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Global racial hierarchies and the limits of localization via National Action Plans

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Introduction
Recent explorations in International Relations (IR) have critiqued the explicit consideration of race within the discipline and in its practice despite its enduring presence as an ordering principle (Shillam, 2016). The starting point of these studies is that while “race and racism have been often side-lined to the margins of contemporary IR, such issues were in fact integrate to the birth of the discipline” (Anievas, Machanda and Shillam, 2015, p. 2). It is within this contemporary scholarship of race and racism that we locate our reflections about the practices of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. This contribution reflects on how whiteness and white privilege are refracted in the narratives and practices WPS agenda through a focus on National Action Plans (NAPs). We consider who WPS is about and who it is for on the international stage. A central part of this investigation is interrogating whether NAPs are truly able to localize the international project of WPS or whether because of global racial hierarchies, they actually simply reinforce the status quo to then allow for the perpetuation of countries in a peaceful though militarized Global North to place countries in the insecure Global South in a position of always failing at WPS. We also examine the imagery used by different countries within their NAPs and its implications for WPS messaging by countries in the Global North.

Furthermore, we explore the ways in which these NAPs consider the violent conflicts and gendered violence within their own borders. We contend that the WPS agenda despite its potential for emancipation given its framing as a universal/global normative framework is steeped in racialised hierarchies manifested in Whiteness. George Yancy (2004, pp.7-8) writes that “whiteness [is] a synergistic system of transversal relationships of privileges, norms, rights, modes of self-perception and the perception of others, unquestioned presumptions, deceptions, beliefs, “truths,” behaviors, advantages, modes of comportment, and sites of power and hegemony that benefits whites individually and institutionally.”

There is a lot of complexity in the idea of whiteness. But it is nevertheless enough to know that it is a system that reifies the status-quo of “White privileges, protections, and material advantages over People of Color” (Sartori, 2018; see also Leonardo, 2009; Lipsitz, 2006). Whiteness born of global white supremacy was crystalized through colonisation and the post-colonisation relations that have been forged between the Global North and Global South (see Allen, 2004; Mills, 1998). In this chapter, we follow Dados and Connell’s (2012) understanding of the Global South as a way of accounting for the geopolitical power relations within which much of global governance occurs. Although an imperfect delineation, as Sartori (2018, p.28) observes, it does the job that the concepts of “Third World” (an outdated Cold War–era term that focuses on only former colonies) and “developing countries” (that implies a teleology culminating in Western models) do not capture.

Race & Global Policy Making: Whiteness at Work in WPS

In this chapter, race and the function of Whiteness is recognised in how WPS practices are situated in a dynamic relationship between the Global North and Global South narrated as global. In this relationship, the countries that dominate the WPS agenda by virtue of their wealth, their position
in International Relations ‘do’ WPS to the ‘Other’ mainly outside the borders of the Global North. This process of creating the Other or othering is “a colonial tool …reflecting a pattern where the Self first establishes dominance by making the colonial Other aware of who holds the power…[entrenching] the Other’s inferiority…” (Hudson, 2016, p. 5). This process, we show, is evident in the language used, and the visual depiction of some of the women included in NAPS having identified NAPs as important artefacts of the WPS agenda.

Overall, we offer a different critique of the WPS agenda as a contribution to feminist security studies and studies in IR that takes race seriously. Moreover, we add to the ongoing discourses that demonstrate unease with the way in which the WPS serves to perpetuate “white saviour” narratives around peace and security interventions, without adequate reflection on what this might mean within the borders of the Global North. NAPs, we argue provide a valuable lens for assessing the way that racialized hierarchies persists in global policy making and doing, even by those with the best intention including civil society organizations (CSOs) that are invested in women’s engagement in peace processes. In conclusion, the chapter articulates limits to the practices of localization offered by NAPs when funded from the Global North, as well as the complications of using the NAPs as an indicator of proper implementation of WPS.

In the following sections and relying of the prior definitions of Global North/Global South, we identify 22 countries who have had at least one NAP and fit the description of the Global North. By focusing on the NAPs of the Global North, we do not seek to reify or legitimise their power in the WPS field; rather, we seek to expose the ways in which broader hierarchies of race in IR are played out in WPS. We sourced all the NAPs from PeaceWomen, an initiative of the Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). PeaceWomen includes the most comprehensive database of NAPs currently accounts for 79 in total as of November 2018 (PeaceWomen, n.d). We undertake a narrative analysis of the NAPs drawing on The ever-present co-optation of the narrative framework of the need for a feminist informed gender analysis of women’s experience in conflict-related environment also takes insidious forms whether it be essentializing women as better at making peace than men or co-opting women’s work to resist militarization to instead see women’s inclusion in peacebuilding as about making war safe for women (Shepherd 2016). Perhaps the most persistent hegemonic process at work in the WPS architecture, though least discussed is that of racialized hierarchies steeped in whiteness.

To confront this gap, we build our analysis of the NAPs by drawing on the insights of Black feminists like bell hooks (1989) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) and the decolonial feminist scholarship of Chandra Mohanty (2003), Inderpal Grewal (2017), Sara Ahmed (2012) and Jasbir Puar (2007). These scholars have contributed to the critical readings of transnational feminist engagements that dangerously re-marginalize those they claim to liberate thus stalling gender justice and social change. Moreover, as in the analysis offered by scholars who have engaged in racial or postcolonial critique of WPS including Marjaana Jauhola (2016), Nicola Pratt (2013), Maria Martin De Almagro (2017) and Swati Parashar (2018), our contribution reinforces the idea that race matters in understanding Global North and Global South WPS knowledge and resource exchange as well as transnational collaborations. We draw on critical work by decolonial and black feminist scholars to reflect on race as it shapes who are viewed as actors and who are viewed as victims in WPS narratives.
Chandra Mohanty writes, “I believe one of the greatest challenges we (feminists) face is this task of recognizing and undoing the ways in which we colonize and objectify our different histories and cultures, thus colluding with hegemonic processes of domination and rule (p. 125).

**Why look at NAPs?**

NAPs offer a valuable point of intervention to reflect on the WPS architecture for a number of reasons. According to Shepherd 2016, NAPs are “one of the ways that states can indicate a commitment to the WPS agenda and articulate strategies for implementation” (p. 325). Moreover, we see how civil society initiatives such as the PeaceWomen project of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom have turned to NAPs as a means of tracking the degree to which states exhibit an intention to prioritize women and gender in their peace and security efforts. Additionally, because of the purpose they are intended to serve NAPs can illustrate how states intend to fund WPS initiatives and determine which initiatives will receive funding. With this in mind, civil society organizations are seen as an important aspect of capacity building for localization in the form of helping to draft, update and share the NAP. This is true in countries in the Global North and the Global South. To an extent then, a NAP can serve as a tool for civil society to both shape and critique the WPS agenda. Swati Parashar argues, however, that NAPs can be counterproductive for postcolonial subjects when they simply endorse the “the state’s narratives of the conflict and its marginalizations and discrimination” (2018, p.5).

The politics of how these narratives are selected, and by whom, are not often discussed. Similarly, narratives about which issues are prioritized within NAPs is understudied. In our analysis we narrow in on three modes of analysis. We first consider which countries have NAPs and how those plans are funded. Relatedly we take note of countries that have multiple NAPs. Our second mode of analysis is to identify what gets counted as a matter of conflict by each country. This interrogation is motivated by the persistence of Global North countries’ ability to use NAPs to continue to engage in the WPS agenda as being about the Other without internal self-reflection. The third mode of analysis we consider in relation to the narratives of NAPS is that told by the images of women featured in NAPs primarily on the cover of the documents. As Bleiker notes, we live in a visual age and images tell us about how the world is seen. In that sense, images in NAPs tell us about how the relevant actors see WPS in the world (see Bleikier 2018, p.3). Together these three modes of analysis offer a way to consider the way racial hierarchies are perpetuated by WPS actors. All the NAPs assessed here where accessed through the PeaceWomen initiative’s database of NAPs (PeaceWomen, n.d.) The PeaceWomen project includes the largest collection of resources about member state commitments to WPS through the lens of NAPS. This includes reporting about the latest NAPs, civil society analysis of the NAPs as well as a global analysis of the NAPs including a look at financing, content analysis and which countries have NAPs to date.

**What can NAPs really indicate**

In 2005, five years after the passage of the first WPS security council resolution in 2000, Denmark became the first country to adopt a NAP. Since then, Denmark has refined and adopted two more NAPs bringing its total to three. Overwhelmingly, the countries that have more than one NAP are
those located in the Global North although this is by no means exclusively the case.\textsuperscript{1} The volume of NAPs coming from the Global North and its content reinforces the dominant narrative of the Global North as the originator of the WPS agenda and the South as the recipients (Basu, 2016). This, as Swati Parashar (2019) argues, further underscore the WPS agenda’s lack of attention to the realities of the Global South and from which knowledge is derived, potentially producing racialised erasures.

Here, we show the ways in which these narratives of racialised dominance are reproduced via the NAPs. To do this, three questions are asked: a) How do NAPs represent WPS?; b) Whose needs are being foregrounded in the NAPs of the Global North?; and c) In what ways do NAPs reinforce or challenge racialised Global North/Global South binaries?

To answer these questions, we first assess the realities of the funding landscape focusing on the funding commitments articulated by NAPs of Global North countries as part of their foreign policies. Specifically, we look at the extent to which these commitments reproduce problematic hierarchies between the Global North and Global South even while working to support localization of WPS through civil society engagement on the ground. Second, while the majority of the Global North’s NAPs are tied to foreign policy practices, we examine the focus of these practices as they are directed mainly at the countries in the Global South. We argue that these external foci of WPS that targets the Global South performs an ‘othering’ function.

\textbf{A closer look at localization}

We focus on civil society as it is generally provides a form of hybrid engagement between the international and the local that aims to make post-conflict peacebuilding projects legitimate when it comes to the localization (Bjorkdahl & Hoglund, 2013, Donais 2009). As Amitav Acharya defines it, localization is, ‘the active construction (through discourse, framing, grafting and cultural selection) of foreign ideals by local actors, which results in the former developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices’ (2004, p.245). We consider whether the more transformational potential of WPS relies on a hybrid practice of localization that also requires the Global North to be transformative in thinking through what it means to apply NAPs domestically. What would it mean to apply the three P’s of WPS within the borders of the United States, the UK, Canada, of Sweden?

In our narrative analysis we first observe which countries have NAPs as well as which countries have multiple NAPs. We then turn to the content of the NAPs as a way to examine which WPS initiatives are funded; further, we analyse the imagined subjects of the NAPs, asking which women are being made secure. Specifically, we ask which women are racialized as foreign in the language of the NAPs. By assessing the funding focus including to civil society in the countries of the Global North, we see a WPS that is increasingly moving away from the possibility of a transformation

\textsuperscript{1} These include: Denmark, UK, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Spain, Austria, Netherlands, Iceland, Finland, Portugal, Belgium, Italy, France, Canada, Ireland, USA, Australia* (only one NAP so far), Germany, New Zealand, Japan and Luxembourg.
framework that is built on mutual respect, partnership and equality within global governance and rather one that unsurprisingly reinforces the status quo.

One organization that has tracked NAPs with the lens of civil society engagement in peacebuilding in the NYC based PeaceWomen project, an outgrowth of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. PeaceWomen lists four key aspects that should characterise each NAP: 1) reflect on the holistic intention of UNSCR 1325 (Participation, Protection and Conflict Prevention); 2) be measurable, including a dedicated budget, indicators/output results, set timeframes and plan periods; 3) have a participatory, transparent process of drafting, implementation and monitoring involving civil society and women’s organizations; and 4) focus on the prevention of conflict, extending to the resolution of the arms trade and disarmament to fully remedy violations of women’s human rights in conflict (2013, p.8).

The word “holistic” is important here. A holistic vision for UNSCR 1325 invites questions about access to economic, political and social opportunities. It raises questions, for instance, about whether or not a military in the Global North engages in gender equal budgeting. It also invites questions about how women are affected by issues such as climate change, migration, asylum, and religious freedom. Claire Duncanson describes this expansive feminist peace as follows: “Peace is not thus just the absence of war. For feminists, it includes the economic and social empowerment of women and other marginalized groups: freedom from want as well as from fear” (2016, p.63). A more expansive way of thinking about UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda more broadly rests on responding to ongoing violent conflict in the traditional sense.

Overall, we see this context of existing donor-recipient relationships as based on colonial and racialised power hierarchies. Furthermore, through these relationships, we see manifestations of Whiteness that render the countries and peoples of the Global South without agency. We show how the WPS agenda can reproduce “racialised colonial histories” (Sartori, 2018, p. 28). An analysis that captures the priorities and modes of funding can help to determine the extent to which these allow for agency that is gender-just in the Global South.

Who Gets Funded and How?

The majority of the countries we examined paid attention to the four pillars of the WPS agenda: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. Overwhelmingly, however, most of the 22 countries have committed mainly to the protection pillar. According to a PeaceWomen report, the protection pillar refers to “specific protection rights and needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings, including (...) gender-based violence” (PeaceWomen 2013, p. 5).

The constant refrain from those who advocate for the implementation of the WPS agenda is that it is underfunded. The Global Study (UN Women 2015), identified chronic underfunding of the WPS agenda as “the most serious and unrelenting obstacle to implementation of women, peace and security commitments” (UN Women 2015, p. 16). The Study asked that a minimum of 15% of all allocations to peace and security be committed to WPS as a way to ensure sustainability and predictability in funding.
NAP funding in the context of the countries of the Global North is important for a couple of interrelated reasons. First, these countries are among the wealthiest countries in the world. The reality then is that these particular countries are in a better position to provide the bulk of the funding towards WPS initiatives. It is no surprise that international civil society organisations especially campaign and rely on them to fund WPS related programmes. Second, it is precisely because of these levels of wealth that these countries are positioned as donors in the Global North and vis-à-vis recipients in the Global South. As donors, countries in the Global North invariably impact on how WPS ‘happens’ in some countries in the Global South.

Moreover, because this is embedded within the foreign policy domain, it is unsurprising that funding commitments to WPS specifically is externally oriented. We assess the funding priorities of the countries based in the Global North and the extent to which the mechanisms for funding those priorities are clear and fulfil relevant actions.

From our reading of NAPs of Global North countries, 22 of them value the importance of civil society stakeholders for ensuring an inclusive 1325 process. Canada’s most recent NAP for instance states:

Recognizing the important role of civil society in advancing the WPS agenda internationally, the government is increasing its support to local women’s groups and movements, working toward achieving gender equality and the human rights of women and girls (Canadian NAP 2017, p. 1).

While all other countries make the same commitment in a variety of ways, they are less explicit about funding civil society. The latest German NAP commits to supporting “civil society projects for a comprehensive, gender-specific and cross generational understanding of peace” (German NAP 2017, p.16). The only reference to a specific funding mechanism in this NAP is the contribution to the UN Women Trust Fund and there is no specification of how much is contributed. The UK reveals more as it is clear the focus for funding in its latest action plan is on Afghanistan, Burma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria (UK NAP 2018, pp. 21-22). Similarly, Norway makes Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Palestine and South Sudan it main priorities in addition to the Middle East because this is considered a region “where the conflict situation is constantly changing” (Norwegian NAP 2015, p. 41).

Both the UK and Norway pay particular attention to the funding mechanisms. Norway commits specific funding for WPS and especially to NGOs to be disbursed by the civil society department of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. France too targets its funding towards Africa and “the Arab world”. In Africa this is dominated by its former colonies including Mali, and Senegal (French NAP, 2015) while Belgium has similarly targeted Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali (Belgian NAP 2013 p.6). The Netherlands has tended to focus on direct funding to national programmes and civil society organisations in Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan (Dutch NAP 2016, p.17). Denmark focuses it latest NAP on Afghanistan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Occupied Palestinian Territories, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Syria (Danish NAP 2014, pp.12-16).
The United States although does not exclusively target countries, its overwhelming support for WPS linked programmes to countering violent extremism mean that many funded initiatives to civil society have been in countries like Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Syria (USA NAP 2016, p.9). Canada is vague about which countries its targets although fragile states and conflict contexts dominate, which stand as proxies for similar countries in the Global South (Canadian NAP 2017, p.9).

Across all these NAPs, we see consistent overlaps. There are not only regional overlaps but also specific country overlaps. Arguably, this may simply be about the current conditions in those countries. They are poorer, they are experiencing ongoing conflict-related insecurity, and these NAPs are a response to the funding calls made and articulated in the Global Study.

Yet, one could also read these NAPs as evidence of WPS being done to the Global South. Parashar’s recent analysis of the ways in which WPS functions is very apt, and we see this well captured by the NAPs. Parashar (2019), drawing on Pratt (2013) notes that the direction of funding serves to represent the Global South as “conflict affected” and consequently in need of rescuing. What is more, the structure and targets of funding serve to link negative perceptions of insecurity with particular countries. For instance, Afghanistan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are very visible as objects needing intervention from the Global North on WPS.

Foreign Policy for Whom?

From the analysis of Global North NAPs, we see that not all countries in the Global North identify a particular region of their policy target. Yet, through inference, we observe framings and narratives that undoubtedly serve as appropriate proxies for the Global South. In 2013, Nicola Pratt argued that there is a tendency to externalise the WPS agenda which leads to an othering of mainly women in the Global South (Pratt, 2013). This has embedded the notion that WPS is primary applied in the realm of foreign policy. But in taking into account the NAPs, it is clear that WPS as foreign policy is not applied evenly across the foreign policy practices of the Global North countries.

We find the case of Canada to be very interesting given that the implementation of the WPS agenda is most resonant in its Feminist International Assistance Policy. At the same time, Canada under Justin Trudeau has made rhetorical moves about being more reflective about its racist colonial past (Markusoff, 2017). In its latest NAP, it is stated that the NAP is “at the heart of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy and Defence Policy” (Canadian NAP 2017, p. ii). Yet, the specific context for action is to countries affected by “fragility, conflict and violence” (Canadian NAP 2017, p. 2) not all of Canada’s external partners. This is similar too to the case of Sweden whose NAP is situated as part of its broader Feminist foreign policy. This focus on these particular types of countries is perhaps buoyed by what Parashar (2019) describes as “pressure to improve the lot of the women ‘out there,’” often advocated by members of international civil society organisations.

An interesting caveat within the latest Canadian NAP is the acknowledgement of the condition of indigenous women as targets of the WPS agenda implementation. The focus on the historical neglect and erosion of indigenous people’s especially women’s lives is a welcome consideration.
and is in keeping with the feminist aspiration of the Canadian government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Yet, while it commits to initiatives like establishing an independent National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to tackle the “disproportionately high rate of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls” (Canadian NAP 2017, p. 5) a direct response to civil society prompting how this would be done, or how it fits into the WPS agenda is not clearly articulated.

What is clear, however, is that indigenous women and girls in particular are ‘othered’ in specific ways. On the one hand, by including indigenous women specifically in the NAP, they are presented as needing separate interventions that the externalised WPS framework caters to. At the same time, the lived experiences of indigenous women and the broader context of these challenges are treated as separate to conditions in so called fragile context. The NAP states: 

Although Canada is not a fragile or conflict affected state, women in Canada face a variety of challenges including gender-based violence. Indigenous women and girls in particular face intersecting discrimination and violence based on gender, race, socioeconomic status and other identity factors, as well as underlying historic causes— in particular the legacy of colonialism (Canadian NAP 2017, p.4)

From the above, there is no consideration of the intersections of violence including the historical colonialism on conditions in the external Global South even though a general definition of gender-based violence (GBV) acknowledges that GBV is intensified by various forms of discrimination including colonialism (Canadian NAP 2017, p. 19). Thus, while the acknowledgement of the precarious position of Indigenous people in Canada and especially women and girls is very important, the lack of integration of the proposed interventions is at best awkward. At the same time, it is unsurprising since WPS as articulated in this NAP is for those “foreign” “Others” in fragile or conflict-affected states. Moreover and as Heidi Hudson reflects on the need to decolonize gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding, “knowledge produced about gendering peacebuilding gains respectability by virtue of being produced in the West, as part of the liberal family. In this scenario, it does not mean that local knowledge is always ignored, but rather that local contexts are “domesticated” as sites of empirical knowledge where Western theory is applied” (2016, p. 5).

This is in contrast to Ireland’s latest NAP (Irish NAP 2015). Among the NAPs of the Global North that we analysed, Ireland is unique in that its NAP is both an internal and external policy agenda. In this sense, it is both about domestic and foreign policy. Ireland acknowledges its own history of conflict and as part of its obligations and relationship to Northern Ireland. In the NAP, Ireland too acknowledges the implications of coloniality based on that past experience but also in solidarity with its international partners. Moreover, while Ireland does not have the equivalent of Canada’s indigenous peoples, Ireland acknowledges that its immigrant population who have escaped conflict are also governed by the WPS agenda.

In analysing the current NAP of Portugal, we see that it targets its actions primarily towards Lusophone countries in Africa rather than Portugal. Overall, then, WPS as articulated in this NAP provides another method through which Portugal’s renewed quest for engaging in the former colonies can be realised since the broader context of the Portuguese foreign policy cannot be
ignored. This focus on the foreign is also underscored in the images depicted within NAPs as we elaborate in the next section.

**Southern Imagery in Northern NAPs**

In *Mapping Visual Global Politics*, Roland Bleiker noted that images “shape international events and our understanding of them” (Bleiker 2018, p.1). Moreover, artefacts like photographs influence how we view and approach diverse phenomena. Indeed, we’d argue that these sorts of artefacts are intended to influence how we view certain phenomenon. So how do certain images, in this case photographs, reproduce whiteness/racialised hierarchies within the WPS through the NAP documentation?

First, not all of the 22 NAPs have photographic images within them. The majority of those that have these images include one photograph, on the title page of the NAP (see Image 3.1). This positioning of a photo image on the title page may be interpreted as a signifier of the central message of the NAPs. As Bleiker notes, images shape as much as they depict politics (Bleiker, 2018) While each NAP photograph is distinct, there is a recurrent theme in these images. With the exception of the latest Swedish NAP, NAPs of countries located in the Global North and with images on the title pages often depict women of colour located in Africa and/or the Middle East. These black and brown women are of the Global South, the object of the WPS. The locality of these women is signified in a variety of ways – their national dress or religious, the immediate background environment, i.e. the physical space they occupy. These images reinforce the otherness of women who are not citizens of the Global North. In these images, perhaps with the exception of Ireland, these women are not represented as citizens of the Global North.

In some cases, these images of the Women from the Global South are juxtaposed against the women of the Global North often depicted in military apparel, or some other sort of military apparatus. This is the case for the latest NAPs of Australia, France, Canada, Iceland, and Austria. While the United States has no such image on its title page, one exists in-text. The images on the other NAPs like those of the UK, the Netherlands, and Ireland is solely of the other woman. Across all of these, although the ‘other’ woman is centred, they are also positioned as being ‘saved’ by the interventions of White people through militaries. In these images, the role of the Global North is depicted as interventionist while the performances of receiving assistance is done by those women in the Global South.

**Figure 1 - Sample of Title Pages on 8 Global North NAPs**

Top, L-R: UK NAP; Austrian NAP; Ireland NAP & Canada NAP
Bottom L-R: Switzerland NAP; Australian NAP; New Zealand NAP & Iceland NAP

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2 The most recent English language versions of the NAPs of Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Japan have only text, and stock image of national emblems rather than specific photographs.
Conclusion

National Action Plans are the main ways in which countries articulate how they intend to instrumentalize and localize the Women, Peace and Security agenda through hybrid peace processes that allow local civil society actors to be agents in realizing a Global North agenda in a local context. In this sense, they are important artefact of states’ gender, security and foreign policies. It outlines their understanding of what it is and who it is for. In this chapter, we set out to understand to trouble localization, and especially what localization work funded from abroad tells us about race through an interrogation of Whiteness within the NAPs. In so doing, we were able to gauge the narratives of security and their racialized representations and implications of donor states who currently fund many WPS initiatives.

While some Global North countries aspire to integrate more women in their foreign policy and security apparatus, primarily, the focus of most of these NAPs have been on ‘Other’ women located in the Global South. In this way NAPs, for countries in the Global North exacerbate the racialized norms of IR and of conflict/insecurity being something that happens in other places, while refusing the gendered violence within their own borders.

In conclusion, our analysis has also allowed us to reflect on the push for localization in WPS practices. In reality, this call for localization only seems to be about the Global South, and in a way that is heavily shaped by state, but especially civil society actors in the Global North: localization, but only for some, and only in a certain way. Even if WPS initiatives are happening in the Global South, by people in the Global South this does not mean the initiatives are not still about legitimizing white people’s desires, ultimately sanctioning actions of the Global North. These desires may be to see the Global South as always in need of repair, as fragile, as failing.

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Primary Documents - National Action Plans


