “measuring” what you say you are” (Bryman, 2016, p. 383). Measurement validity is especially central in this aspect. As discussed above, getting access to the “right” people is the main issue, which relates to measurement validity. Social scientist have discussed widely who may be characterised an “Expert” (Bogner et al., 2018). Some experts may be more of an outlier and some expert may be an “counter-expert” challenging the original experts expertise (Bogner et al., 2018). Yet, all of the interviewees are clearly experts given that they work in the MFA or high in the UN system. Thus, all experts provide valid and important insights and perspectives to this research. Due to the anonymity of the experts, no detail will be provided other than the fact that they work in the MFA, except the outlier who works with NWM and have experience from the UN. This information should provide the readers with just enough information to judge the validity of the research.

Due to the small sample, this research cannot generalise what experts are saying about issues as facts about the institutions as a whole. However, it is possible through the different interviews to investigate if there are any patterns to what interviewees are discussing. Thus, focus will be placed on what the majority of people are discussing. Yet, for some interviews the discussion went beyond the interview guide, highlighting components that I myself had not thought of. Thus, for the interviews that moved beyond the interview guide, I have included the insights most relevant to the study. Asking the right questions were another concern, will the questions asked answer the research question. In order to address this issue I allowed a great deal of flexibility in my interview guide, letting the informant talk and highlight what he/she viewed as important and asked different follow up questions to turn it back to the implementation of women mediators.

External validity, refers to the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). Due to the sample size, its focus on informal structures within the formal institution of Norway's Section for Peace and Reconciliation, this thesis cannot be generalised to any extent. However, the finding from this research can stand as an suggestion for one attempt in understanding the process of implementing women as mediators at the institutional level. More research would be needed in order to generalise any finding of the progress in implementing more women as mediators. Providing more research on the informal structures within an institution could potentially give an attempted answer to the slow progress of women mediators.

Positionality is an issue in this thesis, both in terms of validity and reliability. The researcher is a young, western, educated, female who self-identify as a feminist. Although a researcher are supposed to conduct research as objective as possible, it is difficult to remove ones subjective footprint completely. Thus, my positionality may create certain biases. Yet, I have tried to be aware of them and limit them where possible. In terms of reliability, researchers may differ in what they find important or what kind of topics they find relevant from the data. Consequently, the research and findings are not completely replicable (Bryman, 2016). A different researcher may have different findings based on theoretical framework and what they value as important in the data collection. Although, being aware of this, it has been attempted to be as transparent as possible to where data is drawn. Letting the reader follow the way of argumentation as close as possible. However, staying completely transparent is

challenging in qualitative research, as interpretation will be influenced by the subjective learnings from the researcher (Bryman, 2016).

Additionality, as a young female, conducting her first research, interviewing older men and women with experience affects the power dynamics between interviewer and interviewee. In contrast with “normal” interviews where the interviewer is in control, and the focus is to make the interviewee comfortable enough to talk - expert interviews are the opposite. In this case, the expert are well aware of his/her expertise and are used to being “in charge” (Bogner et al., 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Expert interviews can be describes as “studying up” and are at risk of the interviewee taking over the structuring of the course (Bogner et al., 2018). This has arguably often a gender-specific bias if a young female researcher is interviewing an older male expert (Bogner et al., 2018). In order to overcome this potential bias, it has been argued that the interviewer could either indicate her knowledge in the field, indicating that she/he know the field too. The main issue with this, is that the conversation could be headed towards a topic that is already well known and not new.

On the other hand, taking the role of a Naïve researcher could make the expert more comfortable, perceiving the researcher as more trustworthy and as a result will talk more. The disadvantage is that the expert will bore the researcher with topics that is already known (Bogner et al., 2018). There is no given answer to what is the best option. As indicated by Bryman (2016) the emphasis must be on how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events – that is, what the interviewee views as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns, and forms of behaviour. It was therefore believed that the way in which the experts framed and understood the questions, is what they viewed as important elements and would be valuable data gatherings and insights in itself. Thus, let the researcher stay in control and listen to everything they had to say. Based on the feedback and their willingness to participate, it was indicated that this was a topic they themselves were interested in. They did, for the most part, steer the discussion in a flow with the interview guide. Furthermore, because it was experts both within and outside the MFA, listening to what people within the MFA highlights, but also what they did not discuss, was especially beneficial.

Interviews using Teams/Zoom

Conducting interviews in-person is usually presented as the gold standard, with other models being seen as inferior (Johnson et al., 2019). Yet, using in-person interviews is not possible in this study due to the current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic (2020). Interviews using Teams was conducted instead. However, this is not necessarily negative for the study. There are several advantages using Teams. The interview becomes more flexible than in-person as last-minute adjustment to the scheduling is possible. There are obvious time and costs savings as the need to travel for the interview is removed. Additionally, the convenience of using Teams may encourage some people to participate who otherwise might have declined (Bryman, 2016). On the other hand, there are several disadvantages too. There are potential technological problems, such as bad internet connection or bad voice connection. When seeing each other face-to-face, the interview might be affected by the interviewers gender, age or ethnicity. It becomes more challenging for the interviewer to “control” the interview setting, the interviewee might sit in a noisy area, home with kids or other environmental situations that might affect the interviewee’s attention (Bryman, 2016).

Despite the advantages and disadvantages, Johnson et al. (2019) found in their comprehensive research that in-person interviews are more conversational and more detailed than remote interviews. However, telephone and skype methods do not clearly lead to differences in interview ratings, substantive data codes generated or used from analysis. Additionally, some researchers have argued that the use of web camera makes the interaction comparable to the in-person interaction (Janghorban et al., 2014 in Johnson et al., 2019). Additionally, where some have pointed at the technological difficulties that sometimes occur during skype interviews, others have pointed at how technology have improved over the years and how other disadvantages such as travel cost, geographical advantage, time limitations may overcome the disadvantages, making skype not only acceptable, but sometimes a better option (Lacono et al., 2016 in Johnson et al., 2019). Furthermore, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, experts have been advised to use home office, and most likely have been using Teams for a while. Thus, they may be more used to the setting and finds Teams more comfortable than before. Consequently, using Teams instead of in-person interviews might create less bias than what research have shown before. Nevertheless, one cannot completely remove the bias that may occur with technology, being it bad internet

connection, background noise or the informants lack of attention. However, although in-person interviews have been seen as the golden standard, using skype interviews does not come at the cost of the richness of the data collected. Personal experiences from conducting the interviews were overall good. There were at times technical difficulties, but the most difficult factor were controlling the environment of the expert and keeping their full attention throughout the whole interview. However, in general all the discussions were successful.

Data Collection and Analysis

Since expert interviews is the main form of data collection, the focus is on the experts capacity to provide the researcher with facts concerning the research question (Bogner et al., 2018). This form of data collection is “grounding interviews” (Bogner et al., 2018). By using systematising interview to analyse the data, the focus is to gain access to exclusive knowledge – both technical and process knowledge- possessed by the expert (Bogner et al., 2018). Additionally, the open interview provides room for the interviewee to unfold his/her own outlooks and reflections (Meuser & Nagel, 2009).

The interview guide consisted of six open ended questions, with possibilities for follow-up questions and four discussion questions. The first question was related to work experience and motivation for the work, and was only meant to open up the interview in an attempt to get the experts to talk. The following four questions where much more related to women in peace processes and mediation. The last question was whether the experts had anything they wanted to discuss. If there was more time in the end it was attempted to make the experts to reflect around the discussion points. This was an attempt to go beyond the formal interview in order to avoid the bias towards job practices and guidelines, and rather reflect on the research questions - how do they describe the job that they do versus how do they reflect on different structural barriers to women in mediation. This was also an attempt, as discussed above, to see more of the potential gender components to mediation. The interviews lasted around 50 minutes. Since all participants are Norwegians the interviews were conducted in Norwegian and later translated to English, this may provide some weaknesses where some information are lost in translation. However, it was concluded that writing this thesis in English would be more rewarding as most of the literature is in English. Additionally, since this research attempts on filling a research gap in the literature, writing in English will open up for a wider audience. Because of the in-depth discussions, I had one interview a week

where I transcribed the interviews the following day. In this way I was able to reflect on the individual interviews before conducting another. Some were conducted before and some after the summer holiday. As another measure to keep my informants anonymous and the information confidential, all of my informants were given a code. I separated the notes from the interviews on its own notebook and made recordings on a separate device - which was protected with a passcode. After the interviews, the recordings were transferred to a computer, also protected with a passcode. Thus, the researcher was the only one who had access to the data, and the transcripts, recordings and notes had different codes aiming to make it even more difficult to connect which expert belong to which data, and who the expert was. The recordings was deleted on the date of submission of the research.

The way in which the data have been analysed have been through reviewing what the informants highlighted in the discussions. No particular software was used in the analysis. Instead coding was done in six steps (Transcribing, paraphrase, coding, thematic comparison, sociological conceptualisation, theoretical generalisation) as suggested by Meuser and Nagel (2009, p. 36). Particular attention was provided to the introduction, where experts discussed their work and experience in the field, and the last part “do you have anything you want to add, something you view as important in my research?”. This was the most insightful questions, as I was able to, not only find what they believe is the most important aspect while implementing more women mediators. Furthermore, I was able to gather information I had not thought of myself. I placed a great deal of focus on this data, putting them all together to see whether or not there were something the experts had in common, or if there were something experts within the MFA had in common, that the external people did not, vice versa.

Every interview was different, and great emphasis was made on their individuality based on the experts profession. For some it was possible to follow the interview guide completely, while for others, only a couple of question were asked before the conversation headed in another direction which was further followed up. This is the great benefit while conduction semi-structured interviews, as you are given the possibility to change the “path”. Changing the route of the interview guide gives more richer and comprehensive data. As the interviews were different, it provided the opportunity to view the data from a critical perspective. I could stay critical to what the people directly working with the implementation of the WPS agenda

viewed as important, in contrast to people working solely peace processes. Furthermore identify what my experts said, as well as what they did not mention or discuss.

Analysis and Discussion

This chapter is analysing the data collected within the theoretical framework of FI. It does so in four parts. Firstly, it is discussing the experts' reflections regarding the global number of women mediators and the difference with Norway. Secondly, the discussion shifts to Norway and the formal institutional change. With a focus on NAPs and the experts' views at the measures taken for the success of Norway, compared to the rest of the world, and the challenges that persist. This part is particularly important to answer one of the questions of the thesis, what measures taken to overcome structural barriers. Thirdly, the discussion goes in depth with the interviews and discusses the informal institutional attitudes that persist in the Section of Peace and Reconciliation in the Norwegian MFA and within mediation. This segment focuses much more on the informal institutional structure. This section is crucial in order to answer the research questions of the thesis, what challenges are there to women in mediation, whether there are any gendered components to mediation that hampers women's inclusion. With the focus on informal institution structure, it is possible to find tentative explanations for the slow progress. The chapter ends with a summary of the most significant findings.

As an introductory question the experts reflected on the reason behind a slow progress in implementing women as actors in peace building and peace processes globally. All experts expressed that there has been progress since year 2000, and in the global context of the lack of women mediators, many highlighted how there is pressure and expectations from the international community today, to include women in top positions in peace building and peace processes. One expert stated

If you want to feel down, you look at the progress made the last week, but if you want to feel empowered you look at the progress made the last 20 years. We are fooling ourselves if we think this is anything other than the long game.

Yet, for women in mediation and special envoys, numbers indicate (CFR, 2021), that there has been an exceptional slow progress. One expert suggested that structural factors, such as culture, judiciary, religion, and access to education, prevents women from taking the lead. Arguably, all factors listed by the expert is gendered and indicates that men and women are affected differently. This suggests a special and different burden on women, globally,

meeting gendered barriers, such as lack of access to education or cultural expectations. Thus, in the global context, women face structural barriers before they even begin the road to mediation, making their road to mediation much longer than those of men.

Another expert highlighted how the lack of women in leading positions could potentially have something to do with old perceptions, as of how things are and always has been, as this field have typically been male dominated. Other experts pointed out the contextual feature of the question, underlining how different countries, such as Switzerland or Finland, have different answers compared to Norway. More practically, emphasising how the UN selects people at the end of their career with impressive work portfolios stressing that women have not until recently held the same kind of prestigious background as men. This could explain why there has been few women mediators in the past. Yet, it does not explain why the numbers are relatively small today. As one expert argued:

I agree, it is strange, that you can have an agenda with so much normative agreement, and yet see so little progress. You can find NAPs and statements from East and West, North and South, there is no disagreement, yet there is so much that remains.

Arguably, intended change have not happened, because there are informal structures within preventing change to take place. Just as the experts reflected above, structural features, perceptions, and contextual features are all indicators that there is something within the formal institution that hampers change. Old perceptions indicates that there is a cultural structure in mediation that have a gendered component, where men, because of gender stereotypes and expectations, are seen as more fitting than women to be a mediator. This argument correlates with the discussion earlier in the thesis where women have been judged on gender expectations. The contextual feature indicates that what one country might face as a challenge is not for another, indicating that there might be different work cultures, which may contribute to the explanation to why Norway is an outlier. As one of the experts discussed above, the culture seen in countries might be structural hinders to women, as different opportunities are given to men and women. However, since Norway can be perceived as more women friendly than other countries (Skjelsbæk et al., 2021; Teigen & Wängenrud, 2009), it might be easier for Norwegian women to pursue the work of mediation than in other parts of the world, where the culture is a hinder for women pursuing higher education (GIWPS & PRIO, 2021). It would be valuable to conduct an additional

comparative research that could do a comparative study with FI, in order to investigate the importance of informal institutional structure further.

The analysis above includes the global numbers of the slow progress of implementing women as mediators. If the experts were to solely consider Norway for the reflection, none of the experts believed it exists a direct issue. However, not one mentioned Norway as perfect in this matter, highlighting how there still is room for improvement. Conversely, there seems to be a rhetoric in the Section creating a “us versus them”. This happened multiple times during several interviews where experts compared Norwegian numbers to other countries, indicating that Norway is better. This is especially central where one of the experts argued that Norway has it easier, as it is not like the *African conflicts*.

It is not like African conflicts where there are many more variables in place, such as the ethnicity, religion, culture, language and gender components in the decisions of selecting a special envoy... It is much easier in Norway, all agrees that in Norwegian delegations, it should be equal, 50-50 men and women.

This quote contains two central elements. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the insight from the expert. To conflicts in the African continent there are many more variables that needs to fit with the mediator selected, in contrast to Norway who is much smaller. Thus, it is probably much easier for Norway to decide on a mediator in contrast to conflicts in Africa, which helps explain why Norway is an outlier. Additionally, it is important to bear in mind the context of where the experts work and the context of the conversation in its whole, which disappears when only a quote is taken from a bigger dialogue. However, by using rhetoric creating an “us versus them” with *African conflicts* versus *all agrees in Norway* creates an image of Norwegian exceptionalism, a way of thinking and arguing that promoting peace and gender equality is an essential ingredient of a Norwegian national identity and core societal values (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). Conversely, as identified by Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad (2021), the expression of gender-equality norms and aims has until recently not been as explicit within the field of peace and reconciliation engagements. Thus, although an important insight from the expert, the rhetoric used might create an idea with Norway not totally completable with results from the past.

The notion of Norwegian exceptionalism was also present when experts reflected on why Norway are an outlier compared to global results on countries having mediators. Some reflected on the Norwegian culture and tradition as an explanation for why Norway is an outlier. One mentioned how it has always been a tradition in Norway to work for equality. Additionally, some experts pointed out the importance of a strong civil society. It was emphasized that the Norwegian government did not simply wake up one morning in the 1970s and suddenly decided that they wanted to fight for equality. There was a push, from a strong civil society. Highlighting that there is a need for a strong civil society that holds the agenda, asks questions, and keeps the government responsible. No details were provided for what this push consisted of. It was argued that when the lack of gender balance was discovered in some places of the MFA, such as at ambassador level, or envoys to peace processes, the leaders went in and changed it. Additionally, for the Section of Peace and Reconciliation, with an agenda internationally to promote women, it is very important to keep your own delegations clean. As a result, some suggested that when you have had a focus on gender for some time, it becomes easier as it is normalised. “If there are no women and only men, people realise that something is not right”.

Based on this, there seems to be an underlying attitude that all experts share; women should be a part of mediation. Also, they seem to be working based on the expectations from the civil society. However, there might be some fallacies in this kind of argumentation. It raises the question to, if the Norwegian culture has always been there, why did it take Norway 14 years before they had its first female special envoy. Neither does it answer why, as highlighted in the theory section, there was a lack of correlation between statements and practice. Yet, a change in the section have happened in recent years (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). Thus, solely highlighting Norwegian culture might be a vague argument as there are many other important factors that could explain the high number of Norwegian mediators in recent years. As seen in the literature review, it is not enough to have a civil society who pushes for women’s inclusion. There is a need to have people on the inside who also pushes the WPS agenda.

Nonetheless, there seems to be an overall attitude amongst the experts that women should be included as mediators. Thus, no informal attitude hampers women’s inclusion on the *first* appearance in the Section. This finding may complement the findings from Neumann (2008) discussed earlier in this thesis. He argued that the gendered institution of the MFA could

change with time, and this seems to have been the case where people are much more in favour to include women, as it has become normalised over time.

Formal Institutional change

Norway, the Success

In the discussion of why Norway is a success compared to the rest of the world, there were many different arguments and reflections. Yet, there were a few themes that were mentioned by more than one expert. These are highlighted below. Since most of the argumentations in these sections are steps that have been taken in order to overcome structural barriers, this is understood as a measure done in order to change the formal institutional structure for the Section of Peace and Reconciliation.

Recruitment and experience

When asked about the measures that had been taken in order to promote women as special envoys, the experts emphasised the importance of recruitment and positive discrimination. One expert argued that Norway's advantage compared to the UN is the mediators selected. The UN chooses from the older generation, whereas Norway uses younger diplomats amid their careers. Choosing from a younger generation provides a bigger pool of women to choose from, because the focus is less narrow on a long and prestigious career, rather experience and personality that fits. The expert did not follow up on why Norway chooses from a younger generation. However, another expert emphasised how Norway actively uses age and gender strategically, because it sends powerful signals. It was exemplified with how it could be a man bringing up the gender question, whereas the women talk more about the technical parts. Moreover, how the interplay between a male senior adviser and younger female colleagues could bring about a powerful signal when the senior adviser refers to the younger female colleague. The expert did not provide what kind of signal this is. However, it is possible to imagine that this signal indicates that women too are competent or that gender is a man's issue to. In this way, Norway is breaking the stereotype where women are expected to discuss gender issues, as they change them with men. Additionally, having male senior advisers referring to younger female diplomats may challenge the hypermasculine expectation toward senior advisers, when he leans on and values the female colleague's expertise. Possibly, this signal and strategy challenges the masculine environment in peace talks and breaks some of the informal cultural structure within mediation. Additional research

is needed in order to draw any strong argument. It could prove valuable to conduct research on Norwegian diplomacy and norm diffusion.

Several experts mentioned the use of positive discrimination. This has resulted in more of a gender balance in the leading positions. One expert gave an example with the case of two equally good candidates, where the management chose the woman. Another expert also highlighted the guidelines laid down in the recruitment process, not directly saying positive discrimination. Yet, indirectly highlighting the importance for the guidelines and the inclusion of women in higher positions. Thus, there seems to be a positive attitude for the use of positive discrimination, amongst equally qualified candidates, as an important measure to increase the number of women in Norway. The reflection was not discussed in greater detail. It is important to not mix the debate surrounding quotas, which is a contested discussion. The use of quotas was not part of the questions in the interview guide. However, one expert reflected around its potential use in the UN, highlighting the complexity on the matter. Using quotas in Norway was not mentioned by the expert. However, with the use of positive discrimination and having less men with similar preferences and a bigger diversity of people working in the system may change the work culture, because you get much more variety in preferences with the employers.

It was mentioned by several experts that an important feature to become a special envoy is experience. In this way, when you are asked to take a leading role, you are qualified. As one expert emphasised, experience is not something you can simply study. You need to have been out and about on the ground in conflict areas in order to have legitimacy as a mediator. One expert emphasized that this work must start early, and that diplomats have the fieldwork and experience needed to be a mediator and a special envoy.

There is not that much you can do from your office in Oslo. You need to be out in the field, meet people, be present, and the conflicting parties must understand that you want to contribute.

Consequently, when women are given the experience, the argumentation for women not qualifying for the job is no longer valid. However, it was mentioned that the woman who overtook from Dag Nylander in the Colombia peace process did not have any direct mediation experience, although she had a personality that they saw fitting, emphasising that “you need to have the courage and trust too”. This indicates leaders who are determined and

clear in what they want to achieve. Moreover, there is need for leaders that see the value in having women as special envoys and mediators. Arguably, it is essential to have leaders who dares to break the chain where it is only men with experience who gets the job.

On the other hand, one expert mentioned briefly that Norway values experience and characteristics whereas other countries use politicians and political image while selecting mediators. The expert did not provide any details for which specific other countries were nor why they chose mediators based on prestigious work portfolios. However, as discussed in the literature review with the findings from Stanfield (2020), mediation was for a long time considered an art, whereas it in the last years has become professionalised. Thus, as an old perception of how the mediation field has typically always been, it is imaginable that “other countries” selects mediators based on mediation as an art, whereas Norway choses mediator’s “science” or as something professionalised. Thus, it is not given that a mediator or a special envoy needs to have experience in order to be selected. Hence, there seems to be a different understanding of experience between Norway and “other countries”. In the Norwegian case there seems to be a focus on direct experience from the field, language skills or direct experience from peace processes. Whereas other states values experience in the sense of having a prestigious work portfolio as experience. If this is the case, then women have been trapped. In the Norwegian case, women might suffer because they do not have the direct experience from peace processes, because women have not been given the opportunity in the past. On the other hand, there are less women with prestigious work portfolios, as research has indicated, women have not held power positions in the society up until recently. This argument is plausible since Norway changed their mediation tactics in the early 2000 to a professionalised profession when they established the Section of Peace and Reconciliation (Nissan, 2015; Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). This argument might explain why it took Norway 14 years before they had their first female special envoy. Someone had to break the chain.

This argument is outdated, as Norway now seems to focus on providing women with experience, especially with the evidence of the woman taking over after Dag Nylander. Additionally, an increasing number of women do have quite impressive work portfolios. Nevertheless, the argument above can explain the slow progress of Norway recruiting their first female special envoy. This could also explain why women needs to be given experience,

and how someone on the top must break the historical chain, where men with experience are the only ones provided with opportunities.

A systematic change

Others reflected more on the practical measures that Norway had taken in order to change the system. One mentioned how the Norwegian NAPs and guidelines are much more pragmatic than “other countries”, because they have been able to make NAPs and guidelines based on experience. Consequently, target goals are based on lesson learned from peace processes.

Others pointed to the awareness in the system. Every year, all employers must report on how they have worked to implement NAPs and provide their results. It was argued that it creates awareness as you get a yearly stop where employers must reflect and show how they work to include gender in their work. One argued that this report system could be one of the most sophisticated in the world, because the report system was made solely for the purpose of improving. Another one highlighted how, when the new NAP (2019-2021) was made, they discussed with employers in the Section of Peace and Reconciliation what the actual achievements should be. After making these demands, all employers must report on their achievements, every year. This, the expert meant, leads to motivation for action.

You can have a general agreement that you have to remember the gender component, but if you do not have a concrete bullet that you have to tick, or no one to ask you if you have included gender in your work, then it is easy for the gender component to get lost in everything else that seems important.

It was argued by various experts that working in a peace process, all elements and components are important. Consequently, when you are a single person who work with many different components, it is easy to prioritise based on preferences. Consequently, having people who keep checking if you include the gender factor in your work, is crucial. This indicates that the Norwegian NAPs have been a crucial element in getting women to mediation and as special envoys, as it helps create awareness in the system that gender is important. However, having such a complex guideline in order to keep women in the system suggest that having women working as mediator and special envoys is not self-driven. If it is not checked upon it might get lost in the workload. Therefore, an argument can made that a formal systematic change is needed, while informal institutional structure hinders a self-driven change, since other seemingly more important components, trumps gender.

Additionally, it contradicts the expert’s argument which highlighted the Norwegian culture as

a reason for gender equality in the Section. If the Norwegian culture and the expectation from the society is what making the Section gender equal, then this work should be more self-driven. Although it plausible that the complex system is made due to the pressure form the civil society. Thus, the relationship between civil society might be worth researching more closely.

To summarise the discussion to what the expert thought to be the reason behind the Norwegian success, it was argued that you need to focus on recruitment. Early experience is seen as important, and seeing that aspiring mediators are out in the field building networks and gaining the relevant experience to be a legitimate mediator. Furthermore, having the report system, with a system that keeps it in check. Making sure the gender component is not lost in the workload. Yet, the most crucial factor seems to be a strong leadership who sees the value in having both genders working as mediators. Leaders who aim to give women experience and motivates women on taking leading roles. Thus, based on the discussion, the NAPs are important to create awareness in a system, yet there is something that hinders a self-driven change. The next section investigates the challenges that persist in the Section.

Norway, the Challenges

Flipping the question, by asking about the main challenges Norway meets today, the experts were divided. One expert stated that no problems can be found with the Norwegian structure, and that if Norway did not reach its target, then it was simply because the people in the Section had not done their job. Implying that if one investigates the total amount of special envoys to the most recent conflict the last couple of years, the number found is not necessarily something negative. One year it was two women, and now there are two men. This is equally good and bad; it simply looks much worse on the statistics. Another expressed that the problem was usually in the host country, and that there is a need for them to get better, because Norway can improve and that is good, but if the countries further down the line improves a little than this might lift the whole agenda much further. Some aspects were mentioned by several experts, that is the small community in Norway and the definition of a mediator, these are discussed below.

Small Community

You need to keep an eye on recruitment, but because of the rotations and the shifts in jobs, and because you want to find competent people – and there is an ambition here – but again, there will be some coincidences that strikes out in a small community.

When asked about the current results from the implementation report of 2019, numbers indicated that Norway did not meet its set target of having a minimum of 40% women in the mediation teams. Many experts blamed the small community within Norway. One expert emphasized that the first female special envoy was appointed in 2014, and after that three more women have followed. In the case of Colombia, the special envoy was for a long time Dag Nylander, and when he quit - a woman replaced him. The Section of Peace and Reconciliation appoints special envoys from their own section. Thus, those who applies for the job, who has the direct or relevant experience, and who gets the job, will all be variables. Additionally, because there are people who quit and new people who start, this is directly affecting the gender balance. According to the experts, there are more women than men working in the Section of Peace and Reconciliation today, however few years back, it was mostly men. When asked whether this was a trend, the expert believed it to be more of a coincidence. Arguably, due to systematically working to increase the pool of women to choose from in the past, those who applies for the job is now more of a coincidence. Thus, although the recruitment can be seen as one of the reasons Norway have been successful, recruitment is also a challenge, as there is an issue of supply.

Definition of a mediator

To me, a mediator is more than a special envoy. Special envoy is a formality of a mediator, to give political weight. But the essence in mediation is being present, building relations with the central actors to conflict. A lot of the work of a mediator begins long before you reach the table. There is a lot of work in building relations and trust.

Several experts emphasized the importance of the way in which you define a peace process as another explanation for why Norway did not meet its set target. As one expert argued; the special envoys you include when discussing peace processes, and what types of peace processes you include, is crucial to how the statistic will look. In Norway, there are two active peace processes – in Colombia and the Philippines. However, Venezuela has been back and forth, and is now placed on hold. Additionally, there are South Sudan, where Norway is in the Troika with the US and UK. There is Sahel, which are active processes, but

not formal. Thus, the special representatives you include when discussing peace mediators as leaders is fundamental for how the statistics will look. This again may directly affect the statistics which is dependent on the process. The gender of the mediator will be coincidental in this process, because it is dependent on the formality of the peace process.

Moreover, many experts pointed to the direct definition of the mediator. There is a mediator and mediation, and there is the special envoy. This finding correlates with one of the discussions from the literature review. The definition of mediation, mediator and special envoy have consequences in which one may understand the low number of women mediators and special envoys. However, this is dependent on the peace processes, which is dynamic and within a consistent change. It is therefore important, as Paffenholz (2016) argued, to look at the influence that women have, not simply counting heads. Yet, if one were to do so, it could easily become a reason to justify the low number of special envoys, as one could simply point to mediation instead. Thus, it could be possible that women are in mediation, but not selected as special envoys because of a gendered dimension in the informal institutional structure. The next section will therefore look closer at informal institutions in the Section to Peace and Reconciliation.

Informal Institutional attitudes

The analysis above illustrated what the experts themselves viewed as important structural barriers, or changes, Norway have made in order to implement more women as mediators and special envoys. This section aims to look at the experts' reflections on the issue. This was an attempt to get the experts to move beyond their potential institutional agenda, and an attempt to find some informal characteristics within the Section. There were six themes that stood out in the data, the experts' reflection of National action plans, characteristics of the mediator, family, experience, narrative and the importance of a critical actor. These are highlighted below.

Women, Peace and Security and National Action Plans

NAPs are not an achievement in itself; this is where the work actually begins. A NAP is a means to a potential end, or it can be used to light fire in the fireplace. Nothing is free after this; this is where the work begins.

Reflections on how the experts valued NAPs was important to the theoretical considerations. There were mixed feelings. One emphasised that NAPs have been very important, both to determine the normative development that has been, but also to bring the normative development forward. NAPs build on agreements from the UN, but Norway can also bring some of the progress themselves. Another expert was more critical to NAPs. This expert was more critical to the bullets that you must tick. Arguing that it should not only be that the bullet has been achieved, highlighting the importance of knowing the effectiveness of the measures. “You need to be careful because there are usually big words, and then nothing happens”. However, most of the experts were positive to NAPs, especially on the effects of them. One reflection stood out in the discussion of NAPs.

It was argued that in conflicts where the structure is made, the procedure developed, and the systems have been going on for a very long time. Then including women and appointing them as special envoys might come across as an *add on*. Whereas in newer conflicts where structures are being made today, then the whole WPS agenda is more an integrated part of the process and is deeply rooted in the work. Though, in conflicts that have been going on for a long time, prioritizing gender is something that need to find its place in an already made structure. Exemplifying that there is a difference in how Norway worked in the Palestinian and Israeli conflict in the 1990s which was a conflict Norway worked on before the WPS agenda, contra how Norway is working in Venezuela now.

This reflection shows the long shadow of institutional structures. There is a culture within mediation and peace processes that are so deeply rooted in work ethic which illustrates both importance of the WPS but also the importance of people believing in WPS. The example above it is a good illustration of the importance of both formal and informal structures and their interplay. This discussion indicates that changing formal institutions do bring about change. Yet, you are depended on individual people who takes NAPs into practice. Thus, informal institutions are crucial for change. This finding complements the argument from Skjelsbæk and Tryggstad (2021) who argued that for a long time there was gap between the rhetorical commitment and practice. Yet, in recent years there has been a change. This change might be explained with the framework of FI and the gendered informal institutions. It is more difficult to implement WPS in old conflicts due to the power of informal institutions, whereas in newer conflicts, the informal institutions are not yet in place and therefore implementing WPS is much easier. Thus, this might help explain why Skjelsbæk

and Tryggestad (2021) found that there was a gap between rhetoric and practice, and how in recent years this has changed, as the informal institutions are not yet in place.

This discussion also correlates with another discussion earlier in the thesis. It is not enough to simply swap women with men, because women will still be operating in a system that is made for and by men in the past. This argument can be illustrated with another expert's experience where the expert always had to justify the actions or changes made to the leader. However, when the expert got a female leader, this justification was no longer needed. With the female leader the expert had complete trust to make the changes wanted. This indicates that you can have a normative agreement, however, may still meet resistance due to the informal institutional set up. Yet, as indicated by the other expert, change has happened due to WPS, but it is more difficult to implement in places with a strong informal institutional set up. Which may illustrate the power of informal institutions.

Characteristics of a mediator

One of the questions in the interview guide was on the characteristics needed for a successful mediator. There were several different characteristics mentioned, where some emphasised interpersonal skills, other listening, patience, being able to build trust, social intelligence and cultural understanding. One argued that there is no one answer to this, as you need diversity. Arguing that just like the conflicts are complex and diverse, there is a need for a diversity of strengths in different mediators.

When asked whether some of the characteristics just mentioned could in any way be gendered, or if the gender of the mediator mattered, the experts were divided. A few claimed listening skills, empathy and social intelligence might be easier for women, but in terms of traveling to high-risk areas, jumping on the next plane and leave might be more difficult for women, especially for a woman with a family. Another reflected more on the culture in the host state. Emphasising that in societies where people are used to men holding power, people are more sceptical to women, with an attitude of "she has to prove that she can do it". Both these reflections suggest an essentialized understanding of gender and gender roles. Both reflections build on the gendered stereotypes mentioned in peace processes. Yet, most off the experts stressed that it is the personality of a mediator that is important. It is not a person, but

characteristics that fits. However, in later discussions the gender of the mediator seemed to be a crucial component affecting men and women differently.

During conversations a few experts mentioned the direct work of a mediator as one potential cause for why there are fewer women in the field. As discussed above, in order to be an effective mediator, you need experience, and you must travel. As one expert stated, if you are going to build a trusting relationship you need to travel a lot. If you at the same time are traveling through different time zones you have the additional physical burden.

Consequently, a lot of time will go to logistics, in the end you use mornings, evenings and weekends. It can easily become a lifestyle. If you are not careful, you not only risk being burned out, but you will have the additional burden on your family. Thus, there is a balance with not trapping down too much in risk of losing legitimacy, but at the same time taking care of yourself and the family. A few argued that the mediation field is a bit old fashioned, and that it would be better if there were bigger teams, to lessen the workload of the mediator and the special envoy. To Norway and the small Section, this is a central consideration. It was argued that these kinds of administrative tasks could have been done to make it easier for women to take on the role as a special envoy, as the job becomes more completable with a healthy family life on the side. Hence, a few experts argued that because of the workload it might be more difficult for a woman with a family to be a mediator. These reflections are essentialisations of women's expected gender roles.

In the traveling and experience component there are undertones of gendered informal institution. One expert argued that some work experiences might be more difficult for a woman to achieve, because if you have children, you cannot go to a post where it is not safe for children, or there are no schools. This component can create imbalance in work experience between men and women. Arguing that the same is true for men, although as for women it might be an extra dilemma. The argument was backed with another expert who also viewed the family component as a factor making it difficult for a woman to be a special envoy to a formal peace process. However, there is not enough empirical data to draw an argument on this aspect. It would therefore be interesting to conduct a more comprehensive study on the people who are mediators and special envoys. Nevertheless, the underlying assumption that combining family life is more difficult for women, than men, still suggests distinct gender roles that are not keeping with gender equality.

These arguments are quite traditional gender conceptions who judges women based on gender stereotypes and expectations. Both genders would be affected by the family situation and both male and female experts argued for the effect on family life. However, the argument that it would be more difficult for a woman to live in places with no schools nearby, rather than it being an issue for both genders, illustrates a greater acceptance to men leaving their family for work rather the other way around. This argument needs to be regarded through a critical lens and how representative the reflection is. However, by the first look at it, the discussion illustrates how not many views gender as an issue as to be an effective mediator or special envoy. Yet, while observing the discussion in more detail, there are gender components present after all.

Family

The family as a factor was mentioned in several conversations, both directly or indirectly, and was followed up with questions. Collecting sensitive data was originally not intended. Thus, it was only a general discussion on family life, and the sensitive data was limited as much as possible. More comprehensive research is needed to draw any strong argument. Regardless, a general discussion on the motherhood and how this could affect women in mediation, was noteworthy. For all the experts that mentioned family, they were all divided in their views.

One expert claimed that before, when it was all about gaining experience, it was easier for women to follow husbands and their job rather than the other way around. Thus, for women wanting experience, often had to choose between job or family. This example is outdated now, as the society is much more equal, but it was important back in the days. However, the expert reflected on how today, women have become a lot more independent, and some might not want children, as they do not want to put their careers on hold. Yet now, if women are at maternity leave, they are not held back when they return to the job. Regardless, the expert meant that the mother factor might be an underlying issue making the implementation of NAPs extra challenging in practice.

Another expert argued that the family element was crucial, with many dimensions. Especially in other countries, with different expectations for women to take care of the family. Yet, when asked whether there could be an underlying motherly instinct, this was rejected. It was

more of a practical matter. Men can get children when they are much older, whereas women have a time frame and must be on maternity leave. Men are not as directly affected by this as women. In Norway, who appoints younger diplomats as mediators and special envoys, having children may happen at the same time the woman should be out getting important experience, or at a time when they could be a special envoy. Thus, women having young children at the same time as being out in the field can be difficult to balance.

On the other hand, another expert, who was very careful in the wording, did not think it was too much of a cliché to argue that women, on world basis, might feel a bit more responsible toward the family. This might affect women in mediation who might say no to be a special envoy, because of the workload and how this might affect the family. This is the same for men, however, Norway is more equal than the rest of the world. Another expert had a similar argument, although, used it in the Norwegian context. Being a mediator in Norway, with the heavy and intense work, it is easy for a person to feel like 'head is under water'. This might lead some to quit in order to balance personal and family life. Consequently, if Norway wants to be an effective mediator, there is a need for more recourses. This could make the field more reachable for a person with a family. It was stressed that it should not be only those without a family that can be an effective mediator.

Although these are interesting arguments, it is problematic to draw conclusions based on assumptions. Yet, all argumentations above correlates with a study from 2005. Although Potter (2005) found that the family aspect did not present an unbeatable obstacle, she argued that attention should be paid to train women currently in their thirties and forties to choose and assume leading roles at the appropriate time in their careers (Potter, 2005, p 9). However, Potter focused on mediation in the UN, who as discussed above, chooses people of the older generation, between 55-75 years (Potter, 2005). Thus, this argument does not fit the Norwegian model as Norway chooses mediators in the earlier stages of their careers. This is at the time when Potter argued that women should gain experience. There might be some truth in the arguments above, that women tend to get pregnant or are in maternity leave at a crucial time in their careers.

Additionally, for the small empirical data Potter had available in 2005, she found that most had not included children or marriage in their life. Just as Margaret Anstee and May Blood, who were both clear that they could not have achieved what they have, had they included

those aspects in their lives (Potter, 2005). Potter also found that Betty Bigombe, mediating with the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, found it difficult to leave her college-aged daughter in the US while she pursued her task. Yet, this did not stop her from doing the job (Potter, 2005, p. 9). This indicates the problem of generalising women's decision in having children or not or how women and men balance family life. However, Potter's findings all correlate with what some of the experts mentioned above. There is a need for a more comprehensive empirical study in order to make an argument. However, the discussion captures the Sections reflections on gender stereotypes. Most reflected how the mother aspect may create some challenges to women in comparison to men. Yet, women are not one unity and there are several reasons for why a woman want children or not, moreover, how they handle the situation. Additionally, as several experts highlighted earlier, the Section consists currently of more women than men. Something that indicates there is not a lack of women wanting to pursue the work as a mediator and special envoy. Thus, there might be some essential data in exploring the family factor to a mediator more closely.

Based on the two last discussions on work and family aspect, women still need to work in an environment made and structured by men. This affects women who must adapt to an environment not arranged for them. Having a gender lens on mediation is thereby profitable as it highlights family life, safety and experience which challenges the implementation of NAPs. These discussions point to a more traditional family model even in gender-equal Norway.

Experience

While discussing experience as measures taken to change formal institutions, a few reflections stood out. These identified values are highly gendered, and thereby seemed more fitting in the discussion to informal institutional attitudes rather than formal change. Experience is therefore discussed in more detail in this section. When one of the experts were given the opportunity to work in a peace process, she questioned her qualifications for the job

My first reaction, I have to admit, 'Aren't I too young?' Then my boss told me 'Never say that, a man would never.. or rarely say something similar' ...My boss also pointed out that all the predecessors had been males around the same age.

The expert highlighted that back in the days, there might not be too much of a cliché that women tended to feel underqualified whereas men more often valued themselves as

overqualified. However, in recent years women have started to demand their equal place. This argument correlates with a reflection from another expert.

This is something I've learned from my male colleagues. When applying for jobs, women tend to think they need to be 100% qualified for the job. I've kept it to 50. This is what men does, they just jump on things, but we (women) need the assurance that we can do this job.

The last expert adapted to her male colleagues' behaviour. The other had the full support from her leader who was determined on having the expert for the job. This finding correlates with the argument from Schneiker (2021) who highlighted how some women adopts to the masculine environment. This discussion raises the question; Why are women so humble when applying for jobs compared to men? The answer was found in later discussions. When asked if some of the experts felt that they were being judged as a woman in leading positions one of the experts argued;

As a woman, you always had to prove that you could do the job. ...But, because of my experience, no one could beat me. I was the most qualified for the job.

This quote illustrates the double standards attached to women. Even with experience, the expert felt that her gender was the first to be judged. Yet, because of her experience, she overcame the judgement. Thus, providing women with experience seems crucial for the acceptance of them in mediation and peace processes. This may answer the question to why women tend to feel that they need to be 100 percent qualified for the job, because (some) women might feel the need to justify their position, as they take a position usually held by a man. As discussed in the theory section, women, because of their gender must prove that they can do it, the same expectations are not necessarily present for men. This indicates that there are indeed gender components in the field of peace processes and mediation which places greater expectations on women. Additionally, this quote demonstrates the interplay between formal and informal institutions. Regardless of if the Section changes formal institutions and provides women with more direct experience, informal institutions set up, with gender expectations still judge women based on their gender. Thus, although providing women with experience is important, informal institutional characteristics still hampers women's equal participation in comparison to men.

On the other hand, a few of the female experts having experience from peace processes argued that they felt a connection to women present in the process and the power of being a woman. Especially toward the civil society who consisted of more women. Being a woman in power created more awareness in the system were the conflicting parties involved more women in their delegations or sub-programmes. Additionally, it provided more opportunities as the experts felt they were connected to the whole society and not only the delegations present at the peace table. Thus, women are being judged on their gender, both negatively and positively. The same cannot necessarily be argued for men.

Narrative

When Taliban meets all these women from Norway and are surprised over this, because, for some, it is the first time they are talking to a woman. Then it is like this, it is not that there is alternative not to talk to a woman. It is just that they are not used to meet women in these kinds of positions, because you might have changed them out with men in order to make it more digestible for Taliban. This raises the question; shall you limit your own delegation in favour for Taliban. I believe, in the past, Norway have made adjustments because of that. Because, in the past, we thought this was important. But today, we do less and less of this, because, Norway is Norway. The politics is so clear, we all agree that this is going to happen.

Considering the reflection above, there seems to be a normative conflict in the Section. It is what you want to achieve and your mandate, and then there is the issue with what is possible and to what cost. Thus, although there might be guidelines in how the section should conduct work and select mediators, there are underlying assumptions which sometimes hamper implementation. Shall you limit your own delegation to fit the perceptions of others or shall you stay true to the mandate. To a third party who is supposed to be neutral, this seems like a delicate matter, as Norwegian diplomacy emphasises conflicting parties ownership of the process. Several experts admitted that Norway have tended to struggle with this in practice. They all agree about the normative attitudes, however, when it comes down to doing it in practice, it has sometimes proven to be a challenge. This illustrates a gender component where women are judged based on their gender and not their personality. This is conflicting because the expert mentioned earlier that personality is much more important than their gender. Yet, another expert expressed that just because something is difficult does not mean you should not do it. The expert emphasised that you should not always give the world what it wants. If we want to move forward, we must challenge status quo. When asked a follow-up

question considering a more post-colonialist perspective, if Western values are being imposed on the rest of the world, this was rejected.

The only thing that is absolute in the world is change, we are all in a process. We are going somewhere. Tomorrow is not similar as today. It is about where we want to be tomorrow knowing it is not going to be like it was today. And from a Norwegian perspective we stand quite safely. We want to reach a place where women, who have too little co-determination of the society, are lifted. We are many around the world who want this too.

The two quotes above are conflicting. The second quote challenges status quo, but the first quote indicates that the Section adjusted their mandate in order to fit the context, with the masculine values. This indicates that it is easy to talk normatively about what you want to do, but when it comes down to practice, it proves to be more difficult. Having the mindset seems important for the way in which you do your job, which may make a difference in the future. This is evident with the fact that the first expert emphasised what was done in the past, is not happening today. Questions arise to why it is difficult to implement it in practice. The answer seems to lay at the host country who still feel ownership of the peace process (Skjelsbæk & Tryggestad, 2021). This is where you meet the conservative voices who, as discussed in the theory section, challenge women's place in the power structures. Conversely, it was highlighted that you need to be critical to the voices that we listen to.

It was argued that Norway sometimes listens too much to the conservative voices in societies who say what a woman can and cannot do. As one expert mentioned, Libya is a country where many would argue that it is difficult for women and the women situation is too complex. However, Libya has a female foreign minister (Najla Mangoush, March 2021). Thus, how does Norway judge whether women can attain strong positions or not. "There is something about not accepting the narrative and keep the discussion going". This attitude is also present with the quote above where it was emphasized "We are many around the world who want this too". In this discussion it seems easier to listen to the conservative voices rather than the other way around. Listening to the conservative voices is something that was done in the past, as the first quote indicates. This discussion highlights several aspects. Firstly, how masculinity values exceeds femininity, and where it is easier to adjust to masculine environments rather than staying within the mandate. Secondly, it implies that the critical actor knows the structure of the game, which is an important component as this seems

to have trumped the *many around the world* who wants to include women. However, questions arise for who the expert address when it is implied that there are *many around the world*. As seen in the literature review Lorenzten (2020) identified widespread resistance to the WPS agenda, finding that it is easy to talk normatively about something, although implementing it in practice has proven more difficult. Additionally, in recent years, the WPS agenda have been challenged by states such as Russia (Isbrekken, 2020; Sanchez et al., 2020). Thus, having a normative agreement about something is not enough to create change.

On the other hand, a special envoy represents a third country. This attitude was present with the reflection on *Norway is Norway*. Consequently, it is not necessarily the persons gender that is crucial, rather what country the mediator represents. It is the role you possess that is important. When you are sent as a special envoy, you are not gender of cultureless. More experts highlighted the same thing. For a long time, people believed that there could not be a female special envoy in Somalia or Afghanistan, because of the conservative voices. However, lately one has seen that it is possible, as the focus is not necessarily on the gender, but on who the special envoy represents. As one expert highlighted, the United States (US) have no problems sending a woman. Hilary Clinton has no problems in getting her message out, because she also represents the US. Same can be argued for Norway. The special envoy represents Norway, who is not part of the EU, a member states of NATO, and have a good reputation globally. This might explain why Norway are an outlier compared to the rest, because female special envoys represent the nation more than the gender. A few experts agreed to this suggestion, that when you are in a uniform or out representing Norway, gender comes second. It is therefore imaginable that Norway has such a positive reputation globally that other issues, such as gender, becomes less important.

The Critical Actor

This is something I have learned, that Norway, we have a lot of NAPs, but when you are actually going to put them into practice, then you are totally dependent on people who actually can implement it, who are active, enthusiastic. It is not enough that it is said politically.

Several experts discussed the importance of individual people who make a difference. One stated that if you are gay or a Sami, then it will be easier to remember indigenous rights and sexual minorities in a wider context. That is why it is important to have diversity in the

Section. Usually, it is the Palestinians who fights for Palestinians rights and it is Sami who fights for their cause. If you have a big portfolio and you must choose two or three things that matter the most, then you will choose based on your experiences and preferences. This was also evident with the discussion about the need for strong leadership and leaders who sees the value in having women as special envoys. The support needs to come from the top, and this is something most of the expert argued it was present in Norway.

This finding correlates to one of the questions asked in the interview guide, whether any of the experts had any special components they regarded as more important than others. After conducting the interview, it was realised by the author that the question should have been asked later on, as many of the experts answered something close to the WPS guidelines and their mandate. The answers were therefore divided according to how they understood the question. One highlighted the importance of women as actors in peace processes, this was where the expert meant Norway could do most, and this is where one could lift the whole agenda further. If women were represented, the likelihood of the victimization that women are experiencing today could be dealt with, as women would bring their reflections to the table. It was stated:

Women are not victims who need someone to help them, they simply need someone to stop hindering them. Then they manage just fine themselves. But as of the system, as I say, women are not victims because they are women, it is just systems designed for women to be victims.

In this statement there seems to be a fundamental attitude that women are no less than a man. It is rather a system designed for women to be lesser or a victim. What is fundamental with this statement is the attitude. Furthermore, as another expert stated, if you do not believe that there is an effect on peace processes by including women, prioritising gender in your job may feel like an add on. Thus, if experts did not see gender as an important component in mediation, then working with NAPs on WPS could become less prioritised on the agenda. However, having people with the mindset that women can make a difference makes the implementation processes easier. This indicates that you have critical actors at the decision-making level who keep on pushing the agenda forward. Additionally, it demonstrates the gendered structure women must face in peace processes, because women face a system created to their disadvantage, according to the expert above.

Discussion

At the surface, discussing the gendered dimensions of mediation most experts seemed to think that the personality and experience of the mediator was equally important. Yet, with a closer look at it, holding a gender lens in mediation while investigating the informal institutional set up to mediation, illustrates that there are gender components almost everywhere. Experts, if asked directly about gender, claims it is not important in the Section, although in subsequent discussions it does. There are gendered patterns at play, in Norway as well, these are however subtle, making it harder for formal institutions to explicitly acknowledge and grapple with them. Thus, using FI to examine the Section of Peace and Reconciliation and the gendered informal barriers is indeed a useful framework. In the case of sending a special envoy or a delegation to countries with conservative voices, the potential consequences of the gender of the special envoys do matter. This indicates the power of informal institutional characteristics, which are gendered. The discussion above catches both the attitudes of the experts and the importance of holding a gender lens in the institutional framework.

What explains the slow progress?

In order to answer the question of the slow progress of women in mediation, one may look at the informal institutional structure. In a global context it may be argued that women's way to mediation has been long and challenging. They have needed to work in a system made for, and by, men with masculine values and perceptions of how things are supposed to be. In the past, women have had to adopt to a masculine environment and deal with people who have not necessarily seen the value of including women as mediations. As one of the experts argued, it has been created a system that portraits women as victims rather than actors. Problems arise when women are expected to find their place in the same system created to their disadvantage. This proves challenging when the masculine idea trumps the WPS agenda. However, in the most recent years there have been a change. This change can be explained with informal institutional structure that is slowly changing with the help of positive discrimination and a reporting system that creates awareness of the disadvantageous system toward women.

In the Norwegian context, women seem to have held an advantage, because of the Norwegian culture and a strong civil society that have demanded equality. However, it took Norway 14

years from the adoption of UNRES 1325 (2000) until it had its first female special envoy. Yet, after the first woman, more women have followed. This indicates the importance of women breaking the glass ceiling. There seems to be a relationship between the civil society and critical actors with decision making power in Norway. There seems to be more critical actors who works for the implementation of WPS in the Section. This statement must be seen in the light of a small sample size and with a critical eye on the experts who wanted to participate in a study about WPS. Yet, the findings correlate with expectations in the theory section. Additionally, as discussed in the theory section, one may not need many critical actors in order to create change. A few actors knowing the structure of the game was much more important than the voices of a movement, as seen with the case of abortion in Northern Ireland. Thus, although a small sample size, the argument is plausible. However, throughout the analysis, many experts pointed to the expectation and the need for a strong civil society who holds the government responsible. Although it was found to be a somewhat weak argument, the importance of a correlation between critical actors and expectations from civil society are important reflections. Consequently, the story is more complex than simply having critical actors or simply pointing to civil society. Additional research on the dynamic on civil society and the government could provide some interesting data.

The explanation for the slow progress may be found in the way in which women have been trapped between different understandings of experience. Additionally, someone had to break the chain. Old perceptions and assumptions to what women might signal when sent as a special envoy, might also explain the slow progress; where some experts argued that it is easy to agree normatively about something, however, to do it in practice have proven more difficult. Lastly, the long shadow of a gendered institutional structure where women must find a place rather than being provided a place might also help explain the slow progress, as assumptions and attitudes have hindered a self- driven change.

What are the challenges?

In the Norwegian case it is evident that there are women working as mediators and special envoys. Yet, they sometimes become hidden in the small sample size and in the definitional aspect of mediation and peace processes. As peace processes are dynamic and in a consistent change, it seems to be a challenge to find a comprehensive consistent structure, as peace processes are contextual and dependent on different variables. Challenges persist. Although you have critical actors who work systematically in providing women with access to

mediation and as special envoys, there are still gendered institutional structures that hampers women's inclusion.

Experts argued that the problems are not necessarily in Norway, but in the global environment in which women special envoys work. Women are given greater expectations and must work in a masculine environment. It is noteworthy to highlight that it seems to be a rhetoric creating an "us versus them". This rhetoric can prove challenging as it becomes easier to shift a focus on the need to improve for others and not for themselves (Moss, 2021). Additionally, it can create an assumption that the inclusion of women in peace processes are "others" issues and not one self's issue (Hamilton et al, 2020). If this becomes, or are, a norm in the section, then a problem might arise where being "better than others" is valued as good enough instead of focusing on reaching complete equality. This becomes more evident when investigating in depth the times experts used rhetoric such as *African conflicts, other countries, UN or many around the world*, while making comparisons to Norway instead of staying critical to one own result. However, it is important to bear in mind the context of where the experts work, in international peace processes and the Norwegian MFA. Norway's NAPs on WPS are a multi-ministry collaboration, it is therefore plausible that other mechanisms in other ministers in Norway pays more attention to national and internal equality in Norway, which might explain why the Section looks out on "other countries" rather than internal. However, these questions are beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet, it would be beneficial to conduct a research covering the work of other Ministries on these topics.

There are gendered informal institutions in the Section, where some experts held gender expectations toward women in mediation, and where women were assumed to struggle more with work experience and family life. It was argued that gaining experience and becoming a special envoy occurs at a time where women might have other prioritises in their life, emphasising how mediation is not suitable with a family life. This might create imbalances with men and women. Yet, as seen in the Norwegian case, Norway is not struggling to find women who wants to work in mediation, as illustrated with the section containing more women than men.

What barriers have Norway overcome?

There seems to be an informal culture that values women as the same as men, as seen with the quotations from different experts. This is fundamental as it makes the work easier, because no one is resisting change. This is not to say that there are full and equal equality amongst men and women in Norway. However, it seems not to be anyone who challenges the idea for women's inclusion, which could be a problem in countries with more patriarchal tendencies. Additionally, as argued by experts, the work for equality started early, and changing and work ethic takes time and a lot of work. Norway started relatively early with the inclusion of women (Larsen et al., 2021), and they have improved step by step by creating an awareness in the system. The attitudes make it easier for Norway to promote women and to keep the agenda high. However, because of gendered informal institutions within the section and in the work of mediation, a self-driven change has not happened. Yet, there are mechanisms and there has been created a system aimed at keeping women present. This seems crucial for the inclusion of women. Additionally, since Norway have a strong mandate to work for women's empowerment in the Global sphere, keeping it clean in own delegations are crucial for legitimacy. Political strategy might also be an important factor for explain the relatively high number of women mediators and special envoys in Norway.

Conclusion

Surprisingly few women have held the job as a special envoy to the most formal peace processes. This regardless of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions which emphasise women's important contribution to peace processes. Although there are plenty of research on women's important role in peace processes, remarkably little attention has been placed on women in mediation. This thesis has attempted to address this research gap by investigating the reason for the slow progress in appointing women to the mediating role in track 1. peace processes. It has done so using semi-structured expert interviews and feminist institutionalism as an analytical lens. It has been argued that informal institutional structure within mediation and the Section of Peace and Reconciliation in the Norwegian MFA slows down a self-driven change in the formal institution. Thus, using NAP's to change the formal institutions of mediation, gendered informal institutions slows down the progress.

Experts, if confronted with questions about gender in the Section, did not believe gender to be an issue. Not one said the section was perfect, highlighting room for improvement. However, by using FI as an analytical lens, traces of gendered expectations toward women in mediation, and as special envoys, were observed multiple times in richer reflections about mediation in the section. A few were identified in this thesis. The gendered attitudes were found in the topics; diplomats' access to experience, the way they balance family life, in narratives of how the international community could react in meeting with a female special envoy, and in old perceptions where women are being judged based on their gender, although accepted due to experience. Similar judgments were not found with male diplomats. Thus, old perceptions and gender expectations makes it more difficult to have a self-driven change in the institution. This may explain why there is a slow progress in appointing women to the most formal peace processes.

Additionally, this research found that within the section, it tended to be a rhetoric of Norwegian exceptionalism. Caution should be placed on this type of language, as it risks placing the issue with having women as special envoys to track 1 processes as an issue "out there", and not within the section. Having a too strong of a focus on issues abroad might take away attention to issues "at home". Moreover, although it is normal to simplify the reality in order to understand it, some argumentations provided by some experts were occasionally too simple. Arguing that the Norwegian culture explains the high number of women mediators in

the section creates an image that gender equality in the section has always been there. Yet, as found by Neumann (2008), the MFA have been a gendered institution for a long time, and it is only relatively recent that women have gained access. Additionally, it took the section 14 years to appoint its first female special envoy. Thus, being gender equal is something relatively new. Therefore, the Norwegian culture could be one factor, yet political, financial, geo-political, and structural features might also be crucial factors.

However, throughout the research it was found that due to the small statistic and the way in which mediation is defined, it is directly affecting women's visibility. It is therefore crucial to find a comprehensive definition of mediation, mediator and special envoy. It is important to be aware of the difference between mediator and special envoy while conducting research. There are more women mediators in the Section for Peace and Reconciliation in the Norwegian MFA. Yet, they become hidden in the small statistics and definition of mediator and formalities of peace processes. Thus, it is important to find a comprehensive definition and defining clearly whether research is focusing of mediation in different peace tracks or consider solely special envoys to track 1 peace processes. Regardless, it is evident that female special envoys are lagging, a suggested reason for this is the gendered informal institution to the most formal peace processes.

These findings are significant and important, because, as argued by Paffenholz et al. (2015) strong and supportive guidance by female mediators and women leaders played a decisive role in supporting women during peace processes. Thus, having women as mediators in the most formal peace processes might have an important domino effect for women around peace processes and for what type of peace that is being discussed around the table. As women are present as mediators to peace processes, it is important to overcome the gendered barriers, such as old perceptions and gender expectations as explanations to why women are not present as special envoys to track 1. peace processes.

This cannot be done through formal institutional change alone. It is crucial that, within the system, there are critical actors who knows the structure, are active, take advantage and create a change. This change can happen through attitudes, motivation, systematic positive discrimination and using its power to see women's potential and use them. However, it is not enough to simply have critical actors without a strong civil society and informal institutional attitudes that favour change. It should not be either or, but both. It should be people working

from the inside and on the outside. In the case of Norway, there seems to be more critical actors who have taken the NAPs into practice and using it to empower women. Moreover, Norway has an advantage with the informal institutional structure, where it does not seem to be any informal attitudes that challenge women's involvement.

Due to the small sample size and the narrow focus on one section in the Norwegian MFA, this research cannot be generalised across different countries. However, by using the analytical lens, feminist institutionalism, it is possible to generalise the theory. Arguing that the field of mediation might be gendered, where informal institutional attitudes hinder the intended changes provided with the different UNSCR. The informal institutional attitudes are probably unique in accordance with different countries and institutions. Yet, it is possible to suggest that informal institutions are gendered, affecting men and women differently, which may explain why there is a slow progress in appointing women as mediators globally. More research is needed in order to draw a comprehensive argument. However, it is plausible to draw a tentative suggestion.

Consequently, from the narrow focus on one section in the entire Norwegian MFA, all findings should be considered with a critical eye. Although research is supposed to be conducted in an objective matter, qualitative research is subjective as the interpretation of qualitative data plays an important role. More comprehensive research is needed in this field. As recommended earlier, a comparative study on FI in comparison with the US, Canada or Switzerland could prove to be beneficial, because these three countries have a strong focus on women in mediation. Surprisingly, the family factor surfaced during several conversations, although as it is taken for granted that this should not be an issue in Norway, due to equality being prioritised. Yet, there seems to be more to this factor. Therefore, it could be interesting to do a more in-depth research on who the mediators are. Lastly, it would be interesting to conduct the same study, but with more time and involve a bigger part of the MFA, investigating closer Norway's work in the UN, or how the work plays out in practice in host countries. This would provide a better insight from the NAPs to action part of the study.

To conclude, as informal institutional structures are socially constructed, it is possible to change them. Due to the work of WPS and NAPs there seems to be a positive trend in "newer" conflicts where the structure has not been made. In the case of Norway, there is awareness in the system and positive discrimination that attempts to bring women forward.

The measures of recruiting women, providing equal chances for experience and using younger diplomats as special envoys, is providing the section with a bigger pool of people to choose from while selecting mediators and special envoys. Thus, it is likely that there will be an increasing number of women mediators in the future, as women are provided space - in contrast to finding a place in an already made structure.

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Attachments

Interview Guide

1. Kan du snakke litt om din arbeidsrolle.
 - Hva motiverte deg til å ha denne jobben?
 - Hva er viktige fokusområder for deg?

2. Det argumenteres i litteraturen at kvinner som aktører i fredsprosesser er den den minst gjennomførte punktet til UNSCR 1325. Hvorfor, mener du, er det så vanskelig å fremme kvinner som ledende aktører i fredsprosesser?

3. Hvilke egenskaper mener du en megler må ha for å være suksessfull?
 - Tror du egenskapene du har nevnt/ramset opp er kjønnsbasert? Fordelaktig for menn fremfor kvinner?
 - Mener du at kjønnet på en megler spiller noe rolle?

4. Norge har svært gode tall i forhold til andre land og organisasjoner, hva er det Norge gjør eller har, som gjør dem til en «suksess»?

5. Likevel, Norge hadde i 2018 37.3 % kvinnelige fredsmeglere, selv med sin politiske interesse så har ikke Norge 50-50, (eller 40% som er sitt mål i handlingsplanen), hva er det som gjør det utfordrende å få kvinner i denne rollen? Selv for Norge..

6. Er det noe du ønsker å legge til, som du ser på som relevant -gitt utfordringen å få flere kvinnelige fredsmeglere?

Discussion Points

1. *Discussion Points of the Mediation support Network (MSN) (2017, p 10)*
(<https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/MSNDiscussionPoints-2018-09.pdf>)

*“This section of the Guidance is strongly focused on the inclusion of women in the mediation process. Recalling both the definition of gender which stresses the relationship between the sexes and the power relations in a society, as well as recalling the full title of the Guidance on gender and inclusive mediation strategies, it would have been beneficial to extend the focus to other excluded parts of society, as well as on working with men and the holders of power. Notably the last point is often overlooked: **it is not sufficient to provide for space for the non-powerful to express themselves, as the ability and willingness of the powerful to listen is also needed.** More efforts and reflections are needed to show how to work with men on gender issues, rather than focusing primarily on how to work with women” (p10)*

- Hva tenker du om denne problemstillingen?
 - Er du enig i problemstillingen?
 - Jobber seksjonen med å få mennesker med innflytelse til å være en del av den større WPS prosessen?
2. Basert på ulike definisjoner av en fredsmegler, er det ulike tall som viser hvor mange kvinner som har jobbet som fredsmekler:
 - Aggestam & Svensson (2019) mener at fra 1991-2014 var 38% av fredsmeklere kvinner. Disse holder en svært bred definisjon av meglere.
 - UN Women (2012) finner at, frem til 2012, har ikke en kvinne ledet fredsprosesser i FN.
 - Council of Foreign Relation (CFR) finner at mellom 1992-2019 var det 6% kvinner, de siste 5 årene (2015-2019) har det kommet en økning på 11%.

- Gitt disse tallene ser man at kvinner jobber som fredsmegler, men jo smalere definisjonen av fredsmegler er, jo færre kvinner finner man. Hva tenker du om årsaken rundt dette?
3. I litteraturen om kvinner i fredsprosesser blir det ofte poengtert at kvinners «ulempe» i fredsprosesser er at de ikke er direkte involvert i krigføringen og derfor ikke blir sett på som relevante i fredsprosessen, fordi de som regel, ikke er direkte involvert i kampene. Som er en tredjepart, så skal dette ikke ha noe å si? Har dette betydning? Typ en «*spill-over*» effekt?
4. Hvem mener du er ansvarlig for å implementere UNSCR 1325?

Form of Consent

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet **The Process of Implementing Women as Mediators**

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å kartlegge hvordan Norge som aktør arbeider i implementeringsprosessen av å ansette flere kvinnelige fredsmeklere. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

I denne masteroppgaven skal det forskes på hva som skjer i prosessen fra handlingsplaner til implementering. Dags dato finnes det flere FN resolusjoner, handlingsplaner og kvinnelige meklernettsverk etablert for at flere kvinner skal bli ansatt i rollen som mekler i formelle fredsprosesser. Likevel, så viser data, at det er svært få kvinner som blir ansatt i denne rollen. Denne masteren ønsker å belyse problemstillingen og finne ut av hva som skjer i prosessen som hindrer kvinner i å få denne rollen.

Dags dato er det svært lite forskning på området, så masteren vil dekke et fagfelt det finnes mindre kunnskap om, derfor er det ønskelig med ekspert intervju i et ønske om utarbeide mer rådata om tematikken.

Opplysningen som kommer ut av denne forskningen skal kun brukes til masteroppgaven. Foreløpig er det ingen andre formål med denne forskningen. Likevel, siden dette er en tematikk med lite eksisterende forskning er det godt mulig at andre forskere vil bygge videre eller undersøke i dypere grad slutningen fra denne masteren.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Masterstudent Marie Eriksmoen ved Universitetet i Oslo er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Metoden for masteren er ekspert intervju. Utvalget av informant er trukket basert på informantenes arbeidserfaring og kunnskap omkring problemstillingen. En håndfull mennesker som jobber tett med beslutningsprosesser, med blant annet valg av meklerteams, har fått henvendelse i å delta i forskningen.

I noen tilfeller har andre eksperter tipset om andre aktuelle kandidater til forskningen etter samtaler om forskningsprosjektet, disse har også blitt kontaktet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du stiller til et intervju. Intervjuene er semi-strukturert, så det er ønskelig at deltaker svarer så utfyllende som mulig og gjerne legger til informasjon som kan være aktuelt å vite. Intervjuet vil ta ca 45 minutter. Intervjuguiden inneholder spørsmål knyttet til prosessen i å ansette kvinnelige fredsmeklere, dynamikken i ulike fredsprosesser og hensyn som må tas underveis. Det er ønsket å ta lydopptak og notater fra intervjuene, ved samtykke.

Informasjonen som registres fra informanten er arbeidsplass og relevant faglig bakgrunn i henhold til hvorfor informanten er valgt ut til å delta i forskningen. Ellers er ønske å holde informanten så anonyme som mulig.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Kun masterstudent Marie Eriksmoen har tilgang på notater og data som kommer ut av intervjuet.
- Navnet og kontaktopplysningene dine vil erstattes med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data. I masteroppgaven vil potensielle sitater bli referert til med kode. Datamaterialet vil bli lagret på masterstudentens Mac som aldri vil bli liggende alene, Macen må låses opp med passord.

Ettersom at det vil bli gjennomført ekspert intervju vil det være mulig for enkeltpersoner som jobber i samme avdeling å resonere seg til deltaker. Samtidig skal det være vanskelig å finne ut av hvem som eier ulike sitater.

Opplysninger som vil bli brukt i masteren er potensielle sitater eller diskusjonsområder/tematikker som måtte komme frem. Disse vil bli videre analysert og diskutert i masteren.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er Prosjektslutt november 2021.

Når masteren er skrevet ferdig og levert vil all data bli slettet. Dvs. all data vil være slettet fra Mac innen desember 2021.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Oslo har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene

- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

Universitetet i Oslo ved Marie Eriksmoen, marieeri@student.sv.uio.no eller m.eriksmoen@online.no

- Vårt personvernombud: Roger Markgraf-Bye, epost: personvernombud@uio.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig

Eventuelt student

(Forsker/veileder)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet The process of implementing more women mediators og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i semi-strukturert ekspert intervju.
- å delta i tilleggs intervju – hvis aktuelt
- at Marie Eriksmoen kan gi opplysninger om meg til prosjektet – hvis aktuelt
- at opplysninger om meg, arbeidsplass/arbeidserfaringer publiseres slik at jeg kan gjenkjennes - hvis aktuelt

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

NSD sin vurdering

Prosjekttittel

The Process of Implementing Women as Mediators

Referansenummer

150681

Registrert

28.04.2021 av Marie Eriksmoen - marieeri@uio.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Oslo / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Institutt for statsvitenskap

Melding

20.05.2021 18:02

Behandlingen av personopplysninger er vurdert av NSD. Vurderingen er:

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 20.05.2021, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 30.11.2021.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1 f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: nsd.no/personverntjenester/fyll-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema
Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!