

MSc Political Science Thesis

Transnational Advocacy Networks in Conflict Transformation: Women, Peace & Security in Iraq via UNSCR 1325

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide an answer to the research question “*How has the UNSCR 1325 been implemented in Iraq?*”. The complex processes of policy change is explored by examining the activities and interaction of policy entrepreneurs, in order to gain insights into transnational politics beyond nation states into nongovernmental organisations. A sub-question is “*What is the role of transnational advocacy networks in the implementation of INAP 1325?*”. To answer these a combination of desk research and in-depth interviewing of six participants from local and international non-governmental organisations is employed as methodology.

Findings point that, women’s rights activism in Iraq is embedded in historical roots, however, international contact provided tools for leverage and accountability politics. It is exhibited that NGOs are the driving force behind the implementation of 1325 in Iraq. They did so by activating the boomerang pattern, entailing a simultaneous push on the governments of Iraq and Kurdistan, both from inside and outside the country.

Despite being a major challenge, conflict has opened up a window of opportunity for members of the network, which they took as knowledgeable policy entrepreneurs. By combining international frameworks with transnational advocacy they have successfully managed to gain political will and instill a policy change.

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this thesis to all the women without whom my work would not have been possible. To all the brave ladies, working locally, nationally, regionally and internationally to make this world more inclusive and just. To the women who deserve to be given a voice, and whose stories deserve to be told. And heard. And spread. And remembered. This thesis is not merely telling the story of a network. It is telling the story of real people having the persistence, resilience and capabilities to change their often brutal realities.

List of Abbreviations

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

INAP: Iraqi National Action Plan

INGOs: International nongovernmental organisations

IOs: Intergovernmental organisations

KRI: Kurdistan Region of Iraq

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

NAP: National Action Plan

NGO(s): Non-governmental organisation(s)

SC: Security Council

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

WPS: Women, Peace and Security

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Introduction

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), supported by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, adopted Resolution 1325 (Klein 2012). This ground-breaking Resolution is the cornerstone of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 is the first legal document from the Council to recognise women and the disproportionate effects of armed conflict on females. As a consequence, the Resolution aims to advance women participation at all levels of prevention, resolution, reconstruction and peacekeeping of conflicts. It requires all parties involved to promote the protection and equal participation of women in peace negotiations (Miller et. al 2014).

Following the adoption of 1325, the Security Council has encouraged country signatories to develop national action plans (NAPs) in order to support the Resolution implementation. Numerous actors, including civil society organisations, national governments and the international community, have allocated resources towards developing as well as assisting the development of NAPs. Hence, the WPS agenda has been institutionalised by the tool of NAPs, which ‘aim to translate international legal framework around WPS, Resolution 1325 into domestic strategy with specific national and local objectives’ (Jacevic 2018, 272). The UNSC has passed several complementary resolutions to build on 1325, and promote the WPS agenda¹. In an attempt to stimulate gender equality and raise awareness, workshops and conferences have been held in numerous countries around the world. However, despite being signatories of the Resolution(s), many countries remain slow to support the WPS and reluctant

¹ The WPS agenda consists of UNSCR 1325, subsequent resolutions UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2224. According to PeaceWomen (2018) the Agenda has the potential to ‘escape cycles of conflict, to create inclusive and more democratic peacemaking and to turn from gender inequality to gender justice’. The WPS strives for ‘more equitable peace deals’ by providing women with agency.

to develop 1325 NAPs (Miller et al 2014). As a result, currently merely 40% of UN member states have 1325 action plans (PeaceWomen, 2018) .

Traditionally, governments play the role of leading agents in drafting and implementing NAPs. However, interestingly civil society and non-government actors (NGOs) are most active in opening up public discussions and raising awareness, even in the most challenging countries for women equality. An example is the Iraq civil society reference group, which has lead the implementation of the WPS agenda in the country, and as a result Iraq became the first state in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to implement an Iraqi National Action Plan (INAP) in 2014 (Miller et al. 2014).

Numerous social science studies have emerged on 1325 and its impact (Krook & True 2010, Fritz et al 2011, Barrow 2016, Binder 2008, Otto 2010, Prat 2013, Jacevic 2018, etc.). Whilst scholars and policy makers acknowledge 1325 as a milestone for gender equality, they also point out numerous local challenges to the WPS agenda, including the speed of diffusion and institutionalization. There is a wealth of insights in current research, yet there are still significant literature gaps. Chiefly, there is little research on a national level regarding the 1325 awareness, processes and factors leading to drafting NAPs, implementation, evaluation, revision and social impact of action plans on the areas of security and peace (Reinert 2018, Miller et al 2014). Additionally, there is little research on evaluating NAP impacts, and revising time-bound action plans in accordance with emerging trends, such as localization (Jacevic 2018).

Therefore, in light of the expiration of the first INAP in 2018, this thesis will seek to explore the processes and logic of policy change and the complex diffusion of policies in Iraq. Building on the theory of transnational advocacy networks pioneered by Keck & Sikkink (1998), the following research question is proposed: *“How has the UNSCR 1325 been implemented in Iraq?”*. To answer the research question, a combination of desk research and

interviews will be implemented as methodology. The main argument of this thesis is that conflict has opened up a window of opportunity for women to challenge traditional gender roles by using international frameworks, such as the UNSR 1325, in combination with transnational advocacy. To gain deeper insights into the underlying processes and actors involved in the institutionalization of gender, interviewees will be primarily from domestic and international NGOs. Thus, this thesis proposes the following sub-question: ‘*What is the role of transnational advocacy networks in the implementation of INAP 1325?*’. Consequently, an additional goal of this research is to understand the role of NGOs in providing women with agency on a local level.

In order to provide an answer to the proposed research questions, this thesis will firstly provide a review of the existing literature. Then, it will delve in and elaborate on the chosen theoretical framework from which the following hypotheses are derived to be tested throughout the research process:

H1: Women’s rights activism in Iraq is embedded in historical roots, however, international contact provided tools for leverage and accountability politics

H2: Non-governmental organisations are the driving force behind the implementation of 1325 in Iraq

Following, the research design and methodology are exhibited in the third chapter. Next, in order to understand the context in which the network materialized and to trace whether a boomerang pattern has been enacted the historical background is provided. Succeeding that, interview results are summarized and discussed in the last two chapters. Lastly, limitations and implications for further research are presented, as well as concluding remarks.

Literature Review

According to O'Connell (2011) conflict impacts genders differently, leaving women and girls exposed to more risks including violations of rights, gender-based violence, displacement and increased societal responsibilities. However, state-building in conflict affected contexts can be regarded as an opportunity to instil greater gender equality. New political settlements and constitution drafting provide space for increasing the rights of women, as well as their political and economic empowerment. On one hand, *political empowerment* is defined as the ability of women to participate in and influence decisions and policy-making, as well as have demands from and hold institutions accountable to fulfil their rights. On the other hand, *economic empowerment* includes women's access to employment, resources, training, information, and ultimately control over earnings.

Similarly, Khodary (2016, 501) argues that conflict can be seen as providing a window of opportunity to 're-establish gender equality principles and practices and empower women politically, economically and socially'. For such change to occur, it is asserted that women should be active stakeholders in peace building, reconstruction and political settlements. In the case of Iraq, women - amounting to 64 percent of population - have been faced with numerous conflicts, and thus had opportunities to challenge traditional gender roles by engaging in state, constitutional, peace and political negotiations. Hence, according to Khodary (2016, 502), women have contextually 'unique experiences in peace-building and post-conflict reconstructions'. It is therefore crucial that the roles and contributions of women to rebuilding the post-conflict social order should be 'nationally owned, cautiously prioritized, and tailored to the specific needs of the concerned country' (Khodary 2016, 501). O'Connell (2011) points that whether or not conflict has actually led to inclusive and just state-building, as well as to economic and political female empowerment is largely under researched. However, she identifies that constitutional and legal frameworks, inclusive and equitable political institutions,

gender responsive policy-making and clear accountability mechanisms are the prerequisites for women empowerment to occur.

Khodary (2016) pinpoints various obstacles to women participation in politics in Iraq, including decision-makers lacking political will, insecurity and continuous armed conflicts. Nevertheless, cultural and social barriers are the biggest impediments for female participation in decision-making. These traditional norms are confronted by UNSCR 1325, which challenges structural gender inequalities. The unanimously passed Resolution 1325 recognises the disproportionate effect of war on women and calls for 'equal participation of women in preventing violence, stopping war and helping rebuild communities' (Jacevic 2018, 273). Governments have attempted to institutionalise the 1325 agenda in their national policymaking in a number of ways, yet the 'typical' strategy is the implementation of a National Action Plans (Miller et al. 2014). In a nutshell, NAPs are documents outlining policies or courses of action, which a country aims to follow in order to fulfill objectives and reach goals pertaining to specific national or global matters. National action plans can be adopted to address a variety of topics, yet for the purpose of this thesis NAPs pertain to the implementation of Resolution 1325. According to Miller et al. (2014, 10) governments are the leading agents in 'development of NAPs, initiating the drafting process and seeking partners in future implementation across government sectors and other institutions including civil society'. In terms of content, NAPs indicate a government commitment to the WPS agenda, outline actions to achieve change, promote the coordination between government and civil society, address implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as finances and accountability (Jacevic 2018).

According to Krook & True (2010, 121) gender has made its way into security policy owing to mainstreaming UNSCR 1325, which is a 'means to redress women's marginalization in negotiating and implementing peace and security in local, national and international contexts'. 1325 recognizes the importance of a gender perspective and the need for gender

expertise in the planning of peace and security operations, hence it focuses primarily on greater participation of women. As a result, a transnational advocacy network has grown up around the resolution, including gender experts in the UN Inter-agency Taskforce on Women, Peace, and Security, member states and women's NGOs (Barnes 2006 cited in Krook and True 2010).

Khodary (2016) asserts that apart from participation on national and formal levels, such as government and parliament, women participation in civil society organisations is as important. Owing to their local and less formal structure NGOs include more women and appeal to the wider population. As a result, they have the capability to influence decision-makers for a more equitable engagement of women. In fact, the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Iraq is a result of the continuous work of women activists and Iraqi NGOs who advocated and exercised pressure (Khodary 2016). Henrizi (2015) claims that women in Iraq perceive NGOs as places where they can exercise political agency, and be an active part of Iraqi's civil society. Research often undermines the NGOs as a space providing agency as they exist outside formal political structures, and are not considered local due to international aid. Henrizi (2015, 82) challenges this assumption by asserting that Iraq's 'local environment ... has been highly influenced by international engagement and global trends', hence making NGOs hybrid spaces interacting both on a national and international level. Additionally, mostly women occupy the NGO space as they are restricted from access to formal political structures. Nonetheless, Henrizi (2015, 83) maintains that NGOs agency 'can be very political and may transcend into formal political spaces' and by doing so emancipation change can occur. Despite recognising the increasing role of NGOs for providing women with agency, as well as the active role of Iraqi civil society in advocating for change, both Henrizi (2015) and Khodary (2016) do not delve deeper into the complex underlying processes of international policy diffusion. Particularly, how did women in Iraq manage to finally bring about change in the Iraqi political playing-field via 1325.

As the world has grown increasingly violent, Jacevic (2018, 274) argues that we ought to employ all resources at hand to 'prevent wars and end conflict' including women, who are critical to sustainable peace, yet often neglected. Successfully challenging the 'inequitable gender power relations' in peace-building carries the potential of leading to a more equitable and sustainable peace for all (Khodary 2016, 500). NAPs are a crucial tool for the inclusion of women and carry the potential of increasing stability and fostering peace. However, Khodary (2016) points to a lack of analytical research regarding the role of gender in peace. This limitation can inevitably lead to missing the window of opportunity for women, and in turn for sustainable peace.

A milestone for the political participation of women in Iraq is the launch of the Iraqi National Action Plan in 2014. According to Kaya (2016) INAP focuses on bettering women's rights and political participation in non-war contexts as well as legally increasing gender equality by removing legislation violating women's rights. However, the INAP fails to address a multiplicity of issues including women participating in reconciliation and conflict resolution, preventing gender-based violence and protecting women's rights. Additionally, Kaya (2016) identifies the INAP as lacking clearly defined timelines, budgets and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which undermine its effectiveness. Nevertheless, Iraq is the first country in the Middle East to implement UNSCR 1325 via a NAP. Kaya (2016) points that the first INAP is valid until 2018, which opens up a crucial opportunity for Iraqi women to build further on the generated impact, and follow up with a constructive revision and a second INAP. Therefore, it is worthwhile examining whether or not women have taken this window of opportunity and how have they gone forward with drafting and implementing the INAP.

Theoretical Framework

Theory provides not only the analytical lens through which research is conducted, but also serves as the backbone of social research (Bryman 2012, 20). Therefore, this chapter will elaborate on the chosen theoretical framework and subsequently derive hypotheses to be tested.

To understand the complex diffusion of policies in the international society, the work of Keck and Sikkink (1998) on advocacy networks in international politics will serve as the foundation of this thesis. Building on world polity research, Keck and Sikkink (1998) exhibit that despite academics previously acknowledging the crucial role of nongovernmental organisations as ‘vehicles of diffusion’ of global norms, the processes via which this happens are not described. World polity documents the emergence of international nongovernmental organisations (INGOs) and intergovernmental organisations (IOs), yet merely presents them as ‘enactors’ of norms. To the contrary, according to Keck and Sikkink ‘*different transnational actors have profoundly divergent purposes and goals*’ (1998, 230). Despite Western rights norms often providing the ‘defining framework’ for networks, their articulation and local application varies depending on network activity (Ibid., 231). Hence, in order to trace world policy change, it is crucial to examine the logic and modus operandi of transnational advocacy networks.

To conceptualise, a *transnational advocacy network* ‘includes those relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services’ (Ibid., 11). Usually, such networks organise around issues with high value. The novelty is the capability of ‘nontraditional international actors to mobilize information strategically to help create new issues and ... to persuade, pressure, and gain leverage over much more powerful ... governments’ (Ibid., 11). *Advocacy* implies that ‘they are organised to promote causes, principled ideas, and norms, and ... involve individuals advocating policy changes that cannot

be easily linked to a rationalist understanding of their interests' (Ibid., 16). *Networks* are composed of *activists*, whose goal is not only to sway debate, but to transform the behaviour of states. To do so, they *frame issues* to gain prominence and provoke a response. Later, to ensure adequate policy implementation, networks also oversee compliance.

A crucial component of transnational advocacy networks is *communication*. For the purpose of effecting 'discourse, procedures and policy, activists may engage and become part of larger policy communities'. Thus, besides agents of change, advocacy networks can be viewed as political spaces, which facilitate both formal and informal negotiations between activists on achieving their goals (Ibid., 12). Networks are complex agents, who actively participate in shaping international and national politics simultaneously. Networks include elements of both agents and structure (Ibid., 13), thus sociological and constructivist notions are necessary for their analysis.

Additionally, *international and domestic nongovernmental organisations* are recognised as key activists in transnational advocacy networks. Keck and Sikkink (1998) assert that previous theories fall short on analysing NGOs politically, hence they fill this gap by examining NGO relations with state agencies and international organisations. This is important, as it is chiefly NGOs that often initiate action, present ideas, collect information and lobby governments to alter policies. Besides NGOs, other actors in networks can be 'local social movements, parts of regional and international intergovernmental organisations and parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments' (Ibid., 17)

Advocacy networks have not emerged recently, and rather date back to the nineteenth-century. What has changed since then is their '*number, size and professionalism, and the speed, density, and complexity of international linkages among them*' (Ibid., 18). Networks materialize in the following cases: '(1) channels between domestic groups and their governments are blocked or where such channels are ineffective for resolving conflict....;

(2) activists or political entrepreneurs believe that networking will further their missions and campaigns... (3) conferences and other forms of international contact create arenas for forming and strengthening networks' (Ibid., 19). In the foremost case, the *boomerang pattern* (Figure 1) is enacted, which entails NGOs seeking international connections to express their concerns about governments not recognising certain rights, the network can then exercise pressure from abroad (Ibid., 20).

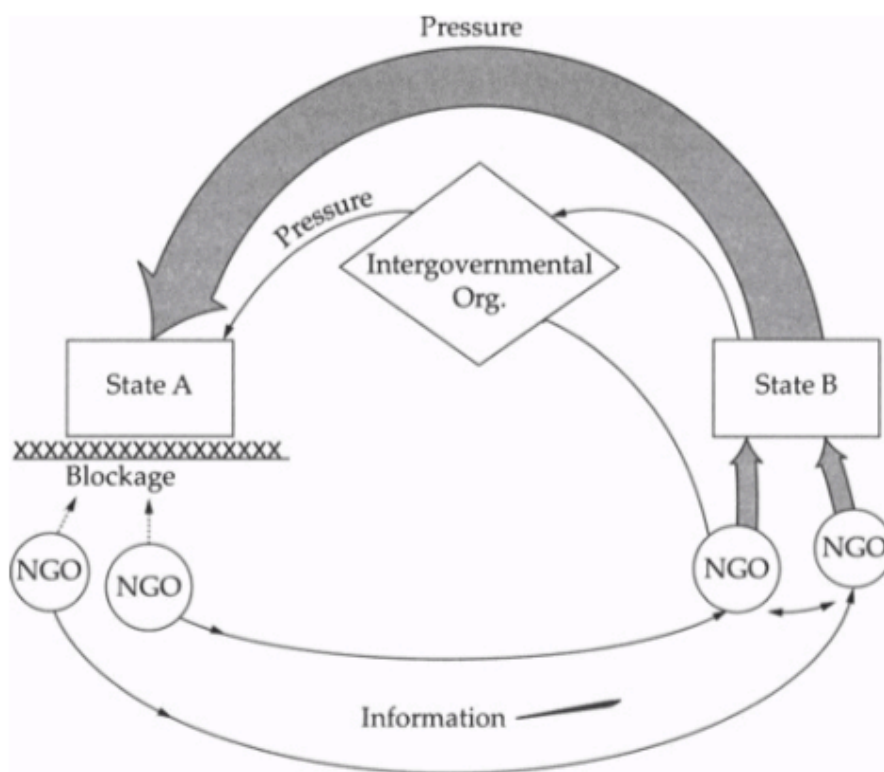


Figure 1 Boomerang pattern. State A blocks redress to organizations within it; they activate network, whose members pressure their own states and (if relevant) a third-party organization, which in turn pressure State A.

Figure 1. Boomerang pattern. Source: Keck & Sikkink 1998, 21

To advance their ideas and lobby for change, advocacy networks make use of one of the following tactics: (1) *information politics*: being able to 'quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and move it to where it has the most impact'; (2) *symbolic politics*: using 'symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience'; (3) *leverage politics*: using the influence of more powerful network members; (4) *accountability*

politics: holding ‘*powerful actors*’ responsible for ‘their previously stated policies or principles’ (Ibid., 24). These strategies can be used alone or in combination.

For the purpose of this thesis it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the latter two tactics, namely *leverage* and *accountability politics*. Firstly, the ultimate goal of advocacy networks is ‘*political effectiveness*’, implying ‘some policy change by target actors such as governments...’ (Ibid., 30). To achieve such change often entails a power imbalance between activists and target actors. Therefore, local activists seek leverage across other network members in order to ‘influence state practices directly’, which can be of material or moral nature (Ibid., 30). *Material leverage* is tied to either ‘money, trade, or prestige’, whilst *moral leverage* is when ‘behaviour of target actors is held up to ... international scrutiny’ and exposes that state practices are in contradiction of international obligations (Ibid., 31). Secondly, ‘networks devote considerable energy to convincing governments and other actors to publicly change their positions on issues’ (Ibid., 31), in order to use such commitments as mechanisms of *accountability politics*. This means that when a government has formally agreed to implement a policy, whilst not doing so in practice, networks emphasise that to seek for action. Accountability politics often involves the boomerang pattern, and is most prominent in the sphere of human (women) rights. An example is human rights networks in the former Soviet Union seeking for international protection by using the Helsinki Accords of 1975, to consequently spur change (Ibid., 32).

Keck and Sikkink (1998, 32-33) differentiate between five stages when advocacy networks have influence, being ‘(1) issue creation and agenda setting; (2) influence on discursive position of states...; (3) influence on institutional procedures; (4) influence on policy change in target actors...; (5) influence on state behaviour. In the case study to be examined in this thesis, the latter three are of most relevance.

Particularly important for the success of networks is the *issue characteristics* and *framing*. Therefore, it is crucial to fit local issues into broader international frames to gain attention and credibility. For instance, networks faced with patriarchy may reframe the issue as violence against women to trigger a debate. By doing so, the structures of patriarchy and inequality are challenged, and open space for new actors to provide alternative solutions (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 35). Nevertheless, merely framing an issue successfully is not sufficient for a policy change, 'there must be *actors* capable of transmitting those messages and targets who are vulnerable to persuasion or leverage' (Ibid., 36). Openness to leverage varies 'across issue areas within a single institution or state structure' (Ibid., 222). It is important to note that countries who 'care about their international image' are most open to leverage (Ibid., 228).

In transnational politics, Keck and Sikkink (1998) identify different nonstate actors, who depending on their motivations fall into three different categories of transnational networks. The network to be examined in this thesis falls within the last category, chiefly motivated by '*shared principled ideas or values*' (Ibid., 37). Inside this type of advocacy networks, individuals and organisations are 'political entrepreneurs who mobilize resources like information and membership and show a sophisticated awareness of the political opportunity structures' (Ibid., 39).

Network theory examines the activities and interaction of policy entrepreneurs, to gain insights into transnational politics beyond nation states into nongovernmental organisations. Insofar, *rights networks* have 'pressured governments and international organisations to develop formal procedures', whilst NGOs activating the boomerang pattern by exposing 'state repressive practices, causing other states to respond'. Once a state adjusts its behaviour and 'reconstitutes the relationship between the state, its citizens and international actors' implies that the work of transnational advocacy networks is successful (Ibid., 43).

Moreover, network theory views the international system as an international society (Ibid., 229). In order to understand policy change, one ought to examine the logic and processes of transnational advocacy networks, which not only differs from states, but the two are often in conflict (Ibid., 230). Keck and Sikkink (1998, 232-233) assert the value of studying networks in order to understand the evolving nature of global politics and the ‘motor of change’ driving local and international change. Thus, network theory is the most adequate model for this thesis to trace transnational change, as it acknowledges that ‘networks are voluntary and horizontal’ and are capable of influencing and transforming transnational policy (Ibid. 234).

On the basis of this theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are derived to be tested throughout the research process:

H1: Women’s rights activism in Iraq is embedded in historical roots, however, international contact provided tools for leverage and accountability politics

H2: Non-governmental organisations are the driving force behind the implementation of 1325 in Iraq

Research Design and Methodology

As evident from the literature, this research will follow an inductive theoretical approach. This implies that firstly information is collected about the particular research interest. Secondly, an existing theoretical lens is chosen and studied for the deduction of hypotheses. Following, hypotheses will be operationalized and empirically examined (Bryman 2012, 24).

Building on the approach taken by Keck & Sikkink (1998), this thesis will adopt the design of case study research, inspecting the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Iraq. Consequently, the purpose is to ‘understand the selected case in depth’ (Bryman 2012, 12) and to investigate ‘the complexity and particular nature of the case in question’ (Stake 1995 cited in Bryman 2012, 66). On one hand, the case examined can be identified as *critical* due to the fact that it builds on an existing theory and ‘will allow a better understanding of the circumstances in which the hypothesis will and will not hold’ (Bryman 2012, 70). On the other hand, it is also an *unique* case owing to the ‘intrinsic interest’ (Ibid.) that motivated the research process, which emerged during my professional experience as a part of a transnational network of non-government organisations operating across the MENA region. Hence, being a member of the network subject to research provided me with contacts and access to activists transnationally, both in the Netherlands and Iraq.

This is consequently reflected in the qualitative research strategy, necessary to grasp the complexity of transnational advocacy networks and trace policy change. In order to answer the proposed research question ‘*How has the UNSCR 1325 been implemented in Iraq?*’, sub-question ‘*What is the role of transnational advocacy networks in the implementation of INAP 1325?*’, and operationalize the hypotheses a mixed-method approach will be adopted, including desk research and interviews. Thus, the source of data collection will be primarily in-depth interviews, as interviewing in qualitative research aims to shed light on the perspective of interviewees (Ibid., 470). Moreover, this method is coherent with the feminist critique of

research, maintaining that qualitative research is preferred to achieve the political goals of research and 'to focus on women's experience and to listen and explore the shared meanings between women' (Skeggs 2001 cited in Bryman 2012, 411).

Interviewees were recruited via the snowball sampling technique, meaning that once a participant relevant to the research question is interviewed, other participants who are perceived as crucial are suggested and referred to (Bryman 2012, 424). Owing to proximity, the first interviewees were located in the Netherlands, with whom very early on in the research process informal conversations were carried out to determine their relevance to the topic and consent to participate. Later, once the first interviewee was sampled, the process was formalized and she was acquainted in detail with the subject examined in this thesis in order to request an informed consent (Ibid., 138), either written or spoken. In order to guarantee interviewee's confidentiality (Ibid., 142), their names will not be explicitly exposed in this thesis. Nevertheless, their functions within the network will be specified in order to provide grounds for discussion and critical analysis of perspectives.

Eventually, as a result of time limitations, six female interviewees were sampled from local and international non-government organisations, as well as the coordinators of the Dutch and Iraqi national action plans. The interviews were conducted both in person and via telephone over the course of three months. Interviews were semi-structured, meaning that overarching questions and themes were identical, however, the question sequence, wording and possible additional questions may have varied (Ibid., 213). The interview guide was developed on the basis of the guideline provided by Bryman (2012, 476). Chiefly, on the basis of the overarching research question and theoretical framework interview topics were identified. Then, questions were formulated to provide the knowledge necessary for analysis. Following, engagement in informal conversations prior to conducting the interviews provided insights to adjust the questions. This was done in order to reflect interviewees' perspectives of what is 'significant

and important in relation to ... topic areas', make use of comprehensible language and ensure response (Ibid., 473). All interviews have been since transcribed and together with the overarching interview guide are included in the appendix pertaining to this thesis. Any recordings made for the purpose of accurate transcription have been permanently deleted.

Grounding on the theoretical framework, *historical background*, *actors* and *challenges to policy implementation* are identified as independent variables (Figure 2). The *historical background* is necessary in order to understand the context in which the network materialized and to trace whether a *boomerang pattern* has been enacted. This variable is operationalized by examining existing literature, and asking the question 'What is the background of drafting the first INAP/ What happened before the INAP?'. To potentially illustrate a boomerang pattern, knowledge of *actors* is necessary, hence leading to the questions 'Who/what was the most significant actor(s) in drafting and implementing the INAP?', 'What was the role of international NGOs and UN agencies?', 'Which local organisations were involved?' and 'In terms of governments and political level do you feel that there is support?'. Next, in order to identify what tactics were used to lobby for change and their efficiency, *challenges* will be identified by asking 'What did civil society do to organize themselves?' and 'What were the major challenges to implementing INAP 1325?'.

All of the aforementioned add up to influence the dependent variable - *policy change* - which is operationalized via asking 'What are the outcomes of INAP implementation?', 'What do you identify as the most significant change/ most valuable outcome?', 'Which strategic goals were accomplished successfully' and 'What kind of formal structures were put in place because of the NAP?'. Additionally, the policy outcome emanated in *lessons learnt* is a resulting dependent variable which is important to evaluate the impact of policy change and

the success of the network. This will be operationalized by asking ‘What are the lessons learnt from Measurement & Evaluation?’ and ‘Are the WPS and 1325 really valuable?’.

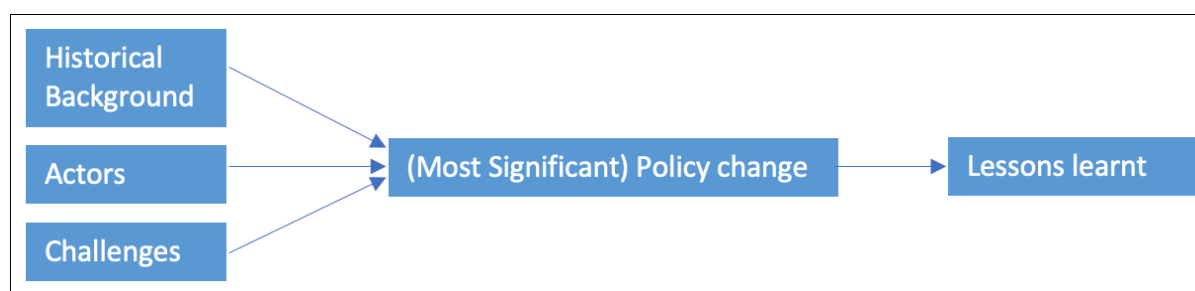


Figure 2. Variables

Lastly, in order to lay foundation for future research, questions will be asked about the interviewee’s expectations, difficulties and desired outcomes of the second INAP. In order to account for any possible omissions on the side of the researcher, the question ‘Do you want to add some point that maybe I missed?’ is asked as concluding.

A Brief History of Women's Rights Activism in Iraq

In terms of public authority in Iraq, it is based on 'a patriarchal form of masculinity embedded in all aspects of society from the way in which public institutions are structured to the management of war, distribution of resources and interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence, and men and women's roles in public and private life' (Dodge et. al 2018, 20). Nevertheless, there is a proven positive causal relationship between lasting peace, conflict prevention and women engagement. Therefore, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive gender inclusive policy. This chapter will trace the efforts of women's rights activists to challenge the established patriarchal norms and be included in the political, economic and social life of the country.

In order to grasp and understand the history women's of rights activism in Iraq, it is crucial to introduce the difference between incremental and fast track discourses for representation of women in politics. On one hand, the incremental discourse entails a notion of 'gradualism', meaning that equal gender representation will come along with the gradual development of a state. On the other hand, the fast track discourse is much more dynamic and proactive. It implies that 'male-dominated societies and organisations are self-perpetuating', and this vicious circle can only be destroyed by making the political life more inclusive for women via active measures such as quotas (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005 cited in Efrati 2012, 255). Following, we will track the shift of discourses from the former to the latter and women's rights activism throughout Iraq's recent history.

Women in the Monarchy

To begin, from the period of 1921-58 Iraq was a monarchy with very active women activists 'protesting against their disenfranchisement' (Efrati 2012, 256). Despite that, however, the notion of gradualism dominated this period and women were being convinced that as the country develops equal representation will be eventually reached. In 1925, the first Iraqi

constitution was adopted under which all Iraqis presumably enjoyed equal rights. Nevertheless, there were two controversial articles for women, denying them two key rights for political participation – to vote and be elected. Concerns were immediately voiced by women activists, who rejected the notion that democratic political participation is for men only (Hassun 1924 cited in Efrati 2012). Later on, in 1934 there was an attempt by women to exercise their political rights via the formation of a women's club, rejected by the Ministry of Interior.

In its last decade, the Iraqi monarchy was largely confronted with political unrest emanated in demand for reforms in the social, economic and political domain. Hand in hand with that, the campaign for women's political rights strengthened, yet the government continued to postpone granting women the rights to vote. Nevertheless, women continued to call for change. This time the difference was that close relatives and wives of the ruling elite also called for action, united under the Iraqi Women's Union authorised in 1945 by the government. The Union was founded as an umbrella organisation to support the work of activists and women's organisations, and denounced women's exclusion of politics as an infringement of citizen rights. In turn, the government agreed to enfranchise women, however, on its own terms of 'gradual modernisation' and required women to be educated first before granting them a change in status (Efrati 2012, 256).

The educational achievements of women in Iraq equated to those of men. As a result, members of the Union saw a window of opportunity to instil change by arguing that granting women equal rights was closely tied to the progressiveness of a state. Chiefly, they asserted that the pace of modernisation is intrinsically dependent on full rights for women (Efrati 2012, 257). Many members of the Iraqi Women's Union were content with the gradual transition offered by the government. To the contrary, the League for Defence of Women's Rights believed that a radical change was necessary for Iraq to become modern in terms of women's rights and political freedom. As a result, members of the League engaged in protests against

the exclusion of women from the political, economic and social life of Iraq (Efrati 2012 cited in Efrati 2012, 257).

The Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in 1958, and this came with a promise for women's equal political rights by the new regime. For the first time in the history of Iraq and the Arab world, a woman was appointed as a minister in the new administration. This finally allowed women to participate in the political life of Iraq and in law formation (Efrati 2005 cited in Efrati 2012, 258). Nevertheless, challenges for women continued to exist as a parliament was not established and calls for equal rights in the new constitution could not be met.

Women under Saddam Hussein

Eventually, the Ba'th Party came into power in 1968 and made commitments to advance women's equal rights by claiming that such an action is tied to Iraqi modernisation (Rohde cited in Efrati 2012). The Party promised that women will be able to enjoy their rights as full citizens and consequently have equal access to participate in the society (Abdel-Ghani cited in Efrati 2012). This promise was emanated in the appointment of a woman as the Minister of Higher Education as well as the precedent of female participation in parliamentary elections in 1980. Nevertheless, the public discourse on equal rights equal rights was once again tied to the prerequisite 'progress', implying that women are backwards and not yet 'worthy of acquiring their full rights' (Efrati 2012, 259), once again embodying the notion of 'gradualism'. Saddam Hussein argued that it is necessary to take cautious planned steps when reforming laws on a sensitive matter like women in order to not lose popular support. As a result, the progress for women socioeconomic rights in the last years of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship was in decline. Nevertheless, the 2003 invasion contributed further to deteriorate the situation of women (Dodge et. al 2018).

Women in the aftermath of 2003

The 2003 invasion of Iraq had an undeniable impact on women, their rights and gender equality in the country due to conflict, insecurity and economic deprivation. This impact can be categorised as negative due to violence exposure and deterioration of socioeconomic rights (Dodge et. al 2018, 18). The US-led intervention in Iraq was presumably supposed to bring democracy for the country, yet little was achieved in the domain of women. Despite promises made by the US administration that women will play a crucial role in the reconstruction of the state, much to the contrary women lost many of the rights they had acquired.

This time, however, activists would not settle to be side-lined and they mobilised their efforts towards the establishment of at least 40 percent quota for participation of women in government (Barwari cited in Efrati 2012). Consequently, women adopted a ‘fast track’ discourse when advocating for their rights, and were no longer content with the notion of gradual modernisation. Iraqi women now believed that for their issues to be placed on the agenda, they ought to access policy-making via the establishment of quotas (Ciezdalo cited in Efrati 2012).

A gender quota system for elections was introduced in 2005 by the Iraqi Parliament. Nevertheless, women’s rights remained disregarded due to a lack of ‘a coherent policy to meaningfully include women in the political processes and the use of women as bargaining chips in political negotiations with religious parties’ (Dodge et. al 2018, 19). Women presence in parliament had little impact on changing the views about women in politics and democratization. Moreover, women who challenged the preconceived notions of male dominance or were against the invasion were excluded and marginalized from the political processes (Efrati cited in Dodge et al. 2018).

One of the biggest repercussions that the 2003 invasion had on women’s rights was the re-establishment of tribal courts, whose dissolution was a long struggle for women activists as

they sought to protect rural women (Efrati 2012). Additionally, during the invasion public authorities in Iraq ceased to provide security. As a result, women were increasingly exposed to sexual violence and abduction. Moreover, displacement resulting from conflict has negatively impacted women, resulting in marginalization, discrimination, exposure to violence and trafficking (Dodge et al. 2018, 20).

Activism since 2003 until today

As exhibited above, women's rights activism in Iraq builds on a long history and tradition, despite being faced with numerous challenges. Currently, 'conflict, war, political transition, economic sanctions and increasing social conservatism' pose the major threats to women's rights activism (Dodge et al. 2018, 19). There is a trend of continuity when looking at violence perpetrated in Iraq before and after 2003. First the deeply violent Ba'th party regime, then the 2003 invasion followed by the emergence of Da'esh. In a nutshell, equality for women in Iraq is hindered by a multiplicity of external factors including social, political, economic, and structural which are aggravated by conflict and instability. Nonetheless, today more than ever are local women connected with transnational activists (Dodge et al. 2018, 19).

Lastly, the transition of Iraq from a dictatorship to a sectarian state posed further challenges to women. This is evident from the design of laws and Constitution after 2005, which have violated principles of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It is crucial to mention that comparing the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and the Federal Government of Iraq, the further has implemented the WPS agenda more via regulations and regional laws. This is a result of a continuous pressure by women's rights activists as well as the willingness of policymakers to recognize the importance of including women and implementing change. Despite such improvements, there are still discriminatory laws and practices existing against women in the KRI (Dodge et al. 2018).

Interview Results

In this section the results from the interviews will be summarized in a table overview (Table 1) in order to provide a clear distinction between the variables.

The overarching results show that there was a multiplicity of actors who have taken a part of the INAP, including both governments, local and international NGOs and UN agencies. Additionally, there were multiple challenges faced in the process, which differ per interviewee perspective. To name a few, challenges range from preconceptions and ISIS to the division between the civil society and lack of budget.

Then, in terms of most significant policy change, interviewees most frequently identified concrete government actions, the change in political will and collaboration with civil society. Lastly, as far as lessons learned are concerned, interviewees identified a need for checking whether government promises are being kept via an effective and efficient measurement and evaluation mechanism, which was not present in the INAP. Other results pointed to a necessity for localization as well as gathering all actors to share mistakes and lessons learned in order to build up for the future INAP.

As a result, the data gathered from the historical background and obtained from interviews is sufficient to confirm both of the hypotheses and provide an answer to the proposed research question in the subsequent section.

	Actors	Challenges	Most significant (policy) change	Lessons learnt from M&E
Coordinator of the Dutch NAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society Women Empowerment Organisation EMMA 40 local organisations INGOs Global Network for Women and Peace (GNWP) KARAMA network PAX International community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preconceptions of men Sexism Civil society talking to government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in peace negotiations and in the security sector Working on demilitarization and human security Conflict prevention Less corruption Men realizing they need women and civil society Dialogue between Bagdad and Kirkuk Agreements on transnational justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking whether promises are happening There was no mechanism to hold government accountable.
Director of WEO & coordinator of cross-sector taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Parliament Civil society – Alliance 1325 Local organisations INGOs – Euromed Feminist Initiative, HIVOS, USIP Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs UK Embassy Netherlands Embassy UNAMI UN Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISIS intervention Financial crisis Security situation and military operations Division between civil society Budget Sectarian state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building of different ministries WPS on top of government and parliament agenda Mobilizing resources Attracting the international community and UN agencies Cross-sector taskforce mediating the peacebuilding between Iraq and Kurdistan Partnership of government and ministries with civil society Support for women shelters and directories for combatting violence against women Political will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No focus on M&E because of challenges Budget for implementation Localization – including subdistricts and villages Working on regional level
Director of EMMA organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local women organisations in Iraq and Kurdistan Women Empowerment Organisation 'Women for Women' from Sweden INGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding and budget Lacked detail Remained in the top level of government and UN agencies Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government cancelling the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Human Rights Ministry One woman ministerial candidate Amending and passing laws on domestic violence Jafari law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measurement mechanism. All actors should gather and share the mistakes and success. Budget
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The United Kingdom, Netherlands and Swedish government International community and UN agencies Ministry of Interior, High Council of Women and Ministry of Justice. UN women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority given for war, weapons and relief issues Culture of patriarchy No appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. A very closed group ISIS Government openness to ideas/advocacy differing between Iraq and Kurdistan Conservative society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of Yezidi women and their children Despite being very general, it is good for all to rely on. Very clear for the pillars and it is also very practical The Iraqi government hired the director of WEO as general director for following the implementation. 	
WEO employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society, NGOs & women organisations WEO and Bagdad Women's Association formed the 1325 Alliance Euromed Feminist Initiative Kingdom of Netherlands Canada UN Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISIS war Lacking M&E mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration of the Iraqi and Kurdistan governments with civil society organisations In Kurdistan, two women were signed as Head of Parliament and Secretary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of gaps Very important to specify the budget The most important gap is the M&E.
HIVOS employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local NGOs INGOs – HIVOS UN Women Government Embassies in Bagdad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding Lack of political will Very centralized governments, Money on high political level Daesh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women were officially recognized Civil society working with government Adopting 1325: a sign of progressiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International framework is necessary for support Politics made it difficult
PAX employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society Al-Amal and Al-Firdaws organisations Impunity watch Dutch government HIVOS and PAX 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quickly changing local context Security situation Involving high officials ISIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training local academics on conducting research Training police and justice to address SGBV Lack of implementation on the ground Raised attention to sexual violence in conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on formal level Need to transform existing structures to empower women Engage men Status of ex-ISIS wives and children

Table 1. Summary of Interview Results

Discussion

This chapter aims to synthesize and critically analyze the obtained interview results in relation to the theoretical framework. The objective is to trace the evolution and modus operandi of the 1325 transnational advocacy network in Iraq, and exhibit the dynamics behind its pertaining policy change. By doing so, it will seek to provide an answer to the proposed research question “*How has the UNSCR 1325 been implemented in Iraq?*” and sub-question ‘*What is the role of transnational advocacy networks in the implementation of INAP 1325?*’, as well as test the hypotheses.

To begin, according to the overarching results, the transnational advocacy network working on 1325 in Iraq is comprised of over forty local non-government organisations including the Women Empowerment Organisation, EMMA organisation and Bagdad Women’s Association, INGOs like HIVOS, PAX, the Euromed Feminist Initiative, USIP and Women for Women, members of the international community such as UN Women, UNAMI as well as the Global Network for Women and Peace. In line with the theoretical expectations, local NGOs were identified by all interviewees as the crucial actors initiating action, collecting information and lobbying the government to adopt a policy change.

Nevertheless, as evident from the historical background, their efforts were met with numerous challenges until the pivotal point when the transnational advocacy network materialized. In 2011, the Women Empowerment Organisation (WEO) was invited to participate at a conference about 1325, as stated by the Director (Interview May 30, 2019) : ‘*We were as an organisation working on women’s issues, every time talking about women’s rights and advocating for basic rights. But then we recognized that there is Resolution 1325 that is supporting all what we are pushing for. So we found that resolution is the tool that we need for our advocacy and it will be a good tool for us to strengthen our position. That was on the occasion of the open day, every year the UN, UNAMI and especially UN Women was doing*

an open day to celebrate this resolution. In 2011 we were invited to the open day to celebrate for this Resolution.'. Therefore in line with Keck and Sikkink (1998), it can be argued that blocked channels between domestic groups and government and the 1325 conference were the preconditions for network emergence.

In April 2012, a national conference was organized by the WEO, who invited relevant stakeholders, including parliament representatives from Baghdad and Kurdistan, officials from the Ministries of Justice and Interior, UNAMI and NGOs. During the conference it became evident that there was a lack of awareness about Resolution 1325. Therefore, ten local organisations formed Alliance 1325 in order to take action, translate the Resolution content into an actionable plan and mobilize efforts to create political will (Interview with WEO Director, May 30, 2019).

Needless to say, they were faced with multiple challenges including extremely centralized governments and lack of political will (Interview with HIVOS employee, May 6, 2019) as well as preconceptions about women, sexism and having governments talk to the civil society (Interview with Coordinator of the Dutch NAP, April 27, 2019). Contrary to advocacy in previous years, the 1325 Alliance was now part of a transnational advocacy network across which communication is crucial.

Therefore in order to gain political, diplomatic and financial support they reached across their network as follows:

'they started seeking support. They started getting support from INGOs – HIVOS and UN women... When they joined the network they became more trusted, serious and professional. When the network grew, the government became more supportive. We pushed a lot via advocacy in the UN and recognized we need to push member states and governments. So we did it by saying: 'It is nice to say things at the UN but what is the value if it is not implemented?'. We used this framing to push for political and diplomatic support from embassies in Bagdad.'

(Interview with HIVOS employee, May 6, 2019). Consequently, it can be argued that the network had enacted the boomerang pattern, according to which local NGOs reach across network when faced with challenges, seeking for influential network members to exercise pressure from abroad.

Additionally, inside Iraq the Women Empowerment Organisation was '*the leading power doing the big push towards drafting the NAP and that was via good lobbying and smart navigating*' (Interview with Coordinator of the Dutch NAP, 27 April 2019). Whilst the boomerang was in place, pressure was exercised on the Iraqi government from the international community in the face of UNAMI and UN Women, INGOs and numerous states including the embassies of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom as well as the Swedish Ministry of Foreign affairs and Canada (Interviews with Director of WEO, Director of EMMA, HIVOS employee and WEO employee).

In the meantime, INGOs shared experiences and advised the Alliance to form an interdepartmental body in order to share responsibility and hold the government accountable for its promises (Interview with Coordinator of the Dutch NAP, 27 April 2019). As a result, the cross-sector taskforce was established and emanated the partnership between the parliament, government and civil society working together to draft the NAP (Interview with Director of WEO May 30, 2019). The cross-sector taskforce comprised of three committees, being the legal, drafting and financial (Interview with WEO employee April 6, 2019). This combination of a boomerang and leverage politics succeeded, as eventually the INAP was approved by the governments of Iraq and Kurdistan in 2014 with a budget of five million dollars for four years implementation (Interview with Director of Emma May 13, 2019).

Shortly after the approval, the advocacy work of the network was faced with new challenges. Immediately after the endorsement of the INAP, the security situation in Iraq quickly deteriorated with the invasion of ISIS and the country leaped into a financial crisis

(Interview with Director of WEO May 30, 2019). As a result, the government dropped the previously allocated budget for INAP implementation, and dedicated its resources to warfare. Once again, activists were faced with a lack of political will from the government as described by the Director of EMMA: *'everybody was talking that there was a war in the area, thousands of victims and thousands of women being raped, so according to the government it was not the time to talk about the NAP'* (Interview May 13, 2019).

Nevertheless, women seized the opportunity to call the government for accountability politics and implement the NAP. Once again, resources were mobilized across the network and an emergency plan for reaction was developed on *'how to respond to the urgent needs of women, girls, IDPs for providing services and distributing humanitarian aid. And also some kind of livelihood programmes, health services'* (Interview with Director of WEO May 30, 2019). Women took this set of circumstances to raise awareness about the importance of 1325 and its real implications during conflict. As illustrated by the Director of WEO, for the government it was challenging to grasp the role of the WPS agenda in conflict, as she said: *'When we were advocating and asking for budget they are saying but please, we are in a conflict we have Daesh and you are talking about women issues. We said, but this is for the period of conflict and post-conflict.'* (Interview May 30, 2019).

Despite being one of the major challenges for implementation, the state of emergency caused by ISIS provided an opportunity for the network to not only influence policy change, but also the discursive positions and inherently patriarchal behavior of the state. This matter was recognized across multiple network actors, as stated by HIVOS' employee: *'with the invasion of Daesh there was a new momentum to try and do something. There was a new NAP, which gave political momentum. There was a bigger push to work on implementation. It came from civil society and international community. The Dutch government and other governments stepped in.'* (Interview May 6, 2019). Moreover, it allowed women to talk about different

notions of security, like human security which implied a deep policy change, not merely adding women, but also disarming groups and organizing the national army and police to provide equal protection to all citizens, as well as more inclusive reconciliation practices involving all minorities (Interview with Coordinator of the Dutch NAP, April 27, 2019).

Once again, the network succeeded and the governments in Iraq and Kurdistan implemented the emergency plan as a response to the conflict situation. This success was accounted for by the WEO employee, as she said: *'it was challenging because of the ISIS war, but the NAP really helped to fight ISIS after & for the two governments to further collaborate'* (Interview April 6, 2019). As a result, it can be asserted that the 1325 transnational advocacy network in Iraq was indeed motivated by 'shared principled ideas and values' (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 37), as activists were political entrepreneurs who grasped the political opportunity and mobilized their resources to seize it.

By adopting the INAP, the Iraqi government was able to attract international recognition (Interview with Director of WEO May 30, 2019), however, it is important to account for the feedback from network members about the most significant change they experienced vis-à-vis the INAP implementation. Interestingly, this question provoked the most contrast between interviewee answers. On one hand, all interviewees acknowledged in one way or another the achievement of civil society to invoke political will and dialogue with both governments in Iraq and Kurdistan (Interviews with Coordinator of the Dutch NAP, Director of WEO, Director of EMMA, WEO employee, HIVOS employee). This allowed for all local network actors and government officials to build their capacity and exchange know-how with international organisations and foreign states (Interview with WEO employee April 6, 2019). Next, achievements included recognizing women and allowing them to participate in peace negotiations and the security realm of Iraq (Interviews with Coordinator of the Dutch NAP and HIVOS employee).

On the other hand, two interviewees expressed a more critical stance on the implementation, by arguing that the NAP remained on the top political levels and did not reach people on the ground (Interview with Director of EMMA May 13, 2019). Similarly, PAX's employee were left with the impression that *'barely anything of it has been implemented'* (Interview on June 7, 2019). Additionally, significant differences were pointed between the regional governments of Iraq and Kurdistan with regards to their political will as illustrated by the Director of EMMA: *'The situation in Kurdistan is much different than Iraq, for Kurdistan even before ISIS women issues were always on the agenda....because of very active women organisation and movement – that is one side. Also the other side is that the government and people of Kurdistan are more open minded to new ideas. It is not easy, but you can make advocacy and reach some achievements.... In Iraq the society is more conservative and 100 percent relies on the Islamic Sharia, so the space for freedom and new ideas is very small.'* (Interview May 13, 2019). Nevertheless, all network members unanimously agreed that the WPS agenda and 1325 were extremely valuable for them to get political will and recognition to the issues they have been working on for years.

Eventually, when interviewees were asked about lessons learnt, they all exhibited significant gaps of the INAP. Firstly, the majority recognized the necessity to put in place an efficient mechanism for measurement and evaluation to hold the government accountable for implementation (Interviews with Coordinator of the Dutch NAP, Director of WEO, Director of EMMA and WEO employee). Secondly, making agreements on budget was identified as important (Interviews with Director of WEO, Director of EMMA and WEO employee). Lastly, two lessons are crucial – chiefly the need for localization (Interview with WEO Director, May 30, 2019) and the necessity to strengthen the network as expressed by the Director of EMMA: *'this action plan needs good advocacy and networking from all the women organisations who are working on any part of the plan. So it needs coordination among all actors of*

implementation. Especially from civil society. Because the civil society are the main actors for advocacy. Implementation is the responsibility of the government and parliament and even political parties because in Iraq they are the ones that have the real power. So it needs actually coordination including every actors who are parts of the issues that the NAP is talking about' (Interview May 13, 2019).

Taking all of the aforementioned into account it can be concluded that both hypotheses are accepted. Moreover, the INAP implementation was a result of the continuous efforts of local and international members of the transnational advocacy network to mobilize, lobby and gain political support and recognition for 1325. The role of the transnational advocacy network was to activate the boomerang pattern through which the government was continuously prompted both from within by local NGOs, and from outside by the international community and multiple states.

Limitations and Implications for further research

Similarly to every research, this thesis was faced with certain limitations. Firstly, it was bound by the time for conducting research amounting to four months. Consequently, this constrained the number of interviewees to six, due to the dynamic schedule of participants. Additionally, interviewees were from local and international NGOs, and one reflecting the perspective of the Netherlands. In order to grasp the multi-faceted dynamic of policy change, for future research it is suggested to recruit interviewees from the governments in Iraq and Kurdistan, as well as representatives from the states named as actors. Furthermore, to examine awareness of 1325, citizens and more local organisations ought to be approached.

In light of the expiration of the first INAP, interviewees were asked to identify their expectations, difficulties and desired outcomes from the second INAP. Their replies can serve as the foundation for further research into the practices of the transnational advocacy network.

Lastly, due to the research design, the results obtained remain difficult to generalize to other cases. Nevertheless, tracing policy change via in-depth interviews has built on the academic literature of networks by exhibiting their *modus operandi* and confirming their crucial role as the driving forces behind translational policy change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, to provide a concrete answer to the proposed research question, the 1325 in Iraq was implemented by activating the boomerang pattern of the transnational advocacy network, which consists of numerous local and international NGOs as well as members of the international community such as UN Women and UNAMI. The boomerang pattern led to the implementation of the Iraqi NAP and its pertaining Emergency Action Plan. Results point to the fact that the conflict with ISIS opened up an opportunity for women to not only develop an emergency NAP, but also to showcase to the government the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. By doing so, the network played a crucial role in combatting violence and acts of terrorism perpetrated by ISIS.

With regards to the role transnational advocacy networks have in the implementation, it was chiefly to exercise a simultaneous push on the governments of Iraq and Kurdistan, both from inside and outside the country, to implement their responsibility to participate in 1325. On one hand, conflict has opened up a window of opportunity for women to challenge traditional gender roles. On the other hand, women activists were knowledgeable policy entrepreneurs and combined international frameworks, such as the UNSR 1325, with transnational advocacy to gain political will. By engaging with the government, 'transforming the relationships, interests, discourses' (Miall 2004, 4) and facilitating the implementation of a policy change, the network has successfully exercised conflict transformation.

In a nutshell findings point that, women's rights activism in Iraq is indeed embedded in historical roots, however, international contact provided tools for leverage and accountability politics. Moreover, it is confirmed that non-governmental organisations are the driving force behind the implementation of 1325 in Iraq. Nevertheless, results point that there are differences in the level of implementation across the country, mostly between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the Federal Government of Iraq.

Additionally, in line with the expiration of the first INAP in 2018, currently a second NAP is being drafted. There were numerous lessons learnt from the first INAP, including a lack of a measurement and evaluation mechanism and a necessity for localization. Local NGOs are currently working toward these in order to build upon their previous work and develop the second INAP.

Taking into account the time limitations by which this research was bound, the data obtained is from local and international NGOs. Therefore, implications for further research suggest that the perspectives of different state actors should be gathered, such as representatives of the parliament, ministries and Iraqi government as well as representatives from the foreign states involved, in order to gain more insights into tracing the policy change.

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Appendix

Interview guide

Q: What happened before the INAP? What is the background of drafting the first INAP?

Q: What are the outcomes of INAP implementation?

Q: Which strategic goals were accomplished successfully?

Q: What/ who was the most significant actor(s) in drafting and implementing INAP?

Q: What was the role of international NGOs/organisations in drafting and implementation of INAP 1325?

Q: What about UN agencies?

Q: Which local organisations were involved?

Q: What did the civil society do to organize themselves to gain political, diplomatic and financial support?

Q: What do you identify as the most significant change/ most valuable outcome?

Q: What was the INAP impact in terms of institutionalization and law reforms?

Q: What kind formal structures were put in place because of the NAP ?

Q: What were the major challenges to implementing INAP 1325?

Q: Why was the ministry of women affairs dissolved?

Q: What are the lessons learnt from Measurement & Evaluation?

Q: What was the feedback on the NAP? (from women, civil society, government, international organisations etc.)

Q: What is your biggest dream for drafting and implementing the second INAP?

Q: What do you need to achieve that?

Q: What are your expectations for the second INAP?

Q: What will be done differently, taking into account lessons learnt?

Q: What would you identify as the biggest difficulty today?

Q: What do you need to solve these challenges?

Q: In terms of government and political level do you feel that there is support for the first and the second NAP?

Q: What is the role of NGOs and non-government actors in the second INAP?

Q: Is the WPS and 1325 really valuable?

Q: If ISIS would not have changed the political tide, do you think you would have been able to advance as much as you did so far?

Q: Do you want to add some point that maybe I missed?

Interview with the Coordinator of the Dutch NAP conducted on April 27, 2019

Q: What is the background of drafting the first INAP?

A: Women in Iraq and KRG played a crucial role in the uprising against Saddam. In preparing the uprising. They made a farfetched agreement. There was no plan. The goal was to have demilitarization. The previous structure was rewarding anybody who had weapons – they would have a chair at the peace negotiation. They wanted a different part. The goal was not to have women just for being women, but to work demilitarization and come to an actable society who wouldn't be governed by anyone that had weapons at that time. The previous structure has a very political element which I believe is very important to stress. It was giving power, rewarding everybody who had weapons would be allowed a chair at the peace negotiations. They wanted a different way to be a part of peace negotiations and they started using resolution 1325. That is the long answer to your question.

Q: What are the outcomes of INAP implementation?

A: The political outcomes are obviously the fact that women started playing part in peace negotiations. They started making sure that it is really working on demilitarization. Striving for local governance because it was one of the main reasons why Iraq collapsed. And very importantly they started working towards different notions of security, including not only state security, but also human security. That is a very important political difference. But something else is an advance to a change on a top political level of Iraq, realizing that two things – civil society is an important actor (which kind of disappeared in the last years of dictatorship) and secondly that women have political power. Having women as political power was not new for Iraqi society because they were in political power in the 40s – this is not new but started to disappear at the end of Saddam dictatorship. And of course completely disappeared as the US

invaded Iraq. So political, societal and legal results in transnational justice and working towards reconciliation and not 'the winner takes all'.

Q: Which strategic goals were accomplished successfully?

A: Check in the NAP 2 because it talks about it in detail. To name a few more attention for conflict prevention is the crucial role of the NAP. There has been very little attention for rising tensions between several groups in Iraq which led of course to the collapse of the regime. More women in the security sector which yielded a security sector reform, which was not completed as it is a very difficult thing to do. But at least it started with a little bit less corruption – far from perfect yet and a little bit – more state of law. A little bit less impunity. You hear me saying a little bit less because one cannot expect huge changes from something as new as an NAP and women coming to power, etc. But the result seeing the small amount of money they got and what they achieved is mind-blowing, its amazing.

Q: What do you identify as the most significant change/ most valuable outcome?

A: That's a very good question. I think it is the fact that men in very high places started to realize that they need women to make change happen, and started to see civil society. These really are the main, major changes. Because coming out of a dictatorship, people are completely used to, and you see it now in Libya and Tunisia, people are used to just look at power and follow blindly and fearfully whoever is in charge. The fact that we start to appreciate counter venting power is cult. I think these were the main achievements. I think being able to have dialogue between Bagdad and Kirkuk or Mosul is as an amazing achievement and a step to have a more pluralistic society and to start value that again. These I see as the main accomplishment.

Q: What/ who was the most significant actor(s) in drafting and implementing INAP?

A: That's the interesting thing, and it was the civil society and in that particular case more precisely the Women Empowerment Organisation. I think it is very, very interesting because usually many NAPs have been drafted by governments, and in this case it was truly civil society doing this. And I think this is pretty amazing. They were the leading power doing the big push towards drafting the NAP and that was good lobbying and smart navigating. They made sure that the government stayed responsible. What they did very smartly, very quickly they formed an interdepartmental body, and this is where INGOs come into play. They learnt from their sister organisations, as they share experiences and everybody told them to make sure to get an interdepartmental body as quickly as possible because otherwise when we come back to M&E you will be responsible for it to succeed. And then you are in big trouble because NGOs cannot make it happen by themselves, nor can the government, nor can the ministries, nor can the police, nobody can make it happen by themselves. So they learned from their peers that you have to focus on that, making sure that this interdepartmental body exists. But once again the interesting thing was that it was totally done by civil society, which is really interesting as a political structure.

Q: What were the major challenges to implementing INAP 1325?

A: Where to start. First, the biggest challenge, and I think still, is the fact that tremendous amount of men, but also women think it is some kind of a ladies thing talking about rape, abandoned women or lack of gynecological healthcare. So the biggest challenge was and it still is the preconceptions. They solved it by putting men at the top, which was very smart. Lack of funding is still a huge challenge. Another challenge, linked to the sexism aspect is that, as soon as women start talking about security people started to hear something completely different – women must be able to walk around in the evening, they shouldn't be attacked or raped – they

automatically link it to women only. Talking about security was a huge challenge. They were not talking about some women security, but about how they were going to disarm groups, how will they organize the new national army and the police. Another huge challenge was having civil society talking to governments. It is a thing that took a few years to get there, and the dictatorship made everything more difficult.

Q: What was the role of international NGOs/ organisations in drafting and implementation of INAP 1325?

A: We were sharing lessons learn, but they were really doing it by themselves. Because we also learnt that no two countries are similar, no two experiences are similar. International communities were the place where they heard about 1325. INGOs were the ones that told very honestly that we don't have to pretend to each other that we are successful, something which governments do. So we were sharing super honestly mistakes, problems, disappointments, etc. And that is tremendously important because for that INGO society are a very strong learning ground, where people learn a lot and fast. There is a network Global Network for Women and Peace (GNWP) which has all the examples from the entire world of people working on Resolution 1325 and is sharing reports, this was really an important part. As well as the KARAMA network, which was connecting everybody to everybody, PAX which helped them organize their 1325 NAP, INGOs, the international community were tremendously important for the Iraqi civil society. And they are for us, it is mutually strengthening.

Q: Which local organisations were involved?

A: Pushed by WEO, EMMA a women's worker organisation. I think there were about 40 organisations involved. Suzan will be able to tell you the exact amount. Also I remember Rena Mohamed – she is extremely strong opinionated women right activist from Bagdad.

Q: What was the INAP impact in terms of institutionalization and law reforms?

A: Hard to say, I think you should ask Suzan that. I know that there were agreements made on transitional justice.

Q: Why was the ministry of women affairs dissolved?

A: I am not sure, you have to ask Suzan.

Q: What was the feedback from women, civil society, government, international organisations etc.?

A: People were positive about it, they were pretty amazed this completely new endeavor worked. Nobody really thought this could possibly work. And people were enthusiastic that it worked. There was a danger of being abused by the government as a token to shut people up. This is a concern which is always there, also there in the Netherlands, and in every civil society that is thinking who is playing who – am I tricking the other side and getting them to work with me or am I the one being tricked.

Q: What are the lessons learnt from Measurement & Evaluation?

A: It sounds maybe like the most boring part, but I think it is outstanding of you that you added this. I came to know after I was the coordinator of the Dutch NAP, which is one of the most far fetching national action plans, and I came to realize that this probably the most important part of the entire NAP is checking whether all of these promises are really happening. And really this is key of every NAP. Several things about it – in the past women were so happy that there was any agreement, that they didn't really take care of the monitoring. They were satisfied that the government was agreeing to have women at the peace processes and to be involved. Then, it turned out that nothing was really happening and there was no mechanism to hold

people accountable. So women learn the hard way that this is a crucial part and really had to think this through and include it. You have to ask Suzan for all the details. But I know that the government have been trying to push the responsibility back to WEO. In a very smart way Suzan managed to impose her way to push the responsibility back to the government and she succeeded, but must have been really hard.

Q: What are your expectations for the second INAP?

A: If one NAP has a chance to succeed its hers because it is from NGOs. What makes it difficult for her is the underlying conflict between Bagdad and KRG. There are elements that are unpredictable. But as far as having the political power to push through for women's rights be it in Bagdad or in KRG, the WEO has the biggest chance.

Q: What will be done differently, taking into account lessons learnt?

A: You should ask Suzan, but I think it will be more on M&E, hard security reform, not only having women in police and army but also on top level decision making. Because 1325 was never about having the same policy and just adding some women. It is not about we want to have the same policy but add a woman, it is not that. It is a fundamentally different kind of security policy, saying that if there is a problem it should not be an intervention by the police of military, it should be listening to both sides, making sure that, that everybody is being heard, that minorities are being heard and processes are inclusive. Probably the future development what they want as a continuation in this kind of deep policy change, and not just adding women. There is a very good one-liner: '1325 is not about add women and stir – not like a cooking receipt of just add more sugar, we want a whole different cake all together'.

Q: What would you identify as the biggest difficulty today?

A: The KRG – Bagdad, the war on terror is a huge challenge to resolution 1325 because by now dues to the worldwide stupid understanding of the war on terror that only a very strong authoritative government will be able to counter terrorism. This is an absolutely negative game changer.

Q: What is the role of NGOs and non-government actors in the second INAP?

A: Completely like the first NAP and even more so in the second one is civil society the driving force. At first, the government first taught it was some sort of a cute paper that will get them funding and international donors would like it. Afterwards they realized that it is really something and is working, so they put even more energy towards it.

Q: Is the WPS and 1325 really valuable?

A: It is not some piece of paper, as it really made a chance. Any agenda is as strong as its proponents or opponents. It is up to the people of how they make use of it. The value is because of what people do of it. In this particular case it is extremely successful because it is pushed by international women organisations.

Q: What is your desired most significant change?

A: I would really like a few things. That security in the Middle East has fundamentally changed. And this is not about making sure that parliament, airport, police stations, government buildings are not being attacked, but that people feel secure, also from their own government. This I would think would be a success. That women have the same rights and possibilities as men. And it becomes completely normal for everybody to be participating in decision-making, whether you are from a Kurdish or Yezidi minority. And one more important thing, because

of the war a lot of the energy went into thinking about how to take care of the refugees, which is very important. But that took away time and energy into thinking how to rebuild the country and what kind of country we are rebuilding and how inclusive, etc. It would be very important and my wish for the continuation that women's organisations are not the only one that have to carry all the heavy burden of reminding the government about – taking care of SDGs, women, refugees – core tasks of the government.

Q: If ISIS would not have changed the political tide, do you think you would have been able to advance as much as you did so far?

A: Five years ago, I would have given you a different answer and I would have thought conflict is a way of opening, a window of opportunity – never waste a good crisis. But now I only see damage coming out of the country. Really nothing good. Don't get me wrong, it was really good to topple Saddam. But there is hardly or none any good coming out of conflict because reinforcing masculinity. There is so much bad of it that it hard to see any good. Yes, conflict shakes up the normal status quo, but also gives power to the wrong people who are ready to get arms – they are the ones that flower in a conflict.

Interview with the Director of WEO and coordinator of the cross-sector taskforce conducted on May 30, 2019

Q: What happened before the INAP? What is the background of drafting the first INAP?

A: We were as an organisation working on women's issues, every time talking about women's rights and advocating for basic rights. But then we recognized that there is Resolution 1325 that is supporting all what we are pushing for. So we found that resolution is the tool that we need for our advocacy and it will be a good tool for us to strengthen our position. That was on the occasion of the open day, every year the UN, UNAMI and especially UN Women was doing an open day to celebrate this resolution. In 2011 we were invited to the open day to celebrate for this Resolution. So it was 2011, like we have been invited to that open day and they were talking about this Resolution and how it is important. This is eleven years that we have this Resolution. And for me it was very strange. I said ok, so what if we have this Resolution? Please can you tell me about the impact, the result, the achievement of this resolution? How women in my country benefited from this Resolution? If you are celebrating only that the UN adopted this Resolution so what? And every year you are celebrating so what? After 11 years from this Resolution please can you list the achievements, the outcomes, the impact? How has it been reflected on the ground? And it was like a big question and then like the UNAMI staff they said yes we believe and we admit that you are the real women activist, asking these kind of questions, so I have to tell you now it is your role and your responsibility how to translate this resolution on the ground. It is the role of civil society to advocate, to push, to support. I said yes of course, but you have to show us the way, to highlight how to do it. So this is how we then started to do our meetings as NGOs, how to work on this Resolution. How to be implemented, how to benefit from it. Because every time we are talking about women rights and they are saying ok what is women's rights? What you need more than what you have? But with this resolution it is what we have every time asking, so this is very strong tool, we

have to use this. So this is how we start to do our meetings and putting our strategies. The first time like we started to do national conference in April 2012. A national conference because we wanted to see how, if this Resolution been implemented, anything been achieved on this or not. Maybe we don't have the knowledge and information about it. Maybe it was new for us, but not new for the governmental institutions, for other NGOs. So this is how we invited all from the level of parliament, both in Baghdad and Kurdistan, and also the state actor from different ministries, Ministry of Justice, Interior, all the service providers. And also civil society, of course UN agencies like UNAMI. And we put the first session just for UNAMI to explain what is this Resolution.

Q: Afterwards you started drafting the INAP, right?

A: Yes, so during the conference again we found there is nothing on the ground even everyone is speaking strangely about what is this 1325 and what is this Resolution? So the result what there is nothing. So this is how we started like ten organisations that we have to do something on this Resolution and we put our strategies how do develop a national action plan in Iraq that is translating all the content of this Resolution and the national action plan, and how to create the political will with the state actors. How to approach them? So we put our map who are the people that can support us and how to approach them. So this is how we start and this is how we created the cross-sector taskforce who worked together on developing the national action plan and also we start the real partnership between civil society, the parliament, government, all working together on developing the national action plan. Of course there was some kind of awareness about the Resolution, about the importance of Iraqi national action plan. And then of course to prepare the things that need to be included, the pillars. So this is how we established different committees in this cross-sector taskforce, like the high committee, the legal committee,

the drafting committee, the financial committee, and each committee contained the state actors from parliament, government and the civil society.

Q: So really an effort from all levels also including the government?

A: Yes

Q: And then you started implementing the INAP in 2014,. So what are the outcomes of INAP implementation? And also what do you think is the most significant change?

A: Yes, the significant change and the most important thing of the implementation of this national action plan is first building the capacity of the different ministries working on the development of the national action plan and then the implementation. And also mainstreaming the Women, Peace and Security on all levels. The Women, Peace and Security agenda became a topic that it is very phenomenal and very clear and it became on top of the agenda of the government and parliament. So this was not easy. It needed time. But this is what happened through the development and implementation. And of course mobilizing the resources for the implementation from international organisations, from government. Even if there was no budget for the implementation, but at least the government used their budget, used their facilities, used their staff for the implementation. And this is how we attracted the international community and the UN agencies and international organisations to support the implementation of this national action plan.

Q: So they provided the base on which you can work?

A: Yes. And there was implementation on the ground because this national action plan been translated into emergency plan after ISIS intervention. So there was emergency plan how to respond to the urgent needs of women, girls, IDPs for providing services and distributing

humanitarian aid. And also some kind of likelihood programmes, health services. So this is all been implemented through the emergency plan because also all the ministries been committed to use their budget for the implementation of this emergency plan. And there was also the master plan for the implementation of this national action plan through 2016 and 2017. So each ministry had their clear plan on what they want to do. So also you know it is not happening like every time you know, because like Iraq has too many strategies for women. Like for ending violence against women, for poverty, but there is no implementation plan. But for this national action plan the good thing and the achievement was there was an implementation plan translated to emergency plan, to master plan.

Q: Also another thing I wanted to ask, one of my interviewees told me that this national action plan is really a huge achievement because it is one of the topics which made the governments of Iraq and Kurdistan come and talk together on the same table, and also agree on something. What do you think about that?

A: Yes, definitely this is one of the big results and achievements of working of this cross-sector taskforce as a national team working together despite all sensitivities there were between the governments. Especially after the referendum. But this thing kept the good relations and they were continuing their meetings and discussions. And even when they said since we are the national team for peacebuilding so we have to initiate, and also to mediate the peacebuilding between the two governments. So of course this is the big achievement. One – uniting all the force and strengthening the relations between different ministries and both governments, and also the partnership of civil society. **So this is why the process in Iraq was very unique.**

Q: Who was the most significant actor(s) in drafting and implementing INAP?

A: Of course state actors from government, and from parliament and like also members of civil society alliance 1325.

Q: You know so many of my interviewees said you – Suzan it was her, she was the one pushing and advocating for it on all levels, she was so determined, she really did it.

A: Yes, I am happy to hear that [laughs]. But yes I was also doing it with the support and cooperation from others. So this is how I was able to continue and to do more and more.

Q: What about international NGOs and UN agencies?

A: Yes, the international NGOs of course. I have to say the Euromed Feminist Initiative (EFI) they supported us from the first day. When we started as an imitative with ten women organisations, we named ourselves Iraqi Women Initiative for Developing a national action plan. And this is how EFI said we are ready to support you, but please just give us your strategy, what you want to do and how to do it. So this is how they started to support us technically and financially. And they got supported through the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So they got the money to support us, but they not only supported us financially, but technically. Like for example in the beginning we said we want to have some experience how to work on this because we don't have any experience, how we can develop a national action plan. Like so we were able to get experience from the Nepal experience. EFI supported us with this, and they invited this lady from Nepal and she came and she gave us the summary of their work, and how we can benefit from the lessons learnt, from the recommendations, what to do, how to start, so it was really very good. So after that the Norwegian foreign affairs they supported all the process for the development. But for the implementation also like UK Embassy, Netherlands Embassy and also UNAMI, UN Women, all they came on board to support the

implementation of this. Of course HIVOS, one of the international organisations supported some of the process, USIP supported some of the process. And that was also our responsibility to approach the international organisation how to support us, to implement, to do some kind of activities, trainings, capacity building.

Q: What were the major challenges to implementing INAP 1325?

A: The major challenges was one of them the ISIS intervention because the adoption and endorsement of the national action plan was in April and immediately after that was the intervention of ISIS and also the financial crisis. So the security situation, the financial, the military operations all it was a big challenge for us. And then to start work on to develop an emergency plan. And of course the resource, the budget. And because of the conflict, so also we were not able to have a clear budget from government on the implementation. Of course the capacity of the government and the staff helped us for implementation. Also it was one of the challenges. One of the challenges was also sometimes the division between civil society, we faced also this kind of division.

Q: Because I also heard that they dropped the budget because there was money needed for other things?

A: Yes, for war.

Q: Which local organisations were involved?

A: We were ten organisations in the beginning across Iraq, like the Bagdad Women Association, Women Leadership Institute, like Asuda, Women Empowerment Organisation, Awal, Iraqi Women League, Al-Taqwa Assossiation, the minorities network, Kurdistan Women union. So many different organisations. And this is how we worked on the development. But

unfortunately some division happened to this organisation, and some of the organisations dropped from this initiative. But when we achieved the great success with the endorsement of the first national action plan, many other organisations who came to us and they want to be part of this initiative. And this is how we changed the name to become alliance 1325.

Q: What was the INAP impact in terms of institutionalization and law reforms?

A: You know we established a legal committee to identify the discriminatory laws that need to be changed and to match with the content of the Resolution 1325 and CEDAW. So this is how the legal committee submits proposals to change different articles. But you know for the same challenges and this topic is not stated as priority. Because it is a priority for emergency to respond to displacement, and humanitarian aid. And even working on law it takes a lot of time and effort on raising awareness, and lobbying and political will.

Q: So for instance some interviewees said that in Kurdistan the government and the society is more open, so maybe it is a little bit easier to make a change. Is that true?

A: Yes, and also because you know now the direction is to sectarian. And this is also a big problem, which we face. In Kurdistan we don't have this problem. There were big changes in the law. But still in Bagdad even the cross sector taskforce agreed on the same pillar that the law and legislation and to have the same proposal to states that we have to work on it in the cross sector taskforce.

Q: What was the feedback on the NAP? (from women, civil society, government, international organisations etc.)

A: You know, this national action plan gave a very good image to Iraq that Iraq is the first country in the Middle East to adopt this action plan. And even many organisations who were

taking this national action plan as they were part of it, and did that. Before there was everyone criticizing, and asking what are those meetings, what is this national action plan. Then they were talking in front of international organisations and saying they want support to implement the programs of this. So this is how in the beginning they were criticizing and talking bad about this, but when it became even when it was endorsed many women NGOs were denying and saying no, there is no approval. So we said we got the approval and distributed everywhere, and we said take it this is signed by the Prime Minister. Because if they feel like they are not part of it, it means it is not good work.

Q: So it is also really important to have the strong relationship between the civil society?

A: Yes. But you know also there is international organisations creating this division among the society themselves, because they talk to one actor and not to the other. That is really interesting, because they think they are trying to help, but they really don't know how to do it.

Q: What are the lessons learnt from Measurement & Evaluation?

A: The lessons learnt from the past national action plan are from the M&E. Because again the challenges from the conflict, and also the financial crisis and the urgent need of humanitarian assistance, so there was no time to focus on monitoring and evaluation. So this is one of the lessons learnt that we cannot implement without M&E. So we have to pay and focus on M&E for the second NAP. So this is one of the lessons learnt. The other one is budget. There should be allocated budget for implementation, otherwise it will be difficult to implement this. The other one it was about localization – how to localize the second NAP. Because with this process, the beginning process is mostly based inside ministries, directorates inside the cities. But how we have to localize the second NAP. How to go to be reflected in the subdistricts and the villages. So this is how we are working on this.

Q: So would you then think that the NAP is valuable in anyway?

A: Yes. You know without the national action plan we were not able to have influence on government, on the implementation, on having all this kinds of implementation plan, mobilizing resource, capacity building. And also attracting the international committees, UN agencies, to have funds. I will give you one of the examples. At the time of, at the beginning of the financial crisis, like the first thing they want to close some of the institutions because they cannot pay for all of the expenses. One of them was the women's shelters in three provinces and also it was some of the directories of combatting violence against women. So through our advocacies and through the national action plan we were able to get fund from the UN agencies to support the shelters and the directories. Without plan we were not able to convince for the fund. So this is how many programmes have been supported, funded, implemented through the plan because there is a plan.

Q: What did the civil society do to organize themselves to gain political, diplomatic and financial support?

A: There were regular meeting among the alliance. Every time even with the master plan. The alliance 1325, they prioritize what are the priorities now for 2016, 2017, etc. from the national action plan. So they put all the programmes under each pillar. So this is how they present it to the task force and say this is the priority, so please take it into consideration when developing the master plan. So this is how the master plan is developed based on the priorities that have presented by the alliance 1325.

Q: You said conflict was one of the biggest challenges. Do you think If ISIS would not have changed the political tide, do you think you would have been able to advance as much as you did so far?

A: You know of course in a stable situation and stable circumstances it is much better than when the government is under stress of conflict. There was more than eight million of Iraqi that were displaced. So even if it was in the beginning for them difficult to understand the Women, Peace and Security agenda. When we were advocating and asking for budget they are saying but please, we are in a conflict we have Daesh and you are talking about women issues. We said, but this is for the period of conflict and post-conflict. So also it was a time to give more awareness what is 1325, and this is how we developed the emergency plan. So of course if it was a stable situation it would be easier for us, at least to get budget and more focus on the implementation. But despite all this, there was implementation. Because there was a good push from the civil society.

Q: What kind formal structures were put in place because of the NAP ?

A: There was official order from the government and the ministries council about the structure, about the chair of this cross sector taskforce, about the coordination committee, about the coordinator of this cross sector task force, about reporter, about secretariat, and the focal point in each ministries. So there was a clear structure for this NAP. And this was also achieved, so it shows the political will.

Q: Now the first NAP is implemented and expired, so now you are working on the second NAP?

A: Yes, now we are working on the second national action plan and we want to benefit from the lessons learnt, from the recommendations. Because also the good thing is that we have report on the implementation. So this is a good base and resource for us, it includes recommendations and lessons learnt. We did also some consultation meetings for localization. We invited all the provinces to two high level consultation meetings. So this is how we had the representative from each provinces to talk about the real needs of each province. Also we

summarized these needs which will also be one of the resource. And of course we received some assessment and studies from NDI, from Actis, so also this is very helpful for us. We don't want to start from scratch. Now we have some experience and some resources to depend on. And also the good thing is that the cross sector task force agreed about the log frame about five pillars of the second plan.

Q: What is your biggest dream for drafting and implementing the second INAP?

A: My biggest dream is to have first the second NAP that has the budget, the resource for implementation, clear structure and the cooperation and coordination between the international organisations and UN agencies because my dream is also to have a pool fund for the implementation from government and international organisations. So that everyone can contribute. It means also more coordination between them.

Q: What do you think is the biggest difficulty now with the second NAP?

A: To be honest, there is a big problem now. But we hope to solve it. We will see. Because maybe the structure was good for the first NAP, but now it needs some changes. Because also there are changes in the institutions, and now the new cabinet and new government. So these are challenges, but we have to wait for the new people to come in.

Q: What do you need to solve these challenges?

A: We need to organize ourselves, to give our suggestion why in this way, how to convince why is it better in order to get the approval for the new structure.

Q: So it is more of a bureaucratic difficulty for the second NAP?

A: Yes, because every time when civil society is doing all these things, and now the government thinks this is easy and there is no space for NGOs. So this is why we have to convince them why civil society is important and needs to remain, and to have this kind of partnership. And this is wasting of knowledge. Because even for us it was a process to learn. If changing those it means a waste of knowledge and experience that we go from the first NAP. We started to work on this since the end of 2011.

Q: In terms of government and political level do you feel that there is support for the first and the second NAP?

A: Yes, and especially from the high level state actors.

Q: Do you want to add some point that maybe I missed?

A: I think it is also time now to work on the regional level, on the common issue of Women, Peace, Security agenda. Because this agenda is not only something on the local level, it is on the regional and international. So this is how we have to expand this work to become on regional level and then to the biggest circle of international. We have a common issue.

Q: What do you need to achieve that?

A: Again political will and second we need fund. I think the fund is the most challenging. Because if we have the fund it is easy to get the political will.

Q: What is your biggest dream for the WPS agenda and for Iraq to achieve now with the second NAP?

A: To have the budget and to see with monitoring and evaluation to have the concrete achievements on the ground and also all the root causes for all the challenges for Women, Peace and Security. This is how we can work on the root causes.

Q: What do you think those challenges are?

A: Education is one of them, lack of the marginalization and gender identity. This is how increasing extremism and the involvement of also women in terrorism. We want to have these on study level, we want to deal with it, to solve it, to respond to it. We want to respond to all the needs that women suffering from it, how can the national action plan fill those gaps.

To me 1325 is really reforming the structure for the better. You see where there are wrong practices and how they can be changed, making new policies, making more inclusive, also localizing, understanding networking.

For example, to have after a certain period that there is equal ministers men and women. We have a quota, but only in parliament, not in the executive authority. So you can find among twenty ministers maybe only one woman. So how we can have equal representation in all levels, in Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, how to have women in decision-making, how women can be part of the political decisions, of peace agreement, of negotiations, of reconciliation. Not all the meetings surrounded by men. So this is my dream, how we can see the changes and how we can remove this patriarchic society and instill gender equality.

Q: One last question about the Ministry of women , why was it dissolved?

A: Because the same example that I gave you, what happened when there was a financial crisis. The first thing that happened was that they started to delete the women institutions – shelters,

directories working for combatting violence against women. So with the ministry of women affairs it is the same. It is an easy thing, not that strong. So this is how it came the first thing to remove the ministry of women affairs.

Interview with the Director of EMMA organisation conducted on May 13, 2019

Q: What happened before the INAP: first anniversary of the NAP? What is the background of drafting the first INAP?

A: There are many organisations, especially in Kurdistan, working and implementing the ideas of 1325 even before 2000. A group of NGOs in Iraq and Kurdistan started to work on the NAP from 2010. From 2011 I was aware of the process, but actually not yet an active part of it then. Back then I was in the Netherlands and came back to Iraq for a meeting with different organisations, and saw Iraq and Kurdistan engaging in the process. This group of organisations was actually more closed, not open for everybody to enter at any time. I was aware of the process and followed because I perceived the issue as very important. So a coordination group for developing an action plan was organized and it took several years actually. In 2014 it was accepted by the government of Iraq and Kurdistan. After that, there were several meetings and workshops, with other people who had similar plans in place already. They estimated a budget for 4 years implementation which was about more than 5 million dollars. When the Iraqi government approved the plan they dropped out the budget to implement it. Also, the government did not agree with the idea to change some laws because they were in contrast with Sharia law. But the most important part is that they dropped the budget. It was a group of organisations, but the main organisation which was involved in the workgroup and also became the face of the process was the Women Empowerment Organisation. They did a lot of advocacy outside and inside to implement it. But actually the implementation could not be real because there was no budget. Within this time ISIS came to the area – after this everybody was talking that there was a war in the area, thousands of victims and thousands of women being raped, so according to the government it was not the time to talk about the NAP. They developed an emergency plan instead of the real plan, as a reaction for the new situation in Iraq. There was also lack of funding –and also for me as I see it, it lacked detail, there was no government part.

It stayed among several ministries and agency directors, it did not go down to the people and staff in the ministries, and stayed on the top. So these were the major challenges, also the funding was the other challenge. So after 4 years they published a report on the implementation. So when you see the report it was actually mainly statistics, which were available before from other ministries. So the real implementation was not really in place and after when the working groups came together, they realized the first NAP was not really implemented because it remained in the top level, it did not reach the real people in the field. The NAP remained on the top level of the government and UN agencies, so that was one of the reasons why they could not implement it. The second reason was the budget. And the third reason is the authority because priority is given for war, weapons and relief issues, but no priority for protecting women and participation in peacebuilding. All this was and conflict happened, but we did not see that the role of women or the face of women during negotiations and processes, it was just only men. I know it is very difficult, also because of the culture of patriarchy and the mentality of authority. All these details I know through the organisation which was part of the coordination group because we are also several times meeting there also talking about the challenges.

Q: What are the outcomes of INAP implementation?

A: It doesn't reach real people, real actors in the field. First reason: Many INGOs were not involved in the process. Second reason: budget Third reason: the authority – no priority for women participation. Lastly, the culture of patriarchy.

Q: What do you identify as the most significant change/ most valuable outcome?

A: For example I can mention two things. One of them is that in the plan there is a part participation of women in decision-making in Iraq. After this plan was available and people

were working on implementing it or advocating for implementing it, the Iraqi government cancelled the ministry of women affairs and the human rights ministry. So even after efforts for implementation and monitoring, the government cancelled them. Also, when the action plan was there, there was only one woman who was minister, and actually she was minister of Women Affairs. Now in Iraqi government there is no women. There is one woman who candidate to be minister and there were a lot of comments and criticisms because her brother and her father were connected with ISIS, so they dropped her out. So taking that into account, I am asking where is the action plan, where the approval of the government, where is the implementation? The other thing was on amending laws and passing laws on supporting women from domestic violence. But even until now, for about 8 years, there is a draft on ending domestic violence in Iraq, which is not yet passed by the government and they did not put it on their agenda yet. Another issue is the Jafari law proposal stating that any girls when she became 9 years she can marry. So, always that came into discussion in parliament, but when it came to action and details nothing was done. They did not amend any articles or laws about protecting women from violence. So I mean what happened with the Yezidi women and now there are many children born from rape and according to the Islamic and Iraqi law, those children became automatically Muslim because their father was Muslim and they were not accepted by Yezidi community. So what I mean is that there was no action made to develop or to like think about the role of the law to accept those children. Even they did not give out them like ID cards, they do not have any documentation. And even you know there are many organisations which have psycho-social support to victims of violence without being related to this action plan because really not everybody are as I told you in the beginning involved. And even in the report I saw that several women have access to psycho-social support – well it is not several women it is thousands of women. But because they are not involved with the NAP, even they did not ask organisations who have programmes about survivals of violence to just take some

information from us. There are hundreds of organisations working on that, but even they did not ask us to give them our report about the beneficiaries, about the programme that we have. So you know there are many organisations that have good programmes for survivors, but even they are not mentioned or really general.

Q: What/ who was the most significant actor(s) in drafting and implementing INAP?

A: From the beginning I think there was a woman from an organisation in Sweden, I think 'Women for Women' who supported some women organisations with the idea of 1325 and drafting action plan for implementation. But actually the real actor was the woman organisations in Iraq, so local women organisations both from Kurdistan and Iraq, but with the support from the Sweden organisation. I think 'Women for Women', but I am not sure.

Q: What was the role of international NGOs/ organisations in drafting and implementation of INAP 1325?

A: They were in several meetings when I participated there were some, but also not all/many INGOs. But also one thing I can say, when the plan is approved by the government many INGOs when they were writing the proposal, when they were talking they always mentioned the national action plan. Besides those INGOs we were actually really supported by those countries like the UK, Netherlands, I think the Sweden government were contributing with money for implementation. So there was international support, and without it actually it is extremely difficult. The reason actually for Iraqi government to approve the INAP was because of good advocacy by international community and also UN agencies support for the action plan.

Q: I read and also heard from other people I interviewed that this is really unique because the NAP was the only thing that the two regional governments – the Kurdistan and the Iraqi

regional government – agreed on. What my interviewee said was that they did not talk about anything else, but when it came to women they felt like there was something to agree on that they should be included.

A: I don't know actually, I don't know how this came to be, but it was the same plan that was approved by the Iraqi government and the Ministry of Interior, who were also part of the drafting. But I don't know on what they connected there together. They had several meetings after the referendum, which was a big cutting between Kurdistan and Iraq. After that period, they held meetings in Bagdad. So what I know is that two people from the High Council of Women in Kurdistan and I think one person from the Ministry of Interior participated in the meetings. So I didn't hear if this plan they gathered the whole government of Iraq and Kurdistan together. There are several actors in Kurdistan who were from the beginning part of – it was the Ministry of Interior, High Council of Women and Ministry of Justice – the drafting and the action plan. Without international support it was difficult.

Q: Which local organisations were involved?

A: Ministry of Interior, High Council & Ministry of Justice

Q: What was the feedback on the NAP, from women, civil society, government, international organisations etc.?

A: Actually many of women organisation & NGOs, we were very happy and proud to have an action plan in this part. It is because you have something you can rely on. Despite being very general, it was good for all of us to have something to rely on. That was the feedback and idea of the people. After a period when it was not implemented, there were meetings and there was no real implementation because of the reasons I mentioned before, I heard from many people that became disappointed. Also in Iraq there were many strategies, but there was no

implementation. Not only that, even the other ministries they have strategies and also the ministry of women have a strategy on women development like vision 2020, but after 5 years they adapted the next one there is even not a small part of the strategies implemented. So that is a part of the disappointed of people. And there was actually one meeting in which I asked ‘Who’s monitoring?’, there were no mechanisms. Also one of the reasons why I think the report was not very focused on the implementation was because there were no appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

Q: What are the lessons learnt from Measurement & Evaluation?

A: I asked – who is monitoring. There was no mechanism. The report does not have a lot on implementation.

Q: What did civil society do to organize themselves to gain political, diplomatic and financial support?

A: So this action plan became a fact, those coordination groups became owners of the NAP. This is one of the points I have, even I hear some organisations got funding for implementing some parts because their proposal is based on the action plan. But even when they were talking about implementation of the action plan, the ‘owner’ would get angry and said that nobody can do anything in relation to the action plan without getting back to them. So that is one of the reasons my organisation and one other organisation Sulaymaniyah tried to be part of the implementation, but we did not succeed actually because it was a very closed group only focusing on the very high level of people, not on the ground. And you know we are NGOs always on the field and in the ground. There are two organisation from Kurdistan from the very begging and from Iraq, but at the end Women Empowerment Organisation became the coordinator and the main actor of the coordinating group. Even this example which happened

with the gender study organisation, I think they had a project on that but they were faced with saying – we are the owner of the plan and you cannot do anything without us. So it was not for everybody unfortunately.

Q: So would you then think that the NAP is valuable in anyway?

A: Well yes, it is valuable actually and also because I think it is very clear for the pillars and it is also very practical for any organisation that wants to rely on or depend on, when they want to make research or write a proposal it is very good. And also it is the work of the women movements in Iraq and Kurdistan, so that is why it is really valuable. It remains the implementation always difficult especially when we faced the big problem here with the war with ISIS, it was not a priority still until now. Not only from the government, but also for international Committees it is still not a priority. When it is not a priority the implementation is not easy.

Q: If ISIS would not have changed the political tide, do you think you would have been able to advance as much as you did so far?

A: The situation in Kurdistan is much different than Iraq, for Kurdistan even before ISIS women issues were always on the agenda, the agenda of women was always on the table because of very active women organisation and movement – that is one side. Also the other side is that the government and people of Kurdistan are more open minded to new ideas. It is not easy, but you can make advocacy and reach some achievements even if it takes a few years something can happen at the end. So that is before ISIS actually. But when ISIS came everything changed. In Iraq the society is more conservative and 100 percent relies on the Islamic Sharia, so the space for freedom and new ideas is very small. And even the idea for the shelter for protecting women who are facing violence or domestic violence is not allowed in

Iraq. Maybe if ISIS is not here, in Kurdistan maybe we could have some achievement now for the implementation of the plan, there would have been something done. But in Iraq I am not so sure, to be honest. In Kurdistan always when the prime minister would have any speech, he would talk about women movement and organisations, he would mention the great role of NGOs in Kurdistan, the partnership with NGOs and women organisation. You know so that on media there was always some talking about women.

Q: What kind formal structures were put in place because of the NAP ?

A: So when they approve the NAP, after a period the Iraqi government hired Suzan Aref – the director of WEO - as general director for following the implementation of the NAP. So that is the only thing that I know as an initiative from the government. I don't know if you have managed to interview her, but it will be very good if you can interview her because she has all details. So she was hired for that which is one of the mechanisms for implementation. But I don't know what is the monitoring mechanism that she has, I know she has a lot of women staff and she is general director in like a department of the Ministerial Council.

Q: Did the UN do something?

A: I don't think so actually. The UN only helped Suzan to go to the Security Council a few times and advocate, maybe she has more details on that. But the UN always mentioned the INAP in reports and meetings. And the UN also supported, I am not sure you can just ask Suzan in your interview, if UN women supported the implementation. There was a delegation every year to Kurdistan and Iraq from government and some civil society supported by the UN to go to the CSW in New York, it's a part of the funding. And also many activities of the meeting that they did for the plan and to make planning for each ministry it was mostly funded by the UN.

Q: What is your biggest dream for drafting and implementing the second INAP?

A: So my biggest dream actually is implementation of this action plan needs good advocacy and networking from all the women organisations who are working on any part of the plan. So it needs coordination among all actors of implementation. Especially from civil society. Because the civil society are the main actors for advocacy. Implementation is the responsibility of the government and parliament and even political parties because in Iraq they are the ones that have the real power. So it needs actually coordination including every actors who are parts of the issues that the NAP is talking about. So that is my biggest dream actually because without that it will be difficult to implement. And always authorities everywhere in the world if they see that there is a big group of the actors who are coordinating, they listen to them, but if not they just tell them 'your excellency' it will not work. I don't say revolution or protesting, but real coordination.

Q: What do you think needs to happen for there to be real coordination among civil society?

What is not in place now? Why is there no real networking?

A: I think what needs to be is for the owner of the action plan and UN women who were always a big part, they need to make some initiative to meet all actors, or at least most of the actors who see themselves working on the topics and issues that INAP is talking about. So it is actually to gather all these people together to see and discuss what is on the ground to decide how to go about it. And it is one more thing that I see actually. It is difficult to implement all four pillars together and on the top level. It is sometimes necessary to have small steps, we cannot always have big steps. It is good to have small steps sometimes. If there is no reaction and response from the authorities we need to go to the field and the ground to see what is needed. This was lacking until now. For example peacebuilding, peacebuilding not only among the religious and community leaders. We need to reach people what they think about

peacebuilding, how they see themselves. One of the I think biggest mistakes is I think that it was not on the ground. I think what we need to do is gather all together and discuss why is the first NAP not implemented and what are the lessons learnt from it. We need to share the mistakes and success. We have to be very clear and say – we failed in 1,2,3 and succeeded in 1,2,3.

Q: And you would say it is the responsibility of UN women to organize such a meeting? So that they can also hear the voice of the people?

A: Yes, they can make the initiative.

Q: In terms of government and political level do you feel that there is support for the fist and the second NAP? And for such networking to happen? Or are they more against it?

A: Maybe there will be a good number of people that can discuss for what you are advocating, specific ministry for specific issues. You can reach the ministry of Social Affairs for what is related to the protecting women. So it is up to the place that you want to reach. I don't think in Kurdistan they will be against. But I think in Iraq they will be against, if they are talking about amending law in contrast with the Sharia, not only not helping, but they will impede the process. For example in Kurdistan, we have actually every year, my organisation in coordination with the Women Peace group we organize this conference about how we can live together. We bring all actors together to discuss the challenges, the problems, what they want, what they don't want. And we always bring the expertise of people from other countries who faced the same problem. So this year it was in April, it was about rebuilding communities beyond ISIS. So the topics that we discussed are actually one of them was 'what is the legal situation of the children born from rape?' 'what we have to do?', so it was a lot of discussion. So also we did a workshop after that and finalized an advocacy plan for solely these children and their mothers. So I mean

it was live publishing on TV and after the conference in the afternoon the spiritual committee of the Yezidi they passed the statement and said 'we are accepting those mothers and the children to come back'. But after three days they said 'we did not mean those words, they need to be born from Yezidi parents'. So I mean it was discussion, we could open discussion. It is possible in Kurdistan, not really possible in Iraq. So it is actually from that day it became a big discussion among Yezidi themselves. There are many people who are not accepting the children, but there are many also who do. For me, for us the first step is to open the discussion. After one year maybe they can do something, but you have to let them to discuss. We have to think loudly and listen to each other. So that is what we are doing. I get a lot of emails from people saying 'you exploded a bomb'. About three years we were discussing with you in closed meetings. But now because there is no reaction and there are hundreds of people who are born, and we know their situation – we have to do something. Our plan is to make a big advocacy to change the law.

Q: Do you want to add some point that maybe I missed?

A: What I want to add actually is that there are many organisations, if I talk about Kurdistan of course because I am here and working here. So there are many organisations that are working, or advocating or implementing the ideas of Resolution 1325 even before 2000. So what I remember from 1991, after the uprising in Kurdistan there are several women organisations and great number of women politicians and women feminist activists working and amending several laws and articles. That what even when there was no resolution 1325. It is because we know that there are gaps, there are problems that we have to work on changing. Even after 2000 and when the action plan was also passed in 2014, and before that there were many people that were working on the principles of the 1325 resolution, even before having it. And now they did not hear it, they are maybe working on it. We need to document all this work that the

feminist activists and NGOs are doing in Kurdistan. Because I know several organisations, NGOs that were established recently after 2014. They were very young girls and boys working hard on the implementation of 1325, but they've never heard about 1325. The soul of 1325 and international agreements are there. People are working on it without even knowing about it. One more thing I want to add actually, because people know about the problems and gaps and challenges, they want to work to change it. So how can we document that? This big movement, this big actions, you know.

Q: For me it was really interesting and really important to document what you did. Even if you are really humble and don't say that there was an actual achievement and want more, I still think that what you are doing is a huge achievement. Because you are pushing and you are not giving up. Because you see the gaps and you know the challenges and you are trying to fill them. And this is really amazing. I think it was important for someone to sit down and document your work, so that people can have it written and build on it from there on.

A: You are doing a great job actually, so thank you for that. Thank you for doing this. Here we are always saying that we want to work together with academics. I am always saying that, I ask myself sometimes I am facing and experiencing so special situations, just I don't have time to write it down. So the cases that I deal with survivors of violence or women that are coming back from ISIS. I don't have time. That is the role of academics. If I share it with you, you can document it. It is the resources of the humanities and the work of all of us together. So thank you for documenting that. So anything else you need anytime you can always text me. You are always more than welcome.

Interview with WEO employee conducted on April 6, 2019

Q: What happened before the INAP? What is the background of drafting the first INAP?

A: The cross-sector taskforce was established by women activists, MEPs, and government representatives. 3 committees were made for drafting the INAP, which were the legal, drafting, financial committee. In the meantime, advocacy with policymakers in Erbil & Bagdad was carried out by local civil society via meetings. The final drafting meeting was with the civil society and women activists. They started back in 2012 with 6 pillars - participation, protection & prevention, legislation, promotion, and measurement & evaluation. However, on the final meeting the government only adopted 3 pillars – participation, protection & prevention.

Q: Why?

A: Because the government had other priorities. But they adopted the draft and implemented the pillars from 2014 to 2018.

Q: Who was the most significant actor(s) in drafting and implementing INAP?

A: It was for sure civil society, NGOs and woman organisations. They were the most important actors. In order to advocate for policy change, they were often met with a lack of political will. But they did not give up. At times, activists were literally pushing doors to get to the government and make them talk to them. Most are women.

Q: Which local organisations were involved?

A: The Women Empowerment Organisation and Bagdad Women's association, which later formed 1325 Alliance with many other local organisations.

Q: What was their role?

A: They are the driving force. I made a report about each NGO and their specific involvement in implementing the WPS. And the conclusion was that it was really due to the consistent efforts and advocacy of NGOs that the INAP was drafted and implemented.

Q: What was the role of international NGOs and organisations?

A: Well, the Euromed Feminist Initiative helped a lot with drafting. The Kingdom of Netherlands helped with advocacy, drafting and finance. Canada and UN Women assisted us financially. Civil society organisations have a lot of international projects with countries and embassies for capacity building for women & MPs to raise their political experience and awareness. Because some of them are in the parliament because they are part of their parties, not really representing the role of women in society. All the civil society is working to change this. There is a really big project with the Kingdom of the Netherlands for meaningful participation - it will be exchanging experiences with Dutch MPs with MPs from Baghdad and Kurdistan. And to also increase their know-how of working in a political environment, because some of them represent party interests more than women in society interests.

Q: What were the major challenges to implementing INAP 1325?

A: I think 1325 in itself was a stepping stone and a huge success. However, it was challenging because of the ISIS war, but the NAP really helped to fight ISIS after & for the two governments to further collaborate.

Q: What are the outcomes of INAP implementation? And also what do you think is the most significant change?

A: To me the most significant change is definitely the collaboration of the two governments of Iraq and Kurdistan with civil society organisation, especially those who work with women rights.

Q: Is the WPS and 1325 really valuable?

A: After implementing the NAP we can see a lot of success from it. We can see a lot of outcomes from it. If it was not valuable we would not see the second NAP. It is really valuable. Also in the future it might provide an opportunity to reopen the Ministry of Women Affairs. The Ministry is important because when you have civil society they don't take you seriously, but when you have the signature of the minister you can implement everything. The Minister should be a woman and she should be politically independent in order to represent the real interests of women on the ground.

Q: Why was the ministry of women affairs dissolved?

A: They stopped it because they didn't need it anymore due to other priorities. Now the official bodies working with the INAP are the High council of Women affairs in Kurdistan & Women Empowerment Department in Bagdad.

Q: What are the lessons learnt from Measurement & Evaluation?

A: There were a lot of gaps and lessons learnt. The logical framework was complementary, but after the implementation it seemed that there should be a lot of M&E trainings in the future. Because now when you ask where are we now? We are in the process of drafting the second INAP, and the workshops for M&E have already started for Bagdad and Kurdistan to put the framework for the new national action plan and identify the new pillars. This time we want the second INAP to have five pillars which are: participation, protection & prevention, peace &

reconstruction, legislation & implementation, women economic empowerment. And they signed it. When we kicked off the drafting session on 16 December 2018, we immediately started with the report on the first INAP. In the lessons learnt it was very important to specify the budget, so this is something we are working hard on. We will finish the drafting of the second one in the end of April. Suzan also presented the report on the first INAP in UNSC on 24 January 2019.

Q: What is your biggest dream for drafting and implementing the second INAP?

A: I am really optimistic because the Legal advisor of the President and the Director of Office of Women Affairs signed it. The current President knows everything, he saw the signatures, so I am really optimistic that the pillars will be implemented in the next 4 years. The report was distributed everywhere in Arabic and English - UK, UNSC, NBCs in Erbil and even to Leiden University students.

Q: What do you want to achieve with the second INAP?

A: One sad fact is that women and girls are only stated as women in the INAP. Maybe only civil society organisations will implement it on women and girls, but not the government. This is the role of civil society. What I want to achieve is that girls are also included in 1325 officially, and that the quota is increased from 30 to 50% political participation. There are success stories in Kurdistan, after the recent elections in Kurdistan two women were signed as head of Parliament and Secretary. We wish to reach this point for all of Iraq.

Q: What do you need to achieve that?

A: Signing the budget and a good M&E mechanism. What we already did is a lot of workshops with relevant actors to raise awareness about good practices from international NAPs & exchanging experiences.

Q: What would you identify as the biggest difficulty today?

A: At first the biggest difficulty was the ISIS war. Now we are in the post-conflict period. So we need to raise awareness and show the value of the INAP in this period in order to gain support from the government.

Q: In terms of government and political level do you feel that there is support for the first and the second NAP?

A: When I saw the members of the ministries gathering for the second NAP, I saw commitment by signing the report and support from both governments. I am optimistic and hopeful. The most important gap was the M&E . After the M&E workshop I could see the feedback from the participants - and they said this is what we really needed. We talked about how to deal with the NAP and SDGs and how to relate them together to implement them . 70% of the participants of this workshop were women from civil society and ministers from both governments.

Interview with HIVOS employee conducted on May 6, 2019

Q: What happened before the INAP: first anniversary of the NAP

A: NGOs were working and very active. A NAP was dropped and nothing was done. With the invasion of Daesh there was a new momentum to try and do something. There was a new NAP, which gave political momentum. There was a bigger push to work on implementation. It came from civil society and international community. The Dutch government and other governments stepped in.

Q: What do you identify as the most significant change/ most valuable outcome?

A: That women were officially recognized and that civil society started working together with the governments in Bagdad and Kirkuk. The INAP actually became the unique linking point between the two governments and they finally agreed on something. Also adopting the 1325 was seen as a side of progressiveness in Iraq by the international community. And for the civil society it was an opportunity to officialize their work.

Q: What/ who was the most significant actor(s) in drafting and implementing INAP?

A: Certainly, local women NGOs, like the Women Empowerment Organisation. Then, they formed the network and the cross-sector taskforce, which involved representatives from the governments, Ministry of Interior, High Council of Women Affairs, the Legal Advisor to the President, Boriana Jonsson from EFI, and other local civil society organisations like the Iraqi Women League. Also INGOs like HIVOS and PAX helped with capacity building and strengthening the network.

Q: What were the major challenges to implementing INAP 1325?

A: Biggest problem was that there was no budget aligned for the NAP. Also political will in certain times, before the network became more professional. It required a lot of hard work and

persistence to gain access to the government and to persuade them to take an active stance for policy change. Another challenge was the emerging Daesh conflict. On one hand it shifted the attention to other matters and the traditional notion of security – weapons and war. However, women took the opportunity and developed an emergency 1325 INAP to facilitate the work of the government and provide them with guidelines to react. This is when they consolidated the fact that 1325 is not simply about women, but about transforming domestic structures, like very centralized governments where money stays on a high political level, to more efficient, inclusive and transparent ones.

Q: What was the role of international NGOs/ organisations in drafting and implementation of INAP 1325?

A: We supported them a lot in building the ties among themselves. We helped them to develop the networks and draft a strategic plan. They had working sessions on setting the agenda, to become more strategic, learning about advocacies, capacity building and form a team. To discuss the necessities to work together. There was a lot of suspicion. It really helped that they joined forces. People like Suzan kept on pushing she was really dedicated. The commitment of certain individuals really helped. Pax colleagues were against- they are accused that INAP was very high up and not meeting the needs on the ground.

Q: What was the feedback from women, civil society, government, international organisations etc.?

A: Everyone was pleased because it was a good starting point. It was written by NGOs. Formally by the Minister of Women Affairs, but because she did not have staff, she asked women to do it. It came from them. It was much more reflective of what the situation was and what was need.

Q: What are the lessons learnt from Measurement & Evaluation?

A: I always said you need to have the international framework and the support on the local level – you really needed. What is the sense of getting stuff on paper when protection was undermined. There was a lot of politics behind the scenes making it difficult.

Q: What did civil society do to gain political, diplomatic and financial support for the work and NAP?

A: They started seeking support. They started getting support from INGOs – HIVOS and UN women - which allowed Suzan to travel to Baghdad. When they joined the network they became more trusted, serious and professional. When the network grew, the government became more supportive. We pushed a lot via advocacy in the UN and recognized we need to push member states and governments. So we did it by saying: ‘It is nice to say things at the UN but what is the value if it is not implemented?’. We used this framing to push for political and diplomatic support from embassies in Bagdad.

Q: Is the WPS and 1325 really valuable?

A: Actually women have historically been very active in Iraq. However, the 1325 INAP provided local work with an international framework to serve both as a foundation and support. It served as a ticket to access the government and also for Iraq to get recognized on an international level for its work on WPS. The case is really unique, because it shows the example of the three tracks of diplomacy merging together to provide an outcome. It was a consistent sandwich pressure – both from inside the country through local activists and NGOs, as well as externally from governments and the international community. And they succeeded with a lot of hard work. Now they are working on the second INAP, so this means that the government recognized its importance.

Interview with PAX employee on June 7, 2019

Q: What happened before the INAP: What is the background of drafting the first INAP?

A: I worked on the Dutch NAP implementation in Iraq. I am currently working in PAX and I worked under the Gender, Peace and Security theme. Before that I worked at HIVOS on the Syria NAP 1325. Following my job switch which was in the summer last year, I've been assisting with Iraqi 1325 program but it comes under the Iraq theme not under the gender theme. An during the past month I have been working on research for this program. Generally I am quite relatively involved with the 1325 Consortia with WOMEN=MEN and all the different partner organisations, thinking about how it can be changed in the next INAP. So I started working on the IRAQ 1325 a year ago. Unfortunately I do not know much about the background of the Iraqi NAP, hat but I can tell you about the Dutch National plan that has been implemented in Iraq. Do you know much about this program?

Q: I have read about it, but not in much depth to be honest. Could you provide me with information about it, please?

A: It is the fourth Dutch National plan and it finishes this year. I know Iraq has been in the past two. The current one has three components of the program. The first component is training Iraqi academics on how to collect data on SGBV. So research has been done with Utrecht University and Iraqi academics on first doing research and then writing policy reports, and also on the mapping of SGBV from 2003 until now, which is more the research component of the project. The second component is the training of the police and justice and security on how to address and report survivors of SGBV to make it more accessible for women and men. I am working with the ministry of interior and I am doing a training with high level police officers. And I will also be doing a review of the police code of conduct to make sure that it is also including SGBV. And the third component is doing both local national and international

advocacy on SGBV based on the research that has been collected by the academics. In the third part, it also includes local women groups and advising them on governance in Kirkuk and a few other ones. And we help these women groups largely with the survivors with SGBB to try and break the silence about this issue, so that people can say what have they experience, In order to also add to the advocacy campaigns. And the next advocacy trainings will happen this year with the women groups and with the partner organizations about how to design effective local advocacy campaigns, so people can collectively contribute to a national advocacy campaign and then also we trying to do an international advocacy campaign based on the national and local campaign. So really helping them with capacity building, working with local academics and organisations.

Q: Who would you identify as the most significant actors on the Iraqi National plan?

A: I can only say about the Dutch National Plan in Iraq. The local organizations such as Al-Amal. I don't know if you know that. They are definitely a big Iraqi organization and have quite trust across Iraq and are also relatively professionalized and have many contacts in the ministry and senior level. So they not only have trust on a local level, but they can facilitate policy making and influence the agenda, as they have many contacts such as ministers. And they also help organising meetings with the big political figures. One of the other actors is Impunity Watch, they are also one of the partners and they play a large role in terms of mapping the SGBV and making sure that accountability measures are in place. And another organization called Al-Firdaws also played quite a big role.

Q: What about international NGOs and UN agencies?

A: We do not work with UN agencies, so I couldn't answer how influential they are. And in terms of INGOs – Impunity Watch and PAX is the biggest one in this consortium.

Q: What do you think are the major challenges to INAP implementation?

A: I think the main one is with the context changing very quickly in Iraq. Much of the program is delayed because of the elections. Anything happened that we could not have foreseen has delayed many projects. In Kirkuk for example the security situation which was really bad at one point and is still now. I think contextual and security issues are the biggest challenge. Political will has also been a challenge, especially with high officials, it is easy to engage them, but harder to get them on board. With for example the revision of the domestic violence law it has been in the talks for many years. And there has been much advocacy to push reforms forward.

Q: What do you think was the impact in terms of law reforms?

A: Yes, I think it is difficult to implement into practice. Even the Iraqi national plans is good in theory, especially that it has been written, but Iraq is the only country in the Middle East I think that have written one. Still there has been little implementation of it on the ground. When we talk to our local partners in Iraq, they say that is has not been particularly efficient, they don't really see much that has happened.

Q: What do you think are the lessons learnt?

A: I really do not know.

Q: What is the feedback from women and civil society? Do they also find it good in theory but in practice not exactly?

A: Yes exactly. They do not think barely anything of it has been implemented, at least that is my impression. I think the focus is quite a lot on the formal level. And I know one issue that we really find in INAP is that we believe in changing certain gender norms and behaviours,

and of course it takes a lot of time and a three years project is not enough of time to really change behaviours and attitudes. I think it is very important to change formal level policy towards equality. But it comes from both ends. It should be top down policy promoting and ensuring gender equality. But it also has to come from bottom up, especially in a country like Iraq where so much patriarchal and religious values need to transform in order to really change opinion and behaviour on the ground. An I think changing laws and policies should be a symbolic step towards that, but it also has to come from the people. And especially when you have many institutions in Iraq that still rely on tribal structures and less formal judicial processes they do not by any means implement any formal laws. Also there are differences between Iraq and Kurdistan in terms of openness. And this is a difficult decision to make with the INAP because we are just focusing on the more formal level police and security institutions and we were questioned to also try and address these more informal structures. But then the informal structures are very discriminatory and are continued by nature. So then if we work with them, we are giving them some sort of legitimacy. So this is an ongoing question do you want to work with a structure that is inherently discriminatory and unequal? Or do you try and transform the more formal structures.

Q: You said the security situation was one of the biggest challenges, do you think that if ISIS has not changed the political tide that they would have been able to advance as much as they did?

A: Difficult to say. I think ISIS has reflected a lot on the Yezidi community, and the ones subject to SGBV in conflict happened to be Yezidi women. I think it has raised the attention to sexual violence during conflict in Iraq and that came from the Yezidi community, and they managed to place those issues on the agenda nationally. Then also there are many unique problems that IDPs, men and women face as they had to flee because of ISIS. So this is of

course raising more judicial issues in the country. And that was in our program as well, to be working with IDP women and raise attention about sexual violence issues in the camps, and the situations that men had to live up to. There are many, many issues within the IDP community. And there are many things as well that are still overhanging, like many of the ex-ISIS wives who are not part of the community, so they are not accepted in the camps and no one knows what is going to happen to these. So they are kind of stuck between the rock and the hammer. Their own community won't accept them back. Also the children born from ISIS is also another issue that needs to be addressed, and it is a huge problem because they don't have IDs, they cannot go to school, so I do not know what is going to happen to them when they get older.

Q: What is your biggest dream for the second INAP?

A: To work more with local organisations and to try to change harmful laws and practices that are pervasive in the country. To transform some of the existing structures to really allow women to take positions in decision-making and to really recognise their agency. And also to increase accountability against sexual and gender-based violence and let women be in the lead in that process. And also to work more on masculinities. I think it is really important to try and instil positive masculinity and also engage men in this conversation to work with women, because change has to come both ways. You can empower women as much as you can, but if men are not willing to relinquish some of their space and power, women will never be able to reach the same place. Also increase psycho-social support to men, teach them that being emotional and seeking psychological support is not a weakness. All these things will also help increase the space for women.

Q: Do you perhaps want to add something else?

A: I don't think so. But if you think of another question, feel free to just message me.