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Exploring the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Timor-Leste

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SOCIOLOGIA
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*To my grandmothers,
Two beautiful, resilient, and inspiring women.*

*He is no fugitive – escaped, escaping.
No one has seen him stumble looking back.
His fear is not behind him but beside him
On either hand to make his course perhaps
A crooked straightness yet no less a straightness.
He runs face forward. He is a pursuer.
He is a seeker who in his turn seeks
Another still, lost far into the distance.
Any who seek him seek in him the seeker.
His life is a pursuit of a pursuit forever.
It is the future that creates his present.
All is an interminable chain of longing.*

Escapist – Never by Robert Frost, 1962

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Finishing this dissertation means closing an important chapter. I am extremely happy and proud to do so, but mostly because with it I have developed a study on a topic that highlights and puts emphasis on women - all women, everywhere - and hopefully brings them to a space where they can be fully seen and heard.

Resumo

Esta dissertação pretende explorar o que impediu o Governo Timorense de lançar um segundo Plano de Ação Nacional (PAN) sobre Mulheres, Paz e Segurança (MPS), no seguimento do primeiro plano implementado entre 2016 e 2020. A independência de Timor-Leste da Indonésia, em 2002, envolveu extensivos esforços de reconstrução pós-conflito visando a criação e fortalecimento da democracia e instituições governamentais. Contemporaneamente, o Conselho de Segurança da ONU adota a Resolução 1325 promovendo a inclusão das mulheres em todos os níveis de tomada de decisão, em particular, no campo da segurança e da paz, de onde as mulheres estão tradicionalmente ausentes. Os Estados-Membros da ONU começaram a desenvolver planos de ação, como ferramentas estratégicas, com o objetivo de implementar a Resolução 1325 e aplicar a nível nacional as recomendações da Agenda MPS. De forma a atingir os objetivos deste estudo, analisámos o PAN timorense (2016-2020); quatro Programas do Governo Timorense; e realizámos uma análise temática aos dados das entrevistas. A abordagem qualitativa permitiu-nos analisar a adesão nacional a um quadro internacional, identificando as barreiras que limitam o Governo Timorense em fazer avançar a agenda. Com base em quatro causas propostas, este estudo exploratório permitiu concluir que a falta de vontade política, de apropriação e de compreensão da agenda MPS contribuíram significativamente para limitar o Governo Timorense. Para lá destes elementos, alguns fatores inicialmente ignorados, como a pandemia COVID-19, as cheias de 2021, e a instabilidade política interna, desempenharam papéis-chave neste contexto.

Palavras-chave: Timor-Leste, Agenda Mulheres, Paz e Segurança, Plano Nacional de Ação, Resolução 1325

Abstract

This dissertation aims to explore what has hindered the Timorese Government from launching a second National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), following the implemented first plan between 2016 and 2020. Timor-Leste's independence from Indonesia, in 2002, involved extensive post-conflict reconstruction efforts aiming at the creation and strengthening of democracy and governmental institutions. Concurrently, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 advocating for women's inclusion in all levels of decision-making, in particular within the security and peace fields from which women were traditionally absent. The UN Member States started to develop action plans as strategic tools aiming to implement Resolution 1325 and apply the recommendations of the WPS Agenda on a national level. To achieve this study's objectives, we analysed the Timorese NAP (2016-2020); four Timorese Government Programs; and conducted a thematic analysis on the interview data. A qualitative approach allowed us to analyse the domestic adherence to an international framework, identifying the barriers limiting the Timorese Government from moving the agenda forward. Based on four proposed explanations, this exploratory study allowed us to conclude that the lack of political will, ownership and understanding of the WPS agenda have significantly contributed to hindering the Timorese Government. Moreover, initially overlooked factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 floods, and the domestic political instability have played key roles within this context.

Keywords: Timor-Leste Women, Peace and Security Agenda, National Action Plan, Resolution 1325.

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Glossary of Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDR	Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
IO	International Organization
NAP	National Action Plan (implementing Women, Peace and Security)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCR	Post-Conflict Reconstruction
SC	Security Council
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration
UN Women	United Nations Development Fund for Women (formerly UNIFEM)
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Introduction

Gender inequality and the absence of women from power structures and decision-making processes in the peace and security sector remains a reality (Koppell, 2013). The narrative of women in war and conflict continues to be that of victimhood and women's peacebuilding efforts, and involvement in post-conflict and reconstruction, continue to be underfunded and undermined (UN Women, 2022). Despite some efforts to highlight the relevance of women, particularly in academia and in some international spheres such as the United Nations (UN), other International Organisations (IOs), and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the perception of women as victims persists, thus perpetuating a lack of recognition of women as legitimate and capable actors, as peacebuilders, decision-makers and as peace negotiators.

Women's presence in post-conflict reconstruction has been considered a critical indicator of long-term peace (Stone, 2014). However, as Laurel Stone (2014) noted, not all women's contributions matter to all conflicts, that is, the female presence itself is not necessarily key to peace. In essence, Stone (2014) argues that not only matters that women are taken into account as active participants and key actors in conflict and post-conflict situations, as it is of considerable importance that the local women, formally or informally organised, contribute and participate in the designing, developing and implementing reconstruction processes. The international frameworks and initiatives on peace and security, in order to be adjusted to a specific context, need to be aware of the specificities of the targeted region and population on which those measures will apply.

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted a landmark resolution. Resolution 1325 marked the first legal document from the Security Council to specifically recognise the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women (Miller et al., 2014). The text includes eighteen requirements for the inclusion of women in all aspects and all levels of peace and security, organised under four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and peacebuilding and recovery. Following its adoption in 2000, several subsequent resolutions were established aiming to address the gaps in Resolution 1325 and advance the so-called Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda. In essence, the UNSCR 1325, along with the resolutions that followed, intended to highlight women's role as agents of change rather than only addressing their needs as victims of conflict (Koppell, 2013). Indeed, a conflict can be a vehicle for women's empowerment namely if they have the space to take part as active participants during the conflict and post-conflict periods (Yadav, 2021).

Recognizing the importance of Resolution 1325, and in response to a Security Council Presidential Statement on WPS (S/PRST/2004/40) of November 2004¹, UN Member States started to implement it at the national level. To do so, governments started to develop action plans aiming to domestically apply

¹ As it rotates among its members, in November 2004, the UNSC's presidency was held by the US.

the measures and requirements outlined by the UNSC regarding the participation of women in the peace and security sector. In short, National Action Plans (NAP) on WPS, while have been globally acknowledged as the primary instrument to implement the agenda, provide a blueprint that governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society can use to coordinate action and track results (Hood, 2016; Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017).

In the current year, Resolution 1325 celebrated 23 years. Nevertheless, its call for action and the full implementation of the WPS agenda are still yet to be accomplished. This is why its implementation on a national level is of great significance and the Member States, through their national governments, have the primary responsibility of doing so.

While exploring the domestic implementation of the agenda, we selected Timor-Leste as the central figure of this exploratory study. Timor-Leste, the first sovereign state of the 21st century, is younger than the UNSCR 1325 and officially became independent in 2002 following four centuries of Portuguese possession before 1975 and 24 years under Indonesian occupation until 1999. Amidst an extensive reconstruction process that involved building its government institutions and state authorities essentially from zero, Timor followed other states in embracing the implementation of an international agenda on a national level which led to the development and launch of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, implemented between 2016 and 2020.

By selecting Timor-Leste we aimed, at the one hand, to analyse how an international agenda is transposed into the national level on a young and still developing democracy. On the other hand, and after a brief research on the WPS agenda, we came to understand that there is a certain scarcity of studies on this matter. We intend to bring new insights and a new approach to the existing research by not only analysing an Asia - Pacific² country, and its adherence to a set of policies on women within peace and security, as to analyse the period in between the development and launch of a NAP on WPS.

Reflecting on this context, this dissertation aims to analyse the latest developments and current situation in Timor-Leste concerning the WPS agenda. As the data led us to understand that the Timorese Government is currently drafting and developing a second plan, we aim to explore what happened in between, from 2020, when the implementation period of the first NAP was over, until today, October 2023. Why does it matter? The WPS Agenda has a transformative potential and its implementation through NAPs is the key tool that allows countries, governments, and civil society to move from gender inequality to gender justice, from conflict and violence to sustainable peace (Peace Women, 2023).

Considering this focus, we intend to address the following question: *What has hindered the Timorese Government from launching a second NAP on WPS, following a first implementation 2016-2020?* In order to answer this broad research question, we propose four possible explanations that act as

² This dissertation follows the UN Women's definition of the Asia - Pacific Region that encompasses Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Multi-Country Office, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Maldives, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vietnam (UN Women Regional Office, 2020).

barriers to the continuous implementation of the agenda: lack of political will; lack of international funding and support; lack of ownership; and finally, lack of understanding of the WPS agenda.

The full implementation of the WPS resolutions is a task that implies multiple actors and stakeholders, from the UN Women, the national governments, CSOs and NGOs. Nonetheless, Member States remain as the most influential and have the primary responsibility of assuring that the commitments of the agenda are domestically integrated through not only plans but also policies and laws (Coomaraswamy, 2015). The rationale behind the choice over focusing on the Timorese Government is because although other actors influence the integration of the WPS on a national level, governments have the final say.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter encompasses key concepts and authors by briefly exploring the Timorese context and historical background, from its liberation from Portugal in 1975 to its later formal independence in 2002 and posterior developments up to the present. We then delve into the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, particularly focusing on the pivotal role of the UNSCR 1325. This section underscores the importance of a domestic implementation, by Member States, of this international agenda. Finally, the development and implementation of the Timorese National Action Plan (2016-2020) is addressed. The second chapter covers the study's methodology, detailing the objectives and scope of the analysis as well as the theoretical framework employed. To comprehend what has hindered the Timorese Government from advancing the implementation of Resolution 1325, and thereby answer the research question, each of the proposed explanations will be analysed and discussed. We will explore the methodological framework and the adoption of thematic analysis and content analysis as tools employed. In the third chapter, we present the research's findings from the literature review and analysis on the Timorese NAP (2016 - 2020), the Timorese Government Programs research, and the thematic analysis applied to the data gathered from the interviews. The data collected and the empirical materials will be then explored and interpreted in the fourth and last chapter, considering the objective of this dissertation. The discussion will also briefly refer to the current situation in 2023. The proposed causes for the gap within the NAP's development in Timor will be analysed and we will conclude by ascertaining the extent to which those causes answer the research question.

This exploratory study allowed us to conclude that the lack of political will, of ownership and of the WPS agenda's full understanding have all contributed, to a significant extent, to hinder the Timorese Government from continuing the implementation of Resolution 1325. Therefore, hindering the advancement of the agenda within Timor-Leste. The lack of international funding and support, although an important component, does not present as a barrier in itself. The COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 floods, and the domestic political instability and changes within the government structure have played key roles within this context - not contradicting or contraposing the proposed explanations we identified, but rather bringing unique and essential layers to this research.

CHAPTER 1

Timor-Leste, Resolution 1325, and the National Action Plans

This initial chapter aims to give context, from a brief historical overview of Timor-Leste to a focus on the origins and purpose of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). We will then delve into the National Action Plans (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), developed with the purpose of implementing this resolution on a national level. By constructing the state of the art, considering concepts and arguments, and building a comprehensive understanding of both the Timorese context and the relevance of the UN WPS Agenda, this chapter seeks to provide a foundational framework within the current context and state of the research in this field.

The focus will then be on the Timorese National Action Plan³ on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020).

1.1. Timor-Leste: Brief Historical and Contextual Overview

In 1975, shortly after the independence from Portugal, a civil war began in Timor-Leste between the pro-Indonesian forces and the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin). Fretilin, as a left-wing political party, was rapidly associated with Communist and Marxist ideologies. This correlation, coupled with the escalation of the Cold War, led the United States and Australia to support Indonesia's invasion of Timor. Despite international condemnation, particularly from the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and the UN Security Council (UNSC), it wasn't until 1998, following President Habibie's rise to power in Indonesia, that a window for dialogue and negotiations emerged, aiming to end what turned out to be more than 20 years of conflict and oppression.

In May 1999, at the UN headquarters in New York, a significant agreement was signed. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Portugal and Indonesia, representing their respective governments, along with the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Kofi Annan, signed a pivotal accord. This agreement emphasised the mutual recognition by both governments that it was "essential to move the peace process forward" (S/1999/513, p. 6) and comprised essential foundations that profoundly influenced the course of Timor-Leste. In particular, it conferred the UNSG the authority to coordinate and organise a popular consultation on the Timorese people's will for independence from Indonesia, "through a direct, secret and universal ballot" (S/1999/513, p. 6). As a result of this agreement, the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was established, through Resolution 1246 (1999), with the purpose of

³ Timorese National Action Plan (NAP) refers to the following document and will not be cited throughout the dissertation: Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. (2016). *National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020)*. Government of Timor-Leste.

organising and conducting a popular consultation that would ascertain whether the Timorese people would accept or reject the proposed “constitutional framework providing for a special autonomy (...) within the unitary Republic of Indonesia” (S/RES/1246, 1999, p. 2).

The referendum took place on August 30, 1999, with a significant majority of votes rejecting the proposed special autonomy, leading to Timor-Leste’s separation from Indonesia. However, the announcement of the results triggered a wave of violence, destruction and human rights violations, mainly perpetrated by the pro-Indonesian forces contesting the results (Freire & Lopes, 2014). Responding to those aggressions and violations, the UNSC authorized the creation of a “multinational force” (S/RES/1264, 1999, p. 2), led by Australia, and of a United Nations Transitional Administration (UNTAET) “empowered to exercise all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of justice” (S/RES/1272, 1999, p. 2). The UNTAET⁴ aimed to assist in the creation of state institutions by giving those the necessary conditions and tools to take responsibility for the territory and prepare for the full and official independence (Freire & Lopes, 2014), that would be declared in 2002.

It was within this context that the authority and administration slowly moved from the UN mission to a Timorese new government, marking Timor-Leste as the first country to emerge in the 21st century. After years under Portuguese control, followed by Indonesia’s invasion in 1975, Timor-Leste officially became independent in May 2002. After independence, the UN downgraded its involvement in Timor-Leste, however, the country’s early years were marked by instability and the UN’s withdrawal turned out to be a “premature development, given the fragile institutional, political, economic and social context” (Freire & Lopes, 2013, p. 208). The instability was then exacerbated by the violent events of 2006, that culminated in a political and humanitarian crisis, which involved the Timorese security forces and revealed their incapacity to resolve the structural challenges the country was still facing.

Although Timor faced some challenges it also had enthusiastic political leaders, an active civil society, and valuable support from the UN, other IOs and foreign governments. The last UN mission (UNMIT) concluded its operations and left the country only in 2012 and the first presidential and general elections organised without the UN’s direct assistance were held in 2017 (Smith, 2018).

An interesting characteristic of the post-conflict process in Timor-Leste is that it is inseparable from the state-building process and the establishment of the country’s stable and solid foundations. The following section highlights this.

1.1.1. The Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Timor-Leste

The transformation of war-torn societies into peaceful, stable, and more prosperous ones is, on its own, an immensely complex task (Brown et al., 2011). If we combine this with practically starting from scratch, creating state and government institutions, and slowly rebuilding a new society, we can picture the challenging times Timor and the Timorese have lived in the last twenty years.

⁴ Interestingly, UNTAET was one of the first UN peace operations to include a Gender Affairs Unit (Smith, 2018).

Today's Timor-Leste was shaped not only by the actions and decisions of its government, institutions, and formal international donors and supporters as the UN, but also by the commitment and determination of Timorese women, men, and civil society, operating in a more or less organised manner. In fact, the country's efforts have demonstrated that although it takes at least 15 years for post-conflict countries to recover stability, Timor managed to achieve a "safe and secure environment in less than a decade" (Government of Timor-Leste, 2011, p.8).

However, despite the notable development and progress made in the past two decades, and the departure of the last UN mission in 2012, Timor-Leste is still today recovering from conflict. The peacebuilding process remains incomplete and the structural approach to peace is still in the making, as observed by Freire (2017).

The interpretation of what it means for Timor-Leste to be in the process of post-conflict reconstruction (PCR), however, might vary. The concept of PCR is not always understood in the same manner, but there are some key components that define a situation as a post-conflict one. The reconstruction of post-conflict societies requires the creation or reconstruction of national institutions that are responsible for justice, security and social development (Buddenberg, 2009). As noted by Christien and Klugman (2020), the reconstruction phase encompasses significant peace milestones, typically beginning with the cessation of hostilities and the signing of a peace agreement, followed by Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) strategies. Finally, it involves the establishing of a functional state, the building of democratic institutions, economic recovery, and societal reconciliation. The post-conflict phase poses also some challenges to country leaders - and the Timorese ones were no exception. According to Hasewaga (2016), these challenges include the construction of peaceful and stable societies that are just and inclusive; the establishment of transparent, accountable, and effective institutions; and the promotion of social and economic progress that ensures equal access to justice, education, health and employment for the population.

Since its formal independence, Timor-Leste has primarily focused its social and economic policies towards addressing the needs of its people and consolidating security and stability, thus providing a solid foundation for nationhood (Government of Timor-Leste, 2011). As part of its much-needed and extensive reconstruction and state-building efforts, and aligned with the foundations laid down in 2002, the Timorese Government developed and launched the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030. This important document intended to reflect the Timorese people's twenty-year vision and aspirations for a prosperous and strong nation. The strategies and actions set out in this development plan (2011) aimed to transition Timor to a middle-income country with a healthy, well-educated, and safe population by 2030. Some goals focused on the security sector and on the development of a more gender-fair society.

Building a nation, its governmental institutions, and social and economic foundations can be seen as a huge challenge as a window of opportunity. An opportunity to aim higher than merely recreating the pre-conflict conditions and to build from the ground up while guaranteeing women's effective participation as community leaders (Zuckerman & Greenberg, 2004; Christien & Klugman, 2020). It

offers a chance to learn from past experiences, take the necessary time and space to establish a peaceful and stable present, and work towards a future grounded in good governance and fair institutions.

The rebuilding of local communities and of often marginalised groups, in particular women and youth, is a key component to the reconstruction of a post-conflict country. Indeed, PCR is expected to be a favourable scenario for the establishment of new norms and rules. A scenario that offers - or should offer - a possibility to focus on women's rights, on respecting them, and on acknowledging the valuable contribution of women in the reconstruction process itself (Zuckerman & Greenberg, 2004).

Regarding the peace and security studies, more attention has been given to the needs of women as victims of conflict rather than as important agents of change and development (Koppell, 2013). In Timor, the lack of relevance given to women goes back to the period of the Indonesian invasion. Several Timorese women were victims of immense violence, but also contributed and played significant roles in struggling for peace and independence, not only as guerilla fighters and members of the clandestine front, but as advocates against the occupation, both in Timor-Leste and abroad (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016; Haq, 2012). The women's organisations also had crucial political roles, namely right after independence, by advocating for women's active participation in state-building (Bouta et al., 2004). This "lack of relevance", however, persisted throughout the civil war, the country's independence, and the local conflicts up until today. Similar to other post-conflict situations, women were largely absent from high-level dialogue initiatives aiming to end outbreaks of violence, particularly following the events of 1999 and 2006 (Haq, 2012) - the tumultuous reactions to the referendum results, and the violent events and humanitarian crisis, respectively. Despite the great efforts and consolidation seen in the last twenty years, Timor-Leste still faces challenges in women's empowerment and actorness in the peace and security fields.

Nevertheless, this reality has been gradually evolving. Although slowly, Timorese women are now leading grassroots initiatives and assuming positions of power and decision-making at the national, district and *suku*⁵ levels. In recent years, women have undertaken significant roles and responsibilities within both society and governmental contexts (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016). As of February 2021, 38.5% of seats in Parliament were held by women, a number that since July 2023 rose to 40% (UN Women, n.d.-a; GIWPS & PRIO, 2023). The Women, Peace, and Security Index 2023/24, on its turn, that ranks 177 countries regarding its status on issues as women's inclusion, justice, and security, rated Timor in the 100th place with a score of 0,664⁶ (GIWPS & PRIO, 2023). However, still 35% of women and girls between 15 and 49 years old experienced physical or sexual violence in Timor-Leste (UN Women Regional Office, 2020).

⁵ In Tetum, one of the official languages of Timor-Leste, *suku* means 'tribe' or 'clan' and is used to refer to the village.

⁶ Possible scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. Retrieved from <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/the-index/> in October 26, 2023.

Notwithstanding, the significance of women's representation extends beyond numbers. Research indicates that the presence and participation of women in decision-making roles ensures that women's concerns and interests are taken into account (Haq, 2012), therefore contributing to a more sustainable and long-lasting peace and security. In fact, the discussion of women's involvement in post-conflict development is not fundamentally about women (Koppell, 2013) and it shouldn't be a women's only effort. In Timor-Leste, as both Timorese men and women were building the foundations of a stable society and resilient institutions, the active involvement of women in decision-making processes held particular importance, as Ameerah Haq (2012) - at that time the UN Special Representative for Timor-Leste and Head of the UNMIT - emphasised in a chronicle dedicated to the role of women in making and building peace.

While peace and reconstruction operations have evolved from traditional approaches that go hand in hand with the military understanding of security and, consequently, of peace, some of these approaches were still put into practice in Timor-Leste (Smith, 2018). Bringing a critical intake, Sarah Smith (2018) noted how the reconstruction of Timor might have focused a little too much on the State being the central administration, thus leading to a certain centralisation of peace which had significant consequences in terms of the "gendering nature of peace". Indeed, if we look at the Timorese society, we understand the significance of informal peacebuilding and reconstruction initiatives at the local level, in particular, at the *suku* level. However, women's involvement in formal peace operations is limited and tends to happen precisely at the informal community-level. This absence from formal peace processes leads women and their stories to go unacknowledged (Bouta et al., 2004; McLeod, 2018). The Timorese Government has recognised this and understands that, in the Timorese society, women still do not fully enjoy their rights and continue to face violence and discrimination, both at home and in public spheres (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016).

1.2. The UNSCR 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

In October 2000, a landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution (hereafter UNSCR) was unanimously adopted. Resolution 1325 is considered the first legal document from the Security Council to specifically recognise the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women (Miller et al., 2014). It includes eighteen requirements for the inclusion of women in all aspects and all levels of peace and security, then organised under four pillars - the so-called four P's of women, peace and security: prevention, participation, protection and peacebuilding⁷ (UN Women, 2016).

⁷ The peacebuilding pillar is alternatively referred to as "relief and recovery pillar" by some scholars (Coomaraswamy, 2015; Hamilton et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2014). The term 'peacebuilding' is employed in this study as it is the one used in the Timorese NAP 2016-2020.

The conceptual roots of the UNSCR 1325 lie in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, and in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, specifically its chapter on women and armed conflict (Miller et al., 2014). Its informal roots, however, are undeniably a result of the pivotal role of women's organisations and feminist advocacy that have always aimed at making women's voices and experiences visible (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017).

Resolution 1325 reaffirms the valuable role of women in the "prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding" (S/RES/1325, 2000, p.1), and calls for a gender perspective to be mainstreamed through peace operations and for the inclusion of women in peace, security and in post-conflict decision-making (Espinosa, 2020; Smith, 2018). By applying it, women's participation and full involvement in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security should be guaranteed. To ensure women's active and effective participation, the UNSC urged Member States to increase the "representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions" (S/RES/1325, 2000) and called all actors involved in peace negotiations and agreements to adopt a "gender perspective" (S/RES/1325, 2000). In short, although it has been interpreted in different ways, with different nuances and expectations (Coomaraswamy, 2015), Resolution 1325 recognised the unique impact of conflict on women's lives and highlighted their often-overlooked contributions to resolve and prevent conflict. As Haq (2012) summarised, this resolution called on the international community to fully involve women in every aspect of the work for peace and security.

Resolution 1325 was then followed by other UNSCRs, intended to address the gaps identified and move the agenda forward (Swaine, 2009). Some resolutions - 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015) and 2493 (2019) - focused on the need for women's active participation and leadership in peacemaking and peacebuilding. In parallel, other resolutions addressed conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). All these, adopted over the years by the UNSC, form what we now know to be the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which was then guided and followed by a robust set of internationally agreed norms and standards. In essence, the WPS resolutions became the principal global framework through which women's experiences were understood and acted upon internationally (Swaine, 2017). Rather than focusing solely on the needs of women as victims of conflict, the development of a WPS agenda intended to make women visible by focusing on their roles as agents of change (Koppell, 2013), as decision-makers, and as peacebuilders actively involved in conflict and post-conflict, formally or informally.

More than 20 years passed since the adoption of 1325 and the full implementation of the WPS agenda depends on women's active engagement and leadership (GIWPS & PRIO, 2023). Nevertheless, the contribution of women to peacebuilding continues to be undervalued and under-resourced, leaving an incredible tool for transformative change and sustainable peace to be left unused and underexplored (UN Women, 2016). As a UN Women brief on peace and security (2016) acknowledges, the world has been facing unprecedented challenges to global peace and security, but the WPS agenda not only still makes sense, as it is more than ever, a key tool to build peace.

Since the adoption of Resolution 1325, the UN Women, other UN entities, NGOs and Member States have focused on developing initiatives to implement it by developing policies, guidelines and indicators (UNSG, 2004). The UN Women's work on women, peace and security is unique (UN Women, 2022). According to the Women, Peace, and Security 2020-2021 Annual Report (2022), the UN Women importantly provides normative support, and coordinates the UN system and its programs concerning women's lives at the global, regional and country levels. The UN Women's mandate includes areas of expertise that go from policy advice and advocacy to conflict prevention and mediation. In particular, concerning the WPS agenda, the UN Women works with its partners, both local and international, to provide technical, coordination and financial support to the development and implementation of NAPs (UN Women, 2022). However, the UN Women is not responsible for implementing the agenda on a national level. On their turn, Member States have been called to be the primary responsible actors for implementing the WPS agenda and, to do so on a national level, National Action Plans started to be developed and implemented. The upcoming section focuses on the origins and purpose of these plans and explores the challenges and limitations of both the WPS agenda and the NAPs.

1.3. The National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security

In October 2004, a UN Secretary-General report on Women, Peace and Security (S/2004/814) reflected on the four years since the 1325's adoption. In understanding that Resolution 1325 alone wasn't enough to inspire immediate action (Hood, 2016), this report explicitly requested governments to develop action plans in order to accomplish the WPS agenda's priorities, on a national level (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017). In the report, Kofi Annan importantly urged Member States, UN entities, civil society, NGOs and other relevant actors to collaboratively "ensure the full participation of women and (the) incorporation of gender perspectives in all conflict prevention work" (S/2004/814, p. 5), and to "develop guidelines and training initiatives (...) on promoting gender equality in peace agreements" (S/2004/814, p. 7). Regarding PCR, the UNSG called upon the promotion of initiatives for women and girls, in consultation with them, towards the incorporation of gender perspectives in "the planning, implementation and monitoring of all reconstruction programmes and budgets" (S/2004/814, p. 14).

Aligned with the recommendations introduced by the UNSG (S/2004/814), the UN Security Council, in its Presidential Statement of October 2004, welcomed and acknowledge the Member States' efforts and encouraged the implementation of Resolution 1325 at the national level, in particular, through the development of National Action Plans (S/PRST/2004/40).

A National Action Plan (NAP) serves as a comprehensive document that outlines a country's policy or course of action to achieve objectives and reach goals pertaining to specific national or global matters (Miller et al., 2014). As noted by Barbara Miller, Milad Pournik, and Aisling Swaine (2014), a NAP delineates strategies, assigns roles, establishes timelines, and constructs indicators for measurement and evaluation. While action plans can cover various subjects, this research focuses on those implementing

the WPS agenda. These are, essentially, practical and strategic documents that allow policymakers to detail a government's actions in fulfilling obligations and recommendations, under the UN agenda, by translating its internationally agreed resolutions into the domestic context (Hamilton et al., 2020; UN Women, n.d.-b). They represent what Hamilton, Naam, and Shepherd (2020) termed, the institutionalisation of Resolution 1325. Seen as a tool, NAPs are a necessary step in addressing accountability deficits within Resolution 1325 and serve as a measure to ensure states fulfil their obligations (Swaine, 2009). In short, a NAP is a Member State's endeavour to translate the WPS Agenda from policy to practice, from the established commitments to concrete programs, on a national level.

Although there is still a debate on the plans' appropriate scope, on whether it should address all aspects of Resolution 1325 or if it should be restricted to some (Swaine, 2009), the framework of priorities and actions commonly integrates the four pillars of the agenda: participation, prevention, protection, and peacebuilding (UN Women, n.d.-b). Regardless of this framework, as Swaine (2009) recalls, each action plan is naturally connected with and dependent on the national government's foreign and domestic policy priorities, and its effective implementation is conditioned by adequate monitoring, reporting, and reviewing mechanisms.

In their article "Women in Peace and Security through United Nations Security Resolution 1325: Literature Review, Content Analysis of National Action Plans, and Implementation" (2014), Miller et al. identified five factors that accelerate the development and implementation of national plans on WPS: political will, namely on the part of high-level government officials; international peer pressure; harnessing of resources and financial commitment; accountability; and civil society advocacy efforts. Regarding the involvement of civil society, it is important to note how an inclusionary drafting process usually strengthens prospects for the implementation and success of the plan, given that the relevant actors are actively involved in proposing activities and determining priorities, of which they also have the responsibility to implement (Miller et al., 2014). On their turn, the levels of political will, accountability and ownership of the government will have a direct impact on the advancement of the WPS agenda. As Member States are the ones responsible for the domestic implementation of Resolution 1325, governments have the central role and responsibility in this process.

The first country to develop a NAP on WPS was Denmark in 2005 (Swaine, 2009). According to Peace Women's⁸ database on the monitoring and analysis of 1325 NAPs, as of July 2023, 107 UN Member States (55%) have adopted a plan on WPS. However, around 30% of those plans are currently outdated and expired (Peace Women, 2023). In addition to the growing number of 1325 NAPs, another interesting - and possibly encouraging - sign is that several countries have already revised their original plans, assessing strengths and weaknesses, and launched second and third phases/generations of those plans (Miller et al., 2014). In the Asia - Pacific region, for example, Australia and the Philippines

⁸ Peace Women is the Women, Peace and Security Programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest women's peace organisation, founded in 1915 (www.peacewomen.org/).

launched two NAPs on WPS already (Peace Women, 2023). Moreover, it is significant to mention that already some action plans were adopted at the regional and organisational levels, as are examples the Pacific Regional Action Plan (2012-2015), the NATO Policy and Action Plan (2018), the EU Action Plan (2019-2024), and the ASEAN Regional Plan (2022).

European's first generation of NAPs were primarily foreign policy documents. By ignoring or underestimating the domestic challenges, this placement of NAPs in the Foreign Affairs realm tended to create the idea that the WPS agenda addressed problems that occurred "elsewhere", although the solutions could be found "here". In doing so, those NAPs were likely reinforcing the framing that Resolution 1325 sought to dismantle (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017). Particularly because of this, outside Europe, namely in the Asia - Pacific region, the WPS agenda faces unique challenges (UN Women Regional Office, 2020). In general terms, the Asia – Pacific's states traditionally maintain a top-down and frequently militarised approach to security - which is precisely what the agenda aims to challenge. More often than not, the WPS agenda is perceived as a liberal Western states' instrument to exercise power and extend political influence and is misinterpreted as applying exclusively to conflict contexts (UN Women Regional Office, 2020). Adding to this, the lack of visibility of peace and security efforts in the region and the agenda's understanding as an emancipatory project, has been rendering controversial and undermining regional commitments towards the agenda. This region's "general resistance towards Westernised norms", as stated by Lee-Koo and Trojanowska (2017), might justify why the Asia - Pacific was the last one to adopt action plans on WPS.

Nevertheless, the agenda finally started to gather traction in the past decade, both in the region and around, as demonstrated by the development of several NAPs, namely in the Philippines (2010 and 2017), Australia (2012 and 2021), Indonesia (2014), Timor-Leste (2016), Bangladesh (2019), and Sri Lanka (2023), to name a few⁹.

1.3.1. Challenges and Limitations of the UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plans

Although Resolution 1325, and the WPS agenda as a whole, were important milestones for women and for the peace and security field, there are also some downsides, obstacles and challenges that persist, preventing the full implementation of the agenda (Coomaraswamy, 2015). Despite the great effort of the international community, only half of the UN Member States have formulated action plans on this issue and two of the UNSC's permanent members - Russia and China - haven't even launched a plan. It is important to recognise the progress made, but the need and opportunity for greater implementation of the WPS agenda and the persisting barriers to its full implementation (S/RES/2493, 2019) cannot be disregarded.

⁹ In Accordance with the Peace Women's database. Retrieved in August 2023 (www.peacewomen.org/).

We will now explore the summarised five major challenges upon the agenda's full implementation, identified in the literature: the non-binding aspect of the WPS agenda and its resolutions; the NAP on WPS being seen as an end in itself; the lack of funding and monitoring mechanisms; the risk of segregating women's issues; and the "one size fits all" UN standards applied domestically (Hamilton et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2014; Swaine, 2009, 2017).

First, despite the UNSC being the only UN body with the authority to make declarations and recommendations with which Member States should comply, those are still non-binding. Concerning Resolution 1325, in particular, the language used - "encourages", "requests" and "calls upon" - as Swaine (2009) refers, makes the resolution sound even more like a suggestion or a proposal, rather than compelling states to act, thus leading it to be interpreted as "soft" as opposed to "hard" law. In this sense, and while considering the space the agenda has gained in the UN and the international systems, the WPS resolutions lack enforcement measures, and the action plans remain voluntary endeavours inevitably subject to changing political interests (Swaine, 2017). This is even more critical at the national level, as the development and full implementation of action plans are dependent on each government, institutions, civil society and other national, or international, actors and their willingness and commitment to the implementation of the agenda.

This leads us to a second challenge, explored by Miller et al. (2014), and related to the production and launch of 1325 NAPs are, more often than not, seen by governments as an end in themselves. National plans are planning and strategic tools that offer a framework to organise and coordinate activities (Hamilton et al., 2020). The mechanisms of reporting and monitoring - normally included in each NAP - should help to hold the governments accountable to their own established commitments (Swaine, 2009). This, however, does not always happen in practice. As we have just seen, the adoption of national plans is a voluntary measure and, in reality, its development on a national level is at times used as an instrument to demonstrate a country's modern status or to publicly exhibit adherence to a significant notorious agenda (Swaine, 2017), more than to actually implement it domestically and meet the goals set.

Another challenge easily, and commonly, identified is the lack of adequate funding and/or the lack of explicit and clear mechanisms for the allocation of the available resources and funds. For a NAP to be effective, a specific funding allocation and tracking is required. However, a large percentage of action plans fail to allocate a specific budget for specific activities (Hamilton et al., 2020). This is, in fact, a persistent failure when it comes to the WPS agenda and the most serious and constant obstacle to its implementation, as identified in Coomaraswamy's Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR (2015), hereafter Global Study. In the majority of plans, there are some references to budgets, but those are not clearly, and at all times, assigned to concrete activities. Adding to this, the "cross-departmental" nature of these plans makes it particularly challenging given that different responsibilities are usually delegated to different entities and actors, and the same happens with the respective resources. Alongside, the insufficient monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and reporting mechanisms, which besides

accountability allows states and stakeholders to be clear about goals, resources and timeframes, is also considerably problematic (Hamilton et al., 2020; Swaine, 2009).

A fourth challenge, also appointed as a criticism to Resolution 1325 and the respective NAPs, is that the resolutions might actually limit the implementation of the WPS agenda by, instead of mainstreaming women's issues, placing and segregating them into the security arena (Swaine, 2009). According to this perspective, placing women's rights within a security framework ends up imposing some limitations on moving the agenda forward which means that NAPs might hinder the achievement of the WPS goals (Miller et al., 2014; Swaine, 2009). This view is consistent with the argument advanced by states such as Germany, whose process of developing a plan on WPS is worth mentioning. Contrarily to other states (mostly in Western Europe), Germany chose first not to develop an action plan. At that time, and while answering some criticisms, Chancellor Angela Merkel (quoted in Bucurescu, 2011¹⁰) explained that many of the concerns stated in Resolution 1325 were already integrated into various federal government action plans and activities. In other words, Germany was opting for a mainstreaming approach in all relevant policy areas, believing it would provide better chances of reaching the objectives, rather than implementing a separate plan (Miller et al., 2014). Inversely, others advocate that separate action plans are essential for 1325 to be fully and successfully implemented. The mainstreaming of the recommendations and measures proposed in the agenda would most likely lead to those getting lost during the implementation process, thus doing little to reform the established structures which women are seeking to access and reform (Miller et al., 2014; Swaine, 2009). As Swaine (2009) concludes, a combined approach that involves the development of an action plan that supports gender mainstreaming across all aspects of institutional policy might be the best solution.

Nonetheless, Germany later changed its position and adopted a 1325 NAP in 2012 (Miller et al., 2014), possibly due to international peer pressure. In itself, peer pressure is not a problem and in fact, as we have seen identified by Miller et al., (2014), it acts as one of the factors that accelerate the development of NAPs on WPS. To give an example, the 10th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, in 2010, galvanised the development of NAPs with eleven plans being adopted, the highest number in a single year to date (Swaine, 2017). The downside is revealed when this international pressure promotes the implementation of standard international templates into the domestic sphere - the so-called "one size fits all". This idea of transferring the best practices is not always the right approach in many conflict and post-conflict situations, namely because the operationalisation of the agenda, and its *modus operandi*, has been premised on traditional (and liberal) approaches to peace and security (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017). In addition, the development of NAPs on WPS is usually a mixture of top-down and bottom-up strategies, thus the importance of inclusionary drafting processes. That is why there

¹⁰ Bucurescu, A. M. (2011). Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: Effective Ways to Implement it at a National Level: National Action Plans or Gender Mainstreaming Approach?: A Comparative Case Study on Swedish and German Implementation Designs. Doctoral Dissertation, Uppsala University, Sweden. Cited by Miller et al., 2014, p. 16.

seems to be an apparent difference when plans are used as tools to make women and their roles during and after conflict more visible, rather than simply applying the standard. On those plans there is a clear promotion of the WPS agenda's "emancipatory potential", that Lee-Koo & Trojanowska identified. As mentioned by Westendorf (2013)¹¹, inclusionary drafting processes foster participatory and bottom-up processes that engage all actors and stakeholders, from the high-level entities to the ones 'on the ground' that will implement it. The domestic nature of the action plans alone is expected to limit the decentralisation of the goals, however, there are examples of NAPs that created district-level implementation strategies precisely to ensure local follow-through and promote the involvement of local communities (Miller et al., 2014) while overcoming this "one size fits all" common approach.

In conclusion, the whole point of a NAP on WPS is to be developed and implemented so that women really become active participants in the peace and security fields, in peace negotiations, in conflict and post-conflict contexts, and overall, that gender-based violence is reduced (Hamilton et al., 2020). There has not been, however, enough progress made and the obstacles we just explored are delaying and compromising the full implementation of the agenda. Thus, by acknowledging these obstacles, the UN and its Member States are already one step closer to possibly overcoming them.

In summary, this first chapter gave the necessary context and serves as the foundational framework for this research. An historical overview of Timor-Leste, from its independence from Portugal in 1975 to the present, with a specific emphasis on the post-conflict reconstruction phase was provided. We then continued through the origins and purpose of the UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda, along with the corresponding NAPs. To conclude, we explored and highlighted some of the challenges and limitations related to both Resolution 1325 and its domestic implementation. We will now delve into the research's methodology.

¹¹ Westendorf, J. (2013). 'Add Women and Stir': The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands and Australia's Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 67(4), 1-19. Cited by Miller et al., 2014, p. 24.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

Considering the previous chapter, we focused on the context of Timor-Leste, the purpose of Resolution 1325 and its implementation through NAPs by exploring key concepts and authors to better understand and answer the research question.

This second chapter intends to present the methodological and theoretical framework within which this study was developed. It first introduces the objectives of the research, followed by a second section that explores the authors and studies that inspired the research's framework and the subsequent formulation of possible explanations to what have limited the Timorese Government. The third section describes the choice and application of the tools used to answer the research question: *What has hindered the Timorese Government from launching a second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security?*

2.1. Objective and Scope of Analysis

In order to define the research objective, we first need to problematize a situation or event. After analysing the purpose of domestically implementing Resolution 1325, through the development of National Action Plans, we understood how important it is not only its launching but its implementation over the defined period. The challenge is not to develop an action plan on WPS but to implement and monitor it, considering and following the proposed activities and indicators, under the four pillars of the agenda. Once the implementation period is over it is essential to (re)evaluate the situation, to ascertain which goals were met and which are still yet to be reached. With this process it is expected that governments define and implement second and third generations - or phases - of NAPs on Resolution 1325. As a result of these NAPs' implementation, gender mainstreaming is being applied to areas of government that would, otherwise, most likely not be amenable to the relevance of this kind of policy issues (Swaine, 2017). The continuous implementation is a sign of commitment to women, to gender equality and to moving the WPS agenda forward.

The selection of the case of Timor-Leste arises from the interest in comprehensively exploring how a young democracy, engaged in constructing its state and institutional basis and still recovering from conflict, endeavours to include and bring women to all levels of decision-making. In a way, aiming to integrate and mainstream gender in its policies and legislation, namely on the peace and security fields.

Building from these ideas and concepts, this study seeks to understand the apparent hiatus in the national implementation of the agenda and assess which possible obstacles and challenges have hindered the Timorese Government from launching a second plan, following a first launched in 2016. To narrow this broad analysis, a set of possible explanations was formulated. These act and are to be explored as potential answers to the defined research question. By focusing on those four ideas – the lack of political

will, of international funding and support, of ownership, and of understanding of the WPS agenda -, we intend to draw conclusions on to what extent these factors have impeded the Timorese Government from advancing the WPS agenda in the country, in particular since 2020.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

According to the UN Women - Asia and the Pacific, the organisation has been supporting the Timorese Government in the development of the NAP's second phase since 2021 (UN Women, n.d.-a)¹². The goal was to launch a new plan that would be implemented until 2025. However, as this did not materialise, this exploratory research objective is to try to understand which possible causes have hindered the Timorese Government from moving the agenda forward.

This dissertation followed and adapted the framework of various studies conducted on Timor-Leste along with those on the WPS agenda and its action plans. Considering the research question, four potential explanations were defined to explore the challenges faced by the Timorese Government in the development of a second action plan: lack of political will; lack of international funding and support; lack of ownership; and lack of understanding of the WPS agenda.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Miller et al. (2014) identified five factors that accelerate the development and implementation of NAPs, in particular emphasising political will, accountability, and the harnessing of resources and financial commitment. Consequently, we might argue that the absence of one or more of these accelerating factors diminishes the likelihood of the development and implementation of a NAP on WPS. Alongside, as observed earlier, the Asia-Pacific region, of which Timor-Leste is part, has traditionally adopted a top-down approach to security and tends to present resistance towards “Westernised norms” (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017, p. 291), including those of Resolution 1325. This general resistance coupled with the persistent underrepresentation of the region in global WPS debates, creates unique challenges to the advancement of this agenda within Asia - Pacific (UN Women Regional Office, 2020). These factors then potentially combined with an insufficient understanding of the WPS agenda, particularly within the Timorese Government, and the absence of those accelerating factors, might render the development and implementation of a NAP more unlikely. We will now delve into the studies, concepts, and authors behind the formulated possible explanations.

Political will is key to developing and implementing action plans on WPS, namely on the part of high-level government officials, as we have seen in the previous chapter. As Aisling Swaine (2017) denoted in her analysis of NAP' trends, the non-binding characteristic of the agenda combined with the voluntary and subject to political changes' aspect of national plans, makes its production and launch depend almost entirely on the government's will.

¹² In cooperation with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Retrieved in August 2023 from <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/peace-and-security/national-action-plans>.

Indeed, a clear evidence to an effective NAP on WPS, as in any other policy area, is political will (Hamilton et al., 2020). Despite international pressure and the UN's constant reinforcement on the importance of fully implementing Resolution 1325 on a national level, as Member States have the primary role in developing NAPs, in situations where the government lacks political will, it is likely that no plan is developed.

Similarly, in the absence of adequate funds and resources, no NAP is successfully developed or implemented. As Radhika Coomaraswamy asserted in the Global Study (2015) commissioned by the UNSG, the lack of funding is the most critical obstacle hindering the development and implementation of NAPs. In this scenario, one might argue that even if there exists a certain level of political will, with no funds and support - here specifically referring to international funds and support from IOs and foreign governments -, it is likely that no plan is developed.

In its turn, ownership and accountability are intricately linked. In the context of lack of ownership, the absence of a designated person or group of people, within the government, that is responsible for the continuous oversight of the plan's development and execution, results in the plan eventually becoming no one's responsibility. Considering the insights provided by Miller et al. (2014), NAPs tend to be seen as an end in themselves, in which their monitoring and evaluation mechanisms - designed particularly for assessing the plan's strengths and weaknesses and guiding the development of a follow-up plan - are usually disregarded. More often than not, as NAPs are used as instruments to promote a country's status in the international sphere (Swaine, 2017), the actual and effective commitment to the WPS agenda is quite secondary, if not nonexistent. In addition to this, due to the cross-departmental aspect of these plans and the different responsibilities, from the drafting to the implementation, usually being delegated among distinct actors and entities (Hamilton et al., 2020), the accountability and ownership over the plan's development becomes diffuse, consequently belonging to no one. If there is no sense of ownership and belonging over a plan's development and implementation, it is highly likely that the plan will not materialise.

Finally, the lack of full understanding of the WPS agenda is also problematic. This adherence to a standard template that is transferred from the international realm and applied domestically, as explored by Lee-Koo and Trojanowska (2017) in the Asia - Pacific region, should imply a great effort in guiding and preparing those that at the national and local levels will implement it. Although the UN Women promotes several training and capacity-building initiatives together with national governments and civil society, the so-called "one size fits all" framework that the implementation of Resolution 1325 often applies, tends to be challenging for both the local communities and members of the government. This is particularly more pronounced in post-conflict scenarios (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017), such as the case of Timor-Leste.

As demonstrated by Basini and Ryan (2016), NAPs can, nevertheless, be an obstacle to the local ownership of Resolution 1325. The lack of understanding of the WPS agenda and its action plans tends to lead to an absence of a sense of belonging (Basini and Ryan, 2016). Therefore, without fully understanding the importance and purpose of domestically implementing Resolution 1325, governments are less likely to develop and launch a plan on WPS.

In essence, this is the basis that inspired our exploratory study and the formulation of the four possible limiting factors, built from different studies and authors. Within this framework it is possible to assume that the presence of specific key aspects is pivotal for the development of a NAP on WPS. Conversely, we argue that the absence of those same aspects renders it more challenging and reduces the chances of a plan's development. The following section identifies the methods and tools used to ascertain to what extent the identified explanations answer this study's research question.

2.3. Methodological Framework

To achieve the objectives of the research, mentioned in this chapter's first section, address the potential barriers the Timorese Government faced concerning the advancement of the WPS agenda, and finally answer the research question, we will now consider the tools and methods applied.

We have focused on both primary and secondary data sources. Besides the relevant authors, articles and studies mentioned in the previous chapters, as well as official UN reports, statements, and resolutions - in particular those that embody the WPS agenda -, in order to build a solid empirical basis, some primary sources were analysed. In the search for themes, gaps and patterns, qualitative methods were applied. These methods, in the words of Berg (2001), seek answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit those settings. Based on Patton's (1990) concept of purposeful sampling, and as it was challenging to gather empirical material for this research, the aim was to collect purposeful and specific data with the focus of answering the research question.

First, we explored more in-depth the development and implementation of the first Timorese NAP on WPS (2016 - 2020) and analysed its proposed activities, outputs and indicators. With this dissertation, our aim is to determine what has hindered the Timorese Government from continuing the domestic implementation of the agenda namely by ascertaining to what extent the four suggested explanations are suitable answers. Nevertheless, we also recognise that it is essential to analyse the first NAP, in particular, to better understand the Timorese context and provide key insights on the WPS agenda within the country.

Second, we selected and analysed the Programs of the V, VI, VIII and IX Constitutional Governments of Timor-Leste¹³. As Member States have the central responsibility in implementing the WPS on a domestic level (Coomaraswamy, 2015), we considered the official documents on which each government set and presented its priorities for the legislative period. By analysing these programs, the aim was to assess whether the recent and present Timorese Governments have been presenting a clear intention and signs of political will, of ownership, and of understanding towards the WPS agenda and its implementation in Timor.

The Programs of the Timorese Government were collected according to its online availability on the Timorese Government's website. As useful for identifying trends and patterns but also monitoring shifts within the different programs, the content analysis method was employed (Stemler, 2001). The time frame, spanning from 2012 to 2023, facilitates an analysis that encompasses the initial stages of negotiations, formulation, and implementation of the first NAP, and the subsequent years leading up to the present moment. This allowed us to possibly compare the periods before, during and after the launching of a NAP on WPS in Timor, thus ascertaining the patterns and shifts regarding the governments' approach through its different implementation phases. We primarily searched for the following keywords and concepts: woman; women; National Action Plan; Women, Peace and Security; Resolution 1325; security; and defence¹⁴. It is important to note, however, that the content analysis employed went beyond simple word frequency counts (Stemler, 2001). The context in which these words and concepts were employed, their meanings within the text, and the structure of the program regarding the choice of chapters and sections were also considered. The keywords searched were also chosen a priori, meaning before the analysis, as we were looking for specific terms, gaps and patterns that could contribute to answer the research question.

Another interesting data source to analyse and interpret, regarding the Timorese Government's efforts concerning the WPS Agenda and its subsequent budget allocation, were the state budget plans. However, unfortunately, we were not able to locate them.

Third, and finally, key data was also collected through online and written structured interviews with four Timorese nationals. Following a snowball sampling by searching and asking for key names, NGOs and entities, we conducted three structured interviews, with predetermined questions¹⁵ fundamentally posed the same way to all interviewees (McGrath et al., 2019). One interview was conducted online, with two participants, and the two other participants sent their written answers. The 8h time difference, between Portugal and Timor-Leste, and the difficulty to find a suitable schedule promoted the use of the

¹³ The different programs were retrieved from <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?cat=32&lang=en> in August 2023. The VII Timorese Government lasted 10 months, from September 2018 to June 2019. Despite our efforts, we were not able to locate its program. As the programs are originally documented in Portuguese, some excerpts were translated for the purpose of this analysis.

¹⁴ As the programs are in Portuguese, we searched for the following keywords: *mulher*; *mulheres*; *Plano de Ação Nacional*; *Mulheres, Paz e Segurança*; *Resolução 1325*; *segurança*; *e defesa*.

¹⁵ The interview's guidelines can be found on Annex A.

asynchronous email method, as termed by Rastislavova and Ratislav (2014). Although it has its disadvantages, the asynchronous method allows the participants to have more time to think and consider their responses, which then contributes to having a more careful communication (Rastislavova & Ratislav, 2014). As we intended to understand the interviewee's subjective perspective of the WPS agenda and its implementation in Timor, rather than a generalizable understanding of a larger group, we only included participants who would have insights and particular experience in the subject in question (McGrath et al., 2019).

It is essential to recognise that, although we gathered data and insights from four Timorese nationals, we reached out and contacted around six entities, from local Timorese NGOs to research centres, and nine other individuals, including researchers, professors, UN Women staff, and former members of the Timorese Government. Despite these efforts, the responses were limited. Following our first interview, we subsequently contacted the three other interviewees based on their recommendation.

We had the opportunity to speak with a Timorese UN Women consultant, who has worked closely with the Government on the recent developments regarding the second NAP - participant A; the director and the program manager of a Timorese local NGO, currently part of the working group on the Prevention Pillar for the development of the second NAP - participants B and C; and the person responsible, through the UN Women and the Ministry of Interior, with leading the development process of the 1325 NAP's second phase - participant D¹⁶. The four individuals have been, in different manners, involved with the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Timor-Leste and, more recently, with the drafting of the second NAP. Their selection followed Patton's concept of "information-rich cases" (1990, p.169) and each interviewee meant to represent a key actor and perspective in the development of a NAP: civil society and local NGOs, UN Women, and the Timorese Government.

To analyse the interviews' transcripts and written responses, the thematic analysis method was employed. Based on the six-phase approach to thematic analysis, explored by Braun and Clarke (2012) - familiarise with the data, generate initial codes, search for themes, review potential themes, define and name those themes, and produce a report - we made sense of shared meanings and experiences between the participants with the aim of determining to what extent the formulated proposed explanations answer the research question. While identifying themes, as a continuum of thematic analysis, two approaches can be applied: deductive or inductive (Braun & Clarke, 2012). However, as noted by Braun and Clarke (2012), although we might opt to follow a more deductive or a more inductive approach to the analysis, we often tend to use a combination of both. In this dissertation, we followed a hybrid approach which means that some themes rely on a preexisting framework, on the assumptions and meanings within the Timorese context (top-down approach), while other themes derived from the collected data (bottom-up approach) (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Particular attention was given to the potential risks associated with

¹⁶ This participant's answers were written in Portuguese. With the aim of analysing the data collected from all interviews using the MAXQDA software, the answers were carefully translated into English.

confirmation bias. To enhance the validity of the qualitative research, the thematic analysis was conducted with MAXQDA, a software program that allowed to interpret the data while identifying patterns around the concepts and events we aimed to analyse.

After transcribing and becoming aware of the interviewee's answers, and by following the six-phase guide provided by Braun and Clarke (2012), the following codes were considered: (1) The WPS Agenda in Timor-Leste; (2) Political Will; (3) International Funding and Support; (4) Ownership; and (5) Understanding of the WPS agenda. The third phase entailed the identification of themes. Following an inductive approach, three themes resulted from the "The WPS Agenda in Timor-Leste" code: Budget, Monitoring & Evaluation, Recent and current situation, and the Timorese NAP (2016-2020). While applying a deductive approach for the remaining codes - political will; international funding and support; ownership; and understanding of the WPS agenda -, the following themes were considered, respectively: Evidence of Political Will, and Lack of Political Will; Evidence of International Funding and Support, and Lack of International Funding and Support; Evidence of Ownership, and Lack of Ownership; and finally, Evidence of Understanding, and Lack of Understanding (of the WPS agenda).

Considering these three sources and in order to comprehend and interpret the intersections and patterns within the data, we made use of triangulation. In qualitative research, triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods, or sources of data, to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomena (Patton, 1999). In short, it is a research strategy that through the convergence of information from different sources allowed us to comprehensively make sense of the collected data (Carter et al., 2014). From the different types of triangulation identified in Carter et al. (2014) - method, investigator, theory, and data source triangulation - we followed a combination of both data source and method triangulation, within what was feasible for this research. Method triangulation involves the use of multiple methods for data collection on a single phenomenon and, on its turn, data source triangulation comprises the gathering of data from distinct groups or individuals with the aim of obtaining multiple perspectives on the same subject (Carter et al., 2014). This approach, by cross verifying the data, allowed to enhance the credibility of this research. We focused on the intersections, patterns and gaps identified throughout the review on the first NAP, the content analysis employed within the Timorese Government's programs, and the thematic analysis applied to the interviews, all considering the WPS agenda in Timor-Leste. With the results derived from the analysis, we intend to assess the extent of which the lack of political will, of international funding and support, of ownership, and of understanding the WPS agenda are possible explanations for this gap concerning the development and launch of a second plan. In the following and final chapter, the outcomes of the analysis and methodologies employed, previously explored in this section, will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 3

Findings

This chapter is organised into three sections. The initial outlines the development and implementation of the Timorese NAP (2016 - 2020). Then, we focus on the practical application of the methods referred in the previous chapter: a keyword search applied to analyse the content of four Timorese Government Programs, and the thematic analysis carried out in MAXQDA to analyse the data collected through the interviews.

3.1. The Timorese National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020)

This first section focuses on the development and implementation of the first Timorese NAP on WPS, based on both the literature review and the insights gathered from the conducted interviews.

As we have seen previously in this study, it is undeniable the support the UN has given to Timor-Leste, contributing to where the country is today. After 24 years of Indonesian occupation, in 1999, it was indeed the popular consultation supported by UNAMET resulting in an overwhelming majority of votes in favour of the territory's independence (Freire, 2017), that opened the door for the country's formal independence three years later. Today, as Timor is an active and important actor on the regional level¹⁷, and has demonstrated the importance of institution-building and post-conflict peacebuilding (S/RES/2037, 2012), the country is still facing some challenges. The UN's presence, namely through UN Women and UNDP, is still felt and still needed.

By promoting a more gender-sensitive approach to post-conflict and peace negotiations, UN Women is the primary lead organisation with the mandate to work with Member States to advance gender equality by developing guidelines, policy analysis and reviews on the development of NAPs (Swaine, 2017). This training and support, addressed to national governments and civil society, is a key motor of the national implementation of Resolution 1325, that not only acknowledged women's key contributions, as called upon Member States and charged them as the responsible actors to act on the full implementation of the WPS agenda (Hood, 2016; S/RES/2242, 2015).

As described in the Global Study (2015), the peacebuilding process is an opportunity to transform society, to work towards gender equality and to address the challenges women face. When the Government of Timor-Leste formally started to develop its first national plan on WPS, in 2013 and with the support of the UN Women (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016), the country was still undergoing significant transitions from conflict. Transitions that, indeed, fit into the definition of PCR, to which the

¹⁷ See, for example, that Timor-Leste was one of the founders of the g7+ group, which brings together countries affected by or recovering from conflict and fragility in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean. More info here: www.g7plus.org.

WPS resolutions clearly apply - although the term ‘post-conflict reconstruction’ appears surprisingly infrequently in the WPS resolutions (McLeod, 2018).

Following the international and regional efforts to implement the WPS on a national level, the Timorese NAP was launched in 2016, to be implemented until 2020, by the VI Constitutional Government. It is interesting to note, however, how even before 2016 the Timorese Government, its institutions and civil society were already committed to the WPS objectives, mostly in informal ways and, particularly in the local communities, without even knowing the agenda. As Aisling Swaine (2009) recalls, several Timorese (women’s) organisations were already engaged in and working towards the WPS agenda’s objectives although they were not yet labelled as such. Back in 2008, for example, Timor-Leste took part in a cross-learning process, with Liberia and Northern Ireland, about sharing the experiences of women in conflict-affected areas (Swaine, 2009). In 2012, the Timorese efforts to promote the objectives of Resolution 1325 were mentioned in the UNSCR 2037 (2012), which encouraged Timor-Leste to strengthen peacebuilding on and with women and youth, and requested the (last) UN mission in the country, UNMIT, to take into consideration the WPS’s resolutions throughout its mandate.

The different NAPs on WPS tend to focus, in varying degrees, on the four pillars established under Resolution 1325: prevention, participation, protection, and peacebuilding (Hamilton et al., 2020), and the Timorese NAP (2016 - 2020) was no exception. Within those four pillars, the Timorese NAP included the main outputs, with specific activities associated, the respective performance indicators to assess the achievement of each output, and its implementation plan throughout the 5-year period. For each activity, a specific government actor was designated as owning the primary responsibility for organising and transposing the proposed activities from the plan to reality, in other words, for implementing it. However, besides this brief assignment, and although a plan’s end note refers that the relevant government entities, CSOs, and development partners were to be identified as responsible for implementing each output (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016), we were not able to locate any other official document or report designating specific actors to each proposed activity. It was possible, nevertheless, to gather some data in the interviews. According to participant D, “the relevant ministries integrated the NAP 1325 activities within their annual action plan”¹⁸ (personal communication, October 2, 2023). Participants A, B and C, on their turn, denoted that each Ministry was responsible for one or more of the NAP’s pillars and that some local NGOs were also assigned to each pillar, in line with the organisations’ mission and purpose (personal communication, September 3, 2023; personal communication, September 7, 2023). These insights might indicate that each Ministry, some CSOs and NGOs, were assigned to a set of specific activities and outputs, under each of the four pillars, although in the plan this is not clear.

¹⁸ In the original: *Os ministérios relevantes integraram as actividades do NAP 1325 no seu Plano de Ação Anual.*

Both the processes of developing and implementing this first Timorese plan received positive comments and appraisal. First, according to Hamilton et al. (2020), while most NAPs developed by fragile and conflict-affected countries were usually led by national machineries supporting women's rights¹⁹, the Timorese NAP is a positive exception as it was supported in and by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). In fact, as declared in the Timorese NAP, the success of the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Timor-Leste would depend on the political commitment and effective leadership of the Timorese Government in a structure of shared responsibility between different ministries and governmental authorities. The MoI would be responsible for the plan's overall leadership and implementation (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016). This cross-departmental approach is positive, as it recognises that the agenda's implementation requires expertise from, and implementation by, all the different government actors, and promotes political support and awareness across the government. However, it might also lead to some challenges regarding the commitment to the process, which tends to be merely political, thus affecting the overall ownership over the plan (Swaine, 2009; Hamilton et al., 2020).

The full implementation of the WPS resolutions is a task that implies multiple actors and stakeholders, but the Member States remain the most influential in assuring that the commitments of the agenda are integrated domestically through plans, policies, and laws (Coomaraswamy, 2015). Notwithstanding national governments taking the leading role, civil society is expected to have a key supporting role. This leads us to the second optimistic dimension of the Timorese plan: the inclusionary aspect of the design process. In fact, from national consultations with CSOs and national NGOs, to the collaboration between civil society and the Timorese Government in awareness-raising and advocacy activities, Timor is a reference in what concerns an inclusive drafting process. Today, as we recognise that peace is something far more than the absence of violence, research shows how peace is only sustainable if peacemaking is inclusive (Coomaraswamy, 2015). Therefore, the inclusion of civil society, women, girls, and local communities, in the drafting and implementation of a 1325 action plan - to which participation is a central pillar -, is key for its impact (Hamilton et al., 2020). Moreover, this inclusion of voices from civil society has an additional benefit: localisation (Hamilton et al., 2020). By contextualising the plan to a specific socio-political environment, its development is based on the local experiences and knowledge.

Effectively, the first Timorese NAP clearly expresses that a wide range of consultations reaching 473 participants (243 women and 230 men) were made during its drafting process (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016). We were not able to find any official information regarding these consultations, which would have been enriching to this analysis. However, the interviewees were able to give us some insights on the drafting process. Participant D was directly involved in the drafting process of the first NAP and confirmed that different consultations were made by the government, first on a national level

¹⁹ National Women's Machineries typically serve as central coordinating units for women's affairs within national governments and promote the integration of gender equality measures across national policies and programmes. Retrieved in September 2023 (asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/national-machineries).

and then continuing through the municipalities, particularly in Dili, Ermera and Baucau²⁰ (personal communication, October 2, 2023).

In contrast to these positive aspects, there are also some downsides appointed to the Timorese NAP, some of them not necessarily being of the Timorese Government's responsibility. As Basini and Ryan (2016) critically stated, Resolution 1325 reflects the idea of a turn into "local ownership", in which Member States 'tailor' a plan according to their domestic reality. However, the very concept and structure of NAPs, in which the ownership is transferred from the international to the domestic, can be particularly challenging to post-conflict states, such as Timor-Leste. That is why Basini and Ryan (2016) argue that NAPs on WPS are ineffective in creating local ownership as they are driven by a bureaucratic approach to peacebuilding. According to participant A, a UN Women consultant, the development of the NAP first phase saw the commitment from the Timorese Government and an explicit collaboration between "the government to push for the implementation (...) and the advocacy support from the CSOs" (personal communication, September 3, 2023). However, the participant continues, what needed to be improved was the government's commitment regarding the budget in order to "avoid taking out the budget from the initial budget allocation to the NAP 1325" that would then be applied in other priorities and operations (Participant A, personal communication, September 3, 2023). While in this transfer to the national level, and the local ownership, Member States are supposed to have the primary role in implementing Resolution 1325, they often have limited capacity, limited resources, and limited political will (Basini & Ryan, 2016). This transfer of budget that was initially allocated to implementing Resolution 1325, as participant A refers, might have been a response of the government to its limited capacity and resources.

Another downside, and although according to some scholars the level of monitoring and evaluation specification of the Timorese NAP is positive (Hamilton et al., 2020), Peace Women's database (n.d.-b) shows that the Timorese plan has no clear strategy for M&E and there is also no concrete budget specification, either about the funds or where those would be allocated. This assessment of the plan's implementation, activities met and goals yet to be achieved is a key component of Resolution 1325's implementation. Regarding the M&E reports, although once again we were not able to locate them, participant D reinforced that the Timorese Government had written, for two times, "a report on the implementation of NAP 1325 to the UN Secretary-General"²¹ (personal communication, October 2, 2023). This might indicate that there were indeed M&E reports, and most likely other reports on further matters within the agenda, about which we had no knowledge or access to during this research.

²⁰ In the original: *Comecei a envolver-me na fase de consultação nacional (...) em 2014, e continuei com consultas nos municípios (...) de Dili, Ermera e Baucau.*

²¹ In the original: *(...) um relatório sobre a implementação do Plano Nacional de Ação 1325 ao Secretário-Geral da ONU.*

According to the UN Women - Asia & Pacific (n.d.a), in 2021, the Timorese Government initiated the development of a second phase of the NAP, with support from the UN Women, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This second phase was supposed to be launched and implemented for the period 2022 - 2025 but this objective was not achieved. After all, and according to the four interview participants that confirmed this information, the Timorese Government is currently developing a second NAP on WPS that is expected to be launched before the end of 2023 (Participant A, personal communication, September 3, 2023; Participants B&C, personal communication, September 7, 2023; Participant D, personal communication, October 2, 2023).

3.2. The V, VI, VIII and IX Timorese Government Programs

After importantly exploring the Timorese NAP launched in 2016, we will now delve into the interpretation and analysis of four Timorese Government Programs. When analysing these documents, we searched for the presence or absence of the specific keywords and interpreted the context within which they were used. As each NAP is naturally connected with, and dependent upon, the national government's foreign and domestic policy priorities (Swaine, 2009), we selected this data source considering that these are the documents that present each government's defined priorities for a specific legislative period. The aim was to assess whether the recent and present Timorese Governments, from 2012 to today, have been demonstrating signs, clearly expressed, of political will, of ownership, and of understanding towards the WPS agenda and its implementation in Timor. By analysing the programs, we were able to ascertain the following:

The V Timorese Government's Program, defined for the legislative period of 2012-2017 lacks explicit mention to a National Action Plan on WPS. The words "woman" and "women" are referred to 17 times but are predominantly related to matters of professional training and social inclusion. Within its content, there is no reference to the WPS agenda nor to Resolution 1325. Concerning the section dedicated to gender equality, the program merely acknowledges the Timorese Government's responsibility in guiding and reinforcing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the CEDAW, in collaboration with NGOs, civil society and local communities (Timorese Government, 2012).

In relation to the VI Government' Program, formulated for the legislative period from 2015 to 2017 and following a government's restructure, it presents a comparable pattern to the previous. The terms "woman" and "women" are referred to 16 times but, again, pertaining to themes concerning professional training and social inclusion. Although it was precisely during this legislative period that the first NAP was launched, the program fails to make any explicit reference to NAPs on WPS or to Resolution 1325. Instead, the Timorese Government reinforces its commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the CEDAW.

Within the section dedicated to gender equality, the program addresses issues such as domestic violence and gender-based violence and highlights the adoption of an integrated approach to gender. This mention of an integrated approach to gender, in particular, possibly indicates an inclination towards mainstreaming gender across different spheres. In essence, this might suggest an intention to develop and implement a NAP on WPS. As the plan is not explicit, these are only interpretations. However, as we now know, the Timorese Government indeed launched its first NAP on WPS a few months after developing this program. Finally, regarding the matters of defence and security, the program echoes a similar sentence of the previous one, underscoring women's role in national defence (Timorese Government, 2015).

The VIII Timorese Government Programme, defined for the legislative period 2018-2023, marks a noteworthy shift. The frequency of the words “woman” and “women” significantly increases to 29 times within the document. For the first time, a clear and explicit acknowledgement of the NAP on WPS is made. In a section dedicated to the Timorese women, the document emphasises the government's commitment to “Continue to implement the NAP on WPS” (Timorese Government, 2018, p. 34). It is noteworthy to mention that, at the time this program was developed in 2018, the Timorese NAP had already been launched and its implementation was underway. However, the program does not delve into details regarding the plan, its ongoing implementation, or the government's post-implementation intentions, after 2020. No explicit mention is made of Resolution 1325. Both the defence and security sections underline the promotion of women's participation and the intention to enhance opportunities for women in these spheres.

As the latest development, the IX Timorese Government was elected in July 2023 and is expected to govern until 2028. In its program, the words “woman” and “women” are referred to 28 times, mirroring the pattern observed in the previous program. Similar to the previous, this document also dedicates an entire section to women's issues. Within this section, the government reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the Timorese NAP on WPS (Timorese Government, 2023). However, resembling the VIII Government's program, this commitment is expressed succinctly - in a single sentence - with no further details or elaboration. Given the recent launch of this program, in July 2023, this reaffirmation of the government's commitment to the WPS agenda raises the possibility - then confirmed by the interview's data - of a development and launch of a second Timorese NAP in the near future. Additionally, the defence and security sections, equal to the aspirations outlined in the previous program, enhance women's participation and the fostering of opportunities for them.

Overall, there is an evident and significant shift over the years. From the absence of any mention of the WPS agenda to a clear statement of the government's commitment towards its implementation through a NAP. Moreover, dedicated sections addressing women's issues such as gender equality, women's access to decision-making structures, and support for women's organisations, have been incorporated over the years. Nevertheless, the Timorese Government does not elaborate beyond simply indicating the intention to implement the Timorese NAP.

3.3. The Interviews Analysis and Findings

This section presents the findings derived from the hybrid thematic analysis conducted on the interview transcripts and written answers. This analysis and interpretation of the collected data aimed to find evidence for assessing the degree to which the proposed explanations answer this study's research question. The results will be presented organised by code following the scheme that derived from the analysis conducted with MAXQDA: political will, international funding and support, ownership, the understanding of the WPS agenda, and the WPS agenda in Timor-Leste²².

3.3.1. Political Will

When analysing the level of the government's political will, based on the data gathered from the interviews, we were looking for evidence that would confirm or contradict if the Timorese Government, the ministries, and other governmental entities have or have not showed interest and will in developing a second NAP, in particular since 2020.

On the one hand, there is some evidence of political will. According to participant A, a UN Women's consultant, "(...) there has been a commitment of the Timorese Government related to the NAP 1325 and the WPS agenda". The same participant added that the Timorese Government has been collaborating and advocating with CSOs to push for the implementation of WPS in the country (participant A, personal communication, September 3, 2023). Other participants corroborated this, namely by stating that the government has been committed to the implementation of a second phase of the NAP (Participant D, personal communication, October 2, 2023). Participants B and C, two members of a local NGO, mentioned that the government has been involved in the agenda's implementation, providing training and disseminating information to the local authorities regarding Resolution 1325 and the NAP (personal communication, September 7, 2023).

However, this evidence indicating the Timorese Government's political will towards the WPS agenda is based on recent developments. When specifically asked about whether there was a lack of political will and if that could be considered a barrier to moving the WPS agenda forward, all participants ascertained positively. According to participant D, the "implementing actors", a term employed to mention the government and other implementing entities, have claimed that the both the COVID-19 pandemic and the domestic political instability had "a great negative impact within the implementation of the NAP 1325"²³, significantly hindered its implementation. These circumstances forced the previous government (VIII) to adjust its priorities in order to address more urgent issues and crises. Participants B and C reinforced this idea, highlighting the political tensions between the VII Government and its opposition.

²² See Annex C.

²³ In the original: *atores implementadores* and *tiveram um grande impacto negativo na implementação do PAN 1325*.

Still regarding the government's commitment, participant D pointed out a critical aspect: the Timorese Government, more often than not, has considered unnecessary to allocate budget to the implementation of Resolution 1325, as it was not perceived as a priority or a necessity to the country. Consequently, participants B and C, as part of civil society but also as members of a local NGO, expressed how the "Timorese Government still has not made the implementation of the WPS agenda a priority (personal communication, September 7, 2023).

These insights brought important and interesting elements to our analysis, which were not considered when the possible causes for the implementation gap were defined, specifically the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.2. International Funding and Support

Regarding international funding and support, we focused on assessing whether the UN Women, IOs and foreign governments and entities have or have not been supporting and funding a possible development of a second NAP in Timor.

As mentioned by participant A, there has been limited funding and support from some foreign governments through the UN Women, particularly from Australia and Sweden, aim to "support the development of the NAP 1325" (personal communication, September 3, 2023). The same was reiterated by participant D, who underscored that despite some challenges, the UN Women has continuously supported the Timorese Government and remains committed to assisting the development and implementation of a second plan, namely through capacity-building activities and financial aid (personal communication, October 2, 2023). It would have been interesting to explore the budget allocation as well as the main donors and funding designated to the WPS agenda in Timor, but we were unable to locate any reports with this information.

In light of recent events, however, the support and funding from international actors have been redirected towards responding to emergency situations rather than to the WPS agenda. Participant A highlighted this, denoting that "there has been less funding" and expressing hope for an increased "interest from other donors" (personal communication, September 3, 2023). Indeed, having its own resources "is an important pillar (...) to the (NAP's) development process" (Participant A, personal communication, September 3, 2023). In their turn, participants B and C underscored these emergency circumstances and noted that "the international agencies and donors have been more focused on the health care combat", in a clear reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the "humanitarian emergency" that was caused by the severe flooding that affected the country in April 2021. Despite this, these participants also mentioned that even when the UN Women and other international donors financially support the implementation of the WPS agenda, the resources are not consistently directed towards its implementation, in reality (Participants B&C, personal communication, September 7, 2023).

3.3.3. Ownership

Concerning the ownership, while analysing the data, we sought evidence that would ascertain whether the Timorese Government, its ministries, and other governmental entities have or have not demonstrated authority and a sense of responsibility for the continuous implementation of the agenda through a second NAP.

More recently, as per the information shared by participant A, the Minister of Interior - which we know to be the primary responsible for coordinating and implementing Resolution 1325 - has taken some measures within relevant government institutions and has been lobbying the National Parliament towards the NAP on WPS. Nevertheless, considering the thematic analysis and its coded segments, it became clear that ‘lack of ownership’, from the four proposed explanations, was the one with the highest number of associated segments.

Indeed, the participants unanimously agreed that the lack of ownership has been an impediment to the effective implementation of the WPS agenda in Timor. The empirical data gathered highlighted a key factor contributing to this: the changes in the government structure coupled with the continuous lack of accountability demonstrated by the government members. According to participant A, these changes in the government have not only impacted the sense of responsibility but also delayed the decision regarding the timing of a second plan’s launch (personal communication, September 3, 2023). Participant D validated this perspective and noted that “the changes in the government’s configuration also happened within the implementing structure”²⁴, meaning the actors and working groups involved in the NAP’s development. As a result, there has been an insufficient transmission of information from former to new government members, leading to the loss of key insights and knowledge (personal communication, October 2, 2023).

The same point was shared by the NGO members, participants B and C. Both mentioned that while “the (Timorese) Government should be taking the main responsibility for this (implementation of Resolution 1325)”, the information regarding the WPS agenda tends to be neglected during the transitional periods between governments (personal communication, September 7, 2023). Consequently, there is a lack of “follow-up” and accountability regarding the NAP, “that is part of a Resolution that the Timorese Government already ratified” (Participants B&C, personal communication, September 7, 2023).

Another critical concern is the Timorese Government’s tendency to perceive Resolution 1325, and its NAPs, as a matter and a “product of the UN”, which has led the government to rely heavily on the “support from the UN Women” to fully implement Resolution 1325 (Participants B&C, personal communication, September 7, 2023; participant D, personal communication, October 2, 2023). This might then explain the “lack of resources” and the government's failure to allocate it as “a real priority

²⁴ In the original: *As mudanças que ocorreram na estrutura governamental também ocorreram na estrutura implementadora.*

on the state budget”, as emphasised by participants B and C. Interestingly, this last insight is connected to the element we will explore next, the (possible) lack of understanding of the WPS agenda.

3.3.4. Understanding of the WPS agenda

Finally, regarding the understanding of the WPS agenda, we analysed the data searching for evidence that would ascertain whether in recent years the Timorese Government, ministries, and governmental entities have, or have not, demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the agenda and of its implementation through NAPs.

Similar to our findings regarding the political will, which were grounded in recent developments, some of the data gathered concerning the understanding of the WPS agenda is more focused on recent developments. Moreover, besides the Timorese Government being our primary focus of analysis, the participants made reference to the understanding of the agenda by the local communities. Although the local understanding of the WPS agenda is key to its implementation (Hamilton et al., 2020) and, we argue, is connected with the government’s understanding of it, this study focuses on the Timorese Government and its approach towards a possible launch of a second NAP. Consequently, the data collected on the local understanding of the agenda will not be included here.

Concerning the lack of understanding, different perspectives were explored. Interestingly, various segments coded regarding a lack of full comprehension of the agenda have also been coded regarding the lack of ownership. Indeed, the governmental changes previously mentioned have had a significant impact on a government’s understanding of the agenda and of the NAP’s implementation. The practice of “sharing information with all ministries in a new government” is yet uncommon (Participants B&C, personal communication, September 7, 2023). Therefore, if the members of the Timorese Government lack access to key information regarding Resolution 1325 and the NAPs, as participant D emphasised, it is unlikely that they fully acknowledge the agenda and its objectives. Indeed, the perception is that “many of the government people and leaders are not really aware of NAP 1325” (Participant A, personal communication, September 3, 2023).

Introducing another perspective, the Timorese NGO members also noted how the WPS, being “an international agenda”, poses challenges to the local context. The information is primarily “disseminated by the UN agencies, namely UN Women”, while engaging with civil society and NGOs, rather than being facilitated to and by the government (personal communication, September 7, 2023).

3.3.5. Brief mention to the recent developments and current situation

Although our analysis focuses on the factors hindering the government from moving the WPS agenda forward, particularly since 2020, we have also collected data regarding some recent developments on this matter. We consider that bringing these to the analysis contributes to highlighting important insights.

All participants affirmed that the Timorese Government is actively developing and will soon launch a second plan on WPS. As participant D referred, relevant activities have been integrated into the different ministries' annual plans, with the necessary budget allocated, and the newly elected IX Government (in July 2023) is adjusting its priorities according to the plan (personal communication, October 2, 2023). The drafting process commenced with a “consultation at the local to the national level” of which the information gathered was then submitted to the government and civil society representatives, as indicated by participant A, who has been involved in this process (personal communication, September 3, 2023). Indeed, this positively contributes to a “highly participative and inclusive” drafting process that has “given the opportunity to the relevant ministries and civil society to reflect on the (NAP’s) requirements, thus assuring a sense of belonging”²⁵, as described by participant D (personal communication, October 2, 2023). The same was underscored by participants B and C, who are currently part of the working team aiming to “share thoughts and insights on the drafting of the NAP (...) while receiving feedback and creating awareness concerning the NAP” (personal communication, September 7, 2023). Indeed, both emphasised the role and involvement of their NGO and other local NGOs in collaborating with the Minister of Interior for the development of a second plan.

To conclude, a key issue was pointed out by participant A, who indicated that the continuous implementation of the WPS agenda is an essential “requirement to Timor-Leste’s accession to ASEAN” (personal communication, September 3, 2023), of which the IX government intend to integrate, as a full member, during its legislature (Government of Timor-Leste, 2023). In fact, Timor-Leste is “the only nation in Southeast Asia that is not a member of ASEAN”, although it officially applied for the organisation’s membership back in 2011 (Government of Timor-Leste, 2011, p. 172). This intention and priority might justify the government’s recent commitment to the WPS agenda and the ongoing development of a second plan.

²⁵ In the original: (...) *um processo muito participativo e inclusivo porque proporciona uma oportunidade para os ministérios relevantes e a sociedade civil (...) para reflectir nas exigências (...) e garantir um sentido de pertença ao NAP 1325.*

CHAPTER 4

Discussion of Results

Following the findings presented in the previous chapter, we now intend to focus on the discussion and interpretation of the results considering the method and data source triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). We will then answer the research question: *What has hindered the Timorese Government from launching a second NAP?* and make some conclusions regarding the possible explanations we explored.

The empirical findings uncovered important insights that were not considered in the beginning of this research, when the four possible causes for the implementation gap were defined: lack of political will, of international funding and support, of ownership, and of understanding of the WPS agenda. On the one hand, the COVID-19 pandemic, which implied the resources and aid, namely from international sources, to be allocated towards this health crisis. On the other hand, the 2021 severe floods that affected the country turned into a humanitarian emergency. It is critical to consider these two events and emphasise how both are actually part of the portfolio and duties of the Ministry of Interior, which as we saw during this study, is the primary responsible within the Timorese Government for implementing and supervising the NAP on WPS. In light of these challenges, one can expect that, to some extent, the government's understanding, will, and ownership towards a WPS action plan, besides the consequent allocation of funds and support, have been dismissed. However, this might not be enough to fully justify a launch of a second plan. While considering these elements, they do not contradict the formulated potential causes we intended to analyse in the first place. On the contrary, as they bring an interesting layer to an already mutually connected set of explanations.

In light of the findings just explored in chapter 3, we will discuss the data gathered from the different studies and authors explored previously, the NAP's analysis, the government programs and the data gathered during the interviews.

Considering the four proposed causes, it was clear how some have had more weight than others, concerning what has hindered the Timorese Government. All four, under different contexts and for different reasons, could be appointed as barriers that have been impeding the advancement of the WPS agenda. Indeed, we did not find contradictory data that would refute or challenge their validity. The data confirmed how the formulated explanations are interrelated, mutually influencing and being influenced by others. None has presented itself as an isolated challenge.

Nonetheless, the lack of international funding and support seems to be the one less supported by the collected data. In other words, the analysis suggests that the insufficient funding and support was a barrier only to a small extent, as more significant than its absence, was the necessity to redirect them towards other purposes.

Conversely, the collected data contributed to a clearer interpretation that the lack of ownership combined with a generalised lack of understanding, have been the most prominent barriers to advancing the WPS agenda in Timor-Leste. Not only these had the most segments associated to, from the thematic analysis, as they are significantly interconnected. This is clear from the perspective that if the government lacks awareness and does not acknowledge the WPS agenda, its members will unlikely have a sense of belonging towards a NAP that aims to implement it, as Basini and Ryan (2016) had analysed before.

4.1. The Lack of International Funding and Support

The empirical data gathered shows how, although there have been some challenges regarding the need for resources, international support and allocation of funds, there is not enough evidence to validate this cause by itself. Although contributing, when compared to the other three potential barriers, this cause seems to have had the least impact in the implementation hiatus in Timor.

Despite the funds that have been allocated to the emergency situations - the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 floods -, based on the interviews conducted, different foreign governments and the UN Women have continuously supported the Timorese Government and the local communities, not only through financial aid but also through trainings and capacity-building initiatives dedicated to the national government, the CSOs and the NGOs that are in charge of implementing the NAP on the ground. As we have seen earlier in this study, the UN Women's mandate focuses on policy advice, advocacy and in providing technical and financial support (UN Women, 2022). However, apart from the key financial support and training dedicated to the Member States' implementing actors, the UN Women does not have – or should have – the responsibility to implement the agenda on a national level.

More than having or not having enough funds or international support, the challenge seems to be their adequacy and the creation of mechanisms to allocate them within the state budget. Indeed, this confirms what Coomaraswamy (2015) identified as the most constant obstacle to the WPS agenda's implementation. If the Timorese Government does not perceive the WPS agenda as a priority, including in the budget allocation, the barrier is not the lack of funds but rather the lack of commitment potentially combined with the country's limited resources and capacity (Basini & Ryan, 2016). As two participants noted, the contributions from the UN Women and other international donors have not always been consistently directed towards what they aimed in the first place: the implementation of the WPS agenda (Participants B&C, personal communication, September 3).

4.2. The Lack of Political Will

Regarding the lack of political will, the results allow us to validate it as a considerable barrier to the development of a second NAP. However, it is important to note how this has been changing lately. The IX Timorese Government is more committed and has decided to move the WPS agenda forward. The interviewees, participants A, B, C and D, confirmed that a second plan will be launched in the near future and allowed us to access some information regarding its drafting process currently undergoing (personal communication, September 7, 2023; personal communication, September 3, 2023; personal communication, October 2, 2023).

As the WPS agenda is non-binding, remaining a voluntary endeavour subject to changing political interests (Swaine, 2017), the development and implementation of national plans are always dependent upon the national government and its willingness and commitment to the agenda. The data analysed from both the Government Programs and the conducted interviews makes it possible to ascertain that the recent Timorese Governments have not been showing enough willingness to move the agenda forward. Nevertheless, this lack might be justified by the recent emergency health and natural events on which the government had to focus its attention, resources and priorities. This might both contribute and be a symptom of what Miller et al. (2014) explored of NAPs being seen as an end in themselves. Indeed, this is aligned with the Timorese context. As a young democracy intending to gain its space in the international system and demonstrate its modern status (Swaine, 2017), the development of the first NAP (2016 - 2020) was an important element in shaping the country's external perception. A similar circumstance might be happening in the present, especially with the Timorese aim of officially accessing ASEAN.

Interestingly, more than a generalised lack of willingness towards the implementation of Resolution 1325, the results present a shift in the government's priorities. We do note that the recent emergency circumstances have had a significant impact in the government's will and commitment to the WPS agenda, as underscored by all interviewees (personal communication, September 7, 2023; personal communication, September 3, 2023; personal communication, October 2, 2023). As previously mentioned, although these elements were not considered in the first place, the recent events and political instability in Timor have seriously impacted the government's will towards the WPS agenda. A different conclusion would have been drawn if this dissertation had focused solely on the last few months. With the IX Timorese Government recent efforts, it would not be possible to consider the lack of will a barrier to the implementation of Resolution 1325.

4.3. The Lack of Ownership and of Understanding of the WPS Agenda

Although different, as we pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, these two possible explanations are linked. The findings show how both might justify, to a considerable extent, why the Timorese Government hasn't yet launched a second plan.

Indeed, Resolution 1325, and the resolutions that followed, incorporate an international agenda of policies and practices to be implemented on the domestic level but this does not necessarily create a sense of belonging within the Timorese Government. As Member States bear the primary role in implementing the WPS agenda on a national level, an insufficient authority over the plan and a lack of a comprehensive understanding of its purpose and goals, from the government, significantly impacts the development of a NAP on WPS.

On the one hand, as previously analysed, the Timorese NAP (2016 - 2020) received appraisal for being supported in and by the MoI rather than by national machineries (Hamilton et al., 2020). As declared on the plan itself, its implementation would depend on a structure of shared responsibility between ministries and governmental authorities (Government of Timor-Leste, 2016). However, this cross-departmental approach, although positive to some extent, coupled with the data we collected and analysed, led us to find some evidence on the challenges regarding the commitment to a continuous implementation of the WPS agenda, beyond the defined period.

On the other hand, the concept and structure of NAPs, in promoting a transfer of ownership from the international to the domestic (Basini & Ryan, 2016), seem to have been particularly challenging to Timor-Leste, a post-conflict country located in the Asia-Pacific region - important elements to consider. Plus, the lack of understanding tends to lead to an absence of a sense of belonging (Basini & Ryan, 2016), something that was possible to assess within this research. Based on the findings from the interviews' analysis, all interviewees highlighted how the political instability and the changes within the government, and consequently within the implementing actors, have contributed significantly to a lack of ownership (personal communication, September 7, 2023; personal communication, September 3, 2023; personal communication, October 2, 2023). Additionally, and due to these adjustments within the government structure, the details and progress made concerning the WPS agenda were often overlooked and neglected through the transitional periods (Participants B&C, personal communication, September 7, 2023). As some Timorese leaders and decision-makers still tend to perceive the WPS agenda as an international agenda belonging to the UN, they assume its implementation to be a UN's responsibility. The inadequate and insufficient information transfer between former and incoming members, and the perception of the WPS agenda as responsibility of the UN, rather than of the Member States, largely weighted within the Timorese context. There is no sense of belonging, therefore, no ownership or willingness to prioritise an implementation at the national level.

As Coomaraswamy (2015) highlighted in her study, there is a need to understand the local realities rather than just the universal practices. Although the author was referring to the local communities, we build from this to refer to the Timorese Government, leaders, and decision-makers. It is essential not to

forget we are analysing a country's adherence to an agenda that was established prior to its own independence. Moreover, as demonstrated earlier in this research, the Asia - Pacific region often presents resistance towards Westernised norms (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017) and has offered unique challenges to the WPS implementation. Although Resolution 1325 is tailored by Member States to suit a specific local context, when implemented domestically, it is still perceived as part of a broader international agenda originating from the Western world. A standard template (Lee-Koo & Trojanowska, 2017) that, sometimes, not even the members of the government fully understand.

Within this discussion concerning the results of this research, we conclude by briefly referring to the findings regarding the recent developments of the WPS agenda in Timor. During the course of this research, we discovered that the Timorese Government is currently drafting a second NAP on WPS that will soon be voted on in the Council of Ministers. This upcoming action plan is intended to be launched and implemented within 2023 and 2027. Moreover, as mentioned by participant A, Timor-Leste has the intention to join ASEAN (personal communication, September 3, 2023). As the new government (IX) is committed to finally conclude the country's accession to this pivotal regional organisation, this intention might have performed as an accelerating factor for the current situation.

To summarise, considering the data gathered and analysed, the different sources and methods applied, we are able to answer the research question. This exploratory study allowed us to conclude that the lack of political will, of ownership and of the WPS agenda's full understanding have all contributed to a significant extent to hinder the Timorese Government from continuing the implementation of Resolution 1325. Therefore, hindering the advancement of the agenda within Timor-Leste. The lack of international funding and support, although an important component, does not present as a barrier in itself. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 floods, and the political instability and changes within the government structure have played key roles amid this context – not contradicting or contraposing the potential causes we defined, but on the contrary, bringing unique and essential layers to this research.

Final Remarks

This dissertation analyses the latest developments and current situation in Timor-Leste concerning the WPS agenda. More specifically, it addressed the question *What has hindered the Timorese Government from launching a second NAP on WPS?*, in particular, following the first implementation within the period 2016 - 2020. To narrow the analysis and answer the research question, we formulated four possible explanations that performed as barriers to the implementation: lack of political will, lack of international funding and support, lack of ownership, and lack of understanding of the WPS agenda.

From a set of qualitative methods, the primary and secondary data sources were explored and interpreted. An exploratory study was conducted considering the Timorese context, and its first NAP on WPS, the content analysis and keyword search applied to the V, VI, VIII and IX Timorese Government Programs, and the thematic analysis employed to interpret the testimonials of four Timorese Nationals that have been directly involved in the development and implementation of the WPS agenda in Timor. These, combined with the data from other studies and authors allowed us to cross-analyse the various insights under the method and data source triangulation approach.

The assessment of the potential causes' extent was made based on methods applied, its findings and its interpretation. Drawing from the conclusions of the empirical results, we argue how there has indeed been a lack of political will, of ownership, and of the agenda's full understanding on the part of the Timorese Government, thus impeding the advancement of the WPS agenda in Timor-Leste. Conversely, more than the need for international support and funding, the Timorese Government needs instead to adequately allocate the resources and to consider the WPS agenda, and its implementation through a NAP, a clear priority under the state budget.

This research has contributed to better understanding the context of a national adherence to an international framework, considering the case of Timor-Leste. The WPS agenda importantly aims to make women visible at all levels of decision-making, namely on the peace and security fields, from which women have constantly been disregarded. The current status regarding the ongoing development of a second NAP offers an interesting perspective to this research and denotes that the WPS Agenda importantly continues to evolve. Timor-Leste, as a small Asia-Pacific post-conflict country and a young democracy, brings an even more interesting component to this analysis. Despite its challenges, Timor has made significant progress and the domestic implementation of such a key and landmark international Agenda is another sign of it. It has been inspiring and captivating to see how the Timorese society gets so involved and how the grassroots movements, the NGOs, the CSOs and local communities are a significant motor of the WPS agenda within the country. Even if not in a formal manner nor labelled as such.

An interesting topic for future research would be to explore which factors have changed and which remain the same within the Timorese Government and the Timorese context, by comparing the 2016 and the 2023 NAP's development.

Before concluding this chapter, it is crucial, however, to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, we encountered a certain scarcity of up-to-date information regarding the activities, decisions, and recent initiatives of the Timorese Government, particularly concerning the implementation of the WPS agenda. Some information was also written in Tetum, the official language of Timor-Leste, without translation into Portuguese or English. Therefore, locating essential data proved to be a challenge. In this sense, the incorporation of the four collected testimonials proved invaluable in substantiating the empirical evidence. Second, while being aware of confirmation bias, this research was interpreted according to the researcher's lens which means that another researcher could have arrived at a different conclusion, even with the same data and applying the same methods. And finally, despite gradual improvements, the availability of studies and academic research focused on the WPS Agenda in the Asia - Pacific region, particularly in Timor-Leste, remains limited. This means that comprehensive analysis of the implementation of Resolution 1325 within the region and the country are not abundant. However, this evolved into a significant and interesting window of opportunity for selecting this topic. Despite the constraints in the data and empirical material, this study brings an important perspective to the existing literature. It introduces new insights during this pivotal period, considering the imminent launch of a new action plan in Timor-Leste, and opens more space, contribution with knowledge in Timor-Leste, on the Asia - Pacific region, and on the national implementation of Resolution 1325.

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Annexes

Annexe A. Interview Guidelines

What has been hindering the Timorese Government from launching a second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security?

Questions:

1. How are you associated with the WPS agenda in Timor-Leste? Were you/your organisation involved in the development and implementation of the first NAP on WPS (2016-2020)?
2. Are you familiar with and have you read the first NAP (2016-2020)? What is your overall opinion on the NAP: positive aspects, which aspects could be improved, the quality of the plan itself (activities, budget, indicators), the implementation process, ...?
3. I have read about a possible second phase of the 1325 NAP to be launched in 2023. Does this mean the Timorese Government is already developing the drafting of a new NAP? If yes, do you know how the process is going and who is involved (which entities, organisations, individuals)? Are you/your organisation involved and taking part in the process?
4. In my research, I've defined four hypotheses that act as possible barriers to the development of a second NAP on WPS in Timor-Leste. These are the hypotheses:
 - . Lack of political will and interest (the government has other priorities; other national issues have been more urgent).
 - . Lack of international funding and support (namely from the UN Women, other international organisations, and foreign donors).
 - . Lack of ownership (who is responsible for what; who should start the negotiations; the possible impact of the recent changes in the Timorese Government).
 - . Lack of understanding of the WPS agenda, namely its goals and importance (an international agenda that is applied locally).

Please comment on these hypotheses. Do they match reality? Why? Are those plausible limitations that have been hindering the Timorese Government from moving the WPS agenda forward? Would you like to add another hypothesis?

2. Is there any other issue or comment you would like to add, that might be relevant to this research?
3. Would you recommend someone / an organisation or entity with whom I could talk and ask some questions related to this topic?

Annexe B. Informed Consent

The study aims to analyse and conclude the reasons that have been hindering the Timorese Government from launching a second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, following a first plan, implemented within the period 2016-2020.

Your participation in the study, which is highly valued as it will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field of science, consists of answering a few questions related to the aim of the research, and previously disclosed to you, based on your personal and professional - and if the case, your organisation's - knowledge and experience. These questions will be answered via an online open-structured interview (max. 1 hour) using a recording audio tool OR via written typed text on a document provided by the researcher.

The study is conducted by Leonor Jacob, master's student in International Studies at Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon (leonor_isabel_jacob@iscte-iul.pt), under the supervision of Professor Raquel Freitas and Professor Joana Azevedo, who you may contact to clear up any doubts, share comments or exercise your rights in relation to the processing of your personal data. You may use the contact indicated above to request access, rectification, erasure or limitation of the processing of your personal data.

Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary: you may choose freely whether to participate or not. If you have decided to participate, you may stop your participation and withdraw your consent to the processing of your personal data at any time, without having to provide any justification. The withdrawal of consent shall not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal.

Your participation in the study might be confidential, upon your request. If you choose so, your personal data will be anonymised, with their anonymity being assured in the study's results.

Your personal data and audio recording/written answers will be kept for a maximum period of 6 months, starting from the day of the data's collection, and used solely for the purpose of this study, after which they will be destroyed.

There are no expected significant risks associated with your participation in the study. Iscte and the student Leonor Jacob will not disclose, or share with third parties, your information and audio recordings/written answers.

Annexe C. Code Scheme

1. The WPS Agenda in Timor-Leste
1.1 Budget
1.2 Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)
1.3 The recent and current situation
1.4 The Timorese NAP 2016-2020
2. Political Will
2.1 Evidence of Political Will
2.2 Lack of Political Will
3. International Funding and Support
3.1 Evidence of International Funding and Support
3.2 Lack of International Funding and Support
4. Ownership
4.1 Evidence of ownership
4.2 Lack of ownership
5. Understanding of the WPS agenda
5.1 Evidence of Understanding
5.2 Lack of Understanding