

A Radar with a Gendered Frequency?
Dilemmas and Discrepancies on the Military's Role within the
Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

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Abstract

There is a feminist scholarly debate on what role military institutions play in translating the goals of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda into practice. Where idealists on the one side question if militaries should ever be involved with such responsibilities and argue that feminist purposes risk being co-opted. Whereas pragmatists on the other, argue that military institutions can be ‘regendered’ and transformed to better engage with feminist visions of security and thus implement the agenda meaningfully. To go beyond this debate there is a need to include the perspectives of those who work with bringing these policies into practice during operations. The conclusions in this thesis rely on a qualitative interview study with Swedish civilian and military gender advisors (GENADs) to attempt to bridge the disagreement described above. These GENADs constitute a central mechanism within the implementation and can therefore provide an increased understanding of the military’s role in the implementation of the WPS agenda. It intends to explore how their experiences can shed further light on the debate between pragmatists and idealists. Through an abductive thematic analysis, it is possible to interpret the answers from the semi-structured interviews conducted as three dilemmas: instrumentalization, military hierarchies, and civil-military collaboration. The findings suggest that the debate is simplified as the arguments on both sides of the debate appear to correspond with reality within international operations. It is therefore suggested that the debate should leave its deterministic mentality between idealist and pragmatist notions and shift its focus from asking whether at all, to in which situations and how militaries should play a role within the implementation. It is also contended that more emphasis in research needs to be on how to create organizational change in norms and attitudes at a systemic level.

Keywords: Women, Peace and Security | Gender Advisor | Militarization | Gender Perspective | Organizational Change | UNSCR 1325 |

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1. Introduction

The UNSCR 1325 and its (currently nine) subsequent resolutions¹ provide the foundation of what is known as the international Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. This can be simplified to be divided into four pillars when implemented. *Participation*, addressing women's and men's equal political leadership in peace and security governance; *protection* of the rights and bodies of women; *prevention* of violence through various strategies; and *relief and recovery* for victims and survivors in post-conflict contexts, particularly sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (United Nations Security Council, 2000).

The WPS agenda is primarily implemented within the context of international operations and therefore, often refers directly to armed forces in a range of ways. International operations have become an integral part of the regular implementation of the mandates, obligations, and tasks of the agenda at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, therefore impossible to overlook when analyzing gender perspective in security affairs (Egnell, 2014; Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 556; NCGM, 2020). However, within these processes, military organizations are on the one hand seen as a problem the agenda seeks to solve as militaries are maintainers of the patriarchal war system as well as perpetrators of violence. On the other hand, military organizations are also seen as protectors of civilians and potential contributors to the implementation of the pillars of the agenda (Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 10).

The role of military organizations within the WPS agenda is thus a controversial and complicated issue. There is no consensus on what role militaries should have within the agenda, if any at all. Yet, regardless of perspective, military organizations are a substantial part of national and international security and should therefore be at the very heart of debates on gender equality and thus also debates about Women, Peace and Security (Wibben, 2018, p. 138; Egnell and Alam, 2019, pp. 253–254).

1.1 Research Problem

Within the academic field of WPS, there is a feminist scholarly debate on what role military institutions should play in its implementation. On the one hand, it is questioned whether the military should even be tasked with the involvement of such responsibilities. Their ability to

¹ UNSCR 1325 (2000); UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); UNSCR 2242 (2015); 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).

act as a ‘force for good’ by protecting civilians and pursuing stability, peace, and prevention of atrocities through the agenda is often questioned. The military itself is often seen as part of the problem rather than the potential solution of integrating gender perspective and promoting women’s rights (Egnell, 2014, p. 36). Consequently, militaries are often viewed as institutions of destructive power and inherent misogyny, inimical to feminism (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 557).

The WPS agenda was set out to be based on a world free from violence and armed conflict where human rights are protected, and to promote the equal empowerment of women and men involved in positions of leadership at all levels (WILPF, 2014, p. 2). Therefore, many feminist scholars argue that a feminist agenda for peace and security should have the goal of eliminating weapons and immensely reducing the role of military alliances and armed forces. Therefore, it is argued that any military engagement within the WPS agenda promoting military effectiveness with an instrumental focus risks co-opting it by legitimizing structural issues of a masculine war system, rather than challenging it – a phenomenon often referred to as ‘militarizing feminism’ (Wright, 2015, p. 505). Additionally, a more optimistic perspective of militaries’ involvement in the implementation of the agenda exists, where it is argued that military institutions can be ‘regendered’ and transformed to better engage with gender and a feminist version of security. Such regendering involves disruption and deconstruction of gendered hierarchies. Hierarchies that arguably have been enabled by both the development of the military over the last decade and the small gains won by women in the field. Certain key actors have influenced this regendering process from the inside, and these are referred to as agents of change or policy entrepreneurs (Egnell, 2014, p. 40; Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, pp. 559–560).

This debate consequently creates inconsistencies within policy advice and research in whether the WPS agenda can be meaningfully implemented by militaries according to feminist visions of security, or whether it risks co-opting feminist purposes. Practical conduct of the integration of gender perspective does in this regard get lost in a divide between pragmatists and idealists and/or activists. Pragmatists are here ready to set certain pacifist feminist fights aside to work with transforming the organization to become a force for good and thus advance the agenda. Whereas idealists or activists see such an approach to the implementation as a betrayal of the origins of the agenda’s anti-militarist and non-violent visions and vastly question whether military organizations and feminist goals could ever coexist (Cohn, 2013; Egnell, 2014, p. 36).

This inconsistency in the understanding of the role of the military within the implementation of the agenda has previously only been researched from either one of the sides although not been put in relation to each other empirically. In this sense, to go beyond this debate, there is a need to bring in the perspectives of those who actually work with bringing the policies of UNSCR 1325 into practice during operations (Egnell, 2014, p. 76). Gender expertise is in this sense deployed as a tool to advance feminist goals of the agenda, and it is accordingly most appropriate to ask how such expertise operates (Prügl, 2013, p. 58). A Gender Advisor (GENAD) is “a full-time expert and advisory function that provides advice on the integration of gender perspective and implementation of the WPS agenda” (NCGM, 2020, p. 4). They, therefore, play a crucial role in ensuring that the WPS resolutions are translated into the overall policies, planning, and execution of an operation whether it be UN peacekeeping, a political or a humanitarian mission (United Nations Security Council, 2013, para. 8; NCGM, 2020, p. 4). However, there is a lack of research that examines the arguments of the debate between pragmatists and idealists on the military’s role empirically as understood by GENADs, even though they constitute an absolute central mechanism in the implementation of the WPS agenda.

Accordingly, to fill this empirical gap this thesis seeks to deepen and discuss the theoretical debate between pragmatist and idealist arguments by bringing in the practitioners’ perspectives and examining whether they experience the same problems and/or possibilities that are taking place theoretically amongst academic scholars.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

In light of this, the following research questions are asked:

- ❖ *What problems and opportunities do gender advisors see in the military’s role in the implementation of the WPS agenda?*
- ❖ *How can their roles and understandings shed further light on the debate between pragmatists and idealists?*

Researching the interpretations and practices of gender advisors is crucial to gaining an understanding of how the WPS agenda and the integration of gender perspective are operationalized by military actors. Understanding how policies are translated into practice and particularly whether the agenda can be meaningfully implemented rather than militarized can

be understood by listening to those whose main task is to integrate gender perspective and the WPS agenda into operations, doctrines, procedures, education, and training. Thus, bringing in the perspectives and stories of those who actually operate within these contexts rather than sitting in their ivory towers distant from the real world (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 560; Davies and True, 2019, pp. 11–12).

The framework of the agenda ranges from a broad set of actors and components who are not just military, instead the agenda should target all levels and all actors in the field of operations. Gender advisors (GENADs) are not only sent out by military organizations into international operations but can also be sent out by, for example, CSOs in cooperation with military organizations in a largely military context. The agenda strives to be implemented at all levels, in all contexts whether they be civilian or military (United Nations Security Council, 2000, 2013, para. 8). Hence, this thesis also brings in the perspectives of civilian GENADs that operate within international operations and interact with military components within the implementation of the agenda and explore whether there are any variations in their understandings.

Therefore, this thesis aims to examine the relevance of the military's role within the implementation of the WPS agenda as understood by civilian and military GENADs and discuss whether the agenda can or cannot be implemented meaningfully by militaries according to feminist visions of security, including the roles of GENADs therein. Furthermore, with this empirical knowledge, this study intends to elaborate on the debate between pragmatists and idealists critically.

2. Previous Research

2.1 Meta-debate(s) on WPS

The creation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) should not be viewed as the origin of global gender politics but rather as a marker of its arrival in the global security arena and at the highest political forum. As such, the field of WPS literature covering the last two decades since the adoption of the resolution is extensive, very detailed, and crowded with academic debates, praises, and critiques (Kirby and Shepherd, 2016, p. 252). The very comprehensive literature on the agenda involves a range of scholarly critiques and contested meanings where the largest debates have honed on essentialism, the geographies of the agenda's setting, the inability to account for criticism and resistance, failures to challenge the war system from a feminist

perspective and recognizing the continuums of violence, as well as contested debates on whether the agenda can be perceived as a success or a failure (Ní Aoláin and Valji., 2019, p. 54).

One of the most extensive critiques of the WPS agenda is its failure to challenge the war system from a feminist perspective by placing women squarely into peace and security regulations. It is argued that the agenda fails to recognize continuums and categories of violence. A substantial amount of consideration has been put on sexual violence of women by male combatants and thus drawn attention from the everyday violence women experience in conflict and post-conflict societies rather than engaging with the continuity and relationship between both ‘exceptional’ and ‘ordinary’ violence against women (Wibben, 2018, p. 141; Ní Aoláin and Valji, 2019, pp. 55–56). Further, implementation strategies are argued essentialist when women’s participation often is based on the stereotypical assumption implying women are more peaceful than men. Or when their participation simply follows ‘adding women and stir’ rather than accounting for gendered power structures or the difference between women and men (Duncanson, 2017, p. 52). The agenda’s concept of gender, therefore, equates women and femininity with peace, whereas men and male norms remain absent from the texts (Valenius, 2007, p. 520; Jansson and Eduards, 2016, p. 592). In short, the core problematization is that while rhetorically probing for peace, the agenda has not welded its ideological nor rhetorical capacity to these values and goals but rather accepts certain gender norms and does little to undo the global security apparatus that enables war economies and arms trade to persist (Otto, 2016, pp. 4–5).

2.2 Implementation of the Agenda

A large body of literature covering the WPS agenda is focused on its implementation, which is also the focus of this thesis. The agenda sits within overlapping architectures within the UN, but also within and throughout other organizations and actors. However, its operationalization has not been provided with concrete tools or clarifications which has left the agenda to a wide set of interpretations ranging from it being sufficient to add a few women to senior positions and peace processes, to more transformative interpretations (Ní Aoláin and Valji, 2019, pp. 61–62). Perhaps the most comprehensive work on the implementation of the agenda is *A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325* by Radhika Coomaraswamy (2015) which identifies gaps and challenges, as well as trends and priorities for action (Coomaraswamy, 2015, pp. 13–15).

2.3 Gender and the Military

The verdict is not out yet on the results of implementing the WPS agenda, and there is thus no consensus on whether the outcomes and impacts of the agenda at the international level have been a success or a failure, since the evidence has been of mixed results (Moser and Moser, 2005, p. 19). The military's involvement is part of this inconsistency, a part that this thesis will focus on rather than the critiques and achievements towards implementation in general. In this light, the scholarly literature is divided into two strands of arguments where one side demands that the military operations adopt more feminist visions of security, whereas the other side argues that the involvement of the military to integrate goals of women, peace, and security militarizes these efforts (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 4).

2.3.1 Idealist Arguments

Particularly, three interrelated forms of violence are argued among anti-militarist feminists to be perpetrated by militaries which makes them inimical of pursuing true feminist goals: physical-, structural- and environmental violence. First, anti-militarist feminists argue that women are disproportionately affected by war and the violence perpetrated by militaries. Even though male soldiers are dying on the battlefield, indirect violence such as sexual and other forms of gender-based violence disproportionately affects women due to their socially assigned roles, for instance, caregivers. Further, as some militaries have shifted their focus towards peace operations, it is argued that their reason to exist remains to be ceasing lethal force to preserve national state objectives and their imperial ambitions, and the inclusion of women in such processes can therefore not be considered progress. Lastly, anti-militarist feminists also argue that militaries commit structural violence indirectly through a system of economic power and political influence that rests on maintaining interests in the development and maintenance of weaponry rather than funding civilian goods and attaining peace and security (Duncanson, 2017, pp. 40–42). These organized economies around states' military-industrial complexes are accordingly not equivalent to a feminist vision of peace and security of a universal reduction and eventual elimination of weapons and the role of the armed forces and military alliances (WILPF, 2014, para. 5).

It is also argued that when the WPS agenda is taken up by militaries, it risks being used to legitimize the war system rather than challenging it – even to militarize feminism (Valenius,

2007, p. 520; Kronsell and Svedberg, 2012, p. 211; Wright, 2015, p. 505; Otto, 2016, p. 5). Studying militarism and militarization is thus argued an integral part of security studies as one cannot think of security without encountering the militarist logic that is so deeply embedded within our present-day understandings of security (Wibben, 2018, p. 144). Hence, critical feminist academics remain skeptical of any feminist arguments that are deployed in militarist services.

Moreover, feminist scholars also view militaries as institutions where hegemonic forms of masculinity and practices of violence and misogyny prevail, including granting the production and reproduction of gendered myths of the military as heroic protectors of vulnerable civilians. These expressions of violent hypermasculinity are argued compatible with militarized identities – militarized masculinities – that focus on the domination of women and subordinate males and the belittlement of the feminine and thus conflicting with missions striving for maintaining peace (Whitworth, 2007 in Cockburn and Enloe, 2012, p. 552).

2.3.2 Pragmatist Arguments

Taking a more optimistic position, other feminist scholars instead argue that militaries can contribute to feminist visions of security and can be a useful source for implementing the agenda. Cynthia Cockburn (1989) theorizes in an anti-militarist context how small changes can lead to fundamental transformations in institutions, which in the words of Duncanson & Woodward can be taken into a military context to indicate how limited changes in militaries could lead to transformation (Cockburn, 1989; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, pp. 11–12). Cockburn and Hubic (2002) later ask whether military identities and military culture can be ‘regendered’ and transformed in a manner that allows for soldiers to be more caring and respectful of women if a more gender-conscious policy is put on the agenda (Cockburn and Hubic, 2002, pp. 117-118). Duncanson and Woodward unfold these thoughts and theorize about how the military can disrupt and deconstruct the gendered hierarchies in ways that allow them to take women’s military participation seriously while being attentive to feminist political goals of gender equality, peace, and justice. This theorization of a ‘regendered military’ therefore describes how gender can be mainstreamed in a transformative sense within the institution (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 12). The very deterministic anti-militarist feminist arguments of the military being inherently and irredeemably masculinist, violent, and incapable of change is problematized as there has been so much change, although slow and imperfect, not least for women in combat roles and LGBT[Q] personnel (Duncanson, 2017, p. 52). Further, as

antimilitarist feminists are ‘social-constructionists’ campaigning for change, and if gender, masculinities, and femininities are argued socially constructed, and therefore capable of change, the same should be true for militaries (Duncanson, 2017, p. 53). Kronsell (2012) argues that cosmopolitan militaries can demilitarize the traditionally typical military goals and characteristics of war and combat and instead transform the organization to ‘do peace’ through peacekeeping and conflict prevention, where soldiers can extend their work beyond combat to include for example speaking to locals (Kronsell, 2012, pp. 69–70). However, a demilitarized military organization that mainly promotes peace does not escape the fact that militaries at times need to use violence and weapons, such as in Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Feminist debates are often silent about the ethics of, if ever, when and how military force to protect civilians would be feminist and a potential force for good (Kronsell, 2012, p. 70; Egnell, 2014, p. 36).

Gendered change processes within these military institutions can be understood through theories of feminist institutionalism and the transformability of a feminist agenda. In these theories changes in gendered power distributions and relations can be driven by ‘policy entrepreneurs’ or ‘change agents’ working from within these institutions to transform them into becoming more gender-conscious (Chappell, Mackay and Kenny, 2010, p. 582; Egnell, 2014, pp. 39–40). Additionally, considering institutional change, Wright (2016) contextualizes NATO’s implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and draws attention to the crucial role of change agents, or ‘femocrats’, that operates within the institution and how they establish institutional knowledge and gender expertise necessary for making the agenda a reality (Wright, 2016, pp. 357–358).

2.4 The Role of GENADs

The literature on the debate on gender and the military and their role in the implementation of the WPS agenda has guided and enriched this thesis and has been incorporated into the findings and analytical discussion. However, scholarship on GENADs concerning this debate has to date been very limited.

Bastick and Duncanson (2018) explore how military GENADs can provide change within military operations in terms of the feminist goals within the framework of the WPS agenda. In line with the ‘regendering arguments’, they contrast the anti-militarist feminist arguments by illustrating through interviews with NATO GENADs, how gender has been institutionalized in

mission headquarters; how their work has contributed to changing the mindsets among their colleagues in both willingness to conduct gender work; and increased understanding of the necessity of gender analysis within operations (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 565). In contrast, the findings from Kesteloo's (2015) interviews with Dutch GENADs in the ISAF operation indicate that their work had minimal effects as they lacked an overall understanding of how to operationalize gender in military operations. Very simplistic visions of gender perspective were integrated which was found insufficient for implementing 1325 within the Dutch Armed Forces (Kesteloo, 2015, pp. 43–45). Furthermore, there are also published reports from specific operations evaluating the practical implications of the implementation of 1325, as well as listed overall recommendations for organizational improvement, there among recommendations for GENADs (Lackenbauer and Langlais, 2013, pp. 4–8; Hagstrom Frisell and Lackenbauer, 2018).

3. Theory

In this chapter, the theoretical framework guiding this study is described. First, the concepts of this thesis, *gender*, and *militarization*, are elaborated upon. These concepts are cornerstones for being able to understand and reflect on the arguments of the debate, as is the need for understanding what is meant when referring to *international operations*. Thereafter, the theoretical arguments within the debate between pragmatists and idealists are presented. These arguments form the basis of the theoretical understanding of this study and are used as the basis for analyzing the empirical material. Lastly, gender expertise as a tool for implementation and the potential variation between civilian and military GENADs is elaborated upon to guide the study in exploring how these actors are theorized to play a role within implementation processes in international operations.

Through this theoretical framework, this thesis intends to explore and analyze common themes and similarities associated with the theoretical arguments of each side of the debate and examine how these correspond with the understandings of the GENADs.

3.1 Key Concepts

3.1.1 Gender – A Social Construct

Since this thesis explores and analyses the implementation of the WPS agenda and the integration of gender perspective in international operations, as perceived by GENADs, I find

it as a prerequisite to clarify how *gender* is understood and interpreted (Kesteloo, 2015, p. 19). A common place to start when understanding the meanings of gender is that it is a social structure that shapes identities and lives. It shapes how people are seen by others and by themselves, as well as shaping the institutional and symbolic universe which constitutes the context and conditions in which we live. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. This is as much a structural power relation as race, class, and colonial systems of power, which rests upon valorizing some people over others, where resources, rights, responsibility, authority, and life options are accordingly organized (Cohn, 2013, pp. 3–4). However, it is important to note that gender is never reduced to one unified category of people as there can also be power differentials between and within each category, nor is it reduced to distinguishing between the biological sexes, and constructions of masculinities and femininities, but also encounters gendered identities, gendered social structures, and gendered symbolic meanings (Cohn, 2013, pp. 5–7).

Thus, when this thesis considers the integration of *gender perspective*, it means to integrate and focus on these gender-based differences in status and power and how these shape the immediate needs and long-term interests of women and men. In practical terms adopting a strategy in the planning and exercise of international operations so that women's and men's needs and interests are treated equally in mission areas (Tryggestad, 2009, p. 540). This is, most commonly, integrated through a *gender mainstreaming* process, meaning this recognition of the different needs and priorities of women and men is institutionalized within the organizations operating in the mission. This is often done through gender-sensitive practices and norms (Moser and Moser, 2005, p. 12). Practically within international operations, a gender perspective is argued to have the potential to transform the traditional military paradigm through the inclusion and creation of understandings of the significance of non-traditional security issues. Having a gender perspective can thus affect both what the operation does and how it is performed in terms of tactics and priorities (Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 8).

3.1.2 Militarization

Militarism is an assemblage of values, beliefs, and assumptions about how the world works. Among such beliefs are that armed force is the ultimate resolver of debate, humans are prone to conflict and violence, that states need armies, that during armed conflict and crisis those in need of armed protection are feminine and those engaging in armed actions are masculine. *Militarization* is thereupon a process by which the roots of militarism are entrenched deep

within a society to organize itself for military conflict and violence (Cockburn and Enloe, 2012, p. 555). By making war seem natural and thinkable, patriarchy inclines our societies to sustain militarization, in which gendered norms play a great role (Wright, 2015, p. 504). Militarized processes commonly occur in peacetime and are often militarizing more areas of life than traditional visions of security, in which militarism not only is reflected in the use of militaries to achieve policy aims, but also in the promotion of limited violence to ensure peace, blurring the distinction between war and politics (Wibben, 2018, p. 140).

3.1.3 International Operations

In this thesis, *international operations* refer to all types of operations with a military component that has the mandate to implement the WPS agenda, whether during or post-conflict. Regardless of its character being peacekeeping, disaster risk reduction, or humanitarian. International operations are not limited to the UN but involve multilateral efforts from any organization that has adopted the WPS agenda such as EU-, AU- or NATO-led missions.

3.2 The Pragmatist – Idealist Debate

Co-optation or militarization of the WPS agenda is ‘easier’ to detect from this thesis’ interviews. Such as by only referring to women as nonviolent alternatives feeding into gendered stereotypes (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 6), or by using the pillars of the agenda only to increase operational effectiveness rather than challenging the war system, gendered norms, and hierarchies, thus instrumentalizing feminist goals and sustaining militarism (Wright, 2015, p. 504). However, what is meant by *feminist visions of security* and how such visions are achieved through the implementation of the agenda is not that easy to distinguish. Traditionally, in idealist notions, a feminist vision of security encompasses the equal empowerment of women and men in all positions of leadership at all levels, and a world free from violence at the level of the elimination of weapons and a reduced role, or even exclusion of, armed forces and military alliances (WILPF, 2014, p. 2; Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 558). Lately, in more pragmatic notions, some feminists have left the deterministic viewpoint and argued for a more transformative approach to the agenda that deconstructs gendered dichotomies (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, pp. 6–7; Davies and True, 2019, p. 4). Small changes in militaries where gender is mainstreamed are by such feminists argued to be able to lead to institutional transformation, where military identities and culture can be regendered (Cockburn and Hubic, 2002, pp. 117-118; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, pp. 11-12). In a regendered military

soldiering is not a masculine identity but is rather constructed through relations of equality, empathy, respect, and care. The meanings of masculinity and femininity are questioned as well as the valorizing of masculinity over femininity, including the hierarchical thinking and norms and attitudes of male domination that traditionally characterize gender relations (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 12).

The above-described concerns about gender and military organizations within these implementation processes revolve around the goal or rationale for transformation or change. Among feminist scholars and activists, there are both instrumentalist and rights-based approaches to change. A rights-based approach highlights how equal rights should be offered to women and men irrespective of strategic imperatives. This part of the debate thrust on women's rights movements and focuses on UNSCR 1325 efforts as inherently good pursuits – simply 'the only right thing to do' (Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 262). Such an approach is not always compelling to a military audience where change for integrating gender perspective can be perceived as detrimental to their fighting power, and thus ought to be treated as exceptional. Hence, since militaries constantly strive for maximized effectiveness, the implementation, in instrumentalist terms, is rather framed as serving to strengthen the military, and thus 'the smart thing to do' (Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 263). However, this instrumentalist approach, stressing operational effectiveness, is highly problematized by idealists. They see it as being superficial and not accounting for the transformative potential of gender perspective, which are goals of the UNSCR 1325 contrary to increasing militaries' effectiveness (Jennings, 2011, p. 4; Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 263).

The debate between more transformative rights-based and instrumentalist approaches to processes of change overlap substantially. Instrumentalist rhetoric can be argued to help build support for the agenda within a military organization. By doing so, the tasks completed by militaries within operations can be more transformative as well as create a platform for change and an organization that better understands gender perspective (Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 264). A pragmatic approach here accepts that both instrumental and rights-based WPS approaches can recognize gender-specific experiences and impacts of conflict, along with the need to prevent conflict in ways where women's agency is enhanced. (Davies and True, 2019, p. 5).

Subsequently, when features such as militarization, co-optation, or instrumentalization of feminist goals for military purposes can be identified within the empirical material they indicate

that one could expect to be able to make certain assumptions and analyses that follow the anti-militarist feminist and idealist arguments. Whereas features such as demilitarization or regendering of militaries' culture and behavior are identified, one could expect to make assumptions and analyses about institutional change of gender becoming mainstreamed transformatively, thus following the pragmatist theoretical arguments. Consequently, one could imagine probable assumptions from the understood behavior and characteristics of militaries when analyzing the interviews related to each side of the debate and expect to be able to make certain comparisons and analyses on identified problems and opportunities for militaries.

3.3. Gender Expertise – a Tool for Implementation

Today, GENADs can play a great role in translating feminist knowledge into policy applications. The emergence of such expertise has on the one side worried feminists about the risks of using feminist ideas for co-opting feminist agendas for governmental and organizational purposes. However, gender expertise is also recognized for contributing to complex problem solving and rationalization of governing feminist issues at the international level and can thus be considered as a strategic tool for advancing feminist goals (Prügl, 2013, pp. 57–58). Seen this way, GENADs can be argued to operate in ways that contribute to transforming gendered institutions from the inside of operations. By promoting how to include gender perspective in practices of international operations, these become better aligned with the visions of the WPS agenda and become considerate of gendered power dynamics and insecurities between women, men, boys, and girls (Chappell, Mackay and Kenny, 2010, p. 583; Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, pp. 573–574). In contrast, as military organizational characteristics are bureaucratic, therefore, instrumental views of the military's role often prevail. Hence, normative pressures for change from within are often problematic for most attributes that traditionally characterize the military. Therefore, the idea that some individuals such as GENADs could challenge an organizational culture of masculinist military culture to become more gender-sensitive is, by some, argued to be naïve (Holmberg and Alvinus, 2015, pp. 136 & 145; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 9).

3.3.1 Civilian versus Military GENADs' Implementation

Considering that gender advisors in international operations are deployed by civilian and military organizations, which respectively have their own characteristics of organizational culture, pre-deployment training, and mandates within the operation, they can be expected to

interpret the debate and the implementation process of the agenda differently. The pace of the implementation of the WPS agenda is often explained by the organizational culture and ways of thinking and acting (Tryggestad, 2009, p. 550).

Based on this, one could imagine that potential variations between the civilian and military GENADs would arise from the interviews. It is conceivable that CSOs that send gender advisors to Israel and Palestine would have a different logic of the implementation than perhaps a gender advisor for the Swedish Armed Forces seconded in Afghanistan. However, at the same time, both civilian and military GENADs are set out to implement the very same agenda and resolutions, and the debate exists throughout all parts of the agenda. Consequently, one can expect to be able to make certain comparisons and analyses between military and civilian GENADs, while at the same time account for them as a whole in their role as GENADs.

4. Methodology

This chapter presents the method used, the data collection, and the data/material itself, including how the data was interpreted. Moreover, the methodological limitations and the author's reflexivity and positionality are reflected upon.

This thesis aims to examine the relevance of the military's role within the implementation of the WPS agenda as understood by civilian and military GENADs and discuss whether the agenda can or cannot be implemented meaningfully by militaries according to feminist visions of security, including the roles of GENADs therein. As well as critically elaborate on the pragmatist – idealist debate with this empirical knowledge. To achieve this aim, this thesis takes a qualitative approach and is based on semi-structured interviews with civilian and military GENADs with experience from international operations within the framework of the WPS agenda. As an analysis method, an abductive thematic analysis has been used. The abductive analysis process means that theory and empiricism have alternated (Langemar, 2008, p. 47), and is further explained in the description of the procedure of analysis.

4.1 Material

The primary material for this thesis has been interviews with Swedish civilian and military GENADs that have been deployed in international operations within the framework of the WPS agenda. The collection of the empirical material was made through strategic selection, where

the interviewees were chosen because they possess qualities relevant to answering the research questions. The strategic selection of GENADs is based on how at some point they have worked with gender issues in the role of a gender advisor in an international operation. However, the interviewees are people, and people draw on experiences in general and do not compartmentalize their lives in such a manner. Hence, the GENADs do at times speak more broadly from their experiences as gender experts in different types of positions and contexts and might have drawn some of their answers on experiences outside their role as GENADs and instead on gender work or interpretations of militaries within the agenda in general. The material from the interviews can therefore not one hundred percent be of them as GENADs, but perhaps rather as ‘gender experts’, yet I choose to call them gender advisors (GENADs) throughout this thesis.

Five GENADs were interviewed for the empirical data, two military- and two civilian GENADs as well as one currently within a civilian affiliation but trained as both a military and civilian GENAD. Each represented different organizations in their deployments in international operations. Some of them had experience in being deployed by several organizations, and all have been deployed in different operations at different moments in time. The variation between selecting both civilian and military GENADs is not essential to the analysis, but since there is little research on the perspectives of civilian GENADs, it is identified that the thesis benefits from a variation of interviewed GENADs. The qualitative interviews including both civilian and military GENADs were thus provided to make comparisons and discover general patterns and common themes between them as well as differentiate them from each other (Langemar, 2008, p. 61). However, with the intention that they do not need to be mutually exclusive categories but rather might draw upon and reinforce one another, as both operate in the field of implementing the same agenda. Hence, civilian, and military GENADs, were both analyzed as a whole and compared to each other.

Additionally, it is important to note that the interviewees do not represent any population but themselves, as case descriptions, since the GENADs’ experiences are context-dependent and not something existing outside their situation as such (Langemar, 2008, p. 63). The goal has been to provide thick descriptions through these in-depth interviews, which has required a lot of time in both procedure and analysis. Yet, what can be said about the theoretical debate can still be generalized as to the logic of assuming ‘thin rationality’ – that most actors in most cases do things for a reason. Providing a perspective of thinly rationalistic mechanisms balances

between contextualization and theoretically formed generalizability. Both are equally important since context is needed to interpret the GENADs perceptions and to help the reader evaluate these interpretations, whereas a rationalistic framework also is needed to move beyond the specific case. Hence, the study becomes theoretically relevant as it sheds light on the debate from a new angle as well as by connecting policy and practice (Bengtsson and Hertting, 2014, p. 720; Hallin and Helin, 2018, p. 91).

4. 2 Data Collection

To access the GENADs thoughts, experiences, feelings, and reflections, the questions asked during the qualitative interviews were not chosen from a fixed set of questions but instead open-ended to provide ‘thick descriptions’ and content-rich material for the analysis, which could not have resulted in the same answers from interview to interview, nor have been thought of beforehand (Langemar, 2008, p. 68).

As the interviews with the GENADs were semi-structured, they were based on three question areas selected before conducting any of the interviews which related to their understanding of the role of the military within international operations. One question area the GENADs were asked about was their background, the types of operations they had participated in within their role, and the material they rely on for their work. These are intended to create an understanding of the GENADs background, education, and experience as well as why they chose to work with gender issues in international operations and to motivate how they operate in their role and their general views of the agenda. The second question area the GENADs were asked about was their role and responsibilities as GENADs, their understanding of the agenda, and their successes and challenges within the implementation process. These intended to access how they in their own words described their work, perceptions of gender, gender perspective, and gender mainstreaming (and other concepts of relevance to understanding the implementation of the agenda in the field of operations). They also served to access their practices of the implementation and further what they highlight as of most importance within the implementation of the agenda. Lastly, and of most prominence, their lived experiences and understandings of the debate and the role of militaries were inquired for. Which intended to access if inconsistencies of the debate affect their work and if they believe their role as GENADs could contribute to institutional change and actualize the WPS goals meaningfully.

Along with their understandings of the military's role within the implementation and whether idealist and/or pragmatist theorization are in line with their reality.

These question areas are listed in the interview guide that was used during the interviews (see Appendix 1). The interviews with the GENADs progressed 'on their own', and follow-up questions were instead asked – probing – to ensure that each area of research was covered (Hallin and Helin, 2018, pp. 42–43). Since the thesis used an abductive method and was partly empirically driven, the interview guide developed and had themes added on gradually after each interview which further led to changes in the research questions (Langemar, 2008, p. 70).

4.2.1 Ethical Considerations

The data collection follows the basic ethical guidelines for participation in an interview study. Particularly, the research does not expose the individual interviewee to mental or physical abuse as well as an improper intrusion in their private life (Langemar, 2008, p. 147). This was ensured through a set of requirements of information, consent, and confidentiality. Before the interviews were conducted the GENADs were therefore informed of the project and what their participation would entail through an information- and consent form (see Appendix 2). Special emphasis was put on elements that could be perceived as unpleasant; the purpose of the study; the responsible principle for the thesis; and ethical aspects such as confidentiality; voluntariness and; the use of their provided information (Langemar, 2008, pp. 149–152). For this thesis, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Their personal information and background were through the transcription only described in general terms and their names, international operation, and organizational affiliation were de-identified to protect the integrity of the GENADs and their colleagues. The only identified risk of participation was feelings of discomfort that could arise in connection to reflecting on their work in the field, yet, hoping the interview could be a reflective process in the long-run and thus surpass this risk.

4.3 Procedure of Analysis

The abductive thematic analysis, guided by both theoretical literature and the empirical material from the interviews, was done horizontally and began already as the interviews were conducted. Meaning that, at the same time as the interviews were held, connections were made between the interviews and the literature in which interpretations and conclusions were drawn. The analysis work began already during the transcriptions of the recorded materials (Hallin and Helin, 2018, p. 74).

After all the interviews had been transcribed, they were read through, and thereafter themes, quotes, and wordings were highlighted and grouped under different overall concepts. Once interpreting the interviews one by one and all together, around 20 different themes of various scopes were identified. Examples from such overview varied from leadership, resistance, security, civil-military relations, militarization, meaningful implementation, to advocacy work. After mapping out this overview, three main themes that represented dilemmas on the military's role – namely, instrumentalization, military hierarchies, and civil-military collaboration – were identified, and naturally also sub-themes. The themes were primarily drawn from what was interpreted empirically from the interviews. However, following an abductive research approach, the identification and grouping of themes were also guided, but not determined, by the author's existing theoretical understandings based on theoretical knowledge from both sides of the debate together with previous research, on potential problems and opportunities of the military's role within the agenda. When new themes or connections between themes emerged from the material, the theoretical framework that served as the basis for interpreting the material was revised. Some theoretical arguments became irrelevant, while others were strengthened. In other words, themes were formed alternately between empiricism and theory.

Each interview was then revisited and reviewed related to each theme to interpret similarities, differences, inconsistencies, and contradictions, including in what ways these emerged (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Each theme was then summarized and structured through analysis and interpretations together with illustrative quotes and examples to make it comprehensible for the reader – which is what constitutes the results of this thesis (Hallin and Helin, 2018, p. 74). The quotes have been selected on the basis that they have contributed to the discussion and either represent the general understandings of an individual, several, or all GENADs (Esaiasson, 2017, pp. 280–281, 285). Since the interviews were held in Swedish, the quotes have been translated into English by the author.

Theory played a role within the abductive analytical process when repeatedly analyzing the themes through the theoretical framework and exploring to what extent it could be informative to the themes. It was identified that some parts of the theoretical framework could be revised and adapted so that it better accounted for the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 98). The empirical material was then interpreted according to the key themes and analyzed based on both pragmatist- and idealist theorization on how these correspond with the GENADs

understandings. Based on this, conclusions were drawn on how it could further illuminate the debate. Hence, the thesis cognitively engaged with pragmatist- and idealist theorization and empirical data from the interviews in parallel to produce its conclusions (Langemar, 2008, pp. 127–128).

4.4. Methodological Limitations

This thesis is not ‘measuring’ anything, and excludes exploring any effects, successes, or failures of the implementation within international operations. Research with such objectives would require other material such as after-action reports or evaluation reports from specific operations. The implementation process involves a tremendous number of activities and actors which are all interconnected and is an ever-changing process where policies and mandates are developed and vary over time. Therefore, with a focus on the perspectives of GENADs, the thesis only provides a glance at the implementation of the WPS agenda in international operations and focuses on the interpretation and experiences related to the pragmatist–idealist debate.

The empirical material only consists of five interviews and is therefore very small. Ideally, since the integration process of gender perspective is intrinsically context-based, this thesis would have benefitted from interviewing more than five GENADs to gain a greater variation of experiences and a greater understanding of the phenomena of interest. Hence, a good balance between a homogenous and heterogenous selection should have been made. Covering GENADs from all levels and actors from the implementation process, ranging from Senior Gender Advisors at the strategic level, Gender Focal Points (GFPs), the soldiers deployed in the operation, the local population, and women’s- and civil society organizations, to provide a link between all steps from top to bottom and back up again to gain an even deeper understanding. Particularly, interviewing the recipients would have been beneficial as the people on the ground who are involved in the efforts and take part in the GENAD’s work with the implementation in the field is crucial, as it is them at the end that can report back on the usefulness of gender perspective (Egnell, 2014, p. 13). Although, due to limited accessibility to a network of GENADs, the thesis relied on so-called snowball selection where some contacts were provided by my supervisor, and the rest were mediated further by the interviewees. The external validity, therefore, becomes limited, and the GENADs do not represent any population but themselves, rather only serve as context-dependent case descriptions (Langemar, 2008, pp. 59–63). At the

same time, with a few interviewees, I could truly go into depth on their experiences in the analysis.

Moreover, the fact that all interviewees are Swedish might influence the findings since Sweden puts particular emphasis on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000), and is the host nation for the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) which provides gender training and education, and is also NATO's 'Department Head' for the Gender in Military Operations Discipline (Wright, 2016, p. 356; Aggestam and Bergman Rosamond, 2019, p. 30; NCGM, 2020, p. 3). Yet, the nationality of the GENADs is seen as a most-likely-case of implementing the agenda according to feminist visions of security, which makes it particularly interesting to investigate how arguments of the debate are found based on their understandings.

4.5 Reflexivity and Positionality

Reflecting upon one's position towards the relationship with both the interviewees and the knowledge produced is important for the feminist research process. It helps the researcher to identify and uncover any pervading power relations and/or structures that may affect the purpose of the research, conceptual frameworks, assumptions, methodological selections, or ethical challenges. Being reflexive in this sense means that with respect to the GENADs, I am being mindful of what role my presence, prejudices, and beliefs might have (Basini, 2016, pp. 169–170). I needed to recognize that my subjectivity becomes a vital part of the analysis. Therefore, my identity, values, and attitude toward the phenomena and the interviewees shape the research process throughout, including the questions asked and the interpretation of data (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2016, p. 79). Therefore, reflecting upon my positionality becomes important. As a [cis] woman and a feminist, I value the agenda's stated goals. Yet, as a white Swedish civilian, I have limited understanding of the inner workings of both the civilian and military organizations operating in the field, and the gendered maltreatment of the local population in the conflict areas in which these international operations take place. Undergoing Swedish basic military training at a young age, my beliefs and opinions about the military have probably been shaped differently than most feminist researchers. My background in the Swedish Air Force, as well as my recent internship at the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), might unconsciously have led me to want to see that the military is an institution open for change and able to match my feminist beliefs. Still, I believe that my perspective entails a

different starting point which could potentially make the study more nuanced, and even more empirically open.

5. Analysis

From the materials collected through interviews, I have identified three main themes which represent the problems and opportunities acknowledged by the GENADs related to the debate between pragmatist and idealist notions on the military's role in the implementation of the WPS agenda. Namely, *instrumentalization*, *military hierarchies*, and *civil-military collaboration*. Each team is further categorized into subthemes. These thematic areas are overlapping as certain data between themes 'slide into each other'. However, my interpretations are made from the interviewees' perspectives and self-understanding to imitate their perceptions as closely as possible through these themes and citations, believing it best sheds light on the GENADs' understandings of their subjective answers to the posed research questions (Esaiasson, 2017, p. 279).

Presentation of Gender Advisors

The analysis is based on material from semi-structured interviews with five Swedish civilian and military gender advisors (GENADs). These have been deidentified to protect them and their colleagues. The international operations, the specific organization their affiliation belongs to, or when in time they were deployed as GENADs are therefore not revealed. Instead, they have been given pseudonyms to facilitate for the reader to individualize and separate the GENADs from each other and between categories. Hence, the only information that is uncovered is whether they have been deployed in military or civilian contexts and their affiliation in very vague terms. The GENADs of this analysis are thus referred to as the following:

Eric – A military GENAD deployed within the Armed Forces

Anna – A military GENAD deployed within the Armed Forces

Isabelle – A civilian GENAD deployed within a Government Agency

Linn – A civilian GENAD deployed within a Civil Society Organization

Marcus – A GENAD deployed within a Government Agency although with the dual experience of also being trained and educated as a military GENAD.

5.1 Instrumentalization – Problem or Opportunity?

From the interviews with the GENADs, I find that there is a distinct dilemma regarding instrumentalization. On the one hand, when the WPS agenda is instrumentalized and motivated in terms of increasing operational effectiveness, it has been militarized. However, on the other hand, operational effectiveness has been needed as rhetoric and an initial step to enable the transformative purposes beyond.

5.1.1 Understandings of the Agenda and Security

Most disagreements between the gender advisors emerged concerning their general perception and understanding of the WPS agenda. The military GENADs are at the forefront in arguing for the agenda as a tool for achieving long-term and durable peace by engaging the entire population. They describe themselves as actors that ‘create’ this security, stability, and safety and that they contribute to building durable peace and particularly express this as part of their mandate and what they are intended to accomplish once in the field. Although pushing for operational effectiveness as a natural result of implementing the WPS agenda, a more holistic and non-militarizing perspective of the agenda is brought up by one military GENAD Anna, who particularly emphasizes the importance of creating ownership. Saying both that she as a GENAD and the military in general can assist with tools and thoughts of how the local population can do these things. Although, the change and development must be owned by locals themselves, hence the importance of finding the women, raising their voices, and helping to make everyone equal to drive a country’s development and ways forward.

“So, we can go in and stabilize a unit absolutely, but for us to reach a long-term perspective, the entire population needs to be involved. I can help you with tools and how to run this and with thoughts on how to do these things. But it is you who must own this.” – Anna, Military GENAD [author’s translation]

The civilian GENADs do, for the most part, have a positive attitude towards the agenda yet do not hesitate to point out the by them identified flaws. The agenda is spoken of in terms of how the resolutions are in their basic form good. Particularly in how they reveal what is of uttermost importance to work in terms of improvement and to establish a basic analysis through the division of participation, protection, prevention, relief and recovery, and thus paths on how to reach gender equality. Despite acknowledging the failures of the system of implementing the agenda, the civilian GENAD Isabelle stands out in her perceptions of the WPS agenda. Claiming that it is one that completely reforms and changes the whole world structure in a

transformative manner, overturns the status quo, questions how we look at peace and security, and advocates for a new world order.

“I see the WPS agenda as a new world order - that this is what it advocates - a completely new world order.” – Isabelle, civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

Whereas at the very opposite point of view from both the military GENADs and Isabelle, is the gender advisor deployed through a CSO, Linn. She acknowledges the symbolic value of the agenda but makes it very clear that she questions UNSCR 1325 to be effective. Rather, if anything should be used for integrating gender perspective, it should be through CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women).

The GENADs frequently spoke of the importance of the definition and understanding of security. Here, I find a clear distinction between the military and civilian GENADs. As Anna and Eric emphasize their ‘task’ as military actors is to ‘create’ security and above all create ‘new’ security and an environment of opportunity for other actors to act and enable them to create their own security structures accordingly. Whereas the civilian GENADs above all highlight the shortcomings in how one understands and talks about peace and security. Specifically, Isabelle claims how the basic understanding of security is one that rarely sees inequality as a root cause of conflict, which she claims is not limited to the military but applies to both civilian and military organizations in general. Both Isabelle and Marcus value the strengthening of women’s security perspective and changing the understanding of how it is talked about as one of their greatest successes. But at the cutting edge, Linn, Marcus, and Isabelle highlight that there is no correct understanding of security if the rights perspective is left out, as per the rights-based approach theorization (Davies and True, 2019, p. 5; Egnell and Alam, 2019, pp. 262–264).

“I always start from the rights perspective, but I know that in the defense and security sector and the Armed Forces, there is a very much focus on operational effectiveness, and I think that is very problematic. [...] It is very problematic because then we make women's rights, and women's participation an instrument for something else. I think we must always form a basis in that it is a matter of a right.” – Isabelle, civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

“Because the rights perspective comes first and cannot be removed.” – Marcus, trained as both Military and Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

5.1.2 Operational Effectiveness and Militarization of the Agenda

I find that there is a clear discrepancy between the GENADs in which the civilian GENADs problematize this focus to a great extent and connect motivating the integration of gender perspective through operational effectiveness directly to the militarization of the agenda. Whereas the military GENADs speak of operational effectiveness as a necessity and a recipe for success, hence do ‘conform to’ these accusations.

“I still think that large parts of the defense and security sector, globally, have taken the WPS agenda and made it something that it is not [...] an interpretation has been made so that the agenda is completely contrary to the basic idea, and I think there is a very great risk that you alienate those behind the agenda; women's organizations and civil society” – Isabelle, Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

In line with this quote, the civilian GENADs Isabelle and Linn argue that when there is too much effort put on operational effectiveness and too little on transformative measures that strive to change power structures, the agenda is militarized. They problematize how using the agenda for operational effectiveness makes women’s rights and women’s participation an instrument for something else, and that the agenda needs to always have a rights-based approach. Even though they acknowledge the positive aspects which are also raised by the military GENADs, such as contributing to increased peace, prevention of conflict, and enabling military operations to meet the needs of women, girls, men, and boys, the rights perspective must be at the forefront. The WPS agenda should not become an instrument for something else. Isabelle especially urges that “if we do not present these issues as rights, and instead talk about operational effectiveness in the spirit of the agenda it will cement inequality and reproduce a discourse that does not lead us forward” [author’s translation]. Because for her, after all, “what it is all ultimately about is the questioning of power and power structures” [author’s translation]. Additionally, Linn elaborates on the consequences a military perspective on security may have.

“It becomes very militarizing instead of letting women’s voices set the agenda, then it only creates a military perspective on security in a way that security knocks out the rights perspective” – Linn, Civilian GENAD [author’s translation].

From the interviews with the military GENADs, I find that throughout the interviews when they describe the agenda at large, as well as their relation to the debate and the role of the military,

it is precisely this ‘operational effectiveness’ that is accentuated. The role of GENADs to integrate gender perspective is described in terms of a ‘tool’ and a component within the ‘recipe for success.’ They argue that it is good for the operation because if you get access to one hundred percent of the local population, the intelligence activities will increase much more than if they would stick to the prevailing power structures. Internally within the organization and in the field, Eric explains his role as a military GENAD could at times be compared to a ‘vacuum cleaner salesman’ that had to keep selling the agenda. Although, he further problematizes the efforts laid on ‘selling in’ the operational effectiveness as he had to go around and skip the basic discussion on structures in society based on gender during the first years after the agenda was introduced. Although in recent years, he does not overlook the basic gender discussions as the environment now is riper. As Eric notes, if he continues to skip these important gender discussions, he will not put a *gendered frequency on their radars* [emphasis added], they will then not gain the glasses and generic tools to see society for what it is. However, even though Eric problematizes this, he still does not see any contradiction in being pragmatic and increasing the operational effect, rather that the military has an obligation and responsibility to act quickly and get home from the operation as soon as possible.

“Do you not understand that it is about operational efficiency? It is about fulfilling what we are set to do. We are set here to create security, and to go home as soon as possible from the operation. Because it is expensive” – Eric, Military GENAD [author’s translation]

Concerning their viewpoints of the agenda and their understandings of security, the civilian GENADs thus find that the military has hijacked the agenda and militarized it since they argue that the military perspective on security is the only one raised rather than letting women’s voices set the agenda. For them, it is further important to note that militarization goes beyond international operations. One example given by Linn is how the military and police personnel carrying weapons in the home has led to an increase in domestic violence. Isabelle further defines militarization to a level beyond the security- and defense sector to a militarization of society at large because norms and behaviors of militarized masculinity saturate it. Moreover, she understands this militarization of society is connected to masculinities and the idea that men should be aggressive and masculine but underlines how this is not only affecting men. Rather everyone in a society that wants to influence patriarchal structures must embrace these militarized masculinities to get somewhere – a culture that permeates the whole society.

“I have heard many colleagues talk about this regarding the military, who have worked with 1325, that the military has hijacked 1325” – Linn, Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

5.1.3 Instrumentalization – A Head Start

On the other side of the dilemma of instrumentalization, I interpret from the interviews that it is at times not black and white. The military GENADs and Marcus with the dual perspective rather ‘defend’ to motivate the agenda with operational effectiveness as a pragmatic measure to allow any progress at all. Accordingly, Eric particularly raises the difficulties, especially at the beginning of the agenda around 2000. When first introducing the WPS agenda and motivating the necessity of integrating gender perspective within the hypermasculine environments of the military organizations, in which notions of gendered inequalities between women and men had never been problematized before.

“The pragmatism we practiced was, as it were, necessary. To get anywhere at all.” – Eric, Military GENAD [author’s translation]

Also, both Eric and Marcus mention that you need to understand that during an operation, the military is mandated with responsibilities that might force them to take specific measures. Such as, in a pushed situation, needing to prioritize to solve the task, such as protecting civilians, and, then again, be pragmatic to reach the goal. At times this could result in measures that might not be in accordance with the agenda as one could have hoped for. From the interviews with the military GENADs, I interpret that they experience that much progress has been made and that a point has been reached where they have become good at the implementation. Arguing how they now reap the fruits of their labor. In terms of progress, Eric mentions how he nowadays does not need to sell in operational effectiveness, not least to the same extent. Thus, emphasized by both Eric and Anna, it has taken time, but we should not forget how far we have come. So far it could never have been fantasized about twenty years ago.

“Time has given this more and more ability to slowly ‘spit on this stone’ and make people actually understand how important this is. [...] It's about development, and the Armed Forces have needed this time to learn this.” – Anna, Military GENAD [author’s translation]

5.2 Military Hierarchies – Problem or Opportunity?

I find another dilemma regarding the role of military organizations as implementors of the agenda. Where on the one side the hierarchical structures of the military are raised as a potential facilitator for the implementation processes. Whereas on the other, it is argued that a good structure and leadership will not matter if a basic analysis and understanding of *gender work* is missing – namely efforts to implement the WPS agenda and integrate gender perspective into operations. Because if norms and power structures are not transformed, there can be no organizational change and no meaningful implementation of the agenda.

5.2.1 Facilitating Structures

The very formation of the military (hierarchical) structure has been referred to as beneficial for implementing the agenda by some of the GENADs. The civilian GENAD Isabelle talks about how, at times, there are better preconditions in the security sector because of their command structure. Organizations that have more democratic and flat governance need another form of consensus, which may create more difficulties in getting things through. Albeit, while these structures might be argued to facilitate the implementation, the military GENAD Eric also points out that within these structures, having a gender perspective is at times argued to be natural within the organization – an attitude he problematizes. He has experience from facing young Swedish soldiers' expressions of being marinated with gender since childhood and how they therefore already hold the knowledge provided by him as a military GENAD.

Marcus, who is experienced in both military and civilian structures, also highlights that civilian organizations could learn from the military foundations. He claims they, militaries, build on the general attitude of once something is decided by the leadership, it consequently creates a structure that facilitates an understanding of “what has been implemented will persist and become followed once it is indoctrinated, period”. Whereas, drawing on his experiences within civilian organizations, the efficiency of the implementation often depends on *who* [emphasis added] plans for the operation.

“The military has a strength in that a lot is indoctrinated as of ‘these documents should exist’, [...] and that is fantastic to start building on, there is often a division of responsibilities that is at least based on it being clear, and these are the kind of things of which civilian actors could learn from.” – Marcus, trained as both Military and Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

Marcus further points out that civilians can learn from the military in how military GENADs in their role as *advisors* [emphasis added] in more literal terms, with a direct connection to the Commander. This could have devastating consequences if the leadership is not supportive, ignore the advice, or make use of the advice in wrong terms but could also, when used ‘correctly’, carry great advantage as the leadership receiving the advice often has great power and mandate to govern and ensure implementation. Hence, because the civilian GENAD often works within operations as a free agent, which was also described by Linn and Isabelle, there is a risk that this responsibility will be missed. Thus, both Marcus and the civilian GENADs argue for the incentive for civilian actors to take inspiration.

5.2.1.1 Leadership

Following these reflections on hierarchical structures, I have from the interviews interpreted that the leadership within international operations plays an extensive role for GENADs as well as achieving the goals of the agenda at large. Leadership plays a role at both the personal- and structural levels. At the personal level, the GENADs express how specific leaders can be the whole prerequisite for driving the gendered projects forward. When the leadership sees the potential in them as GENADs and thus ensures them the mandate and resources needed to carry out their work. This, however, requires that the leadership see the importance of a gender approach and the need to make these efforts a priority. However, when asked about the key challenges they face, all GENADs highlighted resistance from the leadership. Marcus accordingly emphasizes that mandates can be very thought through and well written, but what is crucial is that it is backed by the leadership and that the high command sees gender work as a priority and bring it into the system of the whole organization. Eric particularly stresses the power of leadership in setting an example by highlighting the importance of gender work within the military culture.

“It is also the power of example. If you have a commander who is firm in the matter, a commander who says that this is important, a commander who declares these points and communicates with action as well, that is what we will read.” – Eric, Military GENAD [author’s translation]

Accordingly, in relation to what civilian organizations could potentially learn from military hierarchical structures, Isabelle highlights how she in the role as a civilian GENAD, often associates her work with being a ‘sponge’ that absorbs all access to work within operations and often become responsible for basically all gender work. She, therefore, stresses that it is the

leadership that has the uttermost responsibility and must provide clear guidelines, frameworks, policies, and makes sure to govern the gender mainstreaming and equality work. The responsibility cannot fall on one sole GENAD. Anna likewise raises concerns about how military GENADs often become a single competence on gender within the operation. Particularly problematizing this since military GENADs are most often only deployed for six months which therefore gets untenable in a long-term perspective when that role is constantly replaced. Although putting great emphasis on how leadership is key to being able to go from theory to practice, Isabelle also acknowledges that we cannot believe that it will fundamentally change the culture of an organization. She contends that the leadership does a lot to set the bat but will not change people's norms and behaviors.

“The short-term work is that the leadership establishes these structures, but the long-term work must include that we work to change norms, attitudes, and behaviors.” – Isabelle, Civilian GENAD [author's translation]

5.2.2 Organizational Change

Following this quote by Isabelle and on the dilemma of hierarchical structures, I interpret from the interviews that, even though an organization has a structure that facilitates gender work and has a leadership that prioritizes it, it is not enough. Contrary, what matters for organizational change and achieving a sufficient implementation of the agenda in a transformative manner is to fundamentally change norms. Although, during the interview, Isabelle continues by highlighting the difficulties in going from changing norms to changing attitudes, to then changing behavior. She argues that this is the combination all gender workers are trying to crack. “There is still a lack of research in *how* [emphasis added] change comes about, and especially the mystery in how to bring change on an individual level to the organizational level” [author's translation]. An interesting aspect that the military GENAD Anna mentioned concerning this is that it is extremely important to have a cultural understanding and realize that it takes time to change these norms. Above all, she stresses that Sweden during an international operation should not force western visions upon others, but rather demonstrates that there are alternative ways to operate and provide guidelines on how to operate comprehensively.

“That is why we go there, to create an environment, an incentive for the country's own security structures to be able to grow. And it is not equated with us imposing western ways to look at legislation or the judiciary, but we must be able to pass on guidelines on how to go forward” – Anna, Military GENAD [author's translation]

Regarding arguments about changing norms, one of the main accomplishments raised among the civilian GENADs in their role is the change they see in people. Whereas the accomplishments among the military GENADs are spoken more in terms of operational successes in accordance with the agenda, such as identifying female police officers and managing to create cooperation and establish a long-term gender structure that their successors can take over. For both Isabelle and Marcus, what stands out among their accomplishments are the changes in norms, behaviors, and attitudes among people rather than merits in gender analyses, written documents, or reports. For them, the main gauge for success in gender work is thus experiencing a change in the ways people talk about security.

“It is such small things that can make one often feel how change is happening. Putting together a nice plan that you leave behind, for example in an organization, can have less of an impact than getting some people to think differently.” – Marcus, trained as both Military and Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

“Then, by explaining it and where the women and civil society come from, by explaining their view of militarization, one can begin to succeed in loosening things up. They [military personnel] then think ‘well is that so?’ ‘IT depends on it?’, I now understand” – Isabelle, civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

5.2.2.1 Gender Work – A Façade?

On the other hand, another point raised during the interviews with the civilian GENADs is that in many instances gender work is something superficial and does not intend to change any structures or norms fundamentally. This is not only argued to apply that militaries instrumentalize the agenda by increasing operational effectiveness solely by deploying female soldiers or producing gender-based statistics, but also a common problem among the civilian actors. Therefore, I interpret that the civilian GENADs argue that it becomes clear how theory and practice do not align. Since an organization may on the surface give the impression of being equal, and having gender mainstreaming efforts of all sorts, that does not mean that the organization has these things. There might still be unequal power structures, sexual harassment, and violence widespread throughout the organization.

A challenge raised among all GENADs is that gender equality is often not a priority. Isabelle raises how it may be framed as such within policies but look different when she has come to an international operation to provide her gender expertise, and the work has often been considered

unnecessary. Her role as a GENAD has thus been seen as ‘window-dressing’, but not anticipated to dig and root too much within the organization. In her skepticism towards UNSCR 1325, Linn also mentions that it often only has a symbolic value and that the gender mainstreaming that is advocated for as part of the agenda often becomes a ‘ticking the box exercise’ and does not contribute to a shift in power structures. Rather, she argues that “a lot of work regarding women’s rights is lip-service only to receive money” [author’s translation].

“I have seen quite many organizations that on the surface fulfill these things, but it is actually far from reality.” – Isabelle, Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

Following these understandings, a great challenge raised among the GENADs is that gender work is not always founded on an understanding of the need to work with equality to the core. Marcus especially emphasizes how one rarely in the field has a basic gender analysis before going in or planning an international operation. Hence, a lot of his focus in the role as a GENAD includes problem formulating and making people understand *why* [emphasis added] the work is needed. Anna furthermore repeatedly emphasizes the challenges in her role within multinational operations since there is a lack of understanding in basic gender knowledge among those deployed in the field. This is argued to lead to inefficiency since she often needs to start over from scratch. The major challenge with a multinational operation in this sense she argues is that the other GENADs and personnel do not have the same education and understanding of gender. Hence, it takes a long time before they could agree upon how to work and establish common goals to work towards. Starting over by explaining the concept of gender or motivating the WPS agenda each time becomes more inefficient than if the gender glasses would have been packed in everyone’s baggage from the beginning.

“They came from different countries and did not have the same education as I had. And it was also a challenge because they did not have the same view of gender as I had and did not see it the same way. And this became problematic.” – Anna, Military GENAD [author’s translation]

5.3 Civil-military Collaboration – Problem or Opportunity?

From the interviews with the civilian and military GENADs, the relationship between their organizations particularly relates to the debate regarding collaboration and interaction with each other in both international operations and implementation of the WPS agenda at large. Here I interpret a double-edged sword in their experiences of collaboration with each other. Hence, civil-military relations (CMR) cast an overall shadow over all interviews.

5.3.1 The Risks of Collaboration

According to the civilian GENADs, civil society, particularly women's organizations, experiences a complicated relationship with military actors in the field. Even though there is a need to keep a good relationship to be able to implement their work, it is something that brings anger among some civilian actors being 'humiliated' and constantly being fearful of the military and how they will be treated if they would collaborate. The civilian GENADs thus claim that this results in many women's- and civil-society organizations' unwillingness to have anything to do with the WPS agenda. Linn particularly mentions that she gets exposed to militarization every time she travels in and out of the country and that her organization cannot collaborate with the military. They would get classified as spies and be unable to perform any work. In this sense, she has a very split mind and is not straight out negative about whether the military should be given the responsibility to actualize the agenda. However, stressing that the military, despite having moved towards human security, is violence-based, and has a jargon of sexism internally, as well as an approach based on macho-patriarchal views that are counterproductive for peace. Therefore, arguing how these structures of masculinity can contribute to very destructive behavior and often do more harm than good.

“The whole mission started because the military and the peacekeeping mission, you know could not keep their fingers in their pockets and destroyed more than they contributed from a women's perspective with sexual violence, targeting even young people since they were also victimizing boys”. – Linn, Civilian GENAD [author's translation]

Isabelle further highlights how those positioned in the security sector in Sweden or other EU countries that have not had a conflict or war for decades or even centuries it is easy to forget or understand that the military is often the biggest threat to the local community and civil society. Where being scared that a person in uniform will rape, shoot, torture, or expose them to verbal abuse is their reality.

At the same time, this misconduct is not unnoticed by the military GENADs who understand why civilian actors do not want to interact with them as it may, and most often do, affect their security. However, they also realize that there is a need to collaborate in international operations, where both sides often depend on each other. Eric, for example, mentions how they would not be there today without a women's organization that supported them throughout the

years of the operation. I therefore find this double-edged sword apparent for military GENADs as well, as they during the interviews accentuate how they fully understand the concerns of not wanting to be associated with the military. While also recognizing that there is often a need for militaries to secure the area for them to operate, even though they highlight how that does not compensate if they feel insecure in their presence.

5.3.2 The Benefits of Collaboration

Another perspective raised is that the military and civilian actors could learn from each other when it comes to implementing the WPS agenda. A vital aspect regarding the role of GENADs is described as enabling collaboration and dialogue between civilian and military actors, as part of their work to counteract the militarization or co-optation of the agenda. Repeatedly describing their GENAD role as a bridge between the levels of actors within the international operation and making visible where there is a need for, and how to integrate a gender perspective. Such bridging measures and utilization of dialogue are primarily purposed to ensure that militaries and other militarized actors from the security sector understand the importance of the ‘true’ feminist goals of the agenda. Including what potential harm they make by interpreting the agenda based on military understandings of security and risk hijacking the agenda and alienating women’s organizations and civil society.

However, it is stressed among Marcus and the military GENADs how dialogue is not enough. What matters is how to get military actors to act according to the resolutions and mandates methodologically, and how to operationalize behavior in tactical situations of what they should be doing when violations are occurring. Yet, educating them in this sense, Marcus argues, is where we most commonly fail.

“Above all, by seeking dialogue and trying to be this bridge between the civilian and the military and understand that we have a lot to learn from each other. Since it is very difficult almost all over the world for civil and military actors to cooperate. It usually goes wrong.” – Marcus, trained as both Military and Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

Another aspect in terms of civil-military collaboration related to the debate is that the military mandate in international operations is not only misinterpreted by the military themselves but other civilian actors often impose the organization with tasks and responsibilities that are unsuitable for them. Marcus highlights that civil society has great ideas of how to improve the

security of women in conflict areas, but they may not be realistic in terms of how a military organization works. He states that “it is not reasonable for militaries to perform responsibilities that they are completely inexperienced of” [author’s translation]. The military GENADs follow this argument and express that the role of the military within international operations should not be one of ‘all in all’, but rather ensure that responsibilities of more humanitarian character should be delegated to those more suitable. In this sense, Anna has in her GENAD role specifically put effort to redirect the military’s integration of gender perspective towards security organizations to become more efficient and ‘make development’.

“There were so many other humanitarian organizations that worked towards women’s organizations, among other things, so there was no need for us to do it as well. But rather a need for redirecting us to work with corresponding organizations that we would de facto work with” – Anna, Military GENAD [author’s translation]

Concerning CMR in international operations, what is given most attention regarding deficiencies within the implementation process is the need to improve the coordination and collaboration in the fieldwork. There is an argued need to strengthen existing structures and bring actors, processes, and other things that require uniformity together. Accordingly, Linn emphasizes how mobilization and coordination are lacking in the field which in turn leads to inadequacy in terms of having a long-term perspective. Marcus further argues that because cooperation and coordination are lacking both militarily and civilian, there is rarely a guarantee that the work of the GENADs is transferred or communicated to the next advisor once you leave the operation. He gives examples of how international operations often start over from the beginning as many have undergone the same basic gender exercises 4 – 5 times at stake, as well as how Government Agencies and CSOs can be deployed doing ‘the same thing’.

Even though Linn, deployed within a CSO, describes herself as an idealist and that there in the best of worlds should be no need for militaries or military alliances. She is also the most skeptical among the GENADs towards the military’s role in the implementation, arguing how the military often does more harm than good for women. However, Linn also realizes that for what reality looks like today, there is no near future in which the military does not fill the role by at least having a ‘calming effect’.

“I’m very divided regarding this, I probably have not landed fully. I think like this; that it is good that they are aware that there are rights, at the same time the whole military is violence-based, and the whole military complex takes

and swallows so much money that could be for resources that could be directed in a completely different way. At the same time, we are in a world today where some form of (now I say quote on quote) ‘calming effect’ (laughter) is needed.” – Linn, Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

The civilian GENAD Isabelle pragmatically further acknowledges the relevance for the security sector over the foreseeable future but adds that:

“Even if militaries do not agree with the exact views of women’s organizations understanding of the agenda, or even if they have not fully understood the concept of militarization, all perspectives are needed for strengthening the agenda, and do together create some kind of ‘wholeness’” – Isabelle, Civilian GENAD [author’s translation].

In an intermediate position is Marcus with his dual perspective who holds that the military most definitely should have a role in the implementation of the agenda. Although, within their mandate and not to take on responsibilities that are better suited for other humanitarian or local actors. Yet, rather than diminishing military organizations as idealists do, he contends that we should work to collaborate and help them understand what is important and together enable a meaningful integration of gender perspective. Regardless of whether it is civilian or military actors who implement UNSCR 1325, he urges that one must be pragmatic as it is really all about the same thing when planning for these operations. Namely, stating a goal, a purpose, and a plan for the ways to reach it.

“It may sound naïve, but I think it is the opposite of naïve for most idealists check out and say they do not want to deal with the military, but there I am quite pragmatic” – Marcus, trained as both Military and Civilian GENAD [author’s translation]

6. Discussion

This thesis has intended to enrich the debate between pragmatist and idealist arguments by introducing the practitioners’ perspectives and investigating if they experience the same problems and/or opportunities that the research has described. In this effort, this thesis has engaged with the research questions of:

- ❖ *What problems and opportunities do GENADs see in the military’s role in the implementation of the WPS agenda? and*

- ❖ *How can their roles and understandings shed further light on the debate between pragmatists and idealists?*

By exploring a contradiction and the following dilemmas that exist theoretically, but have not directly been investigated empirically, this thesis thus contributes to Political Science and Security Studies by increasing understanding of the implementation process of the WPS agenda and the role militaries play therein. Scholarship on GENADs concerning the idealist – pragmatist debate has to date been very limited. Consequently, by bringing in the empirical perspectives of GENADs as practitioners in the field, specifically by adding civilian GENADs' experiences, this thesis provides a piece of the puzzle to this academic discussion and nuances our understanding of how the arguments of the debate play out empirically. This could contribute to a more informed debate about the advantages and disadvantages of 'boots on the ground' in both current and future contexts in international operations (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 15). Increasing our knowledge and filling this empirical gap is important for political science and security studies. Military organizations remain a substantial part of national and international security and should therefore be at the core of debates on gender equality as they influence both research and policy implications on Women, Peace and Security (Wibben, 2018, p. 138).

6.1 Problems and Opportunities in the Military's Role

Following the analysis of the material from the interviews with the Swedish GENADs, the problems experienced regarding institutionalization, military hierarchies, and civil-military cooperation could be interpreted in the tradition of feminist anti-militarism. From this perspective, militaries will never have the skillset needed for effective gender work. Thus, the implementation of the WPS agenda should be left to civilian agencies and organizations (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 573). In particular, the perpetration of physical- and structural violence such as gender-based and sexual violence within operations as exemplified by the civilian GENADs, and indirectly problematized by the military GENADs in their problematization of internal issues, demonstrates how military organizations constitute the problem itself as such (Wright, 2015, p. 505).

Even though all GENADs emphasize that the security sector should not be responsible for everything within the implementation of the agenda, militarism seems to permeate both international operations and beyond as assumptions of the necessity of the role of the military

and actors within these processes organizes themselves around conflict and violence (Cockburn and Enloe, 2012a, p. 555). Most visibly, although the military GENADs problematize not getting at the root of issues when motivating the agenda through operational effectiveness, they do continuously argue for it and in the end, see no contradiction in doing so. Rather, it is claimed a necessity to get anywhere at all. Hence, as raised within arguments of a rights-based approach among the civilian GENADs, the WPS agenda, gender mainstreaming, and women's rights do in this sense become a venue for militaries to increase operational effectiveness, thus co-opting and militarizing feminism for military purposes (Kronsell and Svedberg, 2012, p. 211). Accordingly, adhering to anti-militarist feminist arguments of how the pillars of the agenda, when used to increase operational effectiveness, do not challenge the war system, militarism, or gender norms and hierarchies, hence institutionalizing feminist goals (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 6; Otto, 2016, pp. 4–5; Wright, 2016, p. 504).

Regarding the arguments for a transformative implementation and the potential for organizational change within militaries, I find the opportunities raised among the GENADs to indicate that militaries can and have in various contexts within international operations, become more gender-conscious in their everyday activities and training. Following feminist theorization about how militaries can be regendered, they tactically strive to include the whole population, emphasize women's military participation, and are attentive to feminist political goals of gender equality (Cockburn and Hubic, 2002, pp. 117-118; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, pp. 3–4). Additionally, I find that the GENADs do not hold very deterministic viewpoints on how the agenda can only be implemented in terms of feminist visions of security that is free from all weaponry, violence, and armed actors and alliances (WILPF, 2014; Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 558). Rather, they understand feminist visions of security in a more pragmatic and transformative approach where gendered dichotomies can be deconstructed (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016; Davies and True, 2019, p. 4). However, even though there is argued potential for meaningful implementation of the WPS agenda, I do not interpret from the GENADs' understandings that it is reasonable for what the situation in international operations looks like today. In line with these understandings, I interpret that the GENADs believe in the possibility of a transformative and meaningful implementation by militaries of the agenda if certain preconditions are fulfilled. In other words, the agenda could be implemented meaningfully according to feminist visions of security if, and only if, a rights-based approach is used, as well as if militarized hypermasculine norms and structures are transformed (Cohn, 2013, pp. 3–4; Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 264).

However, even if it is found that militaries can, and should play a role, and are capable of contributing to the implementation of the WPS agenda, the GENADs understandings of militarization and militarized masculinities contending with the idealist theoretical arguments can never be overlooked (Whitworth, 2007 in Cockburn and Enloe, 2012, p. 552; Wibben, 2018, p. 144). Militarization and militarized masculinities still saturate both the theoretical debate and practices within international operations and are in the end claimed among the GENADs in need to fundamentally change (Kronsell, 2012, p. 109; Wright, 2016, p. 352).

Moreover, from the experiences of the Swedish GENADs, the debate, or in general, the role of militaries are not what colors the implementation of the WPS agenda. Rather, from the experiences of the Swedish GENADs, what is valued the most is to have the prerequisites of basic gender knowledge and analysis before the operation; a supportive leadership that prioritizes integrating gender perspective, where the gender work does not fall onto one sole GENAD; improving CMR in mobilization and coordination in the fieldwork, and the understanding of security in terms of feminist visions and a rights-based approach.

In line with arguments on the relevance of gender expertise, I also find that the GENADs do play an important role as ‘change agents’ within these processes and can contribute to transforming militaries to become more gender-conscious. They have challenged the mindsets and attitudes of their colleagues and military actors in the field, initiated conversations about gender equality, and informed on being more attentive to power dynamics between men and women, as well as between militaries and civilians. Likewise, they also introduced processes and practices to better understand and integrate gender perspective into operations, and in their roles prioritize counteracting militarization of the agenda, in particular by being the bridge between layers of the operation to ensure everyone understands the true goals of the agenda rather than military objectives (Chappell, Mackay and Kenny, 2010, p. 582; Prügl, 2013, pp. 57–58; Egnell, 2014, pp. 39–40; Wright, 2016, pp. 357–358; Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, pp. 569, 572, 573–574).

Yet, GENADs most often become a single competence within operations, doing all the gender work. Consequently, the overall integration becomes both ineffective and risks having a minimal effect and implementing the WPS agenda very simplistically if the GENADs are inadequately prepared due to a lack of good leadership and resources (Kesteloo, 2015, pp. 43–

45). Furthermore, there are claims in how their role as GENADs was purposed as ‘window-dressing’, demonstrating the gap between rhetoric and reality. This does in a way follow idealist arguments on GENADs wasting their time, only further legitimizing fundamentally problematic institutions if there is no real value in supporting gender mainstreaming in operations when institutionalizing and developing gender work (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 571).

6.2 How GENADs Roles and Understandings Shed further Light on the Pragmatist – Idealist Debate

In light of these findings, some discussion points can be elaborated further upon in relation to the pragmatist–idealist debate. The interviewed GENADs both argue that it is possible to move towards a more transformative agenda if prerequisites are fulfilled and that militaries can be harmful within operations, militarizing feminist goals. I therefore find that Swedish civilian and military GENADs, empirically, see the arguments on both sides of the debate as not mutually exclusive categories. Rather, pragmatist and idealist theoretical arguments co-exist and relate to one another and could occasionally learn from each other empirically. Hence, this theoretical debate does empirically not have *one* [emphasis added] true side but depends on contextuality and how one defines feminist visions of security.

Although, the interview material of this thesis can also be seen as strengthening the pragmatists’ side of the debate. Interviewees expressed that militaries are here to stay in international operations, implementing the WPS agenda as part of their mandates for the foreseeable future and that they can and should play a role in this process as they have the capability to change. This is in line with the pragmatic arguments of how even though the ultimate goal for idealists is to eradicate militarism in society rather than legitimizing military institutions and power, it is important to also recognize that militaries will not disappear any time soon. Nevertheless, these pragmatist arguments interpreted from the interviews do not indicate that regendered militaries can on their own transform international operations meaningfully. Although, indicating how efforts of transforming militaries are not in vain, as change has been identified both internally and externally among the GENADs (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, pp. 6, 13; Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, p. 573). This is also in line with the arguments of how it is unnecessary to have zero-sum thinking, irrespective of what theoretical foundation, and how we should rather leave the deterministic mentality, and instead explore the synergies of both sides for the pursuit of international security and stability (Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 6).

The experiences and perspectives presented by the interviewees, analyzed by myself, therefore portray the debate as useful, although it should shift its focus away from this deterministic approach between idealists and pragmatists. The theoretical debate is simplified and far too black and white to be applied directly to practice. The discussions on the role of militaries in implementing feminist visions of security cannot only be on whether they are good or bad but should rather change direction to focus on *in which situations and how* they should play a role. The GENADs pragmatically acknowledge that militaries have a function and can be contributors to international operations in many contexts, but also idealistically acknowledge how they could be harmful and militarizing in other situations. As highlighted in the analysis by the military GENADs Eric and Anna as well as by Marcus with the dual perspective, militaries do in hostile conflict situations play an important role as protectors but are also often imposed with responsibilities that are unrealistic and unsuitable for them. They should not be an ‘all in one’ actor and the transformation should be a long-term development in accordance with the WPS resolutions, where some tasks should be delegated to other civilian actors more suitable. Following arguments of how humanitarian actors are more suited to engage with gender issues than hypermasculine militaries (Duncanson, 2017, p. 47). Hence, the debate needs to move away from asking whether at all, towards asking, *when* and *how* militaries should play a role. Thus, going back to the initial question of pragmatism, asking how we can create a military culture that both values equality between individuals but also produces soldiers effective in facing danger and disarming violence (Cockburn and Hubic, 2002, p. 117 in Duncanson, 2017, p. 53).

This, however, also needs to be discussed in relation to another pragmatic argument raised among the GENADs regarding the necessity of militaries to at times use violence and to be a ‘force for good’ to protect civilians and complete their responsibilities within the operation. This is something rarely discussed among idealists (Kronsell, 2012, p. 70; Egnell, 2014, p. 36). However, such claims can be argued to reproduce gendered myths and norms of militaries as heroic protectors of vulnerable civilians of which hegemonic forms of masculinities prevail (Whitworth, 2007 in Cockburn and Enloe, 2012, p. 552). These concerns are acknowledged and understood among both pragmatist and idealist scholars, yet there are also reasons to retain an analytical framework that is open to the idea of militaries being important contributors to peace (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 13).

Lastly, as raised in the analysis, the GENADs follow the ‘change agent’ arguments on changing the mindsets of colleagues and increasing understanding of gender perspective within operations (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018, pp. 565–566). However, the idea of a few individuals in operations challenging organizations’ and masculinist military cultures is argued naïve by some (Holmberg and Alvinus, 2015, p. 136; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 9). Accordingly, even though the GENADs describe experiences of them turning rooms around, making ‘gender blind’ soldiers think and behave differently, change at the individual level is also argued not enough. Since what matters is to fundamentally change norms and power structures systematically at an organizational level (Chappell, Mackay and Kenny, 2010, p. 581; Holmberg and Alvinus, 2015, p. 135; Egnell and Alam, 2019, p. 264). As stressed by the civilian GENAD Isabelle, how to go from personal to organizational level in changing masculinist military cultures continues to be a major challenge within international operations. There should therefore also be a change of focus for the academic debate on the level of analysis, where more emphasis in research needs to be on how to move from the individual level to create organizational change in norms and attitudes at a systemic level.

Another aspect drawn from the analysis is how there is a variation between the civilian and military GENADs in their understanding of civil-military relations (CMR) and collaboration between militaries and civilian actors in international operations. All GENADs argue for the need for more uniformity and coordination in the field. Although, the civilian GENADs are at times in denial of militaries’ involvement at times and emphasize the dangers of cooperation, which the military GENADs also acknowledges. At the same time, there is also a claimed necessity to collaborate to enable civilians to work in the field, and for both to learn from each other, not least to teach the right methods of implementing feminist visions of security to the military actors and share a common understanding of its meaning. Policy implications can thus be raised on whether this hardship of civil-military collaboration exists in practical terms and not only theoretically between idealists and pragmatists. This then would affect the practical conduct of integrating gender perspective in operations if there is an unease in which military and civilian actors can ever coexist (Egnell, 2014, p. 36; Duncanson and Woodward, 2016, p. 13). I, therefore, find a need to bring in the perspectives of both civilian and military practitioners to investigate further ways of collaboration to implement the agenda meaningfully.

6.3 Limitations

The results stemming from the interview material can be discussed in relation to how the consent form sent out before the interviews. It presented a different research question and aim than what the thesis ended up with (see Appendix 2). How the material was later used from the interviews was therefore not clear to the interviewees when they agreed to participate, and the research ethics are therefore not entirely just (Langemar, 2008, pp. 149–152). However, this thesis followed an abductive research design and was partly empirically driven, hence I let the interview questions guide, develop and change parallelly from what was told in the interviews (Langemar, 2008, pp. 46–47, 70). The interviewees could therefore have signed new consent forms or have been presented with the results before handing in the thesis (which only one advisor was offered due to confidentiality), which they did not. Nevertheless, they did not disregard any of the questions during the interviews nor afterwards, and I did not experience any discomfort or hindering during the interviews when their experiences on the role of militaries or the debate was brought up.

Another limitation is the finding for organizational change in militaries when all GENADs have experiences from different affiliations and organizations. This would have been clearer if I would have, like Wright (2016), Kesteloo (2017), Bastick and Duncanson (2018), or Hagstrom Frisell and Lackenbauer (2018), looked at only the Swedish Armed Forces, only the NATO, or one specific operation, to be more uniform in my understandings of the organizations' capability for change. However, when exploring the experiences of both civilian and military GENADs this becomes challenging. I especially wanted to explore militaries as a whole and not specific change in one singular institution. Therefore, I found it more interesting to explore their experiences from various constellations of affiliative branches, if key similarities and differences could still be found.

7. Conclusion

Within existing feminist scholarship there is a debate on whether the WPS agenda can be meaningfully implemented by militaries according to feminist visions of security, or whether feminist goals only risk being co-opted for military purposes. This debate has created a situation where the practical conduct of the integration of a gender perspective has gotten lost in a divide between pragmatist and idealist beliefs. There is a lack of research that explores how this debate

is understood by gender advisors (GENADs), despite that they constitute a central role within the implementation mechanism of the WPS agenda in military organizations.

This thesis has therefore intended to fill this gap by examining the interpreted relevance of the military's role within the implementation of the WPS agenda as understood by civilian and military GENADs. Through their understandings, a discussion has then been presented on whether the agenda can or cannot be implemented meaningfully by militaries according to feminist visions of security, including the roles of GENADs therein, as well as the critical relevance of the debate between pragmatists and idealists. In short, examining whether the practitioners empirically experience the same problems and opportunities in the military's role as described theoretically. This has been done by conducting a qualitative interview study on Swedish civilian and military GENADs that have been deployed in international operations.

My analysis finds that the debate takes form in international operations in three ways, namely, *instrumentalization*, *military hierarchies*, and *civil-military collaboration*. First, it is on the one side argued that militaries are instrumentalizing feminist goals for military purposes, while on the other side how using the rhetoric of operational effectiveness within military structures has given the possibility for gender perspective within structures that would otherwise not have allowed it. Second, military hierarchies can be argued to enable paths for the agenda to be implemented, while being at the same time arguably never enough since such military structures must foundationally change, and transform in norms, attitudes, and behavior. Lastly, how militaries pose great risk and harm for other civilian actors within operations but can also provide lessons learned to be of use for collaboration and bettering of the agenda.

Based on these findings, I reason that the GENADs understand the debate both in terms of pragmatist and idealist notions. The anti-militarist feminist arguments of the militarization of the agenda and the perpetration of violence and abuse are highly acknowledged. However, arguments for opportunities for transformation and the potential for organizational change within military institutions to become more gender-conscious are also identified by the interviewees. Thus, the GENADs set some pacifist feminist arguments aside to make the best of the situation and actively work to transform and demilitarize structures towards feminist visions of security. It is therefore interpreted that the GENADs are less deterministic and argue for more pragmatist perceptions where a meaningful implementation of the agenda can be actualized if at an organizational level the hypermasculine norms and structures are

fundamentally transformed and regendered. I, therefore, find that the arguments on both sides of the theoretical debate correspond with reality as understood by the GENADs' experiences within international operations. I reason that the debate is simplified and that it is not black and white where the debate has one true side. Rather, military conduct can, as the three dilemmas demonstrate, empirically correspond to both sides of the debate where they can be seen as both problems and opportunities for meaningful implementation.

Although I interpret that the debate and the role and capabilities of militaries are in general not what colors the implementation of the WPS agenda, my findings still contribute theoretically with information of value for critical discussion concerning the academic debate between pragmatists and idealists and the research implications for where it should be directed onwards. Following the findings of how militaries are here to stay for what the world looks like today, I reason that the debate should leave its deterministic mentality between idealist and pragmatist notions and instead shift focus from whether militaries are good or bad, capable or incapable, towards in which situations and how they should play a role to avoid harm and make use of their potential to be a 'force for good'. These insights may serve as relevant knowledge for practical implications for militaries' work on implementing the WPS agenda within operations. As well as provide empirical knowledge for directing research towards exploring pieces of means in attaining what the agenda intends to achieve. This knowledge may therefore contribute as a basis for critical discussions in Political Science and Security Studies beyond the existing deterministic debate on the potential ability and/or inability of militaries to contribute to facilitating feminist visions of security in international operations in which they are deployed.

While I find that the GENADs play a role as change agents within these processes as they contribute to turning colleagues and soldiers to think and behave differently and increase their understanding of how to integrate gender perspective, change at the individual level is argued not enough. The debate should therefore change focus at the level of analysis where research needs to put more emphasis on organizational change, on change in norms and attitudes at the systemic level. Lastly, I find how policy implications can be raised not only theoretically, but also in practice between the civilian and military GENADs in their understandings of collaboration between militaries and civilian actors in international operations. I therefore claim that there is a need to explore the perspectives of both civilian and military practitioners further to scrutinize further ways of collaboration to implement the WPS agenda meaningfully.

7.1 Future Research

This study has added the perspective of civilian GENADs which implied variation to various extents, including indications of how they also do contribute by acting as so-called change agents. Yet, this has only been found through a very small sample. Hence, these variations cannot be generalized to distinguish between civilian and military implementation, nor to military organizational change processes. Future research would therefore benefit from including a broader set of GENADs from both military and civilian affiliations and exploring both their roles and their experiences in international operations. In particular, as the findings of this thesis have suggested, ask them further about *when* and *how* militaries can contribute to meaningful implementation. Accompanied by one of the main findings on what appeared, in the end, to really matter for organizational change, it would also be fruitful to ask practitioners about their experiences in international operations on how to best demilitarize these norms of militarized masculinities.

Moreover, as highlighted in the analysis, gender work is not only the sole task of a GENAD within international operations but involves a tremendous number of activities and actors that are all interconnected. To further increase our understanding of these implementation processes and the potential for organizational change and meaningful implementation, it would be fruitful for future research to access the perspectives of all stages within the operation between leadership, gender workers, and recipients, and interrelate them and their experiences.

Although not elaborated upon in the discussion, the abductive thematic analysis interpreted multiple pieces of information which can be discussed further in relevance to the role of GENADs in the processes of organizational change. Such as how they face resistance, their relationship with the leadership in operations, including experiences of being a ‘sponge’ and doing all the gender work, as well as how they operate to make people understand why a gender perspective is needed. Hence, future research could hone in on these issues and explore and discuss GENADs, their roles, work, and how their theoretical understanding of the debate affects their work within operations.

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Empirical material

Interview 1: "Eric", Interview with Military GENAD *Eric*, Personal interview. Stockholm, October 15, 2021.

Interview 2: "Linn", Interview with Civilian GENAD *Linn*, Personal interview. Stockholm, October 22, 2021.

Interview 3: “Isabelle”, Interview with Civilian GENAD *Isabelle*, Personal interview. Stockholm, October 26, 2021.

Interview 4: “Marcus”, Interview with Civilian/Military GENAD *Marcus*, Personal interview. Stockholm, October 27, 2021.

Interview 5: “Anna”, Interview with Military GENAD *Anna*, Personal interview. Stockholm, November 9, 2021.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Question Battery/ Interview Guide

These question areas listed in this interview guide provides an approximation of which questions are to be asked to cover the research question. Not to be formulated or asked in any exact order, rather, the questions should take form after how the conversations during the interviews evolve.

Opening questions:

- Professional background:
 - o Tell me how you came about deciding to work with gender issues?
- International operation and material
 - o What type of international operations do you have experience of in the role as a gender advisor?
 - o What educational materials/ doctrines/ policies do you rely on in your work with the implementation of the agenda within the framework of the fieldwork you have participated in?

Main question areas:

- Role and responsibility as a gender advisor:
 - o Can you tell me what your role as a gender advisor means?
 - o What do you see as the main goals of the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda? Why?
 - o What do you consider to be your main successes in your role as a gender advisor? Can you give any concrete examples?
 - o What do you feel are the biggest challenges in implementing 1325 and its goals in international operations?
- Experience of the debate/debate:
 - o Based on your experience as a gender advisor, how do you feel that the system for achieving the goals and directives for the WPS agenda in the field of international operations works?
 - What do you think should be improved so that the goals of the agenda can best be translated into practice?
 - o Based on your experience in international operations, what capacity/opportunity do you believe the military as an actor/organization has to actualize the agenda?
 - In what way? Can you give any concrete examples?
 - If negative, why?
 - If positive, why?
 - o There is a feminist debate about whether or not the military in international operations can function as a tool for promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda. (For example, due to its masculinized structures and violent capital, inability to challenge patriarchal structures and norms, but rather militarizes the agenda for its own purposes.)
How do you view and/or relate to that criticism/ the debate?

- Does it affect your role as a gender advisor and if so, how do you relate your work to this?
- In what way do you work to challenge/ change this?

Closing questions:

- Do you have something that you would like to add that we have not discussed so far, or supplement to what has already been said?

After the interview is over/ the recording is turned off:

- Thank the gender advisor for their participation and show the value of their participation in your study.
- Ask for feedback in the interview
 - o How did you experience the interview?
 - o Is there anything you think I could improve or think about in the upcoming interviews, or interviews in future studies?

Questions that give rise to one's own thoughts	Circular questions	Open-ended questions (can lead to many variations of answers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way? - Why? - Explain how you think/mean? - What are the potential similarities? - Can you elaborate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who? - What? - When? - How? - Where? - How much? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would happen if? - What differences are there between ... and ...? - What strengths and weaknesses do ... have?
Inviting questions	Rich questions	Reflection for myself as an interviewer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What happened then? - Describe what you saw/experienced - How did that feel? - What did you think then? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you believe that situation arose? - Do you know where in your work you face the most difficulties? - Which situations do you find hard? - How do you counteract/ overcome these difficulties? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way did this interview contribute to answering the research question (principally)? - In what ways did this interview connect to previous interviews? - What could have been done differently and why would that have been better?

9.2 Appendix 2 – Consent Form

Appendix 1.

Information letter and request to researchers about participation in an interview study that intends to be part of a master's thesis on gender advisors' work with a gender perspective in international operations.

About me, the research project and why you are asked to participate

My name is Ingrid Skagerlind and I have a bachelor's degree in Peace and Development Studies at Uppsala University. I am currently studying a Master's in Politics and War at the Swedish Defence University with a focus on security and crisis management. During the autumn, I will write my master's thesis as an examining work where the Swedish Defence University in Stockholm is the principal of the thesis.

The thesis will explore how Swedish military and civilian gender advisors perceive, represent, and implement a gender perspective in practice in international operations within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). As well as exploring how feminist theory can contribute to the reasoning and practices of the implementation process in international operations.

The purpose of the study is to contribute with an increased understanding of how policies and theories about Women, Peace and Security are translated and implemented in practice through experienced experiences from gender advisors in the field. And to contribute to feminist security studies on whether the goals of the WPS agenda can be meaningfully implemented in international operations from a feminist perspective.

You have thus been asked to share your experiences as a gender advisor in international operations.

How the study is conducted and how your information will be handled

Participation as an interviewee in the study means that an interview will be conducted via zoom or a physical meeting, according to the interviewee's wishes and possibilities. The interview is estimated to take between 60 – 90 minutes and is semi-structured, which means that some questions are decided in advance but that the interviewee is given space to reflect freely on the topic of the study.

The entire interview will be recorded on tape and then transcribed. You have the right not to answer the questions during the interview, even if you have given your consent to participate. Your answers and your results will be processed so that unauthorized persons cannot access them. Your gender will appear, while your background history will only be described in general terms. The material will be deidentified in all performance reports so that the names of interviewees and organizational affiliation do not appear in order to protect the integrity of you, your managers, and colleagues.

The information will be saved for 2 years. You can also request that information from you be deleted and that the processing of your personal data is restricted (see my contact information below).

Possible consequences and risks of participating in the study

Your participation in the interview study may lead to feelings of discomfort arising in connection with you reflecting on your work as a gender advisor. My wish is that your participation can, in addition to assisting in my data collection, also be a reflective process for you in your role as a gender advisor, which in the long run turn out positive.

Information about the results of the study

The essay with the analyzed content of the interview will be published on the Digital Science Archive - DiVA portal, as a finished product in January 2022.

If you want to see your individual data or the results of the entire study, you can contact me by phone or email (see contact information below).

Participation is voluntary

Your participation is voluntary and can be canceled at any time, without giving a reason. If you want to cancel your participation, you can contact me by phone or email (see contact information below).

Responsible for the study

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