



## **Unveiling Gendered Peace**

A Policy Analysis of South Sudan's Strategy for Women, Peace,  
and Security (2015-2020)

**Diana Blench Heebøll**

Two-year Political Science MA programme in Global Politics

Dept. of Global Political Studies

Course: Political Science Master's thesis ST631L (30 credits)

Thesis submitted Spring / 2024

Supervisor: Kristian Steiner

## Acknowledgement

I want to express my profound appreciation to my supervisor, Kristian Steiner. His expertise and knowledge were invaluable in this research. I am particularly grateful to him for his patience, commitment, and guidance, which motivated and encouraged me. Through his feedback, Kristian taught me various ways of improving my research study. Working and studying under his supervision was an honour.

I am incredibly grateful to the professors and lecturers at Malmo University for all the excellent lectures and discussions; I have learned and benefited from the courses. It was challenging at times, but there was value in being exposed to the material, so thank you for facilitating such a positive learning environment. I genuinely appreciate you all.

I am also grateful to my classmate Nadja Carlborg for her moral support and insightful discussions. Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning my family, especially my spouse, Jens Heebøll, for their unwavering love and practical support and my mother's encouragement during this process.

## Abstract

This study investigates the South Sudanese government's policy titled South Sudan National Action Plan 2015 - 2020 on UNSCR 1325 to identify the discourses in the policy document and examine whether they can be linked to the concepts of power and agency. The thesis uses the feminist theory of power and agency with Carol Bacchi's *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR) framework as a method to answer the research objectives. The thesis finds that the South Sudanese government justice system is represented as the dominant "problem" representation because the government is represented as lacking the political will to change its formal and customary laws that have harmful consequences for women in South Sudan. The Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW), via the SSNAP, is blaming the government for the overall challenges that South Sudanese women endure, which in turn works contrary to the policy objectives since the government oversees allocating financial resources and enacting legislation. Further, the empowerment and agency of women in South Sudan are also undermined since they are portrayed as powerless and dependent on the change in formal and customary laws by the government.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Power, Agency, South Sudan, Women, Gender Equality, Peacebuilding, Patriarchy, Intersectionality, Empowerment, Structural Inequality, Human Rights, Insecurity, Violence

Wordcount: 21579

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	2
Abstract .....	3
List of Abbreviations .....	5
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1 Background.....	6
1.2 Research Problem.....	7
1.3 Aim and Research Questions.....	9
1.4 Limitations and Delimitations .....	10
1.5 Thesis Outline.....	11
<b>2. Literature Review</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.1 Women in South Sudan - Before the Conflict .....	12
2.2 Ramifications of the Civil Wars on South Sudanese Women.....	13
2.3 Gender-Differentiated Warfare .....	14
2.4 Women and Peacebuilding Globally.....	16
2.5 South Sudanese Women and Peacebuilding .....	17
2.6 Conclusion and Research Gap.....	19
<b>3. Theoretical Foundation</b> .....	<b>20</b>
3.1 Introduction to Feminist Theory.....	20
3.2 Core Concepts within Feminist Theory.....	22
<b>4. Methodology</b> .....	<b>28</b>
4.1 Case Study.....	28
4.2 Material.....	29
4.3 South Sudan National Action Plan 2015-2022 .....	31
4.4 Introduction to <i>What's the Problem Represented to be?</i> (WPR).....	35
4.5 Operationalisation of the WPR.....	37
<b>5. Analysis and Findings</b> .....	<b>41</b>
5.1 Political Discourses in SSNAP.....	41
5.2 Power and Agency in SSNAP .....	52
<b>6. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>59</b>
<b>7. Bibliography</b> .....	<b>61</b>

## List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CEDAW	Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare
NGO's	Non-Governmental Organisation
NWC	National Women's Commission
R-ARCSS	Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
SSDF	South Sudan's People's Defence Forces
SSNAP	South Sudan National Action Plan
SSHRC	South Sudan Human Rights Commission
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPR	What's the Problem Represented to be?
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the nature of conflict took a drastic turn, with casualties among civilians increasingly outnumbering those of military personnel. In this context, women have been heavily affected by this shift and are proving to be especially vulnerable (UNFPA, 2001). Responding to the negative impacts of conflicts on women, scholars and feminist peace activists have campaigned actively and successfully highlighted the need for the international community to embrace human rights principles concerning recognising gender equality issues when responding to violent conflict or situations of insecurity (Tickner, 1992; Karamé & Prestegard, 2005). Accordingly, the international community has established instruments designed to ensure women's participation in peacebuilding and political life, such as the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) adopted on the 31st of October 2000 and the 2003 Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Atuhaire & Ndirangu, 2019).

UNSCR 1325 is a resolution concerning women, peace, and security. It was adopted after a review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which indicated that progress for women in gender equality, development, and peace had been limited (Department of Peace Operations, 2020). UNSCR 1325 confirms women's vital role in preventing and resolving conflicts, and it embodies three aspects: prevention, participation, protection, peacebuilding, and recovery. The resolution draws attention to the need for a more gender-representative and responsive security sector (ibid). It builds on best practices, fills in the gaps of the previous interventions and encourages member states to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels, including national, regional, and international institutions, in addition to the instruments for the prevention, management, and settlement of disputes (UNSCR 1325, 2000).

The government of South Sudan adopted its first National Action Plan between 2015 and 2020 based on UNSCR 1325. Thus, it was developed under the principles and objectives of the resolution to address the specific challenges women face in the country's protracted conflict and political instability (SSNAP 2015). It outlines strategies and activities to promote women's participation in peace processes, enhance protection mechanisms for women, and mainstream gender perspectives across peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts. Further, it was developed by the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW) through a participatory process that involved broad

consultation with various peace and security stakeholders and was supported by UN Women (ibid). The government's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment has been criticised for its shortcomings. For instance, one of the main criticisms of the government's efforts toward gender equality and women's empowerment is that the progress in implementing policies and programs is moving very slowly. This has also been highlighted as an area of concern in the Women's Peace and Security (WPS) and Gender Inequality Index. Thus, South Sudan has been ranked among the worst-performing countries regarding the inclusion, justice, and security dimensions in eleven indicators of women's status (GIWPS, 2021/22).

The indicators previously mentioned reveal that gender inequality seems to be at an all-time high. Consequently, this implies South Sudan fails to meet women's rights (GIWPS, 2021/22). For this reason, UN Women emphasises that South Sudanese women are getting the shorter end of the stick since they suffer from gross exclusion concerning all spheres of society and decision-making, state-building, and peacebuilding processes (Rusad et al., 2023). In this regard, while some efforts and initiatives have aimed at promoting gender equality and advancing women's rights, significant gaps and obstacles remain. Considering that the indicators around women's empowerment contradict the government's claim and that excluding women from peace processes threatens peace in and of itself, the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) 2015-2022 is particularly worth investigating (Jobarteh, 2018; Kezie-Nwoha & Were, 2018).

## 1.2 Research Problem

The South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) introduces a comprehensive framework for promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and participation in peace and security efforts, as mentioned in section 1.1. Despite adopting the SSNAP, South Sudan faces significant challenges in effectively implementing gender-sensitive peacebuilding and conflict resolution measures, consequently hindering women's meaningful participation in peace processes and exacerbating gender-based violence and insecurity in conflict-affected areas. The identified research problem concerns women's participation in peace processes and the impact of the SSNAP on promoting women's inclusion in peace negotiations, peacebuilding initiatives, and post-conflict governance structures. The SSNAP is relevant to global politics for various reasons.

**Firstly**, its adoption indicates South Sudan's commitment to upholding international norms and standards related to women, peace, and security. Thus, by aligning with the UNSCR 1325, South Sudan contributes to the global women, peace, and security agenda. **Secondly**, the country's

ongoing conflict and political instability significantly affect regional and internal peace and security. Thus, its effective implementation can contribute to sustainable peace and stability in South Sudan, reducing the risk of spillover conflicts, displacement and humanitarian crises that could impact neighbouring countries and have broader and regional implications. **Thirdly**, since the conflict in South Sudan has led to severe humanitarian crises, which include displacement, food insecurity and widespread human rights violations, women are disproportionately affected by these crises in addition to facing heightened risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, and displacement. For this reason, the successful implementation of the SSNAP can assist in addressing humanitarian concerns by enhancing protection mechanisms, increasing access to essential services, and promoting the rights and well-being of women in conflict-affected areas of South Sudan.

**Fourthly**, adopting the SSNAP can have a normative influence on other countries facing similar challenges related to women's peace and security. Hence, by demonstrating its commitment to promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and the participation of women in peacebuilding efforts, South Sudan can serve as a role model for other nation-states in the Horn of Africa and around the world that are seeking to address similar issues within their own country's contexts. **Fifthly**, implementing the SSNAP may require support and collaboration from international actors such as the United Nations, regional organisations, donor countries and international NGOs. Therefore, by engaging with these stakeholders and leveraging international support, South Sudan can enhance its capacity to address the complex challenges related to women's peace and security, which will, in turn, contribute to global efforts to promote peace, stability and gender equality.

For the reasons mentioned above, the SSNAP is relevant to global politics because it addresses critical issues related to peace and security, humanitarian crises, human rights, and gender equality that have implications beyond the borders of South Sudan. Thus, if the government implements the SSNAP effectively, the country can contribute to broader efforts to build sustainable peace, promote human rights, and advance the rights and well-being of women in conflict-affected regions worldwide. In this respect, the study is passionate about investigating what the government of South Sudan is doing to empower women and mitigate the obstacles they face when trying to participate in peace processes. The study's findings are significant because SSNAP initiatives on UNSCR 1325 have yet to be subject to much scholarly review. Therefore, by critically examining the SSNAP's policy objectives, implementation mechanisms, and outcomes, the study can address the complex challenges of conflict, gender inequality, and insecurity in South Sudan. For this reason, the



findings can inform policy, facilitating a platform whereby the SSNAP can be amended to offer appropriate solutions for societal challenges.

### 1.3 Aim and Research Questions

As reported by Giovetti (2022), significant gaps in women's rights have left women in South Sudan marginalised and even excluded from participating in any level of decision-making or political activity. This study aims to identify the political discourse disclosed in the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) concerning the policy document's goal, objectives, implementation mechanisms, and outcome. As outlined in section 1.1, the government claims to be committed to promoting gender equality and women's equal and meaningful participation in peacebuilding. Nonetheless, it remains indefinite whether South Sudanese authorities are adopting effective policies and strategies to ensure gender equality and improve women's lives.

The study is interested in how political establishments construct specific issues as particular kinds of "problems" through representations of problems. Therefore, the study will examine how the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW), through the SSNAP policy document, addresses structural barriers limiting women's participation in peace processes and decision-making and how it promotes women's agency and empowerment. To reach the study's aim, Carol Bacchi's analytical model, *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR), will be applied using some of the operational questions suggested in the model. To address the research aims, the study will answer two overarching questions.

**A. What political discourses are disclosed in the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) on UNSCR 1325?**

**B. Can the discourses be linked to aspects of power and agency?**

The study will use the WPR questions mentioned below to answer the research questions.

- **WPR Q 1.** What's the "problem" represented to be in the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP)?
- **WPR Q 2.** What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the problem?
- **WPR Q 4.** What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently?
- **WPR Q 5.** What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?

Specifically, WPR questions 1 and 2 were used to answer question A, 4 and 5 to answer question B. The feminist theory discussed in Chapter 3 will be used to answer questions 4 and 5 of the WPR since the concepts of power and agency will be used to support the analysis of women's empowerment and agency. Hence, Chapter 3, section 3.2, provides a more detailed discussion of the concepts of power and agency related to questions 4 and 5. Chapter 4 justifies why the study did not use all the WPR questions. Subsection 4.4 explains how the WPR questions will be operationalised in the analysis section to answer the research objectives.

#### 1.4 Limitations and Delimitations

The research aims to investigate the discourses in the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) and whether they can be related to aspects of power and agency. However, in the present study, several limitations should be noted. Firstly, the most significant delimitation of the study is that it has only focused on the SSNAP and thus on the work of the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW), a government agency mandated to work towards greater inclusivity for women and children. The justification for only focusing on the policy document is to make the analysis more manageable and relevant to the research questions. However, it should be noted that similar organisations, such as the National Women's Commission (NWC) and the South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC), that work to advance women's rights and gender equality exist. In this view, the generalizability of the study's findings is limited to the work of the MGCSW via the SSNAP.

Secondly, the study mainly examined the obstacles to women's equal participation and representation in the formal peacebuilding processes concerning the efforts to guarantee gender-inclusive peacebuilding. Hence, state-initiated political processes used for peacebuilding and not informal peacebuilding activities and initiatives undertaken by national and international agencies or grassroots movements to resolve conflict and restore peace at community levels. Thirdly, the time frame that was being analysed is the post-conflict phase. Therefore, the study has only focused on the SSNAP policy document written after the establishment of the government, hence between 2015-2022. Given this, the limitations must be considered when analysing the findings. Despite the delimitations and limitations, the study aims to provide helpful knowledge regarding the South Sudan government's strategy on the WPS agenda, facilitating a platform for critical thinking and improvement.

## 1.5 Thesis Outline

The thesis begins with an introductory chapter, providing background information regarding the impacts of conflict on women as understood by scholars, feminist activists, and the international community. It further introduces the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP). The introductory chapter also presents the research problem, aims, questions, and the study's relevance to global politics. Additionally, it addresses the thesis limitations and delimitations and provides a thesis outline, which is the current section.

The **second** chapter covers literature relevant to the study concerning women's role in promoting peace, reconciliation, and conflict resolution, and it also addresses the gap in previous research. The **third** chapter discusses feminist theory, focusing on the concepts of power and agency used in the analysis section. Chapter **four** discusses the choice of case and material, and it provides a summary of the SSNAP policy document. Further, it introduces Carol Bacchi's *What's the problem represented to be?* (WPR) framework and methodologically discusses how the questions will be used in the analysis section.

The **fifth** chapter consists of the analysis and findings of the SSNAP policy document using WPR questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 and the feminist theory of power and agency. Chapter **six** concludes with remarks on the research objectives and findings and a brief discussion on future research. Lastly, chapter **seven** is the bibliography.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter will include previous research relevant to the thesis, exploring how scholars have discussed the role of women in efforts to promote peace, reconciliation, and conflict resolution. The chapter is divided into five sections. The **first** section provides a brief overview of the research on the role of women in South Sudan. The **second** section highlights the ramifications of the civil wars on women. The **third** discusses gender and warfare, and **the fourth** explores women's contribution to peacebuilding. The **fifth** section focuses on women's role in peacebuilding processes. Lastly, a brief discussion of the thesis position based on previous research.

### 2.1 Women in South Sudan - Before the Conflict

In patriarchal societies like South Sudan, customary law is the legal framework that governs the society alongside a formal legal framework (James & Mai, 2015, p. 1). Spring (2023, p. 2) and Kane et al. (2016, p. 2) argue that most South Sudanese communities are patriarchal, which means that men are the breadwinners and heads of the household who exercise absolute authority in making decisions on private and public matters. In contrast, women are assigned to domestic work such as household management and caretaking, including cleaning, cooking, and child-rearing. Soma (2018, p. 12) argues that women had significant influence within the household since they often served as advisors to their husbands and participated in decision-making processes. Therefore, women held important social and cultural roles within their communities since they participated in community rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations, contributing to their community's social cohesion and cultural identity (ibid, p. 14). Hence, they were custodians of traditional knowledge, oral history, and cultural practices, and they, in turn, passed down traditions from generation to generation.

Although women play central roles in maintaining family cohesion and ensuring the well-being of household members, Edward (2014, pp. 14-19) argues that they were generally perceived as insignificant in the public sphere. The author underlines that women faced numerous challenges and inequalities due to cultural norms, economic constraints, and a lack of infrastructure, all of which hindered their full participation and empowerment within society. Women also struggled with economic marginalisation and limited access to economic opportunities because of traditional gender roles assigning domestic tasks to women. They were undervalued and often unpaid. Further, Soma (2018) claims that women had limited access to land, credit, and resources necessary for economic independence and entrepreneurship. Khalfalla and Ahmed (2019, pp. 8-9) agree and

claim that discriminatory practices and a lack of job opportunities constrained the participation of women in the formal labour market. Further, gender-based violence in the form of domestic violence, sexual assault and forced marriages was also pervasive before the conflict (Bubbenzer & Lacey, 2013). Consequently, women faced high levels of violence and insecurity that intimate partners or family members often perpetrated. Hence, violence against women was normalised by cultural norms and patriarchal attitudes, which in turn made it challenging for survivors to ask for help or even access support services.

Regarding healthcare, Bubbenzer and Lacey (2013, p. 3-4) argue that women had limited access to healthcare services, including maternal and reproductive health services. Therefore, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, shortage of skilled healthcare providers, and cultural barriers hindered women's access to essential healthcare, prenatal care, and childbirth services. As a result, maternal mortality rates were among the highest in the world, with many women dying from preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth (ibid). Overall, South Sudanese women's participation in formal political institutions, such as government and legislative bodies, was limited, with few opportunities for women to influence policy and governance processes (Bubbenzer & Stern, 2011, p. 198).

## 2.2 Ramifications of the Civil Wars on South Sudanese Women

The civil wars have meant that women have been facing escalating protection threats, such as kidnappings and enforced disappearances, and reduced access to basic services, such as essential healthcare, in conflict zones since the start of the conflict (Maxwell et al., 2012, pp. 2-4). Thus, the authors report that the levels of displacement, insecurity, and violence in South Sudan have reached unprecedented levels. Bubbenzer & Lacey argue that warring parties have historically used conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and rape as tools to intimidate communities and solidify power. Therefore, women are raped as a means of ethnic cleansing, serving not just to intimidate individual victims but also to inflict collective terror on an ethnic group (Maxwell, 2018, p. 9).

Women are particularly at significant risk of gender-based violence (GBV) and other human rights violations, specifically targeting women during conflicts such as torture, abductions, human trafficking, sexual slavery, and forced displacement (Maxwell et al., 2012). These violations have profound impacts on survivors' lives, such as social stigma and adverse economic, social, health, mental health, and human rights consequences. Further, the lack of education access due to the

conflicts has also increased the girl's risk of early marriages and GBV. Young women are uniquely placed within this dynamic. They are most likely to be victims of violence, and they are connected to the most prominent drivers of inter-communal conflict, including cattle raiding to pay for high dowries, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and land disputes around inheritance laws (Bubenzer & Lacey, 2013).

According to Morgan and Oliver (2024), the protracted crises in South Sudan have brought about the re-defining and re-negotiating of gender roles and norms both during and after the conflict, just like in any other conflict. Therefore, these norms sometimes break down, and women take on the roles typically associated with men and boys, giving them legitimate opportunities to participate in decision-making and other activities they would typically not have access to (ibid). Hence, women become heads of households, primary providers and members/founders of networks and NGOs. Nevertheless, when the conflict ends, and during peacebuilding, when men return from wars or from other war-related activities that might have taken them away from their families. Thus, women are expected to return and assume their roles, traditional roles which many are unwilling to do, creating tensions within households and communities (Tounsel, 2020).

### 2.3 Gender-Differentiated Warfare

Elbe (1939, p. 655) highlights that war as a social phenomenon can be described as a “fight between human societies in primitive conditions between savage tribes, in the civilised world and between states”. In recent years, several studies have argued that qualitative shifts have occurred in armed conflict, making it possible to think of conflict in terms of “contemporary” or “modern” conflicts, which is noticeable in significant ways from earlier forms of conflict. Kaldor (2001, p.6) concurs and argues that the “new wars” can be compared with earlier wars concerning their goals, the methods of warfare and how they are financed.

Goldstein (2016) has considered the relationship between war and gender. The author argues that violence in modern warfare is mainly directed towards civilians; hence, the changing character of warfare has a heavy effect on women and children. Therefore, Goldstein claims that war is a gendered phenomenon and activity, which means that war assigns different roles to men and women and, thus, affects their lives differently. Wood & Eagly (2012) and Goldstein refer to gender as a socially constructed characteristic of men and women, including their roles, norms, behaviours, and responsibilities. Wood and Eagly argue that gender roles regarding shared beliefs about the

traits of women and men track the division of labour because people understand these characteristics from their observations of the sexes' behaviours. The authors claim that social observers often essentialise these characteristics by considering them native to women's and men's biology or social insight (ibid).

Goldstein (2016) agrees and claims that gender norms are not determined by biological sex but are a set of expectations specific to cultures or societies. Gender is used when analysing the relationship between men and women regarding their different access to power, resources, and opportunities. Goldstein's and Wood's & Eagly's (2012) studies suggest that gender analysis of war can contribute to understanding the different roles war assigns to men and women as they are, for this reason, affected by war and its aftermath differently and often in a disproportionate way. Goldstein, Lorentzen, and Turpin (1998) and Caprioli (2004) investigate the profoundly different ways that war affects men and women. The authors claim that feminist researchers have found overwhelming support for the relationship between gender inequality and war. Therefore, it is evident that gender oppression has been a feature of armed conflicts.

The issue of gender inequality is an essential aspect of Goldstein's (2016) study; he argues that war exacerbates gender inequality, and he describes gender inequality as unequal access to or distribution of power. Hence, the author moves beyond simplistic gender dichotomies and outdated arguments about militarist men and pacifist women. He underscores that he recognised that there are patterns of difference in men's and women's relationships about war; therefore, men and women experience war and its aftermath differently in their capacities as both "perpetrators" and "victims" (ibid). Lorentzen and Turpin (1998) argue that because of the unequal power dynamic, women continue to experience various forms of discrimination. According to Goldstein, sexual violence is utilised as a weapon of war, and for a long time, it has been considered a natural consequence of war. Men and boys are also victims of sexual violence during times of war, which is used as an instrument to destroy their male power. Nevertheless, he stresses that sexual violence disproportionately affects girls and women.

Meger (2016, p. 93) highlights that in modern times of civil conflicts, rape is a systematic and brutal weapon used by armed groups against the civilian population. Although rape has taken place in mass and controlled formats previously, it was not a primary weapon as it is in modern conflicts. Therefore, civil conflict has become the primary form of warfare worldwide, utilising smaller arms

and more unique tactics than traditional interstate wars. The study by Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) builds on Meger and Buss. It contributes by highlighting that, along with aspects of armed conflict and human rights violations, women are most likely to end up as displaced persons and to be the sole caretakers for children. The authors argue that during wartime, women are forced to flee their homes; thus, they are also disproportionately subject to forced displacement, leaving them without food, shelter, or healthcare. Hence, in addition to the damage caused by the war, the horrors of displacement produce additional suffering for women. Therefore, although women's circumstances are unique in each country, their stories are similar. For these reasons, women continue to be exposed to sexual violence, exploitation, and other human rights abuses.

#### 2.4 Women and Peacebuilding Globally

Studies by Moser & Clark (2001), Schirch & Sewark (2005), Moosa et al. (2013), and Agbalajobi (2009) have significantly contributed to our understanding of women's exclusion from peacebuilding processes. These authors have not only challenged the common knowledge that portrays women as victims in conflict situations but also highlighted their resilience and agency, arguing that women are also agents and active participants in war. They have underscored the importance of moving beyond women as victims and perceiving them as agents in peacebuilding. Therefore, the studies have brought in a critical perspective by highlighting and criticising the assumption that women are inherently peaceful by nature and, for this reason, should be included in peacebuilding processes.

Schirch & Sewark's (2005) research is crucial to advocating for women's equal participation in peacebuilding, as they comprise approximately half of the world's population and are equal to their male counterparts. Further, Peach (1994) have not only considered the notion or myth of women's innate or natural orientation to peace and pacifism but has also critically examined the gender system that perpetuates these stereotypes. The author asserts that women often play a role in the informal peacebuilding processes at community levels, but this should not be seen as a natural inclination but rather as a product of a gender system set in place to serve and maintain men as strong warriors and women as weak and passive peacemakers.

Caprioli (2003) and Peach (1994) have further investigated the indirect impacts of war on women, highlighting the unequal power dynamics and the imbalance in gender relations that often remain post-conflict. Their research underscores the need for structural change to ensure women's equal



participation in peacebuilding, and that the injustice of gender stereotypes should motivate us to challenge these norms. Caprioli's study has shown that women frequently encounter exclusion and discrimination, which prevents them from fully participating in peacebuilding processes in post-conflict societies. This view is supported by Anderlin (2007) and Kidane (2014), who investigate the exclusion of women and argue that peace processes and military armed forces have mainly been male-dominated institutions due to the symbolic link that war has to the norms of manhood. The outcome is a lack of consideration for women's equal representation because men have dominated the role of peace negotiation, peacekeeping, peace-making and the decision-making process. The authors further highlight that men and women have varying challenging experiences, such as different types of violence and trauma during and after conflict. This indicates that they have varying expectations and priorities regarding peacebuilding.

Moreover, Bouta & Bannon (2005) and Anderlin (2007) argue that women's inclusion in peacebuilding can lead to significant positive outcomes. They assert that women make a qualitative difference in making a different contribution to the peace process compared to men because they are more likely to include gender issues on the agenda, which in turn introduces other conflict experiences and sets of priorities relating to peacebuilding and rehabilitation. For these reasons, the authors claim that women may better bridge political divides. The authors agree when they underscore that inclusivity is necessary to make durable peace and development possible and to ensure the legitimacy of the decision-making processes. Their research maintains that sustainable and long-lasting peace can only be attained if women and men are treated as equals, further highlighting the transformative potential of women's inclusion in peacebuilding processes (ibid).

## 2.5 South Sudanese Women and Peacebuilding

The impact of conflicts on the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of women in South Sudan is devastating. Apropos to this, it is discouraging to realise that women are not fully involved in peacebuilding because of their gendered nature (Dame, 2016). However, despite this entrenched exclusion, South Sudanese women have consistently played an instrumental role in propagating peace during the civil wars. A pivotal moment in this history is the Katiba Ban' - the women's battalion founded in 1983, which marked the entry point for South Sudanese women's participation in war and peace (Derek, 2015, p.7). During the liberation movement, women in the Katiba Ban' provided food, gathered intelligence, and even engaged in field combat in armed

conflict zones. However, many women eventually left the movement out of fear due to family commitments (Derek, 2015).

South Sudanese women, recognising their unique position as critical stakeholders with valuable information, experiences, and skills, actively push for greater inclusion and participation in post-conflict peacebuilding. Their strategic shift into informal peacebuilding at the community and grassroots levels demonstrates their agency and ability to make their voices heard and critically impact lasting peace (Dayal & Christien, 2019). Such efforts can also be seen in the 1999 Wunlit Peace Process between Dinka and Nuer, which was celebrated as a prosperous people-to-people peace (Ashworth, 2000). The Wunlit Peace Accord ceased the conflicts and hostilities between the grassroots Dinka and the Nuer.

Moreover, the Sudan Council of Churches also significantly facilitated the peace event with women from Dinka and Nuer, who took traditional roles to mobilise their men and ensure their success (Ashworth, 2000, p.6). Hence, the Wunlit Peace Accord would not have been possible without women. The Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was signed in August 2015 in Juba to end the conflict between President Salva Kiir and Dr Riek Machar that erupted on 15th December 2013 (Accord, 2019). During the negotiations of this deal, women were critically involved. Women supported R-ARCSS and played essential roles in convincing the leaders to sign the deal on 12th September 2018 (ibid). The emergence of influential women-led organisations, such as the South Sudan Women Empowerment Network, Sudan's Women's Voice for Peace, and the Sudanese Women Federation, has created a space for peacebuilding and brought about significant positive changes.

According to Kezie-Nwoha and Were (2018), the organisations mentioned above have assisted in community dialogue and reconciliation forums, advocated for women's rights, and provided essential services to survivors of conflict and violence. Therefore, their actions have not only transformed inter-tribal attitudes and tempered political rhetoric but also mobilised national coalitions to take mass action against sexual violence and push for gender-responsive aspects of peace agreements, public policy, and national laws. In this regard, the efforts are a silver lining for a more peaceful and inclusive South Sudan. These bottom-up efforts in peacebuilding are critical to community-level resilience and help address gaps in top-down peace processes, which scratch the surface of peacebuilding with fragile elite pacts. Women-led grassroots initiatives bring issues that

formal peace processes overlook to the forefront in the quest to pacify military and political elites, thus addressing conflict more sustainably than top-down approaches (ibid, 2018)

## 2.6 Conclusion and Research Gap

The literature on women's formal and informal roles in peacebuilding has been extensively studied, with the former slightly lagging. Gender equality and women's empowerment are necessary for promoting sustainable peace and security at all levels. However, the study has yet to come across comprehensive research that approaches governance as a problem revolving around the situation of women in South Sudan. Therefore, this thesis considers the government a bureaucratic institution responsible for policymaking and administration and a site where governance practices shape problems. This study is significant as it contributes to the existing literature on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda by using a different perspective to analyse the obstacles faced by women in South Sudan amidst secessionist and post-independence sub-national conflicts. The literature presented in this chapter builds the framework for understanding women's situation during war and in post-conflict situations.

### 3. Theoretical Foundation

As mentioned in chapter 1, section 1.3, this chapter will provide detailed information about the feminist theory of power and agency, which will be used together with Carol Bacchi's *What's the problem represented to be?* (WPR) as it relates to questions B, 4 and 5 of the WPR. Several feminist scholars have developed and discussed the feminist theory and provided insight into gaining knowledge of power and agency. Hence, the theory has advantages derived from a history of feminist activism. It is valuable for this study since it will help shed insight into how power functions in patriarchal societies like South Sudan and how it moulds women's ability to act and make decisions. The **first** section will present the general feminist theory and introduce the feminist theory of power and agency. The **second** section will present the concepts of power and agency and explain how and why the thesis uses this theory regarding the research objectives.

#### 3.1 Introduction to Feminist Theory

The feminist theory is a variety of political movements, ideologies and social movements that share a general objective: to advance women's political, economic, personal, and social rights. According to Biana (2020, p. 15), the new definition of feminism does not only fight for the equality of women and men in the same class, but it fights to get rid of sexist oppression and exploitation without disregarding other forms of oppression concerning racism, classism, imperialism, and others. Hence, it is a countermeasure to the systematic oppression and marginalisation of women surrounding differing points of view. According to Ropers-Huilman (2002), feminist theory is founded on three main principles:

1. Women have something invaluable to contribute to every aspect of the world.
2. The oppression of women has made them unable to achieve their potential concerning receiving rewards or gaining full participation in society.
3. Feminist research should do more than critique when working towards social transformation.

The history of modern Western feminism is divided into three temporal "waves", each dealing with different aspects of the same feminist issues. According to Hewitt (2010, p. 2), the concept of waves originated from Irish activist Frances Power Cobbe in 1884 as she shared that movements are like ocean rides. The *first wave* of feminism began in the Western world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rampton (2008) reported that it focused on achieving women's suffrage. The *second*

*wave* occurred during the 1960's and 1980's. Therefore, it unfolded in the context of the antiwar and civil rights movements and the growing self-consciousness of various marginalised groups worldwide. The second wave differed from the first because it “drew in women of colour and developing nations seeking sisterhood and solidarity in claiming women's struggle as a class struggle” (ibid, p. 8). Therefore, its primary target is the growing self-consciousness of minority groups. The *third wave* is considered the time frame from the 1990s to the present and is informed by postcolonial and postmodern thinking. As Jain (2020) claims, it focuses on moving from communal objectives to individual rights. Therefore, Hundleby (2020) highlights that third-wave feminists try to show the diverse range of exploitation and oppression through the attributes of age, race, and class. Hence, it breaks constraining gender boundaries, including what it deems essentialist boundaries set by earlier waves. The *fourth wave* was developed around 2012 to empower women by creating gender equality in society via Internet facilities. In congruence with Jain, women share their experiences of sexual abuse on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X.

*Liberal feminism* is a traditional perspective established as part of the first wave of feminism. It is often the root of analogy when deconstructing contemporary conceptualisations of feminism. Jaggar (1983) and Tong (2009, p. 2) argue that liberal feminists do not hold the mistaken belief that women are inherently less intellectually and physically capable than men. For this reason, this perspective is concerned with levelling the playing field so that women can seek the same opportunities as men and excel in various fields. Further, liberal feminists stress the importance of individual rights. Hence, the liberal feminism approach is concerned with women's equality with men, and it disagrees with patriarchy (Wolf, 2007). *Radical feminism* is the second most prominent form of feminism. According to Mackay (2015), radical feminists believe that liberal feminist perspectives are not comprehensive enough to address the centuries of individual, institutional, and systematic oppression that have ensued. Thus, radical feminism has the viewpoint within feminism that calls for a radical rearrangement of society in which masculine hegemony is eliminated in all social and economic contexts. Rowland and Klein (2012), highlight that it is called radical because it seeks to address the root cause of the problem, patriarchy, and the system, not its manifestations. Therefore, the authors argue that radical feminists want to get rid of patriarchy by challenging existing social norms and institutions instead of through a purely political process. Hence, this involves challenging the idea of traditional gender roles by going against the female exploitation of women and raising public awareness about issues of rape and violence against women (ibid).

*Marxist feminism*, used as synonymous with socialist feminism, incorporates perspectives of social justice and socioeconomic differences. Jackson and Jones (1998) highlight that social feminism is a branch that emphasises public and private spheres concerning women's lives and argues that liberation can only be achieved through striving to end the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression. *Socialist feminism* broadens Marxist feminism's argument for the centrality of capitalism in women's oppression and radical feminist theory of the role of gender and patriarchy (Amstrong, 2020). Considering that women have been viewed as the property of men and essential cogs in the capitalist machine from a commodities perspective for many centuries, Marxist feminists argue for the destruction of the capitalist society since this will, in turn, lead to gender equality. This perspective speaks to unequal pay, obstacles to achieving tenure or excelling in a particular field, and the typical absence of family-oriented policies at many institutions and national higher education organisations (ibid).

There are many different variations and conceptualisations of feminism. Although not all-inclusive, the feminist theory of power and agency extends the variations of feminism previously mentioned in the paragraphs above. The theory focuses on gender, and it comes from the broader feminist movement, which has struggled for women's equal rights and gender equality. For this reason, it is vital for the study since it sheds insights into how power functions within patriarchal societies (Snow et al., 2004). O'Hara and Clement (2018) report that the feminist theory of power and agency can be considered a lens for analysing policy. Therefore, such a lens sheds insight into how gender-based discrimination and the lack of equal opportunity for women concerning women's agency shape and create policies. Against this background, the study has merged Bacchi's WPR approach with the feminist theory of power and agency to comprehensively understand how gender dynamics and power relations shape the SSNAP formulation, implementation, and impact.

### 3.2 Core Concepts within Feminist Theory

**Power** is a fundamental concept in feminism, providing insight into how gender hierarchies are created, maintained, and resisted within social structures (Allen, 1999). Therefore, it is the central concept used within feminist theory to analyse gender inequality, oppression, and social change. Allen claims that power refers to an individual's ability to influence or control the behaviours, actions, and decisions of others. Additionally, it can manifest in various forms, including economic, social, and cultural power (ibid). For this reason, Okin (1978, p. 170) claims that examining power necessitates studying the conceptions of power, which have played a role in influencing feminist

theory. In the following I will discuss the three conceptions of power. First is understanding power as domination, which is the most influential conception throughout the history of the feminist movement. According to Allen (1998, p. 22), it comes from the feminist vested interest in uncovering and gaining knowledge of the systematic relations of sexist, racist, heterosexist, and class-based domination and subordination. The author claims that understanding power as a social good is a resource that women must have since the distribution between men and women is currently unequal.

For this reason, the goal of feminism is to redistribute this positive resource so that both men and women have power equally distributed. In agreement with Mill (1997), who claims that women need to be granted access to resources such as political power, among other things that men have most if not all and that women do not possess. Hence, the problem that feminism aims to correct is the underrepresentation of women in the political sphere. Therefore, the problem concerning power is the problem of distribution among men and women. The solution would be to give women equal political power opportunities (Allen, 1998). In contrast, Allen has also criticised the narrow focus on domination as she claims that feminists have clouded the power that women can exercise, which in turn has intentionally represented women as victims (*ibid*, p. 22).

Okin (1989) argues for the concept of power, claiming that the principles of justice must be extended to the private sphere of the family. Thus, she goes further than Mill (1997) by extending the conception of power as a resource currently being denied to women to include the relationship between women and the state and between women and their husbands in traditional patriarchal societies. For this reason, she highlights that women should have equal access to valuable resources in the family, workplace, and public sphere since she argues that the contemporary gendered-structured family treats women unjustly because the benefits and burdens of family life are distributed unfairly between men and women. Okin claims that this unjust redistribution of power and other resources in the family is due to various institutional and structural social factors. However, she underscores that the anchor of it all is the gender division of paid and unpaid labour and the corresponding cultural system of valuation that views productive labour as valuable and unpaid reproductive labour valueless (Okin, 1989).

Second, Allen (1998, p. 23) argues that power is empowerment since it theorises power and resistance. Okin (1989) agrees and contends that power as empowerment means looking into the

power that women can exercise despite their subordination since such power makes women's everyday lives worth living. Further, she claims that it also makes opposition to domination a possibility. Allen emphasises the importance of recognising and challenging power imbalances to create more equitable and just societies. The author argues for disrupting existing power structures, advocating for social and policy changes, and promoting alternative narratives and practices that empower marginalised genders. Okin and Mill's (1997) redistributive model of power has been critiqued by Young (1990, p.31) as he argues that conceptualising power in redistributive terms means that one is conceiving power as something possessed by individuals in more significant or fewer amounts, which in turn obscures the fact that power is a relation rather than a thing and that looking at power in the lens of master and subject relationship misses the larger structure of agents and actions that mediates between two agents in power relations.

In this view, Allen's (1998) conception of power is understanding that power is not a resource that can be possessed, distributed, or redistributed but understating it with male domination and female subordination. The author's conception comes from radical feminists like Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon. Hence, this perspective of power with domination and domination with master relations is where gender is created and reinforced. Allen further argues that feminism does not want to put women in a position of having power on the same footing as men but to take down the system of male domination and female subordination. Additionally, she states that gender differences are not natural or innate. Hence, the author rejects the claims of the existing power imbalances since they claim that such an understanding of gender is wrong in assuming that the differences between men and women are problematic.

Following Allen (1998), the third view has developed as a response to the deficiencies in the conceptions of power as a resource and power as domination. Thus, it investigates a more positive conception of power, which is power as empowerment—the ability to empower and transform oneself, others, and the world (*ibid*). For this reason, it is concerned with the unique skills and traits that women have and that have been undervalued by misogynist cultures. Such a perspective sees power as something positive that can grow out of feminine traits, capacities, or practices in the sense that the power of women is the baseline for a revision of the masculinist conceptions of social and political life that have been at the spearhead of Western political thought (*ibid*). Additionally, she highlights that women emphasise the care and maintenance of relationships with children, other adults, and the earth. For this reason, Allen argues that feminists point to the perspective of care as



the groundwork for a beneficial understanding of power as empowerment that should be the backbone for a feminist revision of society.

Allen (1998) highlights how empowerment theorists such as Sara Ruddick and Virginia Held have zeroed in on the mother-child relationship as the most fundamental in understanding women's unique perspective on social life. She argues that mothering is central to the feminist revision of society. Mothering requires women to preserve, nurture and empower their children; thus, mothers' preserving and nurturing capabilities are the basis for a new feminist understanding of social interaction, a new way to think about power (ibid, p. 27). Gilligan (1982) agrees and argues that re-examining power from a woman's standpoint is vital since women have reached the highest stage of moral development. The author claims that development should be understood as rare, not autonomous. Hence, when women learn to integrate care for themselves and others, they experience a sense of empowerment, and they gain acknowledgement of their power and worth (Allen, 1998, p. 31).

**Agency** is the second key concept of feminist theory. Butler (2006) explains that agency is an individual's ability to impact the world independently or autonomously. Further, it involves the ability to challenge and navigate power dynamics. Therefore, the question of agency arises when we are concerned with more significant concepts such as autonomy, freedom, rationality, and moral authority (ibid, p. 42). However, agency is more complex since it can mean different things depending on the cultural context and individuals. Sharma (2017) claims that agency is socially understood variably and unevenly. In this context, some groups have more agency than others in that liberal feminists have been able to show that men and women have different access to autonomy and freedom, which in turn means that they are constituted as different subjects. Constraints to freedom may arise due to various factors such as socioeconomic status, gender, race, sexuality, disability, and intersecting forms of discrimination (ibid).

Hooks (2000) concurs and argues that various aspects of intersectionality mentioned above also influence an individual's agency. The author claims that the concept of intersectionality recognises that individuals hold several overlapping identities, which he believes influence their experiences of power and oppression. In this context, Hooks emphasises the intertwined nature of groups in society and how the different aspects of social identity connect to generate extraordinary experiences of inequality and discrimination. The main point is that an intersectional lens contributes to how social

identities and power structures influence individuals' agency experiences (ibid). Shteynberg (2022) further argues that agency can be a collective or individual experience. He contends that collective forms of agency, such as social movements and community organising, anchor marginalised groups because they offer a platform whereby resources can be mobilised to challenge oppression and demand social development. In contrast, he argues that individual agency requires empowerment, resistance, and daily expression of one's identity.

Following Disch and Hawkesworth (2016), power can only be analysed with agency since it is used to gain insight into issues such as freedom and constraint. Thus, feminists are highly concerned with power and freedom since women have been repeatedly denied the status of autonomous social actors, which men have enjoyed. The authors emphasise how women are still limited in various ways than men in the same societies because they are not able to move about without being afraid of harassment or physical violence. Additionally, women are paid differently for the same work as men and much more. Many feminists, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, have focused on what they believe to be the barriers to women's enjoyment of equal freedom (ibid). According to Disch and Hawkesworth, women in modern times have been denied the status of the individual. Hence, they claim that institutions that have served the purpose of furthering the goals of the structure of patriarchy, marriage and family are the same institutions that have led many feminists to argue that they oppressed and constrained women (ibid).

Disch and Hawkesworth (2016) argue that agency for women within institutions such as marriage and family is worth investigating since subjects are constructed by larger structures that are out of their control and are constantly constituted within these structures that ascribe an identity to them. The authors also highlight that the power of the structure keeps its subjects intact in a manner that they play their respective roles and positions, making the subjects internalise their roles as natural and desirable (ibid). Therefore, it is to be expected that women will be predisposed to accept subordinate social positions. Abrams (1999) argues that women can discover their value and gain authentic agency through solidarity with feminist protesters and dissenters. Thus, individuals can resist and challenge constraints to create possibilities for change and transformation. Allen (2005) highlights that working together promotes the voices of marginalised groups and promotes equity. For this reason, she underscores that women's voices and collective action are critical strategic moves when challenging patriarchal power structures to effect social change. Therefore, it is

essential to recognise and value women's agency because it can be channelled into challenging gender inequalities and promoting social change.

Against this background, by using the feminist theory of power and agency on the SSNAP, the study will gain a multidimensional perspective in comprehending how gender intersects with power in the contextual background of peacebuilding processes and conflict resolution activities. As stated by Hove and Ndawana (2017), many war-ridden societies, such as South Sudan, have deep-rooted patriarchal customs and practices that impede women from taking part in decision-making processes while simultaneously reinforcing discrimination based on gender. Thus, using the feminist theory on the SSNAP will assist the study in identifying how the policy document approaches and challenges the customs and practices and how it mitigates and promotes women's empowerment in leadership and agency in peacebuilding activities.

## 4. Methodology

The thesis examines the discourses of the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) to identify whether they can be linked to the feminist theory of power and agency. Therefore, the feminist theory of power and agency will be used with Carol Bacchi's analytical model – *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR) as a method to overcome fundamental biases arising from using a single method (Noble & Heale, 2019, p. 67). The **first** section addresses why the study has used a single case study. **Second**, there will be a discussion about the material used in the analysis section, and **third** is a summary of the SSNAP policy document. The **fourth** section introduces Bacchi's WPR approach and why the thesis has chosen to apply it. **Fifth**, it discusses how the WPR questions will be methodologically used to guide and investigate the SSNAP in the analysis section.

### 4.1 Case Study

The analysis is a single case study of the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) for 2015-2020. The SSNAP was chosen for its uniqueness as the first and only National Action Plan in South Sudan concerning the WPS agenda. Nonetheless, UN Women Africa (2022) reports that there has been dialogue concerning a new SSNAP for 2023-2027; however, there have been no concrete developments. A single case study research design has been chosen due to several benefits. Following Tumele (2015, p. 71), a case study is “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth”. Thus, it offers room for comprehensive analysis and a thorough and detailed analysis concerning the operation's background, factors, and dynamics. Hence, the study will take a closer look into the history, politics, cultural circumstances, and socio-economic dimensions that influence the formulation and enforcement of the SSNAP.

According to Lijphart (1971, p. 691), the most significant advantage of using a case study lies in the fact that focusing on a single case, such as the SSNAP policy document, can provide rich and detailed data, including qualitative information on document analysis on indicators related to women's empowerment and gender equality. Such data is valuable to the study since it will give a broad and unique perspective on the challenges South Sudanese women face when trying to advance their rights. Liphart highlights that case studies can be distinguished into six categories. However, the study uses the interpretative case study, whereby the SSNAP was chosen because of an interest in the case and not for theory building (ibid, p. 692). In contrast, single case studies have also been the subject of several criticisms. The most common issues involve interrelated issues such as external validity and methodological rigour. Verschuren (2003) raises concerns about the

external validity or generalisability of focusing on one case study, such as the SSNAP. He argues that single case studies may only apply to some contexts with different economic, socio-political, and cultural dynamics than those in South Sudan. However, Lijphart (1971, p. 692) argues that considering interpretative case studies are studies in “applied science”, their primary purpose is to shed light on the case; thus, the situation of the women via the SSNAP and not to generalise the findings.

Although Verschuren (2003) makes a valid criticism, it is of little relevance to this study since this research study is not intended to be generalisable; on the contrary, it is one of particularisation. Therefore, it focuses on a specific country’s policy, and it aims to provide a thorough analysis of the research objectives. According to Maoz (2002, p. 164-165), the second issue with conducting single case studies is that it absorbs the author from any methodological considerations, resulting in freeform research whereby anything goes. Yin also shares this concern (2009, p. 12-15), arguing that the absence of systematic procedures of case study research is the most significant concern because of a relative absence of methodology guidelines. Nonetheless, the study agrees with Bennett and Elman (2010, pp. 499-500) when they highlight the unfairness of this critique since the study will use political scientist Carol Bacchi’s WPR approach as a method.

The study is aware that a single case study limits its opportunities to conduct a comparative analysis of other countries, which would have provided valuable insight and lessons learned (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). However, considering the study’s research objectives, a single case study is the most appropriate choice. Further, the author’s human rights background and prejudice may influence the analysis and interpretation, leading to biased findings and conclusions. Nonetheless, by using the feminist theory of power and agency in conjunction with the WPR approach, the thesis is confident that it will be able to conduct a thorough, non-biased policy analysis, ensuring internal validity.

## 4.2 Material

The South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) 2015-2020 is the primary material used for the research. It is a policy document focusing on actions and measures promoting women’s participation in peace and security processes and addressing gender-based violence. The document has been selected due to its relevance to the research questions, which aims to identify the discourses disclosed in the SSNAP and determine whether they can be linked to the concepts of

power and agency. The material analysis consists of qualitative data since it contains various information about gender, peace, and security issues in the country. The policy document is eighty-five pages long, and it is a government publication source containing conflict data, demographic data, gender data, peacebuilding data, violence against women data, and legal and policy data. The SSNAP can easily be accessed through the website ([1325snaps.peacewomen.org](http://1325snaps.peacewomen.org)), run by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The oldest women's peace organisation in the world that works for feminist peace by strengthening women's meaningful participation, transforming gendered power, and bridging local gender conflict analysis with global efforts to implement a holistic WPS agenda (ibid).

According to Paltridge (2006, p. 3) and Marshall (1994, p.92), discourse analysis concerns language use. Therefore, it describes and analyses spoken and written interactions in which language plays an active, constructive role. Bryman (2012, p. 528) claims that critical discourse analysis is a different version of discourse analysis heavily influenced by critical theorist Michael Foucault. Thus, it seeks to connect language and its modes of use to the significance of power and social difference in society. The data obtained from the policy document will be reread to highlight the exact words that appear to capture critical thoughts or concepts that reveal the nature of the discourse in the policy. Bryman claims that discourse analysis differs from content analysis. Hence, it is the most appropriate form of analysis for answering this study's research questions because it emphasises the underlying meanings and power relations attributed to the text in use. Consequently, it takes the analysis exercise to a much deeper and more critical level than expected of content analysis, which begins and often ends with the manifest in a text (Fairclough, 1992).

Making use of secondary data as a context that helps the study to understand the SSNAP has several benefits. As a qualitative research method, documentary analysis of the SSNAP provides a straightforward, manageable, accessible, and cost-effective way to collect and analyse data. Thus, the primary advantage is that the SSNAP is a free online document that is cost and time-effective compared to primary data collection (Bryman, 2012). In contrast, the disadvantage of using secondary data is that it investigates other issues that are not in line with the research objectives, such as child rights legislation and does not provide sufficient contextual information or nuances relevant to the specific context of South Sudan. Consequently, it is challenging to comprehend the degree of complexity concerning the conflict, gender dynamics, and peacebuilding in South Sudan fully. However, the study will use additional secondary data such as a report by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, a report by UN Humanitarian and a publication supported

by the United States Agency for International Development to help strengthen the analysis and to bridge the necessary gaps. According to Johannesson and Perjons (2014), another concern related to using secondary data is assessing the credibility and authenticity of the sources. However, since the research will mainly focus on the SSNAP, a formal document made by the MGCSW, and the reports previously mentioned, the research can be sure of the authenticity and credibility of the policy document, strengthening the research's validity.

#### 4.3 South Sudan National Action Plan 2015-2022

This section explains the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP) initiatives on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security Resolutions. The SSNAP outlines specific actions that the government of South Sudan and other actors, such as donors and civil society, need to implement UNSCR 1325 fully. The implementation of the SSNAP focuses on priorities and actions constructed around significant objectives that aim to improve the status of women regarding peace and security. The mandate falls under four categories: prevention, participation, protection, relief, and recovery. Further, it is based on **three thematic themes** that cover the four pillars of UNSCR 1325, which will be described in detail hereafter.

##### ***4.3.1 Increase women's effective participation in leadership and peacebuilding and strengthen gender perspectives in the South Sudan reconstruction process.***

###### **➤ Strategic objective 1**

The MGCSW first wants the government to review the laws and policies that hinder women from participating in peacebuilding and conflict resolution to ensure that gender-sensitive laws are introduced for the equal opportunity and protection of women in employment. (SSNAP, pp. 32-33). Second, it aims to identify and address the barriers to women's participation in formal and informal politics and peacebuilding. Thus, it aims to support collaboration and cohesion among women in leadership positions through cultural immersion programs and training. Fourth, the MGCSW wants girls to be encouraged to take part in community development, and it also wants them to be provided with education concerning their rights and gender equity (ibid, 34-36). Fifth, it wants to strengthen the involvement of women in traditional and customary decision-making and peacebuilding initiatives. Therefore, it wants to intentionally involve women in developing early warning systems that can monitor potential crises with attention to gender aspects (ibid, pp. 37-39).

### ➤ **Strategic Objective 2**

The MGCSW wants the government to plan and review education curricula to empower the women of South Sudan. The aim is to decrease illiteracy rates and challenge gender-based stereotypes by highlighting the contribution of women in leadership. Second, it wants the development of structures that effectively implement child rights legislation to enforce a minimum age of marriage age laws as well as the elimination of discriminatory cultural practices that impact girls (SSNAP, 2015, p. 40). Third, the MGCSW wants to advocate against discrimination in education based on cultural attitudes to decrease the burden of domestic responsibilities on girls so that they can have improved academic performance. Thus, it wants the government to increase the funding for interventions such as sanitary provisions, boarding schools, and quality teacher incentives to enhance girl-child retention in schools and create safer learning environments.

### ➤ **Strategic objective 3**

The MGCSW wants the government to integrate women's needs into macro and micro-economic policies to promote their employment and income in the formal and informal sectors by reviewing laws, policies and structural barriers that maintain women's poverty. Second, it wants a critical analysis of the national budget priorities and an international assistance plan to assess how women will benefit (SSNAP, 2015, p.43). This includes conducting gender-sensitive budget analysis to understand the impact on women, empowering women leaders to influence budget priorities and holding the government accountable for gender equality commitments, healthcare quality and water sanitation services. Third, it wants initiatives that aim to facilitate women's access to lending institutions and financial markets for substantial funding to build the capacity of women entrepreneurs and facilitate networking and information sharing to develop a robust association of women entrepreneurs in South Sudan (ibid, p. 44).

### ➤ **Strategic objective 4**

The MGCSW aims to involve women at all levels in disarmament efforts, including community sensitisation, weapon collection and convincing armed individuals to surrender. The aim is to integrate women's voices in drafting disarmament operational guidelines to address crime and promote women's contributions to conflict prevention. Second, it wants the government to revise the eligibility criteria concerning including women forced into combat without proper identification to ensure their participation in Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration programmes (DDR). The



aim is to provide safe spaces for abducted women during demobilisation, prioritising their safety and confidentiality (ibid, pp. 45- 46).

#### ***4.3.2 Support security sector reforms and professionalise security sector institutions to enable them to implement UNSCR 1325***

##### **➤ Strategic objective 1**

The MGCSW wants the government to align its security policy frameworks with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and ensure the full participation of women in the security sector and the protection of their rights. The aim is to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and build confidence in security institutions by respecting civilians (SSNAP, p. 49). Second, it wants the development of gender policies within Safety Service International (SSIs) to ensure the understanding and application of gender concepts and human rights standards at all ranks. Thus, it wants the existing training curriculum revised to integrate UNSCR 1325, gender, human rights, women's rights and SGBV issues (ibid, pp. 50- 51). The goal is to ensure that gender perspectives are embedded throughout the training and address critical topics like human trafficking and violence.

##### **➤ Strategic objective 2**

The MGCSW wants the government to campaign for the increased recruitment of women in the military, police, and prisons to boost institutional support for the participation and representation of women. The aim is to include women in security forces, genuinely fostering local ownership and changing perceptions of security institutions (SSNAP, 2015, p. 53). Second, it wants recruitment policies with quotas for female recruits to meet constitutional requirements for women's representation at all decision-making levels within SSIs. Therefore, it wants to prioritise training and promotion of qualified women in SSI to enhance operational effectiveness and facilitate critical roles such as conflict resolution and specialised functions like body searches for women and interrogation of survivors (ibid, p. 54). Third, it wants to improve the working conditions, remove obstacles to women's advancement and implement transparent human resources management systems to recruit, retain and promote women in the security and law enforcement sectors. Hence, it wants to introduce gender equality advisor roles and establish a gender reporting mechanism within SSIs (ibid, pp. 55-56).

➤ **Strategic objective 3**

The MGCSW wants the government to prioritise training SSI staff officers and men in SGBV trauma management to handle cases sensitively, enforce disciplinary measures and uphold command responsibility (SSNAP, 2015, p. 56). Therefore, it wants more women officers to be recruited and trained in crime prevention units to support SGBV prevention efforts in line with international standards (ibid, pp.57- 59). Second, it wants an action plan to mainstream gender in military, police, and prison operations, ensuring women's unique roles and needs in decision-making are processed through transparent reviews and consultations. Thus, it wants gender advisors appointed to ensure that gender considerations in operational planning promote respect for civilians and rights, especially women. Fourth, it wants the development of anti-corruption codes to address the trivialisation of domestic violence cases and improve police responses to SGBV reports. Thus, it wants an expansion and improvement of prisons to cater to women and juveniles' specific needs, including healthcare, sanitation, and separation from male prisoners (ibid, p. 60)

***4.3.3 Strengthen efforts to prevent and protect women against any form of violence, prosecute perpetrators and increase support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence***

➤ **Strategic objective 1**

The MGCSW wants the South Sudanese government to abide by the relevant national laws to eliminate SGBV, reform outdated laws, and align domestic legal frameworks with international human rights standards, particularly in addressing discrimination against women. Hence, it wants a commitment to ratify international human rights treaties and conventions to protect and promote women's rights. Further, it wants full implementation of the SSNAP on UNSCR 1325 to protect women affected by conflict, enhance the participation of women in governance and provide healing and recovery opportunities for women who have experienced violence (SSNAP, pp. 61-62). Second, it wants to strengthen the capacity of legislative bodies to produce and implement gender-sensitive legislation, review outdated laws and promote women's rights and equality through robust parliamentary action. Therefore, it wants the condemnation of impunity for crimes against women, including SGBV, in conflict and post-conflict situations by ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators and implementing zero-tolerance policies.

➤ **Strategic objective 2**

The MGCSW wants the government to enhance judicial independence by enacting laws to govern the judiciary and ensure its separation from political pressures, particularly the Executive branch. Hence, it wants to support equitable and inclusive transnational justice mechanisms so that the government seeks to ensure a fair dispensation of justice, especially concerning violence against women and children (SSNAP, 2015, pp. 65-67). Second, it wants law enforcement officers to be trained, including police, to handle SGBV cases sensitively and efficiently, establish good relations between police and military, and provide support services and shelters to survivors. Thus, it wants to research harmful cultural and religious practices, sensitising communities and advocating for gender-just customary, traditional, and community-based justice mechanisms. Third, it wants to ensure accountability for perpetrators of SGBV, support legal aid services for survivors, improve record-keeping in justice institutions, and recruit social workers to assist survivors. (ibid, p.70 -73)

### ➤ **Strategic objective 3**

The MGCSW wants the government to increase funding for health services to improve accessibility and functionality, including better remuneration for medical personnel, and conduct training and awareness programmes for leaders and workers to address women's rights and girls' specific health needs resulting from armed conflict (SSNAP, 2015, p. 74). Therefore, it wants the development of a gender-sensitive public health strategy to address the physical and mental health needs of women and war survivors, providing free treatment and services. Second, it wants the government to train healthcare personnel to handle SGBV and support survivors effectively (ibid pp.75-77). Hence, it wants to establish units with health facilities to specifically address SGBV cases, offering essential medical services and trauma counselling. Further, it wants to establish mechanisms to collect and maintain gender-disaggregated data on SGBV cases for monitoring and assessing prevalence rates. Additionally, it wants to intensify efforts to provide HIV treatment, care and prevention services targeting women, integrating anti-SGBV messages. Third, it wants to engage male leaders to campaign against SGBV through awareness-raising and redefining perceptions of masculinity (ibid, pp 78 -80).

#### 4.4 Introduction to *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR)

Political scientist Carol Bacchi developed the *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR) to critically analyse public policies regarding how policy issues are created and represented.

Therefore, it is concerned with questioning how governing comes to pass (Bacchi, 2018, p. 3). The

author claims that governing takes place through problematisation and that how a problem is framed and represented in policy debates has profound implications for the proposed and implemented solutions. Thus, she emphasises asking questions about the sources of policies and how they operate while specifically gaining knowledge on how governing comes about regarding the effects on those governed (ibid, p. 10). The WPR framework claims that governments do not necessarily solve problems. Hence, Bacchi (2009) believes that governments produce “problems” as specific kinds of problems. Therefore, recognition is central to her approach since policy issues are not neutral or objective; instead, she argues that they are socially constructed through specific discourses, narratives, and power dynamics (ibid, pp. 252 -255).

Bacchi (2018, pp. 13–14) asserts the importance of problematisation, balances of power and knowledge practices. By asking, “*What’s the Problem Represented to be?*” she aims to highlight the critical examination of the underlying assumptions, values and interests that shape a specific policy agenda. In other words, WPR challenges the dominant understanding of policy issues and advocates for alternative perspectives and solutions (ibid, p. 8). Following Bacchi, focusing on the mentioned aspects will allow for a critical analysis of the SSNAP, highlighting how problem representations are produced regarding the production’s materialisation and the outcomes that come to pass. Thus, the study will be able to provide advanced insights when addressing gender issues in a conflict-ridden nation like South Sudan.

In practical terms, the thesis will investigate the political discourses in the SSNAP by critically analysing how gender issues are framed and represented within the plan. Thus, it will identify the problem by examining the stated objectives and priorities, including the key issues the SSNAP aims to address regarding gender equality, women’s empowerment, and peace and security. The basis for this is that for the WPR framework, government in the broad sense is best approached as a problematising activity in the sense that for something to be governed, it needs to be problematised (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.181; Packer, 2003, p.136). Therefore, problematisation is a helpful point of departure when considering how governing emerges. Hence, analysing representations to investigate how gender perspectives are being outlined within the SSNAP will be done by paying close attention to the language being used, the narratives being represented, and the underlying assumptions, in addition to examining the perspectives and experiences of women. This discussion will be further elaborated on in sections 4.5 and 5.1.

The WPR approach encompasses a checklist of six interrelated questions. However, the study will only use some of the questions because going through all the questions will involve many repetitions, as Bacchi (2009) states. Further, she also claims that it is optional to explicitly address all the questions in the analysis section because the point of analysis determines which questions are foregrounded (ibid, p. 101). Nonetheless, she highlights the importance of keeping all the questions in mind as one considers the research project since it offers exceptional foresight. Hence, considering the study's research objective, the thesis will use questions 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the WPR. The study is aware that Tawell and McCluskey (2022) advise against separating the questions since applying all the questions will help the thesis by improving the analysis and rectifying bias, thus strengthening the research's internal validity. However, the choice to only use questions 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the WPR in the analysis section was carefully considered regarding the research's questions.

#### 4.5 Operationalisation of the WPR

This section discusses how the WPR questions will be used in the analysis section.

---

##### 1. What's the "problem" represented to be in the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP)?

---

The first question is a clarification exercise (Bacchi, 2009, p.3). Therefore, one needs to identify a problem representation of the strategy. Hence, we should work backwards from a policy to "read off" and investigate the problem within it (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 20). Thus, if a government proposes to do something, what is it hoping to change? Hence, what does it produce as the problem? Therefore, it is worth considering the policy objects and subjects regarding the people who become problematised. Nonetheless, due to the complex nature of policies, finding multiple problem representations in a particular policy, such as the SSNAP, is possible. Consequently, it can take time to identify a problem representation; however, Bacchi (2009, p. 4) underscores that when coming across an overlapping problem representation, the primary goal should be to identify the most dominant problem representation.

---

##### 2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?

---

After establishing the most dominant problem representation through critical inquiry of a problem representation, the WPR focuses on the deep-seated cultural values that are taken for granted. However, they underpin the debate (Bacchi, 2009). The primary task of this question is to determine and evaluate policymakers' understandings concerning the opinions and discourses that had been instrumental in identifying the problem representations (ibid, p. 4). Thus, it is not policymakers' assumptions, meanings, or beliefs but those that can be identified within the policy representation (ibid, p. 5). For this reason, Bacchi highlights the importance of going beyond what is in people's heads. She considers the shape of arguments, the forms of knowledge that arguments rely upon and the forms of knowledge necessary for states to be accorded intelligibility. Hence, the task is not to analyse why something happens but instead how something is happening and what meanings, beliefs or assumptions must be established for that to happen. Accordingly, the analysis section will engage with the discourse on the SSNAP policy document using Foucauldian archaeology and discourse analysis, as Bacchi suggests.

According to (Bletsas & Beasley, 2012, p.32), this entails identifying key concepts and categories and interrogating the binaries operating in policy. Firstly, identifying *key concepts* within the problem representation will aid the thesis in unpacking the underlying meanings and beliefs applied to the concepts, shaping the policy-making process and outcome. Bacchi (2009, p. 8) claims that policies usually include many concepts, which can be understood as abstract labels that are frequently open-ended and thus strongly contested. Given that concepts are understood in numerous ways due to competing political visions, this also signifies that individuals apply varying meanings to them. Therefore, the task is to identify the concepts within the problem representation and analyse the meanings or beliefs applied to the concepts.

Second, identifying *categories* is essential because Bacchi (2009) emphasises that they are crucial in governing materialisations concerning organisations and classifications. For this reason, she claims that it is vital to challenge how categories give meaning to problem representations and not unquestioningly accept such categories as "normal". Hence, she underscores the importance of identifying how categories give meaning to representations of problems (ibid, p.9). Third, identifying and investigating the identified *binaries* in a policy document is essential because it helps to simplify complex issues by bringing them down to dichotomous categories. Thus, binaries will assist in reflecting on how power differs among various groups (Bacchi, 2009, p. 7). For this reason, examining the binaries in a policy document can reveal the underlying power dynamics and

hierarchies responsible for shaping how the problem is being framed and addressed in the document because public debate is commonly built on binaries. Additionally, investigating binaries in the SSNAP will help the study delve into the various dimensions of identity concerning gender, class, race, and sexuality that intersect and shape policy outcomes (ibid).

---

#### 4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences?

Can the “problem” be thought about differently?

---

The main task of this question is to examine how particular issues and perspectives are “silenced” in the representation of policy problems. Therefore, this includes identifying what has been overlooked and looking at the implications of these silences because some policies are constrained by how they represent problems. Hence, by reverting to the discourse analysis conducted in the second question, key concepts, categories, and binaries will assist in identifying where misstatements of problems lie because, as previously mentioned, binaries simplify complex experiences. Following Bacchi (2009, p. 13), the thesis will reveal the limits of how a problem is represented in the policy by uncovering the discrepancies within the problem representation.

---

#### 5. What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?

---

The main objective of this question is to critically investigate the problem representation to identify how it works to be beneficial to some while excluding others in addition to what can be done. Hence, the thesis will investigate the perceived effects produced by the problem representation by looking at the three interlinked effects presented by Bacchi (2009). **First**, discursive effects will examine how problem representations are identified in addition to the discourses in which they are framed since it can be quite a challenging task that can limit one’s analysis. However, Bacchi claims that discursive effects are a type of silencing in a WPR approach that needs to be carefully examined and monitored. Discursive effects can be identified in questions two and four in the analysis section. **Second**, subjectification effects have to do with how subjects are shaped through discourse because, according to Bacchi (2009, p. 16), we become specific types of subjects through how policy creates social connections and situates us within them.

Bacchi (2009) highlights how subjectification is challenging to grasp. However, she argues that how we understand ourselves and others around us can be understood as an extension of how policies have produced specific subjects. For this reason, she emphasises how problem representations within policies frequently position social groups against each other, which serves the government's purpose of encouraging a specific desired behaviour by the majority (ibid, p. 16). Further, Bacchi argues that problem representations often include implications concerning who is at fault for the problem. In this context, another task within the WPR approach is to identify these attributions of responsibility to clarify if the responsibility of the problem is directed correctly, as well as explain and examine what kinds of effects follow from specific attributions of responsibility. **Third**, according to Bacchi (2009, p. 17), lived effects will help the analysis investigate the material impact of problem representations that can limit or enable access to resources or relieve emotional or material distress. Thus, it concerns the impact that problem representations can have materially. She argues that how problems are represented in policies directly affects people's lives, and this effect in real life affects our lives.



## 5. Analysis and Findings

This chapter analyses South Sudan's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. As previously mentioned, the study aims first to investigate the discourses in the SSNAP and examine whether they can be linked to the concept of power and agency. Therefore, it will relate to Carol Bacchi's *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR) with the feminist theory of power and agency to conduct the analysis. **First** section 5.1 addresses question **A** of the research study, including WPR questions 1 and 2. **Second**, section 5.2 addresses question **B** and thus WPR questions 4 and 5.

### 5.1 Political Discourses in SSNAP

---

#### 1. What's the “problem” of women, peace and security represented to be in the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP)?

---

The first question aims to conduct a clarification exercise. The assignment is to determine what the South Sudanese Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW) proposes should be done in the policy document. Hence, investigating how the strategy gives shape and meaning to specific issues, conditions, or phenomena by indirectly constructing them as particular kinds of problems since Bacchi (2016, p. 16) highlights that “problem representation” or “problematization” is the indirect construct of “problems”. Thus, the study will critically examine how the issue of women, peace, and security is defined concerning what aspects are being emphasised or left out to reveal whose interests are being backed by the framing.

The MGCSW introduced the SSNAP, intending to reduce the effects of warfare on women by increasing women's representation and participation in decision-making processes (SSNAP, 2015). To discern what the MGCSW produces as a “problem” to the changes, one needs to look at the reasoning and concerns rooted in the strategy. The policy measures of the SSNAP are aimed at various stakeholders such as members of communities and citizens, security institutions and forces, civil society organisations, international organisations, and government institutions (ibid). Hence, they are not aimed at just one specific group of people, which means the policy measures seek to address the root causes of conflict concerning promoting sustainable development and building a more gender-inclusive South Sudan by targeting various stakeholders.

The **first** identified problem representation as it relates to women, peace, and security is gendered power dynamics. The SSNAP (2015) underscores the need to include more women in decision-making and peacebuilding initiatives by challenging entrenched power structures. For instance, it raises discourse concerning how gender stereotypes are limiting women. It argues that the government must strengthen the National Assembly and state legislative assemblies' capacity to guarantee women's rights under national law by developing gender-responsive legislation (ibid, p. 64). By implementing this measure, the MGCSW hopes that the government will review and amend old national laws and regulations that maintain inequality as well as promote violence against women. The basis for this argument is that the government lacks a strong parliament with the needed resources and capabilities to engender legislation related to women's rights in national and state laws that can help get rid of inequality and violence against women (ibid).

In this context, women do not have control over their environment or the same political rights, resources, or authority as men, which means that they end up suffering an increase in domestic violence both during and after conflict, which is usually linked to shifting gender roles (SSNAP, 2018, p. 10). Therefore, the **second** identified problem representation is violence against women. The SSNAP brings up the discourse on the need for condemnation of crimes against women in war and post-conflict situations. For instance, the MGCSW argues that perpetrators of SGBV in the army, peacekeepers and government must be prosecuted and receive sentences appropriate to the offences committed (ibid, p. 65). The basis of this argument is that there needs to be a zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual abuse and exploitation of women. The SSNAP also addresses the need for female leaders and women-led organisations in to be encouraged and included in programs that work with healing and reconciliation work (ibid, p. 48). The main point of this goal is that women in the communities can help ex-male combatants overcome their frustrations and trauma when readjusting back to civilian life. Thus, by women providing counselling for traumatised survivors, they will, in turn, be helping themselves because it will decrease cases of domestic conflicts and abuse against women since the men will be able to deal with their traumas as well as the changed gender roles.

Moreover, the MGCSW wants to change customary laws and practices harmful to women, specifically focusing on SGBV to ensure positive and respectful compliance with women's and girl's rights (SSNAP, 2015, p. 68). The basis of this argument is that widespread SGBV across the country due to decades of armed conflict is a crisis that needs to be urgently addressed because of

the deficiencies in justice related to formal and customary manifestations. The policy underscores that the government's failure to protect women and children from violence by not punishing offenders has contributed to women feeling discriminated against as well as marginalised, which in turn heightens their status as victims of conflict, unable to enjoy the advantages of residing in an independent nation (ibid, pp. 18-19). Thus, the MGCSW wants customary laws to be aligned with the statutory laws, hence providing all victims of sexual violence equal protection under the law and equal access to justice.

The **third** identified problem representation in the SSNAP is the underrepresentation of women in peacebuilding and political processes. Because of the widespread belief in South Sudan that military operations are controlled by masculine values such as physical strength, courage and honour, women are excluded from military and political power positions. However, it is essential to note that the MGCSW highlights that in the absence of men during times of conflict, women take on leadership and decision-making opportunities; nonetheless, not much value is placed on what they offer (SSNAP, p. 17). Therefore, because of the marginalisation and exclusion of women, girls and some ethnic groups from socio-economic opportunities, decision-making, and peacebuilding processes, the MGCSW argues for developing and implementing policy measures that ensure women's meaningful participation in decision-making positions (ibid, p. 33). The MGCSW acknowledges the government's commitment to increasing women's representation and participation in leadership positions of power and decision-making by including an affirmative action clause in the Transitional Constitution that provides 25 per cent of women's representation in government institutions. Nonetheless, the SSNAP underscores that the clause has not been operationalised in all government sectors, such as justice, education, healthcare, and agriculture (ibid, p. 22).

In this context, the **fourth** identified problem representation is the lack of access to resources and services that women struggle with due to the differential impact of conflict on the security of women. The MGCSW brings up a discourse on the common abuses that women of South Sudan grapple with, such as the denial of access to education and employment opportunities, being denied property concerning land rights for married women and the right to inheritance and involuntary labour under the aegis of holding onto traditions and cultural practices (SSNAP, 2015). Therefore, the policy argues for the government to provide the relevant education and training for women to gain economic independence and sustainable development, participate in political and decision-

making processes, and access resources, opportunities, and public services (ibid, p. 43). Further, the document focuses on the budget priorities of the transnational assistance plans concerning the New Compact Deal and the national budget. The MGCSW claims that critical actors, including the government, state assemblies and donor agencies, need to have a gender perspective and work out how women can benefit from available national development assistance resources (ibid. p 46)

The SSNAP (2015, p. 18) also addresses the fact that after conflict, women are left with the responsibility of taking care of the family since men and the youth lack employment and most turn to alcohol dependence. Nonetheless, the document highlights that women face limited access to resources and services concerning women's healthcare, as mentioned previously. Therefore, the MGCSW underscores that women's reproductive health is given low priority when it comes to government planning and financing, which also makes it difficult for women to take care of their families after the conflict. For this reason, the leading cause of death and disability for women is pregnancy and child-related birth complications (ibid, p. 21). It is essential to emphasise that based on the overall changes proposed in the SSNAP policy, various problem representations have been identified, and they incorporate a couple of other interrelated ideas and narratives, following Bacchi's (2009, p. 56) observation that policies are not always straightforward and clearly defined. Therefore, Bacchi claims that several "problems" in a policy text can occasionally overlap or be embedded within each other. Hence, the study has identified four overlapping problem representations: gendered power dynamics, violence against women, access to resources and services, and representation and participation. However, the problem representations can be linked to a set of other interrelated "representations of problems" since they strengthen ways to give shape to a particular representation, which becomes the most dominant one.

Against this backdrop, although the policy measures are aimed at various stakeholders, most measures are explicitly aimed at the South Sudanese justice system in its formal and customary manifestations. Further, most measures can be linked back to the government since most of the critical actors such as the Ministry of Defence, Justice, Interior, Education, Labour, Public Service and HR Development all work for the government. Therefore, the concept of harmful legislation concerning its formal and customary laws and the lack of political will can be interpreted as interrelated in the SSNAP. Consequently, it is plausible to affirm that the policy measures specifically target the government due to its contradictory formal and customary laws and lack of political will to commit to and fully implement laws. Hence, the most dominant problem

representation of women's peace and security in the SSNAP policy document is considered to be contradictory formal and customary laws still practised due to the lack of coordination between the formal legal system and customary laws. Therefore, the MGCSW believes that the continuation of such laws leads to harmful practices that compromise the rights and dignity of the citizens of South Sudan, especially for women (SSNAP, 2015, p. 22).

The MGCSW claims that the justice system, as it relates to both formal and customary laws, is exacerbated by the extended periods of armed conflict, which have, in turn, left South Sudan as a very fragile state with a weakened economy, a broken structure of society, a devastated population and degraded communities (SSNAP, 2015, p. 27). Bacchi (2009) draws attention to the need to direct attention to the most dominant problem representation. Therefore, the four problem representations of the SSNAP that have been identified can all be traced back to the inadequate legal protection of women in both formal and customary laws due to the government's lack of political will. Therefore, the study has pinpointed the most dominant problem represented by the SSNAP policy document as the justice system of South Sudan's government's lack of political will to change unsatisfactory formal and customary laws that lead to harmful practices that undermine the rights and dignity of South Sudanese women.

---

## 2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the “problem” of women, peace, and security?

---

The second question is concerned with identifying the assumptions within the problem representation. Therefore, it aims to analyse how the government of South Sudan, concerning its formal and customary laws, is presented as the “problem” by investigating the binaries, categories and key concepts employed in the policy document. The justification for using this strategy is to help the analysis pinpoint how meaning is being created and used. Consequently, this leads to a more comprehensive understanding of what supports the problem representation by examining what is assumed regarding being taken for granted.

Regarding categorisations in the SSNAP policy document, the lack of political will to fully commit and change the justice system in South Sudan concerning formal and customary laws is being discussed with the violence against women, the lack of women participation in peacebuilding

processes, unsatisfactory legal and institutional frameworks, socio-economic empowerment and prevention and responses to gender-based violence. Hence, although there is a distinction between the categories previously mentioned in the policy document, all the categorisations appear to have a common thread: they are framing the government's justice system as weak and lacking a genuine political commitment to support the participation of women in peacebuilding initiatives. For instance, the MGCSW highlights that South Sudan is amending its justice system to ensure it meets the internationally agreed-upon standards. However, it also claims that males still dominate the justice system due to the standard requirements that are not in favour of women (SSNPA, 2015, p. 23). Another example in the policy document is how prisons in South Sudan are fully congested, and people stay in custody for several months without getting a court hearing due to the inadequate collection and recording of evidence by the police, which means that perpetrators of SGBV frequently walk free. Therefore, incompetency in South Sudan has proven to be a challenge for both the police and the justice sector, which means that many criminal cases are illegally handled by customary courts (ibid).

Moreover, various strategic actions in the SSNAP policy document indicate that South Sudan's justice mechanisms must provide women with appropriate justice mechanisms. To illustrate, the MGCSW have a call to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Gender, and National Civil Society Organisation to strengthen the juvenile department to initiate a discourse to tackle the policies, procedures as well as systems at the national and state levels to enable access to justice for juveniles with a focus on girls (SSNAP, 2015, p. 59). Further, the justice system of South Sudan has been reported to be undermined by corruption, which indicates a need for inspection of the prisons and police custody to make sure that individuals have access to justice and the right to legal aid and representation (ibid, p. 24). Consequently, it can be affirmed that such claims are the reason why the justice system of South Sudan is being perceived as a "problem".

In contrast, the MGCSW is portrayed as a collaborative stakeholder founded on integrity, teamwork, and respect. It is also concerned with gender equality and the empowerment of women and children's rights in South Sudan. Hence, the MGCSW offers a process for strengthening the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on the WPS agenda in South Sudan. Further, it provides the country with an opportunity to develop a mutual understanding of the implementation level of UNSCR 1325 by contributing with an overall framework for enhanced cooperation and implementation, monitoring and reporting on fundamental activities to elevate the status of South

Sudanese women so that they can take part in decision-making and peacebuilding and the reconstruction of South Sudan (SSNAP, 2015).

According to the SSNAP (2015), most violations against women and children, such as rape, child molestation, child and women prostitution and SGBV, are attributed to high poverty rates, decades of conflict and neglect in South Sudan. For this reason, the MGCSW argues that SGBV manifests itself at household levels, in families, in the community, and between communities. The MGCSW underscores that SGBV is deeply rooted in the cultural beliefs of South Sudan, and those mostly affected are women. Therefore, they argue that when unmarried girls are raped, it is not viewed as a severe crime, and therefore, the girl in question is expected to get married to the perpetrator, even if it is without her consent. Additionally, they also claim that wife beating is seen as standard practice and is widely accepted in South Sudan since it is geared towards disciplining a disobedient woman (ibid, p. 20). However, taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture, such arguments paint an interesting picture. The picture that emerges from such arguments is that all the violations can be indirectly linked to the government of South Sudan. Hence, binaries identify what the MGCSW characterise as obstacles to women, peace, and security in South Sudan. Therefore, the MGCSW uses binaries to compare itself with the government of South Sudan. Hence, it portrays itself as promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and child protection. The MGCSW stresses the importance of good governance and anti-corruption.

In contrast, the government is portrayed as a corrupt government that lacks the political will to entirely change and implement formal and customary laws for the protection of women. Therefore, the binaries of good governance and corruption are being used in the SSNAP to stress the importance of anti-corruption measures that are needed for sustainable development and women's rights in South Sudan. Thus, the binaries of governance *vs* corruption indicate the contrast between openness regarding effective, responsible governance and the prevalent effects of corruption.

Additionally, the study can identify the binary of peace *vs* conflict. Following the MGCSW, peace in South Sudan seems to be the desired outcome, and conflict is a fundamental challenge. The discourse in the SSNAP is focused on peace by addressing the ongoing violence against women since they believe that peace will provide a better situation for women. For instance, the MGCSW argues that various studies have been conducted in South Sudan that seem to imply that SGBV and sexual violence during times of war are not widely investigated; however, they claim that women continue to fall victim to various forms of violence even after conflict ends (SSNAP, 2015). They

also argue that when women report cases of sexual and domestic violence to the police, they are often downplayed; hence, very few get to the court system. They emphasise that even when cases get to court, they are compromised by the survivors and their relatives due to the lack of knowledge of court proceedings, and they are poorly handled by the police and judicial staff, which in turn compromises the case (ibid, p. 20).

On the other hand, the government is still facing the challenge of conflict and respecting and fulfilling human rights. According to the policy document, the government is focused on addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting reconciliation. For instance, the SSNAP highlights how South Sudan's legal policy and strategic framework are primarily influenced and shaped by the nation-long history of warfare, as is exemplified by the signing of various peace agreements such as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the Interim National Constitution (SSNAP, 2015, p. 28). For these reasons, it can be argued that the binaries of peace by tackling the ongoing violence against women represent the MGCSW. In contrast, the binary of insecurity represents the government of South Sudan. Hence, the binaries in the SSNAP policy document are being used to contrast the priorities of the MGCSW and the government of South Sudan, whereby the former has acknowledged to be concerned with the violations against women. At the same time, the latter is perceived as not prioritising women's and girls' rights since it is concerned with other pressing national security matters. As reported by Amnesty International (2022, p. 2), the government of South Sudan has wasted opportunities to ensure human rights and improve the lives of its citizens by failing to prioritise public service provisions and to stop widespread corruption and misappropriation of public funds by government officials, senior military, and political figures.

Moreover, it can be argued that the understanding of the government of South Sudan not fully committing to taking action to change formal and customary laws that cause harmful consequences to women corroborates the SSNAP policy document since the perception of the government lacking political will frames the discourse across the policy material. For instance, this is demonstrated when the SSNAP explicitly highlights that the successful implementation of the SSNAP on UNSCR 1325 regarding funding and implementation depends on the government's political will (SSNAP, p. 12). The MGCSW argues that local governments and state assemblies in South Sudan need to gain knowledge of laws embodied in the Penal Code and other national laws. Therefore, they contend that there is a low level of awareness of the existing legislation concerning the laws on the Penal



code that relate to sexual and domestic violence against women because of the lack of coordination between legislators and civil society organisations as well as the minimal involvement of local elected officials and the public. Therefore, the MGCSW argues that if the government of South Sudan were to translate the laws into the local languages and spread the information via public discourse and mass media outlets, more people would gain more awareness (ibid, 23).

The inability of the government of South Sudan to rectify such claims is viewed as a heavy setback in the fight to empower South Sudanese women. Given this, the MGCSW argues that due to the contradictory formal and customary laws not aligned with internationally acceptable standards, the development of recruitment criteria for both males and females into the military still falls short (SSNAP, 2015). The traditional view in South Sudan that military service is a male venture indicates that South Sudanese women have gotten the shorter end of the stick. Consequently, they are often limited from military duties and sometimes entirely excluded from applying even though the Constitutional requirement for women to join the SPLA is twenty-five per cent (ibid, p. 23). The MGCSW reports that the number of women in the military is below ten per cent. Therefore, they frame the South Sudanese government and its branches as not abiding by their laws. Further, the MGCSW argues that another factor that limits women from attaining positions in the security sector with regards to being in the police, army and prison services is that men are seen as warriors and protectors in the communities and that most women in South Sudan are illiterate hence, women lack minimum requirements for joining the security sector: secondary education (ibid).

Nonetheless, the SSNAP highlights that the government of South Sudan, by extension of its executive, legislative and judicial branches thus, the Ministry of Defence, the Female Affairs Department, and the Social Welfare Department, were tasked to help with the recruitment of more women in the security service through the Gender Focal Point Department (SSNAP, 2015, p. 24). However, it has been reported that the department needs more resources concerning human and financial capital to effectively address gender and human rights issues and align them with national and international standards. Such claims show that the government of South Sudan is being framed as not prioritising women's empowerment efforts since they need to follow through with their commitments.

In this regard, the government of South Sudan is being framed in stark contrast to the MGCSW. Although the MGCSW is a ministry that works for the government of South Sudan, it deals with

issues related to gender inequality, the welfare of children, and societal development (SSNAP, 2015). Further, its responsibilities lie in formulating and implementing policies, programs, and actions to ensure that the issues mentioned are promoted. However, the government of South Sudan is responsible for setting national policies, enacting laws, allocating resources, and overseeing the implementation of diverse programs and actions to promote the rights and well-being of South Sudan and its citizens (Local Government Board, n.d). Although the MGCSW plays a critical role in formulating policies and making recommendations on issues related to women's peace and security by providing reports and recommendations, the final decisions on what causes of action to take with regards to national importance are made by a combination of governmental institutions such as the executive branch, legislative bodies as well as other relevant departments in South Sudan (ibid).

While the MGCSW does not frame the government of South Sudan as its rival, it does frame itself as a willing participant in international cooperation. In contrast, the government is framed as not wanting to do away with its contradictory formal and customary laws. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that there is an element of us vs them. In this instance, it is evident when the MGCSW distances itself from the customary and statutory laws. For instance, the SSNAP calls for the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and the National and State Legislative Assembly to increase the number of women as well as women with disabilities in the South Sudanese political arena so that women are enabled to make decisions (SSNAP, 2015, p. 32). Further, it calls for the enforcement of more gender-specific laws that give women extra protection concerning their places of work. Therefore, they argue for integrating a gender perspective in all work areas concerning the Peace and Reconciliation Commission. They also bring up a discourse on the need for girls to develop the skills and coping strategies to overcome gender-based stereotypes as well as counter the damaging traditional practices, religious prejudice and social assumptions that marginalise them. Hence, they underscore the need for girls to be taught at an early age about their rights as human beings, equality before the law, and the right not to be discriminated against due to sex (ibid, p. 38).

The MGCSW highlights the government's failure in South Sudan in many areas concerning women, peace, and security by providing various strategic actions that need to be taken to better the situation of women in South Sudan. Hence, this exposes flaws or gaps in the South Sudan legal system. Therefore, although the MGCSW's main objective is to help the government of South Sudan implement the UNSCR 1325, it can also be argued that the MGCSW, through the SSNAP, is

undermining the government of South Sudan since it depicts the government as having a weak governance and institutional capacity as it relates to the challenges that the country has had to face and is still facing that impede the planning and execution of policies and programs. Further, it also shows that the government is plagued with cultural and societal norms that challenge the participation of women in peacebuilding initiatives and decision-making. The SSNAP acknowledges the various challenges that the government of South Sudan has endured in its quest to rebuild the state. Thus, the negative discourse concerning the government's shortcomings is highlighted, but the background context of the country somewhat explains why some measures are not fully implemented. Hence, it can be argued that the policy document does acknowledge that South Sudan's government is not willingly missing all its expectations and that other underlying factors are at play.

The previous sections have explained how binaries, categorisations and critical concepts identified in the SSNAP policy shape a specific understanding of the challenges of women, peace, and security in South Sudan. Following Bacchi and Goodwin (2016), the discourse creates a specific knowledge of how the government of South Sudan is seen as the "problem" in numerous ways. The government of South Sudan and its respective branches are viewed as corrupt and need more political will to follow through with its commitments to the women of South Sudan (SSNAP, 2015). Therefore, inference can be drawn that the government and its respective branches that are responsible for the WPS agenda are represented as the main reason for the lack of protection for women, which means that through implicit rhetoric, they are indirectly held responsible for the social challenges that plague the society of South Sudan. The assumption here is that the South Sudanese government's inability to align its formal and customary laws so that they are not contradictory and that they are in conformity with international standards has led to harmful consequences for South Sudanese women. The overall outlook behind the SSNAP policy document, which points the finger at the government and its respective branches, is argued in the whole policy document.

Hence, the government of South Sudan is considered liable for the violations and injustices that South Sudanese women face since they are perceived to be the ones able to make a difference by enacting laws that protect women and abiding by them. However, the government is creating a platform whereby concerns of women, peace and security are not prioritised and even considered trivial. Following Bacchi and Goodwin (2016), this socially produced knowledge becomes the

accepted norm, meaning it is perceived as the way of things. Therefore, it works to justify the government's lack of action in South Sudan. Nonetheless, such a viewpoint takes away from investigating other areas of concern, such as widespread corruption among the political elites in South Sudan.

## 5.2 Power and Agency in SSNAP

---

4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation of women, peace, and security? Where are the silences? Can the “problem” be thought about differently?

---

The fourth question examines what still needs to be discussed in the analysis and is thus concerned with where specific knowledge has been silenced. For this reason, the analysis will challenge how the feminist theory concerning power and agency has been applied in the SSNAP policy document to spearhead the WPS agenda. Therefore, the task is to explore what aspects have been overlooked or marginalised in the policy discourse.

South Sudan is the world's youngest state, and as a new state, it is struggling to manage several of its ethnic groups and unite them into one nation (Gender and Ethnicity in South Sudan, 2018). Given this, the violent conflict in South Sudan has manifested into a multitude of consequences regarding the country not being able to function as an independent state. As reported by Blanchard (2018), nearly four hundred thousand people have been killed due to the conflict. Further, the author explains that a report published by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine claims that practically half of the victims of the fighting were a result of fighting from ethnic rivals as the conflict spread across the state. However, the other half succumbed to diseases, hunger and other causes exacerbated by the ongoing conflict. According to Nyadera (2018) and Radon & Logan (2014), the primary reason for the conflict is ethnic differences within the South Sudanese society. Hence, the authors argue that the people of South Sudan have yet to embrace their national identity. Consequently, they hang on to their ethnic identities rather than their national identity. Therefore, the country has no shared definition that brings them together, which, in turn, means that individuals prefer to identify themselves with the ethnic group to which they belong, and this presents a challenge to national unity and statehood (ibid).

Furthermore, South Sudan does not have a common language; therefore, it is a country with a diverse, multilingual context that faces difficult decisions regarding implementing its language policy. Despite this, according to the country's constitution, English has been identified as the first language and Arabic as the second language (Spronk, 2014). Nonetheless, Nyadera (2018) highlights that most citizens cannot communicate in both languages due to high illiteracy levels. For this reason, Kane et al. (2016) report that eighty-four per cent of women are illiterate, which means that most of the population communicates in their local language. In this regard, people in South Sudan can only relate with people of their ethnicity and shared language. As stated by Stiftung (2012), sixty-four ethnic groups in South Sudan speak different local languages, which makes it very difficult for people of different ethnic backgrounds to relate and identify as one people. Hence, the significance is that the people in South Sudan minimally relate with people from a different ethnic group other than theirs, which presents a challenge to the goals and objectives of the SSNAP policy document.

Another challenge concerning the overlooked aspects of power and agency is that ethnic diversity leads to ethnic loyalty between the various ethnic groups (Jok, 2011). The issue here lies in the fact that when individuals are more concerned with the welfare and ideology of their ethnic affiliation against the interest of other ethnic groups in a multiethnic society, it leads to the consequential denial of access to resources and other forms of marginalisation endured by members of other ethnic groups. Stiftung (2012) reports that during the Sudan People's Liberation Movement Army (SPLM/A), women mobilised themselves across different ethnic backgrounds and expertise. However, a research study titled *Yong Women in Political Institutions in South Sudan: Lessons from Lives Experiences* reports that in contemporary South Sudan, women are more divided, with very few alliances to build and sustain a standard woman's movement across different sectors and ethnic groups (Atem & Lopa, 2023).

In this context, women from dominant ethnic groups such as the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk have historically held more political, social, and economic power due to their population size, geographical locations, and alliances with the political elite (Tounsel, 2020). In contrast, women from ethnic communities such as Anyuak, Maban and Murle hold less political power. Nonetheless, it is essential to highlight that power dynamics evolve. Although males usually dominate the decision-making process inside ethnic groups, the decision-making process among women from various ethnic backgrounds is also dominated by women from ethnic communities with more

political influence (Atem & Lopa, 2023). Therefore, women in communities that do not hold much political power can be instrumentalised in ethnic politics, resulting from supporting political factions that limit their ability to advocate for their interests independent of the women from the communities with stronger political influences. Therefore, their voices are marginalised, and their agency is limited. Hence, considering the aspects of power and agency, the SSNAP has not considered the gender dynamics concerning the needs of women who belong to ethnic minority groups since they can have needs that are different from the dominant tribal women's needs since each tribal groups have different social and livelihoods system, cultural traditions and a sense of identity that varies from each other. In contrast, some have similar systems regarding the level of interaction (Gender and Ethnicity, 2018).

Against this background, the policy discusses how women's participation needs to be strengthened regarding their involvement in traditional and customary decision-making processes, mediation, and peacebuilding efforts. The outcome of this goal is that women should have equal access and full participation in power structures at all levels, so they are fully involved in all efforts related to the prevention and resolution of conflict and the maintenance and promotion of peace and security (SSNAP, 2015, p. 39). The SSNAP seeks more visibility in women's community leadership. However, the policy does not address how to overcome the challenges that affect women from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and various states of South Sudan. The failure to address the concept of power and agency concerning ethnic diversity in the SSNAP policy document can lead to violence and eventually protracted social conflict, which can severely limit women's social, economic, and political empowerment and commitments to gender equality (Gender and Ethnicity, 2018).

South Sudanese women in various ethnic groups need to overcome ethnic loyalty if they are to cooperate and communicate to uplift their rights. For these reasons, it can be argued that the SSNAP does not discuss how to overcome the issue of varying power dynamics between various ethnic groups. Overall, it can be argued that concerning the concept of power and agency, the SSNAP policy document overlooks some of the nuances of varying power dynamics within ethnic diversity and gender minority dynamics. Consequently, this indicates that women from specific ethnic communities might not be offered the same decision-making and resource allocation opportunities. Therefore, it can be held that the MGCSW is operating from the perspective that all women of South Sudan are treated in the same way by the society when, in actuality, the treatment of the

women of South Sudan varies not just from the men but also among fellow women concerning their respective tribes. Therefore, the MGCSW still needs to formulate the goals and objectives of the policy document accordingly.

---

5. What effects are produced by this representation of the “problem” of women, peace, and security?

---

The fifth question aims to identify the effects of the problem representation for a critical examination. For this reason, the analysis will use Bacchi's (2009) three interrelated forms of effects, which she refers to as discursive, subjectification, and lived effects, together with the concepts of power and agency in feminist theory.

Bacchi claims that discursive effects relate to how a representation of a “problem” can limit what can be said about an issue. As reported by the MGCSW, the government's justice system and its respective judicial branches are constructed with a particular emphasis on their lack of political will to promote and empower the women of South Sudan. From this perspective, it is challenging to view the government of South Sudan as anything other than reluctant or unwilling to change the situation of women since they do not follow through with their laws and policies that are aimed at the empowerment and protection of women (SSNAP, 2015). Thus, as previously mentioned, the most dominant problem representation concerning the SSNAP is the lack of political will of the government through its justice system to protect women due to the country's contradictory formal and customary laws. This problem representation creates a perspective that makes it challenging to view the South Sudanese government from a different point of view. Hence, it can be argued that the discursive framework of the SSNAP policy document frames the government as the “problem” due to its dishonest character and political inaction that the MGCSW has placed on them through the SSNAP.

The discourse surrounding the contradictory formal and customary laws makes it hard to pay attention to other angles. First, according to Hessbruegge (2012, p. 296), customary law in South Sudan is a powerful symbol of emancipation from two centuries of external domination and, ironically, the product of external domination. The author explains that most citizens of the world's newest states, such as South Sudan, often rely more heavily on customary laws and local authorities to regulate their conflicts than other civilian state institutions and statutory law. For instance,

citizens of South Sudan rely on customary systems because they offer local conflict resolution and justice mechanisms that are usually much quicker, cost-effective, geographically accessible, socially accountable, and culturally appropriate by local communities. Customary law and authority define South Sudan and its society's identity more than the elected civilian government institutions. Therefore, in the eyes of the population, customary law and authority derive much of their legitimacy from the claim of representing indigenous traditions that have been followed since ancient times and thus predate foreign colonial impositions (ibid, p. 297). For these reasons, the government of South Sudan and its external partners can still be reluctant to replace or alter the customary laws because the democratically elected government risks undermining itself regarding implications for governance, social unity and the exercise of power and agency.

Second, according to Coning et al. (2021, p. 1), South Sudan is highly vulnerable to climate change, with flooding, droughts, and locust infestations. Thus, the authors argue that gradual increases in temperature and short-term changes such as flooding have indirect and interlinked implications for peace and security in South Sudan. Hence, it can be argued that the multidimensional challenges of climate change also have consequences for the power and agency of women. For instance, UN Humanitarian (2023) reports that in addition to conflict in South Sudan, floods also contribute to increased displacement and migration. Therefore, women and children end up being disproportionately affected by displacement, which in turn means that they end up facing heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and loss of social networks. Additionally, women face daily risks when doing everyday activities, such as fetching water and firewood and producing charcoal due to extreme weather events. Thus, female-headed households in South Sudan are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change since most depend on agriculture to sustain their families and rely on natural resources like firewood and water. Further, the loss of livestock and crop failures can undermine women's economic independence and bargaining power within their households (Coning et al., 2021).

Following Bacchi (2009, p. 12), subjectification effects involve how subjects and subjectifications are formed in a discourse. Thus, she explains how we view ourselves, and others arise from how specific subjects are created in governmental policies. For this reason, analysing the subjective effects essentially means questioning how individuals become subjects concerning how policies produce social relationships with individuals. Considering that problem representations often assign blame to a specific group of people, there is a need to investigate and ponder whether the blame has



been assigned correctly and the consequences that follow (Bacchi, 2009, p. 7). The feminist theory of power and agency is vital when investigating how the representation of the problem and its causes impact women's empowerment and agency in South Sudan. The theory explains that women's power and agency can only thrive when there is a positive interaction between cultural, political, and socioeconomic factors concerning working to address the barriers and challenges to women's empowerment and meaningful participation by creating opportunities where women can exercise their agency both in the private and public sphere (Allen, 1999).

When considering the agency of the women in the SSNAP, it can be argued that they are portrayed as victims or losers. Manchanda (2006) argues that such an image of women has dire consequences on the lives of both men and women because it does not offer the actual image of the varying impact of conflict on both genders. For this reason, women, especially in conflict-ridden areas, can start to internalise feelings of victimhood, which can, in turn, hinder them from decision-making roles, entering negotiations concerning conflict in the public sphere as well as becoming peace activists or participating in the military struggle (ibid). By creating the political discourse of the government as lacking political will and women as vulnerable and powerless since they are dependent on the laws that need to be implemented by the government with regards to the formal and customary laws, the MGCSW via the SSNAP is undermining the agency of both the South Sudanese women and the justice system.

The MGCSW, via the SSNAP (2015), highlights that in South Sudan, cases of sexual and domestic violence are widespread among the military and security sector personnel because of the lengthy culture of impunity. They claim that impunity has been present since the armed conflict, and the government's failure to offer psychological support to armed personnel to ward off post-conflict trauma has manifested into violent crimes against defenceless women, civilians as well as children in post-conflict South Sudan (ibid, p.77). Therefore, the MGCSW is simultaneously highlighting another government failure that has caused damaging effects on the society as well as creating a narrative of South Sudanese women as powerless by taking away their agency since such an example illustrates how women are not able to make their own choices and exercise control over their bodies with regards to their sexual experience.

Furthermore, the MGCSW also brings up a discourse on the need for women who have been forcefully abducted and enslaved to reintegrate back with their families without being afraid of

being ostracised or stigmatised (SSNAP, 2015, pp. 46-47). This also illustrates that the attitudes toward assigning blame to women constrain their agency. After experiencing such trauma, they are probably not willing to share their experiences due to the judgement and stigma, which in turn weakens their control and agency (Manchanda, 2006). The government of South Sudan has been plagued by various challenges ever since the country gained independence, such as political instability, corruption, ethnic conflicts, and human rights abuses (Unger & Wills, 2007). However, the SSNAP seems to be exacerbating the social issues facing South Sudanese women that it set out to help rectify by its portrayal of women as lacking power and agency and the portrayal of the government as lacking political will due to the unfavourable characteristics attached to both by the policy document. Thus, the debate on whether the government lacks political will can be discussed when considering South Sudan's ongoing conflicts. For instance, the study by Awolich (2018) highlights that in South Sudan, fixing governance is the key to stability. The author claims that the government needs more strategic direction concerning a vision to rally the citizens, which means that the country faces difficulties in forging a national identity. Further, she claims that the power of the government is concentrated in the executive and presidency, with the legislature and the judiciary subordinated. Thus, power is concentrated in Juba to the detriment of the periphery (ibid)

In contrast, the study by Unger and Wills (2007) argues that systematic conflict transformation impedes effective governance in South Sudan. The author claims that conflict transformation in South Sudan is a shared task of many actors to impact the complex conflict types and actors. Hence, Unger and Wills claim that in post-conflict South Sudan, there seems to be a focus on state-building measures around the government in Juba, both by the international community and the people of South Sudan. However, they argue that more focus should be paid to traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution combined with other governance efforts for an integral governance and peacebuilding approach (ibid). Thus, the subjectification effects at play influence how other individuals view us and how we view one another (Bacchi, 2009). As previously stated, women's empowerment and agency play a role in how they experience and negotiate a place. Thus, the negative discourse identified in the SSNAP policy document concerning the government and women illustrates how the SSNAP impacts both parties. Therefore, by calling for various actions and measures to be taken and implemented, the MGCSW, via the SSNAP, is blaming the government for the ineffective contradictory laws that leave women unprotected and unable to exercise their power and agency.

Bacchi (2009) states that lived effects involve life and death. For this reason, the SSNAP has many lived effects on the groups or individuals affected by it, hence on the government as well as on women, as has been indicated before through the undermining of both groups. For instance, the policy document directly calls for the government to comply with international human rights standards concerning treating women with dignity by ratifying international and regional human rights instruments. The MGCSW believes that if the government were to comply with this strategic action, they would prioritise promoting and protecting women. Further, they are also calling for the condemnation of impunity crimes against women, especially those of sexual violence and abuse by government personnel. The MGCSW believes that such an action will provide the proper investigation measures to prosecute and remedy violence against women in (SSNAP, 2015).

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the thesis aimed to answer two overarching questions. The first was to explore the discourses in the South Sudan National Action Plan (SSNAP), and second to examine whether they can be linked to the feminist theory concerning power and agency. Concerning the former, the study found that discourses in the SSNAP are contradictory because the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW) claims that it is trying to help the government of South Sudan promote women's empowerment concerning equality and peacebuilding in conflict resolution. However, applying the WPR approach to the policy measures reveals that the most dominant "problem" representation is the justice system of the South Sudanese government as it relates to the lack of political will to change their formal and customary laws that lead to harmful practices that undermine the rights and dignity of women in South Sudan. Therefore, highlighting all the government failures and lack of action calls into question the capabilities of the government to enforce its laws and prioritise women's rights, which presents a tricky predicament since the government oversees allocating financial resources and enacting legislation.

The latter question draws on Carol Bacchi: *What's the Problem Represented to be?* (WPR) and the concepts of power and agency. The study concludes that as much as the document highlights ways in which the government can promote women's agency and empowerment, the policy also somewhat restricts their abilities by portraying them as helpless and at the mercy of the government as it relates to a need for change in the formal and customary laws that limit their voices and hence works contrary to the policy objectives. Additionally, the SSNAP does not address how to overcome the issue of varying power dynamics in the various ethnic groups, which means that it disregards

some of the nuances of diverse power dynamics, leaving some women without power and agency since it operates from the perspective of all women in South Sudan are treated equally. This finding is of vital importance since it indicates a gap in the SSNAP which needs to be addressed to provide equal opportunities for all women in South Sudan.

Using the WPR approach has enabled the study to critically examine the problem representations in the policy document and choose a dominant problem to focus on since the SSNAP has various problem representations, making it quite complex to grasp. However, the downside was that the study was not able to fully implement the feminist theory of power and agency as it had intended to because questions 1 and 2 of the WPR approach do not merge with the application of any theory since they involve answering the questions by reading through the policy document. Nonetheless, the feminist theory of power and agency was used as a guiding lens to answer questions 4 and 5, which gave an extensive picture of the SSNAP policy document and revealed other ways of looking at the problem representation of WPS agenda not just as the lack of political will of the government but also that the South Sudanese government not wanting to alter its customary laws due to the threat of the elected government undermining itself regarding implications for governance, social unity and the exercise of power and agency. The study's results confirm previous research on women, peace, and security concerning women's obstacles when participating in formal peacebuilding efforts.

Based on the thesis conclusions, future research concerning the implications of the SSNAP policy can be conducted with a specific focus on interviewing government officials and women in South Sudan. By interviewing top government officials, the research would better understand the government's priorities, the reasons behind the slow implementation of laws, and the hesitance in changing its contradictory formal and customary laws that undermine women's rights. Additionally, interviews with South Sudanese women would reveal insight into the varying power dynamics of women by engaging in discourse with women from various ethnic groups. Therefore, by providing women with a voice through interview-based research, the findings can inform policy recommendations because the depth and quality of knowledge used by policymakers influence policy effectiveness.

## 7. Bibliography

- Accord 2019. Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalised Peace Agreement. Conflict Trends. Available at:<https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/reviving-peace-in-south-sudan-through-the-revitalised-peace-agreement/> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- African Development Bank Group (2015). Project: Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment for Inclusive Growth Geeming Country: Republic of South Sudan detailed Proposal for the Utilization of TSF/Pillar III, ADF 13 Funds. Available at:<[https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/south\\_sudan\\_-\\_gender\\_equality\\_and\\_economic\\_empowerment\\_for\\_inclusive\\_growth\\_geem-ig.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/south_sudan_-_gender_equality_and_economic_empowerment_for_inclusive_growth_geem-ig.pdf)> Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Allen Amy (1999). *The Power of Feminist Theory*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Routledge.
- Allen, Amy (2005). "Feminist perspectives on power." Available at:<<https://plato.stanford.edu/ENTRIES/feminist-power/>> Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Allen, A. (1998). Rethinking Power. *Hypatia*, 13(1), 21–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810605>
- Biana, H. T. (2020). Extending bell hooks\u27 Feminist Theory. Available at:<<https://core.ac.uk/download/289120827.pdf>> Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Amnesty International (2011). Amnesty International and Amdiss Memorandum AFR 54/009/2011 13 April, 2011.South Sudan: Submission for Consideration by the Constitution Review Commission on the Review of Provisions on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the 2011 Interim Constitution of South Sudan. Available at:<<https://www.amnesty.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/afr540092011en.pdf>> Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Amnesty International (2022). South Sudan: Human rights priorities for the government of South Sudan. Index Number AFR 65/5196/2022. Available at:<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/5196/2022/en/>> Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Anderlini, S. N. (2007). *Women building peace: what they do, why it matters*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Armstrong, Elisabeth, "Marxist and Socialist Feminism" (2020). *Study of Women and Gender*: Faculty Publications, Smith College, Northampton, MA. Available at:<[https://scholarworks.smith.edu/swg\\_facpubs/15](https://scholarworks.smith.edu/swg_facpubs/15)> Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

- Ashworth, J. (2000). *Wunlit Peace Accord and Ending of Dinka-Nuer Conflicts*. Woodsmiths Publishers, UK.
- Atem Aluel & Lopa Eva (2023). *Yong Women in Political Institutions in South Sudan: Lessons from Lives Experiences*. Available at: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/suedsudan/20021-20230221.pdf> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Awolich A. Abraham (2018). *Fixing Governance is Key to Stability in South Sudan*. Sudd Intsitute. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep20110.pdf> Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Bacchi Carol (2009). *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* Frenchs Forest, N.S.W. : Pearson, cop
- Bacchi Carol (2018). *Poststructural Policy Analysis: A Guide to Practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Barnett Michael, Hunjoon Kim, Madalene O'Donnell, & Laura Sitea (2007). *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*. *Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name?* Available at: [https://brill.com/view/journals/gg/13/1/article-p35\\_4.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/gg/13/1/article-p35_4.xml) Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Beauvoir de Siomone (2009). *The Second Sex*. Le deuxième sexe copyright © 1949 by Éditions Gallimard, Paris Translation copyright © 2009 by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier Introduction copyright © 2010 by Judith Thurman.
- Bennett, A. and Elman, C. (2010). *Case Study Methods*. In C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. Ch. 29.
- Bennett Judith (2006). *History Matters. Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bell, Christine & O'Rourke, Catherine. (2010). "Peace Agreements or Pieces of Paper: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Peace Negotiations and Agreements." *ICLQ* (59):941–980. Available at: <DOI:10.1017/S002058931000062X> Accessed 12th February 2024.
- Blanchard Ploch Lauren (2018). *South Sudan's Civil War: Nearly 400,000 Estimated Dead*. Available at: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IN10975.pdf> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

- Boesten Jelke (2017). Of exceptions and continuities: theory and methodology in research on conflict-related sexual violence, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 19:4, 506-519, DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2017.1367950 Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Bouta, T., Frerks, G., & Bannon, I. (2005). Gender and Formal Peace Processes. In *Gender, Conflict, and Development* (pp. 49–64). World Bank. Available at:<  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02478.11>> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Butler Judith (2006). *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Bubenzer Friederike and Lacey Elizabeth (2013). *Opportunities for Justice and Reconciliation in South Sudan*.
- Bubenzer Friederike and Stern Orly (2011). *Hope, Pain & Patience: The Lives of Women in South Sudan*. Chapter 8 In *power without power: Women in politics and leadership positions in South Sudan*. Published by Fanele – an imprint of Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd.
- Buss, D. E. (2009). Rethinking ‘Rape as a Weapon of War’. *Fem Leg Stud* 17, 145–163. [online] Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-009-9118-5> Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Carol Gilligan Carol (1982). *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Caprioli, M. (2000). Gendered Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 37(1), 51–68. Available at:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/425725> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024
- Caprioli, M., & Boyer, M. A. (2001). Gender, Violence, and International Crisis. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45(4), 503–518. Available at:<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3176309>> Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March
- Caprioli, M. (2004). Democracy and Human Rights versus Women’s Security: A Contradiction? *Security Dialogue*, 35(4), 411–428. Available at:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26298581> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Chitando Anna (2021). *Women and Peacebuilding in Africa*. Routledge Studies on Gender and Sexuality in Africa.
- Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility (CSRF) South Sudan (2022). *Gender norms, conflict sensitivity and transition in South Sudan*. Available at:<https://www.csrf->

[southsudan.org/repository/gender-norms-conflict-sensitivity-and-transition-in-south-sudan/](https://southsudan.org/repository/gender-norms-conflict-sensitivity-and-transition-in-south-sudan/)  
Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

- CONCERN Worldwide US (2022). Timeline: South Sudan’s history at a glance. Available at:<<https://concernusa.org/news/timeline-south-sudan-history/>> Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Christopher Tounsel (2020). Women in South Sudan. Available at:<<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.516>> Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.
- Dame, A. (2016). Women Voting Pattern in World. Wilson Publishers, USA.
- Dayal A and Christien A (2019). “Tracking women’s participation in informal peace processes”, Washington DC: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2019. Available at:<https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/tracking-womens-participation-in-informal-peace-processes/> Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024.
- Davies, B. (1991). THE CONCEPT OF AGENCY: A Feminist Poststructuralist Analysis. *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, 30, 42–53. Available at:<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23164525>> Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Derek, A (2015). Katiba Ban’at and South Sudan Liberation. Milimani Publishers, Kampala-Uganda.
- De Silva Samantha, Abir Hasan, Aissatou Ouedraogo, and Eliana Rubiano -Matulevich (2020). Getting it Right: Strengthening Gender Outcomes in South Sudan. Available at:<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/723961596172568911/pdf/Getting-it-Right-Strengthening-Gender-Outcomes-in-South-Sudan.pdf> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Disch Lisa & Hawkesworth Mary (2016). The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory. Published by Oxford University Press.
- Ebneyamini, S., & Sadeghi Moghadam, M. R. (2018). Toward Developing a Framework for Conducting Case Study Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918817954> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Edward, J. K. (2014). Barriers to Women’s Participation in Public Sphere. In *A Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in South Sudan* (pp. 14–23). Sudd Institute. Available at:<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11063.8>> Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Elbe von J. (1939). The Evolution of the Concept of the Just War in International Law. *The American Journal of International Law*, 33(4), 665–688. Available at:<https://doi.org/10.2307/2192879> Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



- Ellerby, Kara. 2016. “A Seat at The Table Is Not Enough: Understanding Women’s Substantive Representation in Peace Processes.” *Peacebuilding* 4(20):136–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2016.1192240>. Accessed 12th February 2024.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Gender and Ethnicity (2018). Background Analysis for the GEF CCCD project Gender and Ethnicity in South Sudan. Available at:[https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40424/GEF\\_CCCD\\_Project.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40424/GEF_CCCD_Project.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- GIWPS (2021/22) Georgetown Institute of Women Peace and Security. Women Peace and Security Index 2021/22. Tracking sustainable peace through inclusion, justice and security for women. Available at:< <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WPS-Index-2021.pdf>> Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Giovetti Olivia (2022). CONCERN Worldwide. Gender equality in South Sudan: What we know in 2022. Available at:<https://www.concern.net/news/gender-equality-in-south-sudan> Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.
- Goldstein Joshua S. (2001). *War and Gender. How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Harding, S Hirsh, E. & Olson, G. A. (1995). Starting from Marginalized Lives: A Conversation with Sandra Harding. *JAC*, 15(2), 193–225. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20866024> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April.
- Hessbruegge Jan Arno (2012). Customary Law and Authority in a State under Construction: The Case of South Sudan. *African Journal of Legal Studies* 5 295-311. Available at: [https://brill.com/view/journals/ajls/5/3/article-p295\\_4.xml?ebody=pdf-117260](https://brill.com/view/journals/ajls/5/3/article-p295_4.xml?ebody=pdf-117260)> Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Hilhorst Dorothea and van Leeuwen Mathijs (2005). *Grounding local peace organisations: a case study of southern Sudan*. Published by Cambridge University Press. Available at:<https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/57A45EB867382805C00C9C8285196C9B/S0022278X05001217a.pdf/grounding-local-peace-organisations-a-case-study-of-southern-sudan.pdf> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- H Kezie-Nwoha and J Were (2018). “Women’s informal peace efforts: Grassroots activism in South Sudan”, CMI Brief no. 2018:07, Bergen: Chr Michelsen Institute, Available at:<

<https://www.cmi.no/publications/6700-womens-informal-peace-efforts>> Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024.

- Hooks Bell (2000). *Feminist Theory - From Margin to Center*. Pluto Press.
- Hundleby, C. (2012). Feminist Empiricism. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, pp. 28-45, Sage Publications, Inc.
- Hudson, Valerie M. Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett (2012). *Sex and World Peace*. Columbia University Press.
- Hove, M., & Ndawana, E. (2017). Women's Rights in Jeopardy: The Case of War-Torn South Sudan. *Sage Open*, 7(4). Available at:<<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017737355>> Accessed 28th March 2024.
- ICAN (2024) International Civil Society Action Network "We Rise for a Peaceful South Sudan": The Role of Women in Shaping Post-War South Sudan. Available at:<<https://icanpeacework.org/2024/01/role-of-women-in-shaping-post-war-south-sudan/>> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Jaggar Alison M (1983). *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.
- Jackson Stevie and Jones Jackie (1998). *Contemporary Feminist Theories*. Chapter 2 *Feminist Social Theory*. Publisher Edinburgh University Press.
- Jain, S. (2020). *The Rising Fourth Wave: Feminist Activism and Digital Platforms in India*. ORF Issue Brief No. 384, Observer Research Foundation.
- James Nyathon and Mai Hoth (2015). *The Sudd Institute. Research for a peaceful, just, and prosperous South Sudan. The Role of Women in Peacebuilding in South Sudan*. Available at:[https://www.suddinstitute.org/assets/Publications/572b7eb2dd52b\\_TheRoleOfWomenInPeaceBuildingIn\\_Full.pdf](https://www.suddinstitute.org/assets/Publications/572b7eb2dd52b_TheRoleOfWomenInPeaceBuildingIn_Full.pdf) Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> March.
- Johnson, D. (2001). *The Impact of Wunlit Peace Accord Amongst Dinka and Nuer*. Oxford University Press. UK.
- Johnson Hilde F. (2016). *South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War*. Published by I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd. London. New York.
- Jok Madut Jok (2011). *Diversity, Unity, and Nation Building in South Sudan*. Available at:<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep12371.pdf>> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April.

- Kane S, Rial M, Matere A, Dieleman M, Broerse JE, Kok M (2016). Gender relations and women's reproductive health in South Sudan. *Glob Health Action*. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5129092/> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Kane Sumit, Maryse Kok , Matilda Rial , Anthony Matere , Marjolein Dieleman, and Jacqueline EW Broerse (2016). Social norms and family planning decisions in South Sudan. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-016-3839-6> Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024.
- Kathryn Abrams, From Autonomy to Agency: Feminist Perspectives on Self-Direction, 40 *Wm. & Mary L. Rev.* 805 (1999), <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmlr/vol40/iss3/6> Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Karame, K. & Prestegard, L., (2005). Sudanese Women and the Peace Process. Priorities and recommendations for women's inclusion and empowerment. Conference Report. 13 -15 January 2005. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. Available: [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/28270/NUPI\\_Pub\\_4.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/28270/NUPI_Pub_4.pdf) Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Kaldor Mary, (2001). *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Kezie-Nwoha Hellen and Were Juliet (2018). Women's informal peace efforts: Grassroots activism in South Sudan. Available at: <https://www.cmi.no/publications/6700-womens-informal-peace-efforts> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Khalfalla Limiaa Abdelghafar and Ahmed Musa Elsadig (2019). *Privatisation and Women's Employment in Position in Sudan*. Publisher: The World Association for Sustainable Development (WASD). Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330506071> Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> March.
- Kidane, Y. (2014). Women's Leadership Role in Post-Conflict Peace-Building Process. *Journal of African Union Studies*, 3(2/3), 87–101. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26893866> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- LeRiche Matthew & Arnold Mattew (2013). *South Sudan from Revolution to Independence*. Oxford University Press
- Local Government Board (n.d). Republic of South Sudan. Orientation Course for Local Government Administrative Officers. Available at: [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pa00j9mn.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00j9mn.pdf) Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

- Logo Harriet Kuyang , Ojaswi Shah, and Charlotte Watson (2022). Gender norms, conflict sensitivity and transition in South Sudan. CSRF Better Aid Forum Briefing Paper. Available at:<https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/repository/gender-norms-conflict-sensitivity-and-transition-in-south-sudan/> Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.
- Mackay, F. (2015). Radical Feminism. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 32(7-8), 332-336. Available at:< <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276415616682>> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Machanda Rita (2005). Women’s Agency in Peace Building: Gender Relations in Post-Conflict Reconstruction. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 44/45, pp. 4737-4745. Available at:<<https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Gender%20and%20Security-Women's%20Agency%20in%20Peace%20Building.pdf>> Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Marshall, H. (1994). Discourse analysis in an occupational context. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), *Qualitative methods in organisational research* (pp. 91-106). London, England: Sage.
- Maoz, Z. (2002) Case study methodology in international studies: from storytelling to hypothesis testing. In F. P. Harvey and M. Brecher (eds) *Evaluating Methodology in International Studies*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor. Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Maxwell Daniel, Gelsdorf Kirstein and Santschi Martina (2012). Researching livelihoods and services affected by conflict. *Livelihoods, basic services, and social protection in South Sudan*. Available at:[https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/SS\\_EvidencePaper\\_final\\_published\\_July2012.pdf](https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/SS_EvidencePaper_final_published_July2012.pdf) Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- Meger, S. (2011). Rape in Contemporary Warfare: The Role of Globalization in Wartime Sexual Violence. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 1(1), 100–132. Available at:<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.1.1.100>. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> April.
- Meger Sara (2016). *Rape Loot Pillage. The Political Economy of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict*. Oxford University Press.
- Mercy Corps (2019). *The facts: What you need to know about the South Sudan crisis*. Available at:<<https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/south-sudan-crisis>> Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Morgan Elia Lona and Oliver Livia (2024). *Perceptions of Gender and Conflict Sensitivity Considerations in South Sudan*. OHCA. Available at:<https://reliefweb.int/report/south->

- [sudan/perceptions-gender-and-conflict-sensitivity-considerations-south-sudan](#) Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Moser Caroline O.N, Clark Fiona C. (2001). Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence. Published by Zed Books Ltd.
  - Moosa Zohra, Maryam Rahmani & Lee Webster (2013). From the private to the public sphere: new research on women's participation in peace-building. Pages 453-472 | Published online: 11 Nov. Available at:<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13552074.2013.846585> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
  - Nilsson Desiree & Svensson Isak (2020). Women, Peace and Security: Women's Organizations in Peace-Making. Available at:<[https://fba.se/contentassets/c44814eb02b04124960629d864fa6b04/research\\_brief\\_nilsson\\_svensson\\_webb.pdf](https://fba.se/contentassets/c44814eb02b04124960629d864fa6b04/research_brief_nilsson_svensson_webb.pdf)> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
  - Nyadera, I. N. (2018). South Sudan Conflict from 2013 to 2018: Rethinking the Causes, Situation and Solutions. African Journal on Conflict Resolution. Available at: <https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/south-sudan-conflict-from-2013-to-2018/> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
  - OCHA (2014) OCHA Services. South Sudan ratifies CEDAW convention. Available at:<<https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-ratifies-cedaw-convention>> Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
  - O' Hara Corey & Clemente Floraine (2018). Power as agency: A critical reflection on the measurement of women's empowerment in the development sector. World Development Volume 106, June 2018, Pages 111-123. Available at:<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X18300408?via%3Dihub> Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
  - Okin Susan Moller (1989). Justice, Gender, and the Family. New York: Basic Books.
  - Olaosebikan, Aremu, Johnson (2010) African Research Review. An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Ethiopia Vol. 4 (4), Serial No. 17, October 2010 ISSN 1994-9057 (Print) ISSN 2070-0083 (Online) Conflicts in Africa: Meaning, Causes, Impact and Solution (Pp.549-560). Available at:<[file:///C:/Users/JensNielsen/Downloads/ajol-file-journals\\_336\\_articles\\_69251\\_submission\\_proof\\_69251-4009-145083-1-10-20110902.pdf](file:///C:/Users/JensNielsen/Downloads/ajol-file-journals_336_articles_69251_submission_proof_69251-4009-145083-1-10-20110902.pdf)> Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

- O'Reilly Marie, Suilleabhain Andrea O, Paddenholz Thania (2015). Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes. Available at: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking.pdf> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Paltridge, B. (2006). Discourse analysis. London, England: Continuum.
- Patton MQ (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. Available at: < <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10591279/>> Health Serv Res. Dec;34(5 Pt 2):1189-208. PMID: 10591279; PMCID: PMC1089059 Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Peach, L. J. (1994). An Alternative to Pacifism? Feminism and Just-War Theory. *Hypatia*, 9(2), 152–172. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810175>. Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- Pearl Karuhanga Atuhaire and Grace Ndirangu (2019). Women In International Security. Removing Obstacles to Women's Participation at the Peace Table and in Politics. Available at: <https://wiisglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/Removing-Obstacles-to-Womens-Participation-at-the-Peace-Table-and-in-Politics.pdf> Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.
- PSC Report, The Peace and Security Council (2023). Briefing update on situation in the Horn of Africa Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-update-on-situation-in-the-horn-of-africa/>> Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024.
- Radon, J., & Logan, S. (2014). South Sudan: Governance Arrangements, War, and Peace *Journal of International Affairs*, 68(1), 149–167. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24461710> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Rampton, M. (2015). Four Waves of Feminism. Pacific University Oregon, 1-10.
- Rampton, M. (2008). Three waves of feminism. The magazine of Pacific University. Available at: < <https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>> Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.
- Rehn Elisabeth and Sirleaf Ellen Johnson (2002). Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peacebuilding. Available at: < [https://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/Rehn\\_Sirleaf\\_-\\_W\\_War\\_Peace\\_-\\_the\\_Independent\\_Experts\\_Assessment\\_on\\_the\\_Impact\\_of\\_AC\\_on\\_W\\_Ws\\_Role\\_in\\_Pblgdg.pdf](https://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/Rehn_Sirleaf_-_W_War_Peace_-_the_Independent_Experts_Assessment_on_the_Impact_of_AC_on_W_Ws_Role_in_Pblgdg.pdf)> Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

- Regan, P. M., & Paskeviciute, A. (2003). Women's Access to Politics and Peaceful States. *Journal of Peace Research*, 40(3), 287–302. Available at:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3648332> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Ropers-Huilman, B. (Ed.). (2003). Gendered futures in higher education: Critical perspectives for change. Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Rowland Roby & Klein D. Renate (2012). Feminist Knowledge (RLE Feminist Theory). Chapter: Radical Feminism: Critique and Construct. Routledge.
- Schirch, L, and Sewak, M. (2005). The Role of Women in Peacebuilding. Working Paper, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. European Center for Conflict Prevention, Utrecht.
- Security Council Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325) (2000) Available at:<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n00/720/19/pdf/n0072019.pdf?token=i6jFEH5fC2cuvKxf62&fe=true> Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024.
- Shteynberg, G., Hirsh, J. B., Garthoff, J., & Bentley, R. A. (2022). Agency and Identity in the Collective Self. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 26(1), 35-56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10888683211065921> Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Snow A. David, Soule A. Sarah & Kriesi Hanspeter (2004). The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements. Feminism and the Women's Movement: A Global Perspective Myra Marx Ferree and Carol McClurg Mueller. First Published by Blackwall Publishing Ltd.
- Snow, Donald M. (1996). *Uncivil Wars: International Security and the New Internal Conflicts*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- South Sudan National Action Plan. Available at:<<https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>
- Soma Esther (2018). Our Search for Peace. Women in South Sudan's National Peace Processes, 2005-2018. UN Women, Born to Lead, OXFAM. Available at:<<https://oxfam.dk/documents/noedhjaelp/women-south-sudan-peace-processes-300120-en.pdf>> Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Spronk, T. (2014). Addressing the challenges of language choice in the implementation of mother-tongue based bilingual education in South Sudan. *Multilingual*. Ed. 4, 16 (2014). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13616-014-0016-z> Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.
- Spring David (2023). CRSF Meta-Analysis: Gender. Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility South Sudan. Available at:< <https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/repository/csrf-meta-analysis-gender-2/>> Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



- Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement, (2005). Available at:<<https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/accord/sudan-comprehensive-peace-agreement>> Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Available at:<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/> Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024.
- Tumele Simone (2015). Case Study Research. Available at:<<https://www.circleinternational.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IJSRM4-9.pdf#page=72>> Copyright ©2015 by International Journal of Sales, Retailing and Marketing v Vol. 4 v No. 9 v. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April.
- Ted, Piccone (2017). “Democracy, Gender Equality, and Security.” Brookings Institute, September 2017. Available at:[https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2017/08/fp\\_20170905\\_democracy\\_gender\\_security](https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2017/08/fp_20170905_democracy_gender_security) Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024.
- The Republic of South Sudan. On the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (2000). Available at:<[https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/Beijing20/NationalReviews/natl\\_review\\_south\\_sudan\\_-\\_eng.pdf](https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/Beijing20/NationalReviews/natl_review_south_sudan_-_eng.pdf)> Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- The Women and War Reader (1998). Edited by Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer E. Turpin. Published by: NYU Press.
- Thompson Martha (2006). Women, Gender, and Conflict: Making the Connections. *Development in Practice*, 16(3/4), 342–353. Available at:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4030064> Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Tickner, J.A. (1992). Gender in international relations: feminist perspectives on achieving global security. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tindall Theo (2022). Women, Peace and Security: Breaking down silos. Available at:[https://odi.cdn.ngo/media/documents/WPS\\_South\\_Sudan\\_Case\\_Study\\_FINAL\\_FCDO\\_v\\_2\\_3eWbhFR.pdf](https://odi.cdn.ngo/media/documents/WPS_South_Sudan_Case_Study_FINAL_FCDO_v_2_3eWbhFR.pdf) Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



- Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction*. Philadelphia, PA: Westview Press.
- Tounsel Christopher (2020). *Women in South Sudan*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.516> Accessed 24th April 2024.
- UN Women Africa (2022). “The WPS agenda in South Sudan could not be timelier” – South Sudan begins the development of its second National Action Plan on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. Available at: <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2022/09/the-wps-agenda-in-south-sudan-could-not-be-timelier-south-sudan-begins-the-development-of-its-second-national-action-plan-on-the-un-security-council-resolution-1325-on-women-peace-and-security> Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- UNFPA, (2001) (United Nations Population Fund). *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Girls A Consultative Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender in Areas of Conflict and Reconstruction* Bratislava, Slovakia 13–15 November 2001. Available at: [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/impact\\_conflict\\_women.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/impact_conflict_women.pdf) Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024.
- UN Humanitarian (2023). *South Sudan: “Living as a woman is a fight we go through daily”* Available at: <https://unocha.exposure.co/south-sudan-living-as-a-woman-is-a-fight-we-go-through-daily> Accessed 1st March 2024.
- UN Refugee Agency. *Global Refugee Statistics. South Sudan Emergency*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.ca/in-canada/refugee-statistics/> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- UN Women. *Women Count. South Sudan*. Available at: <https://data.unwomen.org/country/south-sudan> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Unger Barbara & Wills Oliver Dr. (2007). *Systemic Conflict Transformation and Inclusive Governance in Southern Sudan*. Berghof Foundation for Peace Support. Available at: [https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/SUD\\_Inclusive\\_Governance\\_Southsudan.pdf](https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/SUD_Inclusive_Governance_Southsudan.pdf) Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Verschuren, P. J. M. (2003). Case study as a research strategy: Some ambiguities and opportunities. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice*, 6(2), 121–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570110106154> Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

- Wakoson, E. N. (1987). The Sudanese Dilemma: The South-North Conflict. *Northeast African Studies*, 9(3), 43–58. Available at:< <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43660246>> Accessed 13th March 2024.
- Wolff, K. (2007). Liberal Feminism. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, G. Ritzer (Ed.). Available at:<<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeos1040>> Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> March.
- Wood Wendy, Eagly H. Alice (2002). A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Behavior of Women and Men: Implications for the Origins of Sex Differences Wendy Wood Texas A&M University. Available at:[http://humanbehaviors.free.fr/telechargement/origins\\_of\\_sex\\_differences.pdf](http://humanbehaviors.free.fr/telechargement/origins_of_sex_differences.pdf) Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Wood Wendy, Eagly Alice H. (2012) Chapter two - Biosocial Construction of Sex Differences and Similarities in Behavior. Available at:<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780123942814000027>> Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Young Iris Marion (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

