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Queering the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Enhancing LGBTQ+ Perspectives in (En)gendering Peace

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Abstract

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has made notable progress in addressing the gendered impacts of conflict on women and girls. However, the experiences of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer (LBTQ) women remain marginalised within its heteronormative framework. In conflicts around the world, LGBTQ+ people are systematically targeted due to their sexual orientation and gender identities, underscoring the urgent need to address the intersectional vulnerabilities of LBTQ women within the WPS framework. This thesis addresses a crucial gap in queer feminist peace research by evaluating the integration of LGBTQ+ perspectives into the WPS Agenda across its four pillars in Northern Ireland and Colombia. Through a case study with a two-countries approach and interviews with professionals in the fields of LGBTQ+ rights and peacebuilding, it is argued that queering the WPS agenda is essential to enhancing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives. Findings from Northern Ireland and Colombia offer valuable insights into practical strategies and policy recommendations for advancing LGBTQ+ rights within the WPS framework. This thesis contributes to the literature by advocating for a more inclusive and responsive peacebuilding framework that reflects the intersectional realities of conflict-affected populations.

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Table of Abbreviations

ARN	Agency for the Reintegration and Normalisation
CCC	Colombian Constitutional Court
CRSV	Conflict-related Sexual Violence
CTPRC	Territorial Council for Peace, Reconciliation, and Coexistence
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
ELN	National Liberation Army
EPL	Popular Army of Liberation
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GFA	Good Friday Agreement
GSC	Gender Sub-Commission
ICRIR	Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IVF	In Vitro Fertilisation
JEP	Special Jurisdiction for Peace/ Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Others
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LBTQ	Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Queer
M-19	Nineteenth of April Movement
NAP	National Action Plan
NHS	National Health Service

NI	Northern Ireland
NIGRA	Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
NIWC	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
TERF	Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNVIC	United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
VAW	Violence Against Women
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Glossary

Cisgender	"A term to describe people whose sense of their own gender is aligned with the sex that they were assigned at birth. Gender identity is distinct from sexual orientation and sex characteristics" (Hagen et al., 2023, p.3).
Cisprivilege	"The social advantage enjoyed by those who are cisgender/cissexual" (Hagen et al., 2023, p.3).
Gender	"Socially constructed identities, roles, and attributes that a society considers expected, appropriate and acceptable for someone according to their sex and the social and cultural meanings attached to biological differences based on sex" (United Nations Free & Equal, 2024, para.8).
Gender-Based Violence	"Violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender" (Izumi, 2007, p.14).
Gender expression	"The external manifestation of different characteristics culturally considered masculine or feminine. May include bodily interventions (i.e. surgical procedures or hormonal processes), mode of speech, dress, manners, and interaction with other people" (Hagen et al., 2023, p.3).
Gender identity	"A deeply felt and experienced sense of one's own gender. Everyone has a gender identity, typically aligned with the sex assigned to them at birth" (Hagen et al., 2023, p.3).
Heteronormative	"The concept that heterosexuality is the preferred or normal mode of sexual orientation" (Hagen et al., 2023, p.3).
Homophobia	"Any form of prejudice or hostile attitude towards those who are attracted to people of the same gender" (United Nations Free & Equal, 2024, para.15).
LGBTQ+	"An initialism for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other people with sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics that are perceived not to conform to social norms" (United Nations Free & Equal, 2024, para.20).

Non-binary	“A person whose gender expression or identity does not respond to the binary understanding of gender (female/male” (Hagen et al., 2024, p.3).
Sexual orientation	“A person’s physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction towards other people. Everyone has a sexual orientation, which is part of their identity” (Hagen et al., 2023, p.3).
Transgender	“A term to describe people with a gender identity that does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may identify with gender identities such as man, woman, trans man, trans woman, transgender person, non-binary person or with a wide range of other terms across different languages and locations” (United Nations Free & Equal, 2024, para.32).
Transphobia	“Any form of prejudice or hostile attitude towards transgender people, including denying their gender identity or refusing to acknowledge it” (United Nations Free & Equal, 2024, para. 33).
Queer	“An umbrella term for those with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities” (Hagen et al., 2023, p.4).
Queering	“Applying queer concepts to systems (peace processes, social service distribution) or concepts (gender, security, peace), informed by queer experience” (Hagen et al., 2023, p.4).

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Chapter One: Introduction

"The Women, Peace and Security agenda got us a foot in the door. It isn't enough anymore: it is time to knock the door off its hinges" - Jayakumar (2022, p.103)

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda has made significant strides in addressing the unique challenges faced by women in conflict and post-conflict settings. Established in 2000 by the United Nations Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325, the landmark WPS framework has set a precedent for the consideration of gender perspectives in peace and security. However, the experiences of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer (LBTQ) women continue to be obscured within the WPS framework (Hagen et al., 2023, p.6). The systematic violation of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) people has been a pervasive feature of armed conflicts around the world. Queer women are rendered particularly vulnerable due to overlapping marginalisation and discrimination, based on gender and sexual orientation (Jayakumar, 2022, p.83). Thus, the transformative inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace processes, such as those in Northern Ireland and Colombia, amplifies calls for an increased focus on LBTQ women within the WPS framework. To gain a deeper understanding of LBTQ women's experiences of conflict and to 'knock the door off its hinges,' this thesis is guided by the research question: *'How can the Women, Peace and Security Agenda enhance the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives?'* The primary objective of this study is to identify the best practices and challenges in including LGBTQ+ perspectives in WPS implementation. Through a 'queering' of the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia, this research provides insights into how the WPS framework can respond more effectively to LBTQ women's experiences of conflict. Ultimately, it is argued that queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda is intrinsic to enhancing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives.

1.1 Terminology

While a wide range of terms are utilised to represent individuals who identify with non-hegemonic sexual orientations and gender identities in academia, each presents distinct limitations and challenges (Hagen, Daigle and Myrttinen, 2021, p.305). Although the term 'LGBT' is the most often used by international non-governmental organisations to describe sexual and gender minorities, resistance

against this acronym has emerged given that it is primarily a construct of the Global North (Hagen, 2016, p.315). Meanwhile, Hagen (2016, p.315) advocates for the term 'LGBTQ+' with the inclusion of 'Q' to represent 'queer' and '+' to depict those with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions or sex characteristics that do not identify with the other terms within the acronym. Historically an offensive term in the English language, scholars and activists have reclaimed 'queer' to encompass all individuals who do not identify as heterosexual or cisgender (Mizzi and Byrne, 2015, p.361). The term 'queer' is now framed as a means of resisting the violent use of language and re-shifting the power balance to challenge heteropatriarchy and heterosexism (Mizzi and Byrne, 2015, p.361). Thus, it is argued that the use of the acronym 'LGBTQ+' is a means of highlighting "the inherent linkage between inclusionary and transgressive approaches towards sexual equality for all" (Hagen, 2016, p.315). Considering this discourse, this research uses the inclusive terms 'queer' and 'LGBTQ+'. Furthermore, the term 'LBTQ' (lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer) is employed to refer directly to the experiences of women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, particularly in situations where queer women's experiences cannot be meaningfully aggregated (Hagen et al., 2023, p.1).

1.2 Significance of the Research

This area of research has immense academic, political and practical significance. Firstly, this thesis fills a significant gap in the literature in its integration of LGBTQ+ perspectives into the WPS agenda given that it has centred on cisgender heterosexual women. The queering of the WPS agenda across its four pillars - participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery - in Northern Ireland and Colombia provides a nuanced analysis of the treatment of LGBTQ+ perspectives in WPS implementation that scholars have previously overlooked in these contexts. The adoption of an intersectional approach is significant as it draws attention to the ongoing marginalisation of LBTQ women based on gender and sexual orientation, deepening our understanding of the complex interplay between gendered relations of power, violence and insecurity (Hagen, Daigle and Myrttinen, 2021, p.306). Such an intersectional approach is critical in the current political environment where anti-"woke" and "traditionalist" and trans-exclusionary radical feminist (TERF) movements attempt to create divisions between feminist and LGBTQ+ rights advocacy (Cooper-Cunningham et al. 2023, p.1). With the spread of anti "gender ideology" sentiments in which gender is considered an "ideological matrix of a set of abhorred ethical and social reforms, it is more important now than ever to advocate for the implementation of the WPS agenda and the inclusion of gender perspectives (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017, p.5).

In its identification of best practices and challenges in integrating LGBTQ+ perspectives into WPS implementation, this thesis has practical relevance in its provision of recommendations for governments, international organisations and NGOs to design more inclusive and effective strategies to protect LGBTQ+ rights when promoting peace and security. Finally, this research is timely as it contributes to a broader movement towards the incorporation of LGBTQ+ perspectives into peace and security initiatives within the United Nations system. This trend is exemplified by the Security Council's organisation of Arria-formula meetings on LGBTQ+ violations in 2015 and on the integration of the rights of LGBTQ+ persons into its mandate in 2023. Furthermore, the appointment of the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity by the Human Rights Council in 2016 highlights the increasing institutional recognition and commitment to these issues.

1.3 Research Design

This section describes the methodological approach adopted to address the research question posed in this thesis. It provides a rationale for the adoption of the case study methodology and semi-structured interviews, alongside a detailed justification for the selection of data sources and the focus on Northern Ireland and Colombia within the case study. Furthermore, this section highlights the limitations inherent in the study.

1.3.1 Research Methodologies

A case study methodology grounded in qualitative approaches is central to this research. In line with the definition posited by Simons (2009, p.21), a case study is understood as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real life' context". This methodology is suited to the exploration of LGBTQ+ perspectives of peace and security considering Starman's (2013, p.38) argument that case studies are intrinsic to developing different views of reality. Thus, this research adopts a single case study methodology with a two-countries approach as opposed to exploring a plethora of contexts to ensure trade-offs are not made in terms of depth and detail (Goodrick, 2014, p.4). The investigation centres on understanding how the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives manifests within the implementation of the WPS agenda, with Northern Ireland and Colombia serving as unique and interesting contexts for analysis. Firstly, Northern Ireland and Colombia are both exemplary cases in their inclusion of women

in their peace processes, culminating in peace agreements incorporating protections based on sexual orientation (Marín Carvajal and Álvarez-Vanegas, 2018, p.465; Pierson, 2018, p.461). LGBTQ+ individuals were targeted during the conflict in both contexts with systematic sexual violence perpetrated in Colombia and the policing of "deviant" sexualities by paramilitaries in Northern Ireland (Conrad, 2004, p.125). It is imperative to note that the focus on Northern Ireland and Colombia does not suggest they are directly comparable given that there are distinct differences concerning the region's economic development, geography, political context, conflict structure, reconciliation process and the time elapsed post-conflict. However, these varying timeframes and geographical contexts are what make the selection of these cases innovative as it facilitates a comprehensive analysis of differing approaches to integrating LGBTQ+ perspectives in WPS implementation across time and space. Thus, the analysis of these two regions provides insight into the complexities, successes and challenges of incorporating LGBTQ+ perspectives into peace and security efforts, contributing to understanding this phenomenon within the WPS agenda.

As Goodrick (2014, p.6) advocates for triangulation in case study methodology to add credibility to the research, this thesis integrates empirical evidence derived through interviews with the analysis of existing primary and secondary sources (Baxter and Jack, 2008, p.556). Furthermore, triangulation ensures the inclusion of different viewpoints on a singular phenomenon to ensure a holistic overview. Given Ritholtz et al.'s (2023, p.13) argument that queer peacebuilding necessitates "activist knowledge that destabilises an established concept", interviews were conducted with professionals in the fields of peacebuilding, LGBTQ+ rights and WPS implementation in Northern Ireland and Colombia to ensure that perspectives from the ground were included. The author conducted eight interviews with three participants with expertise in Northern Ireland and five with expertise in Colombia. Organisations working in both urban and rural areas were selected as violence and LGBTQ+ discrimination manifested differently in these contexts. It is important to note that one interview participant is based in Dundalk, a bordering county of Northern Ireland in the Republic of Ireland, given that LBTQ women in the border regions in the Republic were also impacted by the conflict and may avail of resources and support networks on both sides of the border. The list of interview participants is provided in Appendix A. Participants who request to remain anonymous are identified by pseudonyms throughout the research.

Semi-structured interviews were selected as open-ended questions ensured the flexibility to adjust to the insights and experiences shared by the participants (Mizzi et al., 2023, p.134). As English is the author's

native language, the interviews were predominantly conducted in English to reduce the risk of misinterpretation and misrepresentation of participants' views, thus maintaining the ethical integrity of the research. However, one interview was conducted in Spanish with a Colombian translator as the participant's unique insights were deemed exceptionally valuable for the research. Although the translator is fluent in both English and Spanish, it is imperative to note that this mediating may have influenced the accuracy of the data given the cultural-specificity of language structures and idioms, particularly given the cultural-specificity of language surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity (Mabry, 2008, p.220). Furthermore, the interviews were conducted via Zoom as the platform's security, ease of use, and recording functions render it highly suitable for collecting qualitative interview data (Archibald et al., 2019, p.7). This data was collected, transcribed and analysed by the author in a thematic analysis, which involved identifying key issues within the peace and security discourse and mapping them onto the WPS agenda pillars.

1.3.2 Source Selection

As it is imperative to use a wide array of sources to provide a rich analysis of the WPS agenda's inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspective in peace and security in Northern Ireland and Colombia, primary and secondary sources are blended in this analysis. Primary sources including peace agreements sourced from PAX, reports from UN Special Procedures and Special Political Missions, WPS National Action Plans, and political statements are analysed within this research. Secondary sources including academic analyses and reports from civil society and governmental institutions are also cited throughout the research. The majority of literature cited in this research is in English due to the prominence of the language in academia and international relations (Tomuschat, 2017, p.196). However, several sources originally written in Spanish are also cited due to their importance as primary sources or documents from prominent LGBTQ+ organisations in Colombia. The 'DeepL' machine translator was utilised to translate these texts given its high quality in Spanish-English translation (Aguilar, 2023, p.19).

1.3.3 Scope and Limitations

Although Jayakumar (2022, p.85) argues for the expansion of the WPS framework´s gender analysis to include the experiences of all individuals who identify outside the sex and gender binary, this research centres on the inclusion of LBTQ women to ensure a workable scope. Although careful consideration has been given to the methodology employed in this thesis, several limitations inherent to the study are evident. Firstly, a limitation of this thesis is the lack of disaggregated data on LGBTQ+ violations in

Northern Ireland and Colombia, an issue exacerbated by the underreporting of LGBTQ+ human rights violations due to enduring social prejudice, a lack of trust in institutions and the fear of re-victimisation (Hagen et al., 2023, p.24). Thus, when this research refers to LBTQ women or LGBTQ+ people, there is a potential that the experiences of the diverse identities included in these acronyms are homogenised. Furthermore, the in-depth focus on Northern Ireland and Colombia presents a limitation in terms of the generalisability of the research findings as the specific socio-political and historical contexts may not fully represent the complexities of other settings. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the insights gained from this study provide a crucial foundation for incorporating LGBTQ+ perspectives into peace and security initiatives that can be adapted to other contexts.

It is also imperative to consider the influence of the author's positionality on the research. Positionality refers to the location of an individual within a particular position due to membership in social groups including gender, class, race, background and identity and its influence on their research (Deliovsky, 2010, p.886). This encourages reflexivity, the continuous and critical examination of the researcher's biases and assumptions and their impact on the research process (Begoray and Banister, 2010, p.263). Furthermore, McShane (2021, p.11) argues that to facilitate a turn towards decoloniality within gender studies, researchers should adopt an intersectional lens to examine their positioning and the cultural context and history of colonialism that informs their perspective of 'gender'. Thus, while the author has practised reflexivity and considered the impacts of personal bias on her research, she acknowledges that her viewpoint influences her analysis of LBTQ women's experiences of conflict in both Northern Ireland and Colombia.

1.4 Outline

This thesis is divided into four further chapters. Chapter Two engages in a critical review of the dominant literature in the field of feminist peace studies, within which the WPS agenda is situated. Following the exploration of queer feminist critiques of the WPS framework, scholars' calls for a queering of the WPS agenda are examined. By identifying gaps in the research on queering the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia, the chapter concludes by outlining the theoretical framework of the thesis. Chapter Three centres on queering the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland. Following the contextualisation of the conflict and development of LGBTQ+ rights in the region, the integration of LGBTQ+ perspectives across the WPS pillars is analysed. Similarly, Chapter Four begins with an exploration of the conflict and LGBTQ+ rights situation in Colombia before engaging in a queering of the WPS agenda. Building on Chapters Three and Four, Chapter Five identifies the best practices and

challenges in including LGBTQ+ perspectives in each of the four WPS pillars. Finally, the concluding chapter summarises the research findings and their implications as well as providing practical recommendations on how the WPS agenda can enhance its inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security. By the concluding section, it becomes evident that queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda is intrinsic to enhancing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives.

Chapter Two:
Setting the Scene: A Queer Feminist Peace Framework

2.1 Introduction

There is a significant interdisciplinary body of academic literature on the WPS agenda, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of the gendered dimensions of peace and security. This is evidenced by the publication of authoritative works such as the 'Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security' and the establishment of numerous research centres focusing on WPS issues. In recent years, scholars have increasingly drawn attention to the need to include LGBTQ+ perspectives in the gender analysis of the WPS framework, initiating calls for a queering of the WPS agenda (Hagen, 2017; Jayakumar, 2022). To gain a deeper understanding of this discourse, this thematic literature review synthesises and evaluates academic texts in the areas of the WPS agenda, feminist peace research and queer critiques. While the field of security studies also has relevance to the WPS agenda, the review centres on literature within peace studies given Mizzi and Byrne's (2015, p.367) argument that this field engages with gender issues more effectively due to its focus on addressing direct, cultural and structural forms of violence such as anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination and hate crimes. The literature has been selected based on its significance in the field as determined by its inclusion in reputable journals or handbooks, citation count and theoretical contribution. Furthermore, the publication date is considered to address the most recent debates in the rapidly evolving discourse.

Having broken the literature down into six thematic areas, the review begins with the exploration of the WPS agenda and its pillars to establish a comprehensive understanding of the WPS framework. Following this, the core concepts in feminist peace research in which the WPS agenda is situated are examined. Queer theory is then delved into to gain insight into how queer and feminist critiques are bridged to inform the emerging field of queer feminist peace research. Building on these queer feminist peace perspectives, the WPS agenda is critically analysed with attention to the equation of 'women' and 'gender', a lack of intersectionality and a narrow interpretation of violence. The queering of the WPS agenda is then considered to highlight the theoretical implications of queering the framework. The literature on queering the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia is then examined to highlight gaps in the research. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of the theoretical framework of the thesis.

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2.2 The Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The Women, Peace, and Security architecture draws attention to the experiences of women in conflict and post-conflict environments and the gendered dimensions of peace and security (Shepherd, 2018, p.102). The priorities and principles of the foundational UN Security Council Resolution 1325 established four pillars of WPS: participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery. These have been elaborated in nine further UNSC Resolutions, highlighting the living and expanding nature of the WPS agenda (Shepherd, 2018, p.98). The first WPS pillar centres on increasing the participation of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, including in peace negotiations, peace operations and decision-making at national, regional and international institutions (United Nations Security Council, 2000, p.2). The protection pillar focuses on ensuring the protection of women and girls from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence as well as the protection and promotion of their human rights in conflict situations (Hagen et al., 2023, p.6). The scholars Basu and Nagar (2021, p.214) argue that the WPS resolutions following Resolution 1325 disproportionately focus on 'protection'.

The third pillar is prevention, which ensures the deterrence of conflict and all forms of violence against women in conflict and post-conflict environments. Initiatives within this pillar include increasing the prosecution of perpetrators under international law and strengthening women's rights under domestic legal frameworks (Durojaye, 2020, p.569). However, it is argued that prevention is the "weakest 'p' in the pod" as it is inconsistently articulated across the WPS resolutions (Basu and Confortini, 2017, p.59). The fourth pillar is dedicated to the advancement of 'relief and recovery' (R&R) in post-conflict settings through a gendered lens, taking the specific needs of women and girls into account (Durojaye, 2020, p.569). True and Hewitt (2018, p.179) highlight the ambiguity surrounding this pillar having demonstrated that within WPS resolutions, 'relief and recovery' is referred to through mentions of peacebuilding, transitional justice, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and empowerment. Thus, it is highlighted that in practice the R&R pillar encompasses the advancement of women's social and economic rights, including a gender perspective in economic recovery, ensuring post-conflict financing and gender budgeting and guaranteeing gender-transformative justice (True and Hewitt, 2018, p.184).

Over two decades later, the WPS agenda has been institutionalised worldwide with one hundred and seven Member States establishing National Action Plans (NAPs) that translate their obligations under the WPS framework into a domestic strategy with national and local objectives (Jacevic, 2018, p.273). As conflict manifests at multiple levels of society, scholars argue that sustainable peacebuilding efforts such as the WPS necessitate engagements at three levels: top leadership (Track I), middle-range leadership (Track II) and grassroots leadership (Track III) (Lederach, 1997; Palmiano et al., 2019, p.6). This approach is echoed by Resolution 1325 in its recognition of the importance of consulting local and international women's groups during Security Council missions United Nations Security Council, 2000, p.3). Newby and O'Malley (2021, p.8) assert that the highest level of WPS implementation is at track III given that civil society actors have been central to initiating and shaping the WPS agenda. Despite these efforts, numerous civil society organisations argue that the transformative potential of the WPS agenda has yet to be fully realised (True and Hewitt, 2018, p.178; de Jonge Oudraat, 2018, p.842). This critical perspective arises from the persistent gap between the normative WPS framework and implementation on the ground (de Jonge Oudraat, 2018, p.842). To gain a deeper understanding of the nuanced debates surrounding the WPS agenda, it is imperative to delve into the feminist peace studies literature in which it is situated.

2.3 Feminist Peace Research

While feminist scholars have made significant contributions to peace studies, feminist perspectives and methodologies have remained marginalised within the dominant discourses of the field (Väyrynen et al., 2021, p.1). However, in recent years there has been an increasing recognition of the growing body of feminist peace literature and its significant academic and political advancements (Väyrynen et al., 2021, p.1). As defined by leading feminist peace scholars in the *Routledge Handbook of Feminist Peace Research*, feminist peace research "includes all research, thinking, and action that uses, implicitly or explicitly, feminist insights to understand and act upon the world in ways that foster peace with justice" (Väyrynen et al., 2021, p.2). To gain a deeper understanding of feminist peace research, this section explores its key debates and concepts.

2.3.1 Feminist Understandings of Peace

There is a wealth of feminist peace literature that provides broadened visions of peace (Smith and Yoshida, 2022, p.3). Feminist scholars are critical of traditional international relations theories that are characterised by 'negative peace', defined as the absence of conflict or direct violence (Galtung, 1964). It is argued that this perspective fails to ensure peace for women in both the private sphere and in post-conflict contexts where women are disproportionately vulnerable to gender-based violence (Duncanson, 2016, p.62; Hewitt and True, 2021, p.369). Therefore, feminist understandings of peace align with Galtung's (1964) concept of 'positive peace' which encompasses the absence of both direct and structural violence (Hewitt and True, 2021, p.369). Feminist scholars understand structural violence as the unequal distribution of power and resources, arguing that men's overwhelming control of land and property ownership and political, economic and societal leadership positions reflect an entrenched system that sustains violence against women (Rees and Chinkin, 2016, p.1216; Hewitt and True, 2021, p.369). By connecting peace and security to structural equality, women's economic and social empowerment are considered fundamental to achieving peace (Duncanson, 2016, p.65; Smith and Yoshida, 2022, p.3). However, the notion of 'feminist peace' also receives criticism. As articulated by Mohanty, Riley and Pratt (2008, p.1): "There is no monolithic 'feminism' or even a shared set of philosophical, ethical, cultural or political interests among all women". Therefore, scholars assert that there can be no singular feminist understanding of peace despite it being a universal goal (Väyrynen et al., 2021, p.4; Smith and Yoshida, 2022, p.3). Further tensions are highlighted by the argument that violence is often enacted in the name of feminism (Smith and Yoshida, 2022, p.3). This is evidenced by Western imperialist constructions of the helpless Muslim woman in need to justify violent imperialist projects (Ahmed 1992, p.51; Mahmood, 2009, p.105). Thus, while 'feminist peace' is expansive in its vision, it is not without friction.

2.3.2 Gender-Based Violence as a Continuum

There is a rich body of feminist literature exploring gender-based violence (GBV). While 'GBV' and 'Violence Against Women' (VAW) are often used interchangeably due to women's over-representation as victims of sexual violence, these terms are not synonymous (Gill and Mason-Bish, 2013, p.91). The broader concept of GBV can be understood as an umbrella term for "violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender" (Izumi, 2007, p.14). However, the scholars Leach and Humphreys (2007, p.53) problematise the term GBV, arguing that it implies the existence of types of violence that

are not rooted in gendered power relations when all violence is gendered. With the recognition that GBV is also perpetrated against men, the term encompasses acts of violence including domestic and sexual violence, trafficking, femicide, female genital mutilation or cutting, and forced marriage (Terry, 2007, p.12). A form of GBV which has received significant attention in the literature is the use of systematic rape as a weapon of war. This is employed as a deliberate tactic to intimidate and humiliate enemy populations and dilute ethnic groups by impregnating women with the "child of the enemy" (Terry, 2007, p.44; Crawford, 2017; Yadav and Horn, 2021, p.109).

Coined by Kelly (1987), the feminist concept of the 'continuum of violence' explores the interconnected and mutually reinforcing nature of different forms of GBV, ranging from 'everyday' acts of violence to the structural violence of economic systems that sustain inequality to armed conflict (Cockburn, 2004, p.43; True, 2020, p.93; Yadav and Horn, 2021, p.106). By interrogating the dichotomies of 'war/peace' and 'public/private life', this concept highlights that for certain gendered and sexualised bodies, there is no 'entry' or 'exit' from violence (Yadav and Horn, 2021, p.110). The scholars Yadav and Horn (2021, p.110) build on Crenshaw's (1993) concept of intersectionality, arguing that individuals with intersecting identities based on gender, race, sexuality and class may experience multiple sites of violence simultaneously. Thus, it is argued that future feminist peace research should employ an intersectional lens in the analysis of the continuum of GBV by considering sexuality and diverse gender identities as a basis on which LGBTQ+ people may be targeted (Yadav and Horn, 2021, p.110; Loken and Hagen, 2022, p.10).

2.3.3 Visibility Paradigm: Where are the Women?

Introduced in Cynthia Enloe's (1990) groundbreaking work entitled *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, the visibility paradigm is central to feminist peace research. By echoing Enloe's (1990, p.6) question 'Where are the women?', feminist peace scholars seek to make visible women and their experiences that have been obscured in traditional accounts of peace, security and conflict resolution (Edenborg, 2021, p.106). The passing of Resolution 1325 and feminist critiques of the WPS agenda reflect this continuous call for visibility (Edenborg, 2021, p.51; Smith and Yoshida, 2022, p.3). However, debates have emerged within this visibility discourse, particularly regarding the overrepresentation of women as 'helpless victims' of sexual violence during conflict as opposed to 'agents of change'. This binary carries significant implications for understanding how women exercise agency during and after conflict (Björkdahl and Selimovic, 2021, p.44). The

scholars Hagen, Daigle and Myrttinen (2021, p.304) argue that a crucial next step in feminist peace research is visibilising the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ persons living in environments affected by conflict due to their gender identity, expression and/or sexual orientation. In recognition of this under-researched area in the literature, it is imperative to explore the texts delving into queer perspectives in peace studies that inform such analysis.

2.4 Queer Perspectives of Peace Studies

Browne and Nash (2016, p.4) posit that 'queer research' constitutes any form of research embedded within conceptual frameworks that challenge the instability of established meanings and resulting power relations. Thus, this section examines queer research to gain an understanding of queer perspectives on peace studies.

2.4.1 Queer Theory

Queer theory, a term coined by de Lauretis (1991) emerged in the early 1990s drawing from post-structuralist theories of identity, feminism and women's studies, as well as activist traditions (Edenborg, 2021, p.50). While there is no universally accepted definition, in this thesis queer theory is understood as "a set of approaches that destabilise and interrogate normative understandings, practices, and institutions related to sexuality, sex and gender" (Edenborg, 2021, p. 50). Thus, queer theory encourages challenging established social norms and explores new ways of understanding gender, sexuality and identity. This is exemplified by the notion of 'performativity' that is central to queer studies. Building on the foundational literature of Judith Butler (1990), queer theorists posit that individuals enact and embody gender and sexual identities through repeated adherence to rigid societal norms of masculinity and femininity (Mizzi and Byrne, 2015, p.361). Therefore, it is asserted that gender and sexuality are socially constructed, rendering them fluid and unfixed identities (Mizzi and Byrne, 2015, p.362). Another core tenet of queer theory is the deconstruction of heteronormativity which can be understood as the societal norms that privilege heterosexuality as 'natural' in opposition to homosexuality as the deviant 'other' (Browne and Nash, 2016, p.5).

2.4.2 Queer Feminist Peace Studies

While gendered dynamics of conflict have been explored in over two decades of peace scholarship, there is limited academic engagement with queer perspectives in feminist peace studies (Hagen, Daigle and Myrttinen, 2021, p.304; Ritholtz et al., 2023, p.5). By bridging feminist and queer critiques, a queer feminist peace studies approach aims to challenge social constructions of the gender binary to highlight a wide spectrum of sexual and gender identities whose experiences are obscured in traditional analyses of peace and security (Hagen, 2016, p.313). This section evaluates the literature, adopting a queer feminist peace approach to reveal the central debates in the discourse.

2.4.3 Queer Reconceptualisation of Peace

Recognising that dominant conceptions of 'peace' do not engage with sexual and gender identity, a significant contribution of queer peace research is the reconceptualisation of peace (Edenborg, 2021, p.50). Building on feminist scholars' arguments that 'peace' and 'war' are not distinct opposites but exist along a continuum of violence, queer perspectives further deconstruct heteronormative understandings of the war/peace dichotomy (Edenborg, 2021, p.50). Given that sexual and gender minorities experience intersectional forms of discrimination that transcend conflict itself, fleeing a conflict zone does not result in peace but introduces further layers of vulnerability (Hagen, Daigle and Myrttinen, 2021, p.307). This is mainly attributed to the fact that the sources of violence against queer and trans people extend beyond the perpetrators acknowledged within the peace processes to include their families and communities (Ritholtz et al., 2023, p.13). Furthermore, in countries that are not engaged in conventional warfare, sexual and gender minorities may experience conditions that resemble a state of war where lives have been lost, refugees have been created and people have been displaced (Wilkinson, 2017, p.236; Edenborg, 2021, p.50). Thus, queer feminist peace scholars seek to redefine the meaning of peace, questioning whether it can be achieved for LGBTQ+ communities (Mizzi and Byrne, 2015, p.359; Ritholtz et al., 2023, p.9).

2.4.4 Visibility as a Double-Edged Sword

Akin to feminist peace studies, visibility and invisibility are central issues addressed in queer theory discourse (Edenborg, 2021, p.51). Queer theorist Kosofsky-Sedgwick (1990, p.71) argues that "the closet is the defining structure for gay oppression in this century", highlighting how the exclusion of queer people has historically relied on invisibility as well as acts of "powerful unknowing". Although Edenborg (2021, p.51) notes that the applicability of the closet metaphor outside the Global North has been questioned, the notion of 'coming out' and expressing one's identity remains central to LGBTQ+ movements and Pride protests around the world. However, visibility has also been problematised by queer theorists.

Firstly, it is argued that visibility can render sexual and gender minorities more insecure as non-conforming to sexual or gender norms can result in severe danger (Edenborg, 2021, p.52). This is exemplified by the increased visibility of trans women of colour in the media in 2014, which was followed by an increase in the number of murders of trans women in 2015 (Cárdenas, 2017, p.163). Increased insecurity due to visibility is further reflected in Trans Murder Monitoring's (2023, para.2) documentation of the murder of 321 trans and gender-diverse people from October 2022 to September 2023. Meanwhile, Serrano-Amaya (2015, p.41) draws attention to the targeting of gender and sexual minorities by armed actors in violent conflict, presenting a taxonomy of motivating factors: humiliation, shaming and dehumanisation; "re-education"; and impeding social mobilisation in occupied areas.

Queer theory also draws attention to how peace and security discourses recognise certain LGBTQ+ individuals, often those who are gay, cis-gendered, male and white, as a "lovely sight" (Haritaworn, 2015, p.24). However, this is at the cost of gendered, sexualised and racialised individuals who are rendered hypervisible as "folk devils," "scapegoats" and criminalised "Others" (Haritaworn, 2015, p.24). Edenborg (2021, p.52) argues that these constructions are linked to spectacular forms of nation-building. This is exemplified by Russia's 2013 ban on "propaganda for nontraditional sexual relationships" which sought to reduce LGBTQ+ visibility while also portraying sexual and gender minorities as a hypervisible danger to heteropatriarchal Russia's 'traditional values' (Edenborg, 2019, p.113). In recognition of these arguments, it is asserted that visibility must be recognised as a double-edged sword to ensure that peace and security efforts take careful consideration of when, where and how visibility is desirable for LGBTQ+ individuals (Edenborg, 2019, p.7).

2.5 Queer Feminist Critiques of the WPS Agenda

Stemming from the queer feminist peace perspectives explored above, significant critiques of the WPS agenda have emerged in feminist security studies and queer studies. This section evaluates the predominant criticisms visible in the literature.

2.5.1 'Gender' Equated to 'Women'

A major critique of the WPS agenda is the interchangeable use of 'gender' and 'women' within UNSC Resolution 1325 (Hagen, 2016, p.318; Basu and Nagar, 2021, p.213; Jayakumar, 2022, p.83). By equating 'women' and 'gender' the WPS architecture reinforces a limited and essentialist understanding of gender as a "pathological relationship based on sexed bodies" (Jayakumar, 2022, p. 87). Echoing the arguments of queer feminist peace scholars, Jayakumar (2022, p.83) asserts that the assumption that every individual experiencing conflict is cisgender renders non-binary and transgender people's experiences of conflict obscure. The conflation of 'women' and 'gender' is further problematised given that gender analysis encompasses gender identity, expression and sexuality, which are relevant to all individuals, not just women (Hagen et al., 2023, p.7). With Resolution 2467 acknowledging men and boys as victims of conflict-related sexual violence, scholars are increasingly asserting that the WPS agenda should continue to extend its focus beyond women to explore the gendered power dynamics in peace and security that impact all people (United Nations Security Council, 2019, p.9; Jayakumar, 2022, p.85). This is evidenced by Wright's (2020, p.660) arguments for addressing masculinities in WPS, given that militarised masculinities operate in ways that create male vulnerabilities while also perpetuating the discrimination of women that the WPS agenda seeks to address. Hagen (2016, p.318) further develops this argument by drawing attention to how masculinities normalise and promote the rape of the 'other' in times of conflict, leading to the targeting of sexual and gender minorities. These critiques regarding the conflation of 'gender' and 'women' highlight the necessity for a more inclusive understanding of gender within the WPS agenda.

2.5.2 Homogenising Women: Lack of Intersectionality

Although the term 'woman' is intended to be an "all-encompassing" representation of the target population of the WPS agenda, feminist and queer theorists are critical of the WPS agenda's homogenisation of women into one monolith (Jayakumar, 2022, p.86). The scholars Basu and Nagar (2021, p.213) problematise the use of gender as the only identity marker, arguing that ignoring class, race, nationality, ethnicity and sexuality removes all considerations of intersectionality from the discourse. Thus, it is posited that the WPS resolutions fail to acknowledge the complex gendered experiences of conflict stemming from the intersection of other identity attributes (Jayakumar, 2022, p.86). As there are no mentions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their experiences across the ten WPS United Nations Security Council resolutions, queer theorists have identified the exclusion of LBTQ women as a major gap in the WPS agenda (Hagen et al., 2023, p.6). This is problematised given that lesbian women face compounded oppression during periods of conflict due to their overlapping marginalised identities based on both gender and sexual orientation (Haley-Nelson, 2005, p.166; Hagen, 2016, p.319).

2.5.3 Narrow Interpretation of Violence

While the increasing focus on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) has led to more effective implementation mechanisms, scholars are critical of the WPS framework's narrow focus on 'war' and 'war-time rape' (Aoláin and Valji, 2018, p.465; Reilly, 2018, p.16; Jayakumar, 2022, p.84; López Castañeda and Myrttinen, 2022, p.54). It is argued that the WPS agenda is virtually synonymous with ending the impunity of perpetrators of CRSV due to substantial legal provisions in UNSC Resolutions 1888, 1960 and 2106 (Reilly, 2018, p.19; López Castañeda and Myrttinen, 2022, p.53). In a content analysis of the WPS resolutions, Smith and Stavrevska (2022, p.67) highlight that the WPS framework's engagement with continuums of violence is limited to a reference to the "continuum of interrelated and recurring forms of violence against women and girls" in the preamble of Resolution 2467 (United Nations Security Council, 2019, p.2). Echoing queer and feminist critique, it is argued that this failure to meaningfully engage with the continuum of violence has resulted in a sidelining of discussions about prevention and protection from other forms of gendered and sexualised violence occurring in times of war and peace (Jayakumar, 2022, p.88; López Castañeda and Myrttinen, 2022, p.53). As highlighted by Jayakumar (2022, p.88), this has serious consequences as the normalisation of everyday violence due to

the absence of legal sanctions for perpetrators leads to overt violence against sexual and gender minorities in times of conflict. Building on this argument, Hagen and O'Rourke (2023, p.23) are critical of the WPS agenda's narrow focus on punitive measures for individual perpetrators as opposed to enacting systematic change to prevent violence against women and gender and sexual minorities in all its forms.

2.6 Queering the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

In recognition of the queer feminist critiques of the WPS agenda, several scholars have called for a queering of the framework. Jamie J. Hagen (2017, p.1), the leading scholar in queering WPS, argues that the very title of the WPS agenda invites a queering of the architecture to identify which women are included as its subject. Hagen (2017, p.1) further posits that a queering of the agenda is intrinsic to understanding how gender identity and sexual orientation shape LBTQ women's lived experience of peace and security given that queerness is currently ignored within the WPS framework. Grounded in queer theory, Jayakumar (2022, p.102) and Hagen et al. (2023, p.15) suggest that queering WPS necessitates deviating from the gender binary to promote the inclusion of individuals with diverse sexual and gender identities in WPS initiatives. It is argued that the use of 'queer' as a verb instead of a noun indicates a process involving more than the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people as a 'variable' in analysis (Hagen, 2016, p.331; Edenborg, 2021, p.50; Hagen et al., 2023, p.40). Instead, queering WPS constitutes "troubling, questioning and creatively reimagining approaches to not only gender, but also peace and security" (Hagen et al., 2023, p.13). This approach challenges the heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions that limit gender analysis within peace and security initiatives and draws attention to the influence of entrenched notions of masculinity and patriarchy that create patterns of violence and prejudice against the LGBTQ+ community (Edenborg, 2021, p.50). Furthermore, it is argued that queering requires an anti-militaristic approach to peace and security initiatives that rejects heteronormative military values that reinforce cisprivilege to strive for peaceful practices (Hagen et al., 2023, p.8). Ultimately, it is asserted that queering seeks to establish more expansive and transformative visions of gender and peace that can enhance the WPS agenda for everyone (Hagen et al., 2023, p.8).

2.7 Queering the WPS Agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia

In examining the limited literature on queering the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia, distinct gaps in the literature are evident. This is a notable lack of published literature focusing on queering WPS in Northern Ireland. While McEvoy (2015) explores the queering of security studies in the region and Duggan (2016) provides valuable insights into queering the conflict, both texts notably lack engagement with the WPS framework and key concepts in peace studies. Thus, this suggests an area necessitating further research. Although there is a plethora of literature exploring LGBTQ+ rights in the context of the Colombian conflict, there is limited literature that centres on 'queering' in this context. While Maier (2020) explores the queering of Colombia's peace process with a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion, the scholar centres on transitional justice as opposed to the WPS agenda. Hagen (2017) examines the queering of the WPS agenda in Colombia. However, the scope of this research does not encompass an analysis of the queering of the four WPS pillars. While Hagen (2017, p.3) draws from the case of Colombia to argue that ongoing WPS initiatives could support LBTQ women's human rights campaigns in Nigeria, this comparative analysis is confined to a concise paragraph. Thus, a clear gap in the literature is a comprehensive comparative analysis of queering the WPS in Colombia with an additional relevant case study. In the form of a practice-based toolkit, Hagen et al. (2023) draw on the case of Colombia to queer the WPS pillars. Although the text is valuable for practitioners due to its focus on practical applications, the simplification of terms and concepts for an audience outside of academia results in a less comprehensive text than a solely theoretical analysis.

2.8 Conclusion

Reviewing the dominant literature in queer and feminist peace studies has highlighted significant critiques of traditional approaches to peace and security. A prominent theme visible in the literature is the critique of the WPS agenda's lack of intersectionality and narrow interpretations of violence and gender. Further reflection on pertinent debates in queer feminist peace perspectives has prompted important questions: What constitutes peace for LBTQ women? To what extent should the WPS agenda address continuums of violence? How can the synergies in feminist peace approaches and queer peace perspectives visible in the literature be leveraged to better advocate for the specific needs of LBTQ women in WPS work? What do prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery look like for LBTQ women in Northern Ireland and Colombia in these regions?

To gain an understanding of how to better include LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security, the empirical section of this thesis fills a significant gap in the literature by addressing these questions through a queering of the WPS agenda's four pillars in Northern Ireland and Colombia. Building on Hagen et al. 's (2023) approach, the foundational framework of queering WPS is interpreted as the exploration of LBTQ women's experiences of conflict while also challenging heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions to explore more expansive visions of gender and positive peace. This involves drawing attention to the experiences of LBTQ women who are often excluded from the WPS agenda and peace and security initiatives more broadly. By questioning the entrenched notions of masculinity and femininity ingrained in heteronormative and cisnormative frameworks, this research broadens the gender analysis of peace and conflict to benefit people of all genders and sexual identities.

Chapter Three: Queering Women, Peace and Security in Northern Ireland

3.1 Introduction

Northern Ireland is an interesting context to queer the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Although the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) preceded the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000, it envisaged expansive governance reforms to reimagine peace and security through a human rights framework. This resulted in the introduction of measures that are now addressed within the WPS agenda (Turner and Swaine, 2021, p.6). The peace process was considered transformative due to the participation of women in the negotiations and subsequent peacebuilding efforts (Pierson, 2018, p. 462). The GFA is also historic in its inclusion of the first reference to discrimination based on sexual orientation in an international peace agreement (United Nations General Assembly, 2022, p.19). Although there is a lack of implementation of Resolution 1325 by the state of the United Kingdom (UK), progress is reflected in the Northern Ireland Assembly's establishment of an All-Party Group on *UNSCR 1325:WPS* and the plethora of grassroots and civil society peacebuilding initiatives (Pierson, 2019, p.59).

Despite these efforts, the Peace Summit in April 2023, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, drew attention to the ongoing divisions due to nationality and identity and the legacy of violence on individuals, communities, and society (Hamber, Erwin, and McArdle, 2023, p.1). Due to the fallout from Brexit, the Northern Ireland Assembly, also referred to by the metonym Stormont, collapsed and was inactive from 2017 to 2020 and again from February 2022 to February 2024. In the absence of a devolved legislature, progress in creating sustainable peace was hindered (Murphy and McDowell, 2023, p.1). The LGBTQ+ community are particularly vulnerable to violence as reflected in statistics from the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) that indicate that rates of homophobic and transphobic bias-motivated crimes are at their highest recorded since 2004 (UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 2023, p.10). Considering these challenges, this chapter centres on queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Northern Ireland to explore the best practices and challenges in including LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security measures. Firstly, this section contextualises the conflict in Northern Ireland and the development of LGBTQ+ rights in the region. Following this, a queering approach is adopted to evaluate the measures implemented in Northern Ireland in relation to the participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery pillars of the WPS agenda.

3.2 Historical Context of the Conflict in Northern Ireland

The 1921 Anglo-Irish Agreement established Northern Ireland as a separate political entity within the United Kingdom, distinct from the Irish Free State. In the two years following partition, Northern Ireland was marked with violence with 428 people killed, two-thirds of which were Catholic (Duggan, 2012, p.12). Within the Northern Ireland Assembly, the newly established regional parliament, Protestant leaders changed the electoral laws to maximise the power of the majority Protestant community (Woodwell, 2005, p.163). Furthermore, economic stratification continued with Catholic unemployment rates reaching twice those of Protestant unemployment rates (Woodwell, 2005, p.163). For the next four decades following the partition, the political situation remained stable despite the attempts of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to overthrow the Unionist government through several armed insurgencies (Bosi and De Fazio, 2017, p.14). In the mid-1960s, the civil rights movement was sparked by the discrimination of minority Catholics by the predominantly Protestant/Unionist government, particularly concerning housing and employment (Livingstone, 2005, p.1212). With the British army patrolling the streets, republican paramilitary groups including the IRA reorganised, with loyalist paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) forming in response (De Fazio, 2020, p.1693). A series of events including the killing of a British soldier by the Provisional IRA and Bloody Sunday, where British servicemen killed thirteen unarmed Catholic civilians during a protest, exacerbated the sectarian struggle (De Fazio, 2020, p.1704).

The years from 1968 to 1998 were marked by an ethnopolitical conflict referred to as the ‘Troubles’ (De Fazio, 2020, p.1691). The term ‘Troubles’ stems from the social context of funerals where those expressing condolences often say ‘sorry for your troubles’ to the relatives of the deceased (CAIN Archive, 2024, para.1). While Brearton (2012 p.223) frames the term ‘Troubles’ as politically neutral since it does not ascribe blame to a party of the conflict, O’Leary and McGarry (1996, p.18) argue that the term is a euphemism for an ethnic war, communal war or international war, underscoring the political implications of selecting such an understated term. During the conflict, violence was perpetrated by three main actors: State security forces, republican paramilitaries and loyalist paramilitaries (De Fazio, 2020, p.1619). With a death toll of 3,530 in a region populated by 1.5 million residents, few were left untouched by the sheer scale and duration of the violence, social polarisation and instability (Woodwell, 2005, p.161; Bosi and De Fazio, 2017, p.11). The ceasefires of the loyalist paramilitary organisations and the IRA in 1994 enabled four years of multi-party negotiations involving

the Irish and British governments and political parties (Byrne, 2001, p.338). This resulted in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, also known as the Belfast Agreement, on Good Friday in 1998. This peace agreement marked the end of the worst years of the conflict and was based on principles of consociation to establish a devolved government in a power-sharing executive composed of unionist and nationalist ministers (Byrne, 2001, p.327; Duggan, 2012, p.47). In this context, consociation is understood as a distinctive institutional formula to stabilise communities divided along ethnopolitical or religious lines characterised by government by grand coalition, proportionality, mutual veto and segmented autonomy (Coakley, 2011, p.476). However, it is imperative to note that some dissident republic militant groups did not abandon the armed conflict having refused to accept the agreement (Bosi and De Fazio, 2017, p.19). While the GFA is largely perceived as successful twenty-six years after its inception, paramilitary control of communities persists in Northern Ireland, along with ongoing divisions over identity and nationality (Hamber, Erwin and McArdle, 2023, p.14). With 54% of voters in Northern Ireland voting to remain in the European Union, Cochrane (2020, quoted in Mizzi et al., 2023, p.130) argues that Brexit marks a second phase of partition that poses the most significant political and economic challenge for Northern Ireland and the constitutional question since its establishment. Although the GFA has rendered the border invisible in many ways, Brexit reignited debates about the border, increasing polarisation and destabilisation for local communities and the peace process (Gormley-Heenan and Aughey, 2017, p.497; Hamber, Erwin and McArdle, 2023, p.19).

3.3 Development of LGBTQ+ Rights

Northern Ireland's post-colonial and post-conflict history has been central in informing contemporary representations of the LGBTQ+ community in Northern Ireland. Duggan (2012, p.23) argues that homophobia was used by the Irish to undermine the dominance of the British towards the end of the 19th century. This is exemplified by Irish nationalists' efforts to highlight the alleged homosexuality between elite members of the British establishment as a means of discrediting the Gladstone British administration (Duggan, 2012, p.14). Thus, the Irish constructed homosexuality as a colonial 'Other' and a threat to the nation while the continuation of the "heterosexual, procreative, patriarchal family" was deemed central to Irish national identity and the survival of the Catholic Church (Duggan, 2012, p.14). Furthermore, the trial and execution of Sir Roger Casement, a British diplomat and Irish nationalist involved in the 1916 Easter Rising, demonstrates how both the British and Irish weaponised his alleged homosexuality to question his integrity (Duggan, 2012, p.15).

During the ‘Troubles’, the experiences of sexual and gender minorities were rendered invisible as reflected in the omission of homophobic incidents in official police records until 2000 (Bennett, 2024, p.338). The perception of LGBTQ+ individuals as a social taboo that posed a threat to hetero-patriarchal communities resulted in the “regulation and punishment of deviant sexualities” by paramilitaries on both sides (Conrad, 2004, p.125). With men being directly associated with the violent protection of both Irish republican and loyalist community rights through the active ‘policing’ of individuals deemed “deviant” within their communities, militarised masculinities were consolidated (Ashe, 2012, p.238). The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the state police force, also perpetrated homophobic violence through harassment and the frequent raiding of “gay-friendly” venues highlighting a prioritisation of targeted intimidation over the provision of safety (Duggan, 2012, p.62). Post Good Friday Agreement, it is argued that the prioritisation of ethnonationalist identity within the consociational arrangement has obscured intersections with gender and sexuality in Northern Ireland (Ashe, 2012, p.235). Progress on LGTBQ+ rights in Northern Ireland has lagged behind the rest of the United Kingdom due to the conservative nature of society, political resistance and the enduring influence of the Catholic and Protestant churches on social norms, institutions and the political agenda (Ashe and Mackle, 2024, p.5). This is reflected in a report of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (2023, p.57) that highlights the explicit or implicit promotion of heteronormativity within the religiously segregated education system.

3.4 Participation

This section evaluates the participation of LBTQ women in the development of the Good Friday Agreement, the WPS National Action Plan and in elected positions that contribute to peacebuilding. Queering participation necessitates questioning whether this involvement is substantive while also exploring how these spaces can be reimagined to enhance the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives.

3.4.1 The Peace Process

In recognition of the under-representation of women in Northern Ireland's conservative political system, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) was established in 1996. This all-women political party sought to create lasting peace by bridging the ethnonational divide between Protestants and Catholics (O'Keefe, 2017, p.174). The strategy of "lowest common denominator politics" was adopted to maintain focus on the universal issues shared by all women as opposed to differences (O'Keefe, 2017, p.174). Having gained two seats at the multiparty peace talks, the NIWC was the only party with women delegates (Kilmurray and McWilliams, 2011, p.2; Cockburn, 2013, p.158). Despite receiving frequent insults and sexist remarks, the NIWC founders Monica McWilliams and Pearl Sagar lobbied for equality clauses to be included in the final peace agreement (Kilmurray and McWilliams, 2011, p.2). Former Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) of the Republic of Ireland, Eamon Gilmore, commends the work of the late Mo Mowlam, the then Northern Ireland Secretary and Liz O'Donnell, a representative of the Irish government, which ensured that women's issues were included in the agenda (Interview with Gilmore, 2024).[1]

As the LGBTQ+ movement was not represented in the peace talks, it is imperative to question whether the NIWC was representative of LBTQ women across the divided communities. As the NIWC deemed issues relating to sexual orientation "divisive" and "putting off ordinary women", it is argued that the lowest common denominator approach silenced the voices of LBTQ women (O'Keefe, 2017, p.175). Furthermore, republican women were unable to discuss the state violence that profoundly impacted their lives, resulting in compounded forms of marginalisation for republican lesbians (O'Keefe, 2017, p.174). Despite the lack of formal representation in the peace process, the LGBTQ+ movement situated itself as a peace process actor as exemplified by the 1995 Pride celebration theme 'Time for Peace, Time for Pride' (Nagle, 2017, p.194). In the same period, the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association (NIGRA) adopted the mission statement 'Let us Unite in Diversity', emphasising the importance of celebrating all forms of diversity to counter ethnonational polarisation (Nagle, 2017, p.194).

[1] This citation format indicates that the information presented is derived from the original empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews conducted by the author as part of the research study

3.4.2 Gender References in the Good Friday Agreement

It is argued that the influence of the NIWC is reflected in the inclusion of significant clauses on human rights and equality in the Good Friday Agreement (Pierson, 2018, p.468). The clause emphasising "the right of women to full and equal political participation" is particularly notable as it reaches beyond global norms of peace processes at the time (Good Friday Agreement, 1998, p.18; Pierson, 2018, p.468). However, Pierson (2018, p.468) argues that the substantive impact of this is questionable given that mechanisms have not been established to ensure the realisation of this goal. Furthermore, the GFA identified sexual orientation as a characteristic in which public authorities in Northern Ireland are mandated to promote equality of opportunity Good Friday Agreement, 1998, p.18). Thus, sexual orientation was subsequently enshrined in the legislation as one of the Nine Grounds that may give rise to a disadvantage in the anti-discrimination clause in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998). This approach was considered progressive and expansive due to its inclusivity and departure from the habitual identity labels of 'Protestants' and 'Catholics' (Cockburn, 2013, p.167). However, Gilmore noted that it is important not to exaggerate the extent to which the Good Friday Agreement addresses LGBTQ+ issues given that it was formulated in an environment where significant discrimination remained (Interview with Gilmore, 2024). While these provisions were considered examples of best practice at the time, scholars have argued that they are weak, easily subverted and have had minimal impact on LGBTQ+ rights at the local level due to the lack of resources committed (Ashe, 2018a, p.9; Irvine and Hansen, 2019, p.194; Mizzi et al., 2023, p.131). Furthermore, Hagen, Deiana and Roberts (2022, p.146) argue that the gender-neutral implementation of Section 75 has failed to include transgender people and an intersectional lens.

3.4.3 The United Kingdom's Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan

The United Kingdom has developed five Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans. In contrast to the NAPs of other donor States, the first four of the UK's NAPs did not include any commitments at a domestic level despite the continued peacebuilding efforts in Northern Ireland (Stone and Parke, 2016, p.34; Pierson, 2018, p.462). The CEDAW Committee and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women have repeatedly called for the implementation of the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland, with experts arguing that "getting one's own house in order" is essential for increasing the credibility of a country's external promotion of the WPS framework (Stone and Parke, 2016, p.34; Women's Policy Group NI, 2021, p.224). In a departure from previous approaches, the UK's fifth National Action Plan (2023-2027) introduced a domestic focus. This included commitments to increasing the recruitment of

women in the British Armed Forces and governmental negotiation teams as well as tackling violence against women and girls (United Kingdom Government, 2019, p.14). The United Kingdom government (2019, p.5) highlight their "collaboration with UK experts from women's rights organisations, as well as wider civil society, academics and parliamentarians" in developing the fifth NAP. Given her expertise in queering the WPS agenda, interview participant Jamie J. Hagen was "loosely consultative" during the process (Interview with Hagen, 2024). She argued that while there was awareness of including queer perspectives and LBT women's experiences through the consultation process, the final recommendations were omitted (Interview with Hagen, 2024). The NAP includes three references to 'LGBT' individuals, including a reference to the "overlapping barriers to accessing assistance" faced by LGBT+ women (United Kingdom Government, 2019, p. 24). Attention is also drawn to LGBT+ people as a community under threat in the discussion of transnational threats and their increased vulnerability to GBV (Hagen et al., 2023, p.38). However, Hagen is critical of the celebration of these provisions in the NAP, arguing that the LGBTQ+ acronym is included but not LGBTQ+ perspectives (Interview with Hagen, 2024). Furthermore, she argues that the formal NAP and UK annual Security Council statements on WPS fail to accurately represent the approach to WPS in Northern Ireland as these are notably conservative compared to the political demands of civil society organisations such as the Rainbow Project (Interview with Hagen, 2024).

3.4.4 LBTQ Women's Participation in Decision-Making

While the WPS agenda emphasises the importance of women's participation in elected political positions, interview participant Sophie Nelson highlights that mere visibility is not enough to include LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives (Interview with Nelson, 2024). Despite women holding 33 per cent of the seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly, Nelson asserts they are not substantively representing women in all their diversity (Interview with Nelson, 2024). Although it can be argued that an increase in the participation of LBTQ women is therefore necessary to represent LGBTQ+ perspectives, Hagen stresses the importance of questioning the environment we are inviting them to join (Interview with Hagen, 2024). Nelson highlights the challenging political context in Northern Ireland:

> "There is a unique problem in the North in terms of the hostile two-party situation and the historic church-state relationship in terms of the power of churches in the North as well to influence and become represented, albeit not formally, but through different politicians' own personal ideology and personal morality. And that has made it very

> difficult for the queer community to take up positions of power" (Interview with Nelson, 2024).

Nelson further describes the political environment as "hostile", referring to the statement made by Colin Kennedy, a DUP Newtownards councillor at a meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council on 25th October 2023 (Interview with Nelson, 2024):

> "Do not be surprised when those who enthusiastically endorse the LGTBQIA alphabet soup agenda in the West are the very same people who are now seeking to defend Hamas, who are not averse to tossing gay people off the roofs of houses" (Ards and North Down Borough Council, 2023, 02:17:17).

Considering this discriminatory environment, Hagen is less committed to Stormont in its current form as a site of change for LBTQ women (Interview with Hagen, 2024). Instead, grassroots initiatives and self-organising are recognised as having had the greatest impact in advancing LGBTQ+ rights as exemplified by the *Love Equality* campaign where civil society organisations and political activists succeeded in advocating for the legalisation of same-sex marriage (Interview with Hagen, 2024; Interview with Nelson, 2024). While this was achieved in close cooperation with elected officials, this would not have been possible without the strength of the collectivised and mobilised LGBTQ+ community pressing for change (Interview with Nelson, 2024). The desire to reimagine the political system in Northern Ireland is also visible within the wider community. This is reflected in the outcome document of the Peace Summit which highlighted participants' calls for "radical" alternatives to the current system which is described as "stagnant" and "pale, male and stale" (Hamber, Erwin, and McArdle, 2023, p.5).

3.5 Protection

An intersectional approach is adopted in the analysis of the measures established in Northern Ireland to protect LBTQ women from differentiated violence experienced on the grounds of gender and sexuality. Queering protection involves expanding the scope of this pillar to consider violence as a continuum that manifests in many ways including hate crimes, online gender-based violence and conversion practices.

3.5.1 Gender-Based Violence

During the conflict in Northern Ireland, domestic violence which disproportionately impacted women was distinguished as 'ordinary' violence in comparison to the 'extraordinary' violence of the conflict (Pierson, 2018, p.472). It is argued that this early exposure to violence and abuse within family homes has resulted in the acceptance and normalisation of gender-based violence (Lagdon et al., 2023, p.32). In 2023, the Northern Ireland Executive Office (2023) developed a seven-year Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls as opposed to establishing one framework that addresses GBV against people of all genders. While an intersectional lens is considered as a guiding principle for its implementation and the framework was co-designed by people from a diverse range of sectors including an LGBTQ+ rights organisation, there are minimal references to the LGBTQ+ community, sexual orientation and gender identity in the framework aside from in the glossary. An additional challenge for the protection of LBTQ women from gender-based violence is the funding cuts experienced by the Rainbow Project which resulted in the loss of its domestic and sexual violence worker who focused specifically on the LGBTQ+ community (Interview with Nelson, 2024). Furthermore, multiple sources have highlighted a lack of trust in the Police Service of Northern Ireland that results in the underreporting of physical violence among women and the LGBTQ+ community (Lagdon et al., 2023, p.24; Interview with Nelson, 2024).

It is imperative to note that gender-based violence manifests in ways that are not physical given that online gender-based violence is a significant issue for LBTQ women in Northern Ireland. Recent research by the Open University has found that one in two lesbian and bisexual women in Northern Ireland have experienced online violence (Jurasz, 2024, p.112). Hostility towards transgender people in the media and a lack of accountability from social media companies accelerates violence, further increasing the vulnerability of transgender women (Women's Policy Group NI, 2021, p.249). Rates of reporting this violence are high with 80 per cent of the women surveyed who experienced online abuse reporting the incident to the police or social media platforms (Jurasz, 2024, p.124). However, 82 per cent were dissatisfied with the outcome of their report, claiming that they were easily dismissed by the social media platform or the police who deemed the incident to be within community guidelines or were told to alter their behaviour of presence on the platform (Jurasz, 2024, p.124). It is important to note that the Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls is expansive in its inclusion of

strategies to address online violence against women and girls. This approach consists of awareness campaigns of actions to prevent harm, promoting media literacy skills and developing a fund to stimulate innovative approaches to addressing this issue (Northern Ireland Executive Office, 2023, p.33). However, it is important to note that these measures centre on reducing victimisation as opposed to punishing perpetrators of violations. Furthermore, the lack of an intersectional approach fails to address the differentiated vulnerability of LBTQ women to online GBV. Thus, Nelson highlighted the pressing need to introduce additional strategies to address the violent rhetoric and hostility experienced by LGBTQ+ people in online spaces (Interview with Nelson, 2024). Solutions identified by victims include strengthened content moderation, reporting mechanisms and community guidelines that explicitly prohibit online GBV on social media platforms (Jurasz, 2024, p.125).

3.5.2 Hate Crime

While the introduction of a Hate Crime Bill was scheduled into the Department of Justice's 2022-2027 mandate, it has been postponed due to the delay in the formation of an Executive (Lowe, 2024, p.1). In the absence of a statutory definition of hate crime in Northern Ireland, the Police Service Northern Ireland (2023, p.3) defines a hate crime as "any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic". In 2023, the PSNI recorded 253 hate-motivated crimes based on individuals' sexual orientation and 46 hate-motivated crimes based on transgender identity (Police Service Northern Ireland, 2023, p.1). However, the Women's Policy Group NI (2021, p.273) problematises the classification of crimes as motivated by singular personal characteristics due to the intersectional nature of hate crime. It is important to note that while transgender identity is deemed one of such personal characteristics, cisgender identity is not considered. As a result, when hate crimes are perpetrated against lesbian and bisexual women ostensibly due to their sexual orientation, no consideration is given due to the nuanced intersection of gender, sexuality, race, disability and community background as motivators of hostility (Women's Policy Group NI, 2021, p.273). In recognition of this gap in the legislation, Jurasz and Barker (2020, p.3) argue for the inclusion of both gender and gender identity as protected characteristics and the adoption of an intersectional approach to hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland. This would strengthen protection for LBTQ women by ensuring that the criminal justice system adequately records crimes committed against cis and transgender women due to gender and gender identity while also officially recognising the multiple factors motivating hostility (Jurasz and Barker, 2020, p.3).

3.5.3 Conversion Practices

Recognising that violence against the LGBTQ+ community manifests in many ways, multiple interview participants recognised conversion practices as a site of differentiated violence for LBTQ women in Northern Ireland (Interview with Hagen, 2024; Interview with Nelson, 2024). Conversion practices (also referred to as conversion therapies) are defined as "any practice (medical, therapeutic or otherwise) aimed at changing or suppressing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity" (Pyper and Tyler-Todd, 2024, p.28). According to the United Kingdom Government Equalities Office's (2018, p.3) National LGBT Survey, two per cent of respondents reported experiencing conversion practices while a further five per cent have been offered them. The Northern Ireland Assembly (2021) initiated action to address this violence by passing a non-binding motion in April 2021 that called on the Minister for Communities to introduce legislation on an effective ban of conversion practices in all its forms. However, the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (2023, p.18) noted that progress could not be made due to political deadlock in the absence of a functioning executive and legislature. In recognition of a recent study on conversion practices in Northern Ireland conducted by Professor Fidelma Ashe and Dr Danielle Mackle, the Northern Ireland Assembly (2024) passed a motion reaffirming its support for a ban on conversion practices on the 4th of June 2024 with implementation to be achieved before the end of the current Assembly mandate in 2027. However, an amendment to endorse the additional recommendations issued by Ashe and Mackle (2024, p,36) did not pass. These included the establishment of a robust system for investigating claims of conversion practices, training for police and the courts and the provision of support for victims (Ashe and Mackle, 2024, p.36). Until the legislation, corresponding policy and additional recommendations are implemented, a significant gap in protection for LBTQ women and other members of the LGBTQ+ community remains.

3.6 Prevention

Queering the prevention pillar centres on expanding measures to prevent conflict and GBV in conflict-related environments to address the sexual orientation and gender identity-related situations of insecurity that LBTQ women face in Northern Ireland. This process involves challenging the discriminatory gender norms, attitudes and behaviours and gaps in legal protections for LGBTQ+ rights at the root of violence against LBTQ women in Northern Ireland (Hagen et al., 2023, p16).

3.6.1 Challenging Discriminatory Gender Norms, Attitudes and Behaviours

Discriminatory attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people remain in Northern Ireland, particularly in the form of homophobia and transphobia (Mizzi et al., 2023, p.132). Although Ashe (2018a, p.7) notes there has been progress in improving social attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people, the scholar argues that there is significantly less acceptance of transgender people. This is mirrored by a statement from an elected officer in Belfast in the report of the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity's (2023, p.5) country visit to Northern Ireland: "I have never seen so much unadulterated hatred as currently directed towards the trans community". A study conducted by Mizzi et al. (2023, p.139) furthers this viewpoint, highlighting that pervasive homophobia compounds with systemic sexism to instil fear of misogynistic and transmisogynistic violence in LBTQ women in Northern Ireland. It is argued that a key challenge in addressing such norms is the deep pockets of prejudice within public institutions, workplaces and churches due to their conservative and masculinised nature (Ashe, 2018a, p.9). In recognition of this, Sophie Nelson identified cooperation between civil society organisations and the government as an important strategy to eliminate prejudice, highlighting HERe NI's work to identify issues within institutions and use policy and gender identity awareness training to address them (Interview with Nelson, 2024). Furthermore, Hagen drew attention to the importance of solidarity between the women's and LGBTQ sectors as a means of addressing prejudice, referring to the strong support of transgender people during the visit of anti-transgender speaker Kellie-Jay Keen's visit to Belfast (Interview with Hagen, 2024).

3.6.2 Strengthening Legal Protection for LGBTQ+ Rights

The LGBTQ+ rights framework in Northern Ireland combines UK-wide legislation and laws enacted by the Northern Ireland Assembly (Ashe, 2020, p.76). According to the Equaldex (2024) LGBT Legal Index, the United Kingdom ranks 37th in the world in relation to the legal rights and freedoms of LGBTQ+ people with a score of 80 out of 100. However, it is important to note the argument that the Northern Ireland Assembly is slower to adopt international standards relating to LGBTQ+ rights than the rest of the UK as exemplified by the delay to legalise same-sex marriage until 2020 (Ashe, 2020, p.8). This is compounded by the collapse of the Northern Ireland Assembly which has halted the development of legal reforms that are likely to have a gendered impact (Deiana, Hagen and Roberts, 2021, p.2).

Furthermore, scholars have raised concerns that Brexit may lead to the erosion of the human rights standards enshrined in EU laws and directives (Byrne et al., 2020, p.496). The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol underscores the United Kingdom's commitment to maintaining the GFA post-Brexit (Mizzi et al., 2023, p.130). This commitment is reinforced by the human rights and equality bodies established in the region. However, as the UK is no longer bound by EU safeguards, there is a potential for regression in the protection of LGBTQ+ rights in Northern Ireland, particularly if a future Conservative government withdraws from the European Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe (Tryfonidou, 2020, para.8). This was attempted in 2022 by Dominic Raab, the UK Deputy Prime Minister, through the proposal of the Bill of Rights Bill which would replace the Human Rights Act. The UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (2023, p.3) notes that this bill was promoted to the wider public as an opportunity for UK judges to "push back" against the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and "inject a "healthy dose" of common sense". While this bill was shelved, it highlighted the importance of establishing a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland as proposed in the GFA to ensure stability in the protection, respect and fulfilment of the rights of all (Women's Policy Group NI, 2021, p.306).

3.7 Relief and Recovery

Although twenty-six years have elapsed since the end of the conflict in Northern Ireland, it is imperative to explore the relief and recovery measures necessary to help LBTQ women recover from violence. Queering this pillar involves expanding our understanding of relief and recovery to consider gender transformative approaches to transitional justice as well as the sexual and reproductive rights and mental healthcare reforms necessary to ensure LBTQ women enjoy peace in its positive form.

3.7.1 Gender Transformative Transitional Justice

The inadequacy of formal transitional justice processes in Northern Ireland in addressing the human rights violations that occurred during the ethnopolitical conflict has been underscored by interview participants and other international experts (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2023, p.1; Dooley et al., 2024, p.165; Interview with Hagen, 2024; Interview with Nelson, 2024). As the GFA did not include an overarching transitional justice mechanism, information about conflict-related human rights abuses has stemmed from ad-hoc inquiries, inquests and initiatives by victims and civil society (Dooley et al., 2024, p.7). A recent report by the International Expert Panel on State Impunity and the

Northern Ireland Conflict highlights the gendered nature of the widespread, systematic and systemic impunity of the State of the United Kingdom (Dooley et al., 2024, p.17). This is exemplified by inaction to redress women's reports of being subjected to punitive strip-searching with no real security purposes, acts of sexual assault during interrogation and threats of rape to degrade and humiliate women prisoners and those on remand (Dooley et al., 2024, p.432).

In its introductory text, the recently enacted *Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 (hereafter* the Legacy Act) aims to "address the legacy of the conflict and promote reconciliation by establishing an Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR)". However, it is argued that this Act curtails efforts to achieve accountability and the truth (Dooley et al., 2024, p.7). Firstly, it is asserted that the investigative mandate of the ICRIR is significantly weaker than the police-led and judicial bodies it replaced (Dooley et al., 2024, p.10). Criticism also stems from the Legacy Act's controversial introduction of a 'conditional immunity scheme' for perpetrators of crimes including murder and torture. While the grant of immunity is prohibited in cases of a sexual offence or an inchoate offence relating to a sexual offence, this is largely symbolic as the Legacy Acts also prohibits the PSNI and Police Ombudsman from conducting criminal investigations into all conflict-related offences (Mallinder, 2024, para.5). Thus, UN experts have argued that this legislation is a "flagrant breach" of the UK's international human rights obligations as it denies victims their rights to truth and effective remedy (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2022, para.8). Furthermore, the Legacy Act has ignited a legal battle, with the Republic of Ireland initiating an interstate case against the UK at the European Court of Human Rights (Dooley et al., 2024, p.9).

Aside from the release of a BBC documentary about the 1997 murder of Policeman Darren Bradshaw, one of few openly gay officers in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Nelson argues that there has not been a significant effort from formal institutions to acknowledge LGBTQ+ people's struggles with the conflict (Interview with Nelson, 2024). While Nelson refers to a willingness to recognise this history as exemplified by the police's engagement with HERe NI's heritage project officers, she also identifies the Legacy Act's limitation of investigations as a distinct barrier (Interview with Nelson, 2024). In the absence of sufficient formal justice measures, interview participants Hagen and Nelson draw attention to the strength of LGBTQ+ community-led initiatives in Northern Ireland that reimagine memorialisation through art (Interview with Hagen, 2024; Interview with Nelson, 2024). Hagen identified the Outburst Queer Festival and the Array Collective, arguing that these artistic spaces have

provided her with “the most compelling and open accounts of queer experiences in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and today” (Interview with Hagen, 2024). This is exemplified by the transformative queer theatrical production ‘Divided, Radical And Gorgeous’ (D.R.A.G.) first performed in 2012 at the Outburst Arts Festival. This biographical monologue explores the relationship between a Belfast drag queen and a closeted republican paramilitary, challenging the traditional memorialisation of the conflict in its focus on LGBTQ+ experiences marginalised within the heteronormative political culture of post-conflict Northern Ireland (Lehner, 2017, p.115). The departure of the protagonist's lover to participate in the peace process symbolises the perceived incompatibility of a queer future and the consociational ‘two communities’ model (Bennett, 2024, p.343). Thus, by questioning and destabilising the fixed identities and societal norms that underpin politics in Northern Ireland, this performance challenges the two community divide and calls for a reimagining of life in Northern Ireland that transcends sectarian divisions (Bennett, 2024, p.343).

3.7.2 Healthcare for LBTQ Women

Queering relief and recovery in Northern Ireland highlights that improved access to healthcare is central to LBTQ women’s enjoyment of peace in its positive form. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2019, p.13) notes that women, especially those with multiple intersecting identities, experience barriers to healthcare access in Northern Ireland. The under-resourcing and understaffing of abortion services, the failure to fund in vitro fertilisation (IVF) for LGBTQ+ couples, and the dearth of gender-affirming care are cited as infringements of LBTQ women’s sexual and reproductive rights (Deiana, Hagen and Roberts, 2021, p.2; Women’s Policy Group NI, 2021, p.165). As of 2023, 700 people in Northern Ireland were on official National Health Service (NHS) waitlists for gender-affirming healthcare. However, this number likely underestimates the true demand for these services as many transgender individuals opt for self-funded or crowdfunded trips given that the current NHS wait time is five years (Mizzi et al., 2023, p. 138; Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 2023, p.13). Ashe (2020, p.5) argues that the NHS’ inefficiency mainly stems from its outdated care model that departs from international best practice by considering transgender identity as a potential mental health condition requiring increased levels of assessment before treatment. In 2019, the Health Minister commissioned the ‘Gender Identity Service Pathway Review’ to evaluate its services. While the Review Group has organised listening events as a means of consultation, the recommended changes have not yet been implemented (Rainbow Project, 2024, para.6). Noting that the dearth of gender-affirming care has resulted in a mental health crisis among transgender youth, it is

imperative to explore mental health and peer support services within the queering of relief and recovery (UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 2023, p.13).

3.7.3 Mental Health and Peer Support Services

The conflict in Northern Ireland had an immense psychological impact on LGBTQ+ individuals in Northern Ireland given their increased insecurity and struggles to reconcile their national or religious identities with their sexual orientation (Bennett, 2024, p.339). It is argued that people who identify as LGBTQ+ are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health issues (Mental Health Foundation Northern Ireland, 2023, p.14). This is reflected in research conducted by the Rainbow Project (2021, para.1) that highlights that 33 per cent of the LGBTQ+ community experienced poor mental health in comparison to 21 per cent in the general population as recorded by the Mental Health Foundation Northern Ireland (2023, p.14). This mental health crisis is exacerbated by a myriad of factors including the lack of access to healthcare and the failure to address anti-LGBTQ+ bullying, poverty and homelessness experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals (Women's Policy Group NI, 2021, p.166). While the Department of Health issued a Mental Health Action Plan in 2020, it has faced criticism due to the failure to adopt an intersectional approach to consider the increased mental health difficulties faced by the LGBTQ+ community (Women's Policy Group NI, 2021, p.164). Thus, it is argued that mental health services for LGBTQ+ people should be funded, designed and delivered in collaboration with LGBTQ+ civil society organisations, especially organisations already engaging in this work (Women's Policy Group NI, 2021, p.166). Bernardine Quinn is the manager at 'Outcomers', an LGBTQ+ organisation in Dundalk in the Republic of Ireland, just seven kilometres from the border is one of such organisations. As the only LGBTQ+ organisation in the area following its establishment in 1996, the organisation became a rare community where people of all religious and national identities could avail of peer support based on their shared LGBTQ+ identity (Interview with Quinn, 2024). In light of this approach, Quinn highlights how queering relief and recovery in the Northern Irish context necessitates a politically neutral and secular stance to ensure that LGBTQ+ people from both sides of the border can continue to avail of peer support services without judgement (Interview with Quinn, 2024). Furthermore, Hagen argues that queer spaces such as Belfast's queer-owned bookstore 'Paperxclips Books' provide the most important relief and recovery for LBTQ women as they offer community support where they can openly address mental health issues that they may not feel comfortable discussing with General Practitioners (Interview with Hagen, 2024).

3.8 Conclusion

Queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the context of Northern Ireland has highlighted the progress, challenges and gaps in the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives. In terms of the participation pillar, notable progress is visible in the formation of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition to secure representation in the peace process, the resulting inclusion of the first provision on sexual orientation in a peace accord, the consultation of LGBTQ+ peacebuilders in the development of the fifth WPS NAP and increased representation in elected political positions. However, a significant challenge is ensuring that this participation is substantive, highlighting the need to further reimagine peace and security decision-making spaces to ensure the safe and equal participation of LBTQ women.

Queering the protection pillar reflects an expansive approach to protection due to efforts to protect LBTQ women from both physical forms of violence as well as less visible sites of violence such as conversion therapy and online GBV. However, progress is hindered due to challenges in implementation, particularly due to political instability in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, while there is an increasing awareness of intersectionality as exemplified by the seven-year Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls, an intersectional approach has not yet been incorporated into all protection measures. Despite progress in challenging discriminatory attitudes at the root of violence against lesbian and bisexual women, transphobia remains widespread underscoring the need for a further reimagining of protection. Additionally, a key challenge in the strengthening of legal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals is the NI Assembly collapse and potential human rights rollbacks post-Brexit in the absence of a Bill of Rights. Queering the relief and recovery pillar highlights the enduring mental health and reproductive needs of LBTQ women that infringe on their enjoyment of positive peace. In light of the insufficiency of formal transitional mechanisms and the gendered nature of impunity in Northern Ireland, grassroots initiatives have been transformative in their reimagination of transitional justice to address the legacy and memorialisation of LGBTQ+ experiences of the conflict.

Overall, the analysis underscores the importance of an intersectional approach to implementing the WPS agenda and broader peacebuilding initiatives in Northern Ireland. The process of queering directly addresses the research question as its troubling and reimagining of initiatives within the WPS pillars demonstrate areas in which the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives in Northern Ireland must be enhanced. Mirroring this analysis, Chapter Four delves into a queering of the WPS agenda and its pillars to highlight the progress, challenges and gaps in the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in the context of Colombia.

Chapter Four: Queering Women, Peace and Security in Colombia

4.1 Introduction

Colombia provides a rich context to explore the queering of the WPS agenda given that the 2016 peace accords marked the first time LGBTQ+ voices were included in the official peace process (Hagen, 2017, p.1). The UN Secretary-General describes this participation as a "global milestone in terms of integrating gender considerations in conflict resolution" (United Nations Security Council, 2022, p.9). It is argued that this gender transformative approach renders the Colombian case a unique opportunity to empirically ground the notion of queer peace through the implementation of the intersectional feminist and LGBTQ+ perspectives in the peace agreement (Ritholtz et al., 2023, p.14). Thus far, three governments have been tasked with the implementation of the peace agreement: the Santos government (2010-2018), the Duque government (2018-2022) and the Petro government (2022-2026). However, the implementation of gender-specific provisions has been slower than overall progress with persisting challenges including conflict-related sexual violence (United Nations Security Council, 2022, p.18). Although Colombia is currently developing its first WPS National Action Plan, the inclusion of gender perspectives in the peace process demonstrates an expansive implementation of the agenda (Hagen et al., 2023, p.41). Thus, this begs the question: how are LGBTQ+ perspectives included in the implementation of the WPS agenda? How can a queering of the agenda enhance their inclusion? To answer these questions, this chapter begins with an exploration of the context of the conflict in Colombia and the development of LGBTQ+ rights before engaging in a queering of the WPS agenda across its four pillars.

4.2 Historical Context of the Conflict in Colombia

Colombia has experienced a long history of violence and civil war following its liberation from Spain in 1819 (Sánchez, Solimano and Formisano, 2005, p.2). The bitter rivalry between the Liberal and Conservative parties resulted in *La Violencia* (1948-1958), a bloody rural civil war across Colombia. The violence between the Liberal and Conservative parties ended in 1958 with the establishment of a model of power-sharing through a partisan pact known as the 'National Front' (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.5). With this system marginalising third parties and the Colombian military's attack on the assassination of the populist leader of the Liberal Party, communist peasant self-defence groups reorganised as the Marxist guerilla 'Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia' known by its Spanish acronym FARC or FARC-EP (Sánchez, Solimano and Formisano, 2005, p.9; López-Uribe and Sánchez,

2018, p.86). This period also saw the establishment of the 'National Liberation Army' (ELN), the Popular Army of Liberation (EPL) and the Nineteenth of April Movement (M-19) (Holmes and Gutiérrez de Piñeres, 2014, p.373). These guerilla groups were one of many sources of violence during the protracted armed conflict that began in Colombia in 1964 and persisted for over 50 years. Scholars have identified a plethora of factors that caused and perpetuated the conflict including the weak and sporadic presence of the Colombian national government, the lack of enforcement of property rights that facilitated land dispossession and evolving criminal activity surrounding the drug market (Holmes and Gutiérrez de Piñeres, 2014, p.373; Yaffe, 2011, p.202). However, it is argued that discrimination was at the core of the violence due to the inability to resolve socioeconomic, exclusion and injustice by peaceful means (Yaffe, 2011, p.196; Colombia Diversa, 2020a, p.10). Given the long history of structural poverty, displacement, exploitation and oppression in the peripheral regions, much of the violence occurred in these rural areas (Colombia Diversa, 2020a, p.11). The 1980s saw a rise in the formation of right-wing paramilitary groups as a form of retaliation to the violent acts perpetrated by the leftist guerilla groups as well as an escalation of drug-related violence relating to the Cali and Medellín cartels (Holmes and Gutiérrez de Piñeres, 2014, p.374). The lines between Narcos and paramilitary began to blur as Narcos purchased land inheriting the tensions of the land conflict and paramilitaries entered the drug trade to fund their operations (Holmes and Gutiérrez de Piñeres, 2014, p.374). The conflict was characterised by the systematic and extensive nature of sexual violence perpetrated by State forces, guerilla groups and paramilitaries as recognised by the Colombian Constitution Court (CCC) in the *Auto 092* (2008) ruling.

The Colombian government's repeated engagement in start-and-stop peace talks with FARC and the ELN reflects a pattern that Lederach (1997) identified as a contemporary conflict marked by cycles of confrontation and negotiation (Maier, 2020, p.378). The decades of armed conflict finally ended with the signing of the historic final peace agreement between the FARC and the government of Colombia on November 24th, 2016. This long and convoluted peace process was initiated with initial secret talks between the governmental envoys and FARC representatives during the spring of 2011 (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.2). Additional secret negotiations were held in Havana, Cuba in 2012 followed by four years of public peace talks (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.2). President Santos held a plebiscite in October 2016 to enable the Colombian people to approve or reject the peace accord as a means of adding legitimacy to the process (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.30). To the surprise of the international community, a majority rejected the peace accord, albeit by a small margin with 50.2 per cent against and 49.8 per cent in favour (Idler, 2017, para.1). A revised peace accord was signed in

Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and ratified in November 2016 by the Colombian Congress (Maier, 2020, p.378). While Colombia is now considered a 'post-conflict' context, the challenges remaining in implementing the peace and accord and creating sustainable peace are immense (Maier, 2020, p.377). With continued disputes over territory, non-state actors controlling illicit drug markets and more than 8.8 million people officially registered as victims of the armed conflict, the road to reconciliation is long (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.34; Albarracín et al., 2023, p.141). Interview participant Mercier highlights that the situation is further complexified by compounding crises including humanitarian challenges post-conflict, a migration crisis due to unprecedented migration through the Darién Gap at the Colombian border and vulnerability to climate change (Interview with Mercier, 2024).

4.3 Development of LGBTQ+ Rights

To understand the experience of LBTQ women in Colombia post-conflict, it is imperative to explore the historical context of LGBTQ+ rights in Colombia. It is argued that the European notions of heteronormativity and cisnormativity were imposed on indigenous people and enslaved black Africans in Colombia with the arrival of Spanish colonisers at the end of the fifteenth century (Boatcă, 2009, p.132; Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.471). This was achieved through the condemnation and persecution of Indigenous natives' queer manifestations and non-binary experiences of gender in the Catholic tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.471). These social norms were upheld in the construction of the Colombian nation-state in the early 19th century to foster a sense of national unity (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.472). The Truth Commission's findings illustrate the persistence of this prejudice, asserting that violence against the LGBTQ+ community was not a phenomenon of the war, but rather a continuation and exacerbation of societal persecution that existed before the conflict began (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.178). During the civil war, armed actors weaponised social prejudice by attacking LGBQT+ individuals, or those perceived as such, to gain legitimacy among civilians and tighten their grip on local communities (Colombia Diversa, 2020a, p. 11). In light of this enduring discrimination, the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1981 is framed as a milestone in the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights in Colombia (Maier, 2020, p.386). However, the legal recognition of civil rights for LGBTQ+ people was not achieved until the establishment of the 1991 Constitution (Bouvier, 2016, p.13; Maier, 2020, p.386). The Constitutional Court has since played a pivotal role in advancing LGBTQ+ rights in Colombia (Wilson and Gianella-Malca, 2019, p.148). However, it is imperative to acknowledge that such advancements have sparked a backlash from the far right who equate gender justice with "forced homosexuality" and argue for the return to "traditional

values" (Hagen, Daigle and Myrttinen, 2021, p.307). This is evidenced by the 2016 protests against Gina Parody, the former education minister who identifies as a lesbian, which were sparked by the publication of a teaching handbook on sexuality diversity that allegedly exposed Colombian children to "gender ideology" (Espitia, 2016, p. 7). Furthermore, multiple scholars have identified the inclusion of LGBTQ+ rights as a central reason for the public's rejection of the first peace accord in the plebiscite (Espitia, 2016, p.3; Serrano-Amaya, 2019, p.162). This was fuelled by the ring-wing arguments that this inclusion would "promote homosexuality" and lead to the imposition of a "homosexual dictatorship" (Espitia, 2016, p.3). According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, this anti-LGBTQ+ backlash "had a chilling impact on previous gains related to those rights" (United Nations General Assembly, 2018, p.2). As highlighted later in this research, this deep-rooted discrimination and prejudice towards LGBTQ+ people, especially transgender women, continues to lead to violence.

4.4 Participation

Queering participation involves critically evaluating the inclusion of LBTQ women in decision-making in various stages of conflict and post-conflict in Colombia including the Havana peace process, the recent development of the WPS National Action Plan, elected political positions and peace and security initiatives. Furthermore, it is crucial to explore the extent to which participation results in the substantive inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives.

4.4.1 The Havana Peace Process

When the peace talks began in Havana in 2012, there was no direct participation of women at the negotiation table and a lack of gender perspectives in the content of the peace accord (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.16; Mersky, 2020, p.10). However, the strong advocacy of Colombian LGBTQ+ and women's organisations reinforced by the support of the UN resulted in the negotiating parties committing to the inclusion of at least two women in their ten-person negotiating teams and establishing the Gender Sub-Commission (GSC) in September 2014 (Mersky, 2020, p.10). The GSC was composed primarily of women with Maria-Paulina Riveros for the government and Victoria Sandina for the FARC leading their respective five-person team (Bouvier, 2016, p.20). While the GSC was mandated to ensure an "adequate gender focus" in the language of the five substantive chapters of the Final Peace Agreement, it is important to note that it introduced recommendations on the finalised texts of the drafting commission as opposed to being actively involved from the beginning of the process (Bouvier, 2016, p.21; Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.17). Between December 2014 and March 2015, the GSC

organised three delegation visits including 18 representatives of women's and LGBTQ+ organisations with the support of UN Women (Bouvier, 2016, p.22; Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.16). These individuals testified before political leaders and core members of the negotiating parties on point six of the peace process agenda, victims of the armed conflict (Maier, 2020, p.382).

Following this, the Executive Directors of the prominent LGBTQ+ civil society organisations Corporactión Caribe Afirmativo and Colombia Diversa were invited to participate directly at the dialogue table as peacebuilders as opposed to solely representing victims (Maier, 2020, p.382). This historic invitation to present the perspective of a marginalised group was unprecedented in previous peace processes worldwide (Bouvier, 2016, p.22). In line with the arguments of Lederach (1997, p.94), it is posited that these 'middle-level' leaders effectively leveraged their recognition from top-level leadership to create an inclusive peace process where the voices of victims were amplified at the peace table (Maier, 2020, p.385). However, given the impact of intersectionality and the diversity of LGBTQ+ perspectives, it is imperative to note that both Executive Directors who represented LGBTQ+ interests were men (Maier, 2020, p.385). Furthermore, it is argued that although the GSC was an important and effective mechanism, the process was not one of equality given the mechanism's under-resourcing and reliance on the personal sacrifice of its members to meet outside of programmed hours (Winstanley, 2018, p.1). Women continued to be underrepresented in formal discussions while being overrepresented in thematic advisory spaces and administrative functions (Winstanley, 2018, p.2).

4.4.2 Gender References in the Final Peace Accord

In queering the WPS agenda, it is imperative to question whether the participation of LGBTQ+ representatives meaningfully reshaped notions of peace and security by resulting in the inclusion of gender provisions in the Final Peace Agreement. The European Union Special Envoy for the Colombian Peace Process, Eamon Gilmore argues that the Colombian Peace agreement is the "most comprehensive peace agreement anywhere in the world in the twenty-first century" (Interview with Gilmore, 2024). Much of the international praise of the agreement is attributed to the accord's inclusion of over 130 gender and women's rights provisions (Mersky, 2020, p.10). As the provisions relating to sexual and gender minorities contributed to the accord's defeat in the plebiscite, in the final agreement, "controversial" gender language was removed from the text (Espitia, 2016, p.8). Thus, the term 'sexism' was changed to 'discrimination against women' while 'gender identity' and 'sexual orientation' were replaced by 'LGBT population' (Espitia, 2016, p.8). While the central focus of these

provisions is on women with fewer mentions of LGBTQ+ rights, one participant argued that provisions that simply state 'gender' also include LGBTQ+ issues if gender mainstreaming is applied comprehensively (Interview with the Colombian gender specialist, 2024). A significant achievement of the GSC was ensuring that the peace agreement stated that acts of GBV perpetrated by either of the parties would constitute a ceasefire violation (Mersky, 2020, p.11). Furthermore, Espitia (2016, p.8) asserts that the most important part of the agreement is the provision regarding respect for equality and non-discrimination in Chapter Six which states that no social group has the right to use the accord to limit the rights or discriminate against other social groups (Espitia, 2016, p.8). Thus, it is argued that the Colombian peace accord is the only peace process that has addressed gender issues in a manner that exemplified the aims of Resolution 1325 (Davies and True, 2018, p.13).

4.4.3 Colombia's Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan

As a result of women's and feminist organisations' commitment to implementing the WPS agenda in Colombia, the Petro government initiated the development of a WPS National Action Plan in August 2022 (ABColombia, 2023, para.1). A participatory approach has been central to the development of the NAP with over 1,000 diverse women engaging in regional and national forums with broad territorial coverage (ABColombia, 2023, para.3). LBTQ women were directly involved in the drafting of recommendations on the four WPS pillars through the 'First Forum of Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans Women: For a Dignified Life' organised by Colombia Diversa (Hagen et al., 2023, p.8). Similar forums were established to meaningfully engage Indigenous, Afro and former combatant women in the process and ensure an intersectional focus within the NAP (Interview with Colombia gender specialist, 2024). As a result of the consultations, the recommendations of the civil society steering committee that supported the development of the plan included the establishment of a monitoring mechanism, the provision of adequate funding and the adoption of an intersectional approach to LGBTQ+ issues (United Nations Security Council, 2024, p.14). The approach to citizen participation adopted by the Colombian government can be considered a positive model for other countries to follow. However, it is imperative to note that while the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia notes that the approval of the NAP was expected in March 2024, the process has been slow, and the NAP has not yet been published (United Nations Security Council, 2024, p.13). Recognising Hagen et al.'s (2023, p.40) argument that the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in the consultation process does not guarantee a queer analysis, it is not yet possible to determine the degree to which LGBTQ+ perspectives and these recommendations have been incorporated into the final NAP.

4.4.4 LBTQ Women's Participation in Decision-Making

As the Final Peace Accord guarantees the application of a gendered approach to the implementation of Chapter Two provisions on 'Political Participation: A Democratic Opportunity to Build Peace', it is imperative to evaluate LBTQ women's participation in elected political positions (Acuerdo Final, 2016, p.35). As no women were included in FARC leadership at the beginning of the peace process, Gilmore highlights the election of FARC women to Congress and the Senate as notable progress (Interview with Gilmore, 2024). In terms of the representation of LBTQ women, the 2019 municipal elections resulted in Claudia López Hernández becoming Colombia's first openly LGBTQ+ mayor and the first woman elected to the role (Stephens, 2023, p.8). López Hernández was one of nineteen LGBTQ+ candidates elected, marking an unprecedented participation of openly LGBTQ+ individuals (Stephens, 2023, p.8). Similarly, the elections for a new national government and Colombian Congress for the 2022-2026 term were characterised by several gender-related milestones (Quinn, 2023, p.70). Firstly, women's participation as candidates and elected members increased significantly with 29 per cent of those elected being women (Quinn, 2023, p.70). The feminist political movement *Estamos Listas* presented a party list to the Senate for the first time and was endorsed by over 74,000 citizen signatures (Quinn, 2023, p.70). Furthermore, there was a 50 per cent increase in openly LGBTQ+ candidates with the election of six LGBTQ+ individuals, tripling LGBTQ+ representation in Congress since the 2018-2022 term (LGBTQ+ Victory Institute, 2022, para.1).

Despite this success, several obstacles have hindered progress in strengthening LBTQ women's political participation. Firstly, Quinn (2023, p.20) is critical of the failure to adopt the legislation necessary to reform the electoral system to require gender-balanced candidate lists and guarantee the presentation of women-only organisations' lists. Furthermore, progress in implementing gender provisions in the Peace Accord is slow with Chapter Two having the highest percentage of gender stipulations in which implementation has not been initiated (Quinn, 2023, p.64). LBTQ women face additional barriers to participation due to discriminatory attitudes as reflected in a study by Luminate (2023, p.15) which found that 23 per cent of participants believe that LGBTQ+ people are not representative of the majority of the population and should not hold public office. In the absence of the full political participation of LBTQ women, Diaz García argues that you cannot wait for the government to advance LGBTQ+ rights (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). She highlights the importance of grassroots political participation such as through her leadership in 'Mesa Comunitaria LGBTIQ+' or 'LGBTQ+ Community Table,' a

communitarian network between small civil society organisations (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). By electing one leader for each town, this intertown and interregional network develops strategies to amplify its influence (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). However, it is imperative to consider that cases of gender-based political violence in Colombia have a chilling effect that directly impacts LBTQ women's ability to actively participate in peace process implementation and within their communities (Mersky, 2020, p.30).

4.4.5 Reimagining LBTQ Women's Participation in Peace and Security

The UNSC Resolution 1820 calls for the full participation of women in the maintenance of peace and security and conflict prevention and resolution (United Nations Security Council, 2008, p.2). Queering the WPS agenda in the case of Colombia necessitates a departure from approaches to peace and security embedded in militarisation to reimagine LBTQ women's participation. The Truth Commission transcends traditional notions of participation in peace and security by exploring the crucial role that LGBTQ+ people play in resisting control through their bodies:

> "They (re)existed in the conflict, they (re)armed gender, they came out of the wardrobe to live their "unwanted" sexuality, they created art and culture, they embodied non-traditional roles of motherhood and fatherhood, they mimicked and kept silent in order not to die, they returned to their territories, they have elaborated their own memories and formed collective and political bodies that build peace" (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.564).

By highlighting the enduring nature of the LGBTQ+ community's use of the body as a fundamental site of resistance, these acts are framed as part of a continuum that existed before and during the armed conflict as well as in the current post-conflict phase (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.564). Thus, reimagining participation in peace and security through a queer lens in Colombia involves the recognition of diverse forms of resistance employed by LBTQ women to acknowledge their roles as active agents of change as opposed to being solely passive victims.

4.5 Protection

The need to expand the focus of the protection pillar to explore measures to protect LBTQ women from the everyday violence they experience as a continuum was underscored during the interview process (Interview with Colombian civil servant, 2024). The situation in Colombia remains complex given the insecurity created by the demobilisation of the FARC and the invisible forms of violence experienced by LBTQ women (Marín Carvajal and Álvarez-Vanegas, 2018, p.471). Furthermore, this violence varies between rural and urban settings and also within these areas (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). This section evaluates measures to eradicate gender-based violence, police violence, attacks on human rights defenders, and violence due to prejudice perpetrated against LBTQ women in Colombia.

4.5.1 Gender-Based Violence

As data reflects that the 'private sphere' remains highly dangerous for women in Colombia due to gender-based violence, it is imperative to evaluate the protective measures implemented (Marín Carvajal and Álvarez-Vanegas, 2018, p.470). In 2021, the Office of the Attorney General recorded 82,623 cases of domestic violence in which women were victims (International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia, 2023, p.27). However, only 16.09 per cent of cases reached the procedural stage of trial and only 0.8 per cent of cases reached the sentencing stage reflecting high levels of impunity (International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia, 2023, p.27). Similarly, there are also low rates of prosecution in the case of femicides, although to a lesser extent, with only 13 per cent of cases resulting in convictions (International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia, 2023, p.27). Such impunity results in a significant gap in the protection of women in situations of violence. However, it is imperative to note that the Office of the Attorney General does not adopt an expansive approach to GBV that includes LGBTQ+ individuals, rendering it impossible to determine the relationship between the sexual orientation and gender identity of the victim and the attacks (ACAPS, 2023, p.2).

4.5.2 Police Violence against LBTQ Women

While the Truth Commission acknowledges the National Police's violation of LGBTQ+ rights during the conflict, this violence persists in peacetime due to the "serious and selective" nature of the police's violence against LGBTQ+ individuals (Cárdenas Suárez et al., 2018, p.57; Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.406). This is exemplified by the documentation of 28 cases of gender-based violence against women and LGBTQ+ people by the National Police during the National Strike, a series of mass demonstrations that erupted in April 2021 (Amnesty International, 2021, p.6). In 2022, Colombia Diversa (2023a) recorded 97 cases of police violence against LGBTQ+ people as well as the abuse of authority through extortion, torture, sexual violence and arbitrary detention. The authorities also perpetrate symbolic violence by excessively policing public spaces frequented by the LGBTQ+ community and conducting targeted, repetitive searches under the guise of "citizen safety" (Cárdenas Suárez et al., 2018, p.45). Furthermore, the National Police's deliberate omission of violations against LGBTQ+ individuals in official records constitutes a structural form of violence that undermines its role as a guarantor of the rights and safety of its citizens (Cárdenas Suárez et al., 2018, p.48). LBTQ women are disproportionately targeted by police officers as evidenced by daily verbal aggression of highly sexist, homophobic and transphobic natures (Cárdenas Suárez et al., 2018, p.34). Transgender women, particularly those engaging in sex work, experience increased vulnerability to abuse by police authorities (Cárdenas Suárez et al., 2018, p.36; Interview with Diaz García, 2024). The police's prejudiced assumption that transgender women involved in paid sexual activities are criminals, coupled with accusations of "exhibitionism", exacerbate violence against these marginalised individuals (Cárdenas Suárez et al., 2018, p.36). Although the National Police commits to applying a differential gender approach in its procedures under Directive 003, Caribe Afirmativo (2024, para.7) argues that an investigative and sanctioning process should be established to hold police officers who violate their obligations codified by Colombian law to account. Similarly, the Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition recommend that the Ministry of Defence establish a technical roundtable to follow up on cases of violence against LGBTQ+ people that are perpetrated by members of the police force (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022a, p.25).

4.5.3 Violence against Human Rights Defenders

Multiple interview participants recognise Colombia as one of the most dangerous countries to be a human rights defender with those who are LBTQ women facing increased risk of violence (Interview with Diaz García, 2024; Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024; Interview with Gilmore, 2024). According to a report by Amnesty International (2023, p.8), a total of 1,000 human rights defenders have been killed since the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 and 2022, averaging one murder every 61 hours. However, Quinn (2023, p.79) highlights the distinct pattern of sociopolitical gender-based violence impacting women human rights defenders in Colombia due to the dual status of their identity and advocacy in a highly patriarchal society. Attention is also drawn to the distinct vulnerability experienced by women who are from ethnic groups and/or LBTQ due to their interesting identities (Quinn, 2023, p.79). In a briefing of the Security Council on April 9, 2024, Marcela Sánchez, the Executive Director of Colombia Diversa, articulated a poignant perspective: “Every attack against an LGBTQ person, every human rights defender killed, and every murder left un-investigated sends the message that our lives are dispensable” (Sánchez, 2024, para.7). Echoing this sentiment, an interview participant argued that every murder of LGBTQ human rights defenders is an attack on the whole movement as leaders begin to disappear due to the fear instilled by the armed groups and the inaction of State institutions to address this violence (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024).

In light of these immense risks faced by LBTQ women human rights defenders, it is imperative to analyse the mechanisms that have been established to strengthen their protection. The National Protection Unit established in 2011 by the Colombian Ministry of the Interior oversees the protection of vulnerable populations including human rights defenders, indigenous people and journalists (Espitia, 2016, p.6). However, it is important to recognise that this unit does not extend specialised support to LGBTQ+ individuals (Espitia, 2016, p. 6). Meanwhile, progress has been made in establishing local committees in several regions as part of the Colombian government’s *Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders* (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). However, the delay in the approval of the programme’s action plan significantly hinders implementation (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). Gilmore drew attention to the European Union’s support of the work of the Ombudsman’s office to protect human rights defenders, noting the reduction in risks in remote areas where violence is particularly high due to limited State presence and the strength of the illegal economies (Interview with Gilmore, 2024).

Furthermore, environmental human rights defenders in Colombia, many of whom are women, avail of *ProtectDefenders.eu*, the European Union's mechanism to protect defenders around the world who are at high risk (Interview with Gilmore, 2024). To sustain the effectiveness of these initiatives, long-term funding and an intersectional approach are important to safeguard LBTQ women human rights defenders.

4.5.4 Violence Due to Prejudice

The concept of 'violencia por prejuicio', or its English translation 'violence due to prejudice', which originated in Latin America, was cited as a form of violence experienced by LBTQ women in multiple interviews. The Colombian philosopher María Mercedes Gómez defines violence due to prejudice as:

> "The opinion based on social stigmatisation, without support in knowledge and based on hatred or disgust towards someone, for fear of losing the privileges of masculinity, due to irrational hatred or disgust towards someone, supported by violent exercise, which is justified by distrust towards different practices, ideas, orientations and corporalities" (Gómez, 2006, quoted in Beltran, 2023, p.3).

It is imperative to note that this form of violence does not stem from the identity of the victim but the value judgement that the perpetrator makes about the victim's alleged characteristics (Colombia Diversa, 2020b, p.26). Furthermore, Cárdenas Suárez et al. (2018, p.56) understand violence due to prejudice as a social phenomenon given its collective and systematic nature. Colombia Diversa (2023b, p.9) is expansive in its inclusion of violence due to prejudice as a category in the investigation and reporting of violations. In 2022, the organisation identified 10 cases of forced displacement that were considered violence due to prejudice due to the enactment of violence to "punish" them due to their sexual identity and/or gender identity (Colombia Diversa, 2023b, p.4). As violations against the LGBTQ+ community are underreported, an important initiative introduced by the Ombudsman's Office is the 'Contigo' application which facilitates the registration of cases of violence, including those motivated by prejudice. This application has proven effective in increasing the number of reported incidents (Rodriguez Gutierrez, 2023, para.1).

4.6 Prevention

A queering of the prevention pillar centres on measures that prevent violence against LBTQ women. Thus, strategies to address discrimination against LBTQ women and strengthen LGBTQ+ rights under domestic legal frameworks are explored in this section.

4.6.1 Challenging Discriminatory Gender Norms, Attitudes and Behaviours

Diaz García identified strategies to change the culture and mindset of discriminatory norms as effective measures to prevent violence against LBTQ women in Colombia (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). During the conflict, armed actors enforced rigid gender norms in the regions under their control, strengthening discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community through the distribution of pamphlets that rendered them hypervisible as "undesired members of society" (Espitia, 2016, p. 4). The continued prejudice against LGBTQ+ people is particularly salient in rural areas having been intensified through violence in the absence of State presence (Maier, 2020, p.385; Interview with Diaz García, 2024). It is argued that the Final Peace Accord has the transformative potential to overcome the discrimination of LBTQ women, particularly due to explicit references to women and the LGBTI population within provisions on the promotion of tolerance and non-stigmatisation in section 2.2.4 (Acuerdo Final, 2016, p.47). Thus, the government committed to the elimination of stigmatisation through the promotion of training and communication strategies aimed at educating citizens (Acuerdo Final, 2016, p.47). While the national government adopted the Public Policy for Reconciliation, Coexistence, and Non-Stigmatization in August 2022, this action was taken several years behind schedule (Quinn, 2023, p.67). Quinn (2023, p.67) questions the legitimacy of this policy given that its gender integration did not align with the terms of the Final Peace Accord. Despite this criticism, LGBTQ+ rights organisations recognise the policy's preventative potential due to its recognition of both women and LGBTQ+ people as the target population as well as the momentum it can inject into the Territorial Councils for Peace, Reconciliation, and Coexistence (CTPRCs) which are tasked with promoting non-stigmatisation in their territories (Quinn, 2023, p.68). Meanwhile, Mercier highlights the importance of Colombia Diversa's collaboration with religious leaders to challenge the prejudices that stem from religion (Interview with Mercier, 2024). Similarly, Diaz García identifies civil society campaigns of awareness from the LGBTQ+ sector as an effective means of challenging societal norms while also noting that such processes take years to see progress and must be developed in conjunction with public policies (Interview with Diaz García, 2024).

4.6.2 Strengthening Legal Protection for LGBTQ+ Rights

As the Truth Commission identified that the persecution of LGBTQ+ people during the conflict stemmed from State institutions' failure to recognise and guarantee LGBTQ+ rights, it is crucial to evaluate preventative measures to strengthen legal protection for LBTQ women (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.481). According to Equaldex's (2024) LGBT Legal Index, Colombia ranks sixth in the world in terms of LGBT rights, laws and freedoms with a score of 95 out of 100. An important provision in the Constitution of Colombia (1991, p.5) is Article 13 which ensures that State institutions "promote the conditions so that equality may be real and effective and shall adopt measures in favour of groups that are discriminated against or marginalised". The majority of the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights has been secured through strategic litigation in the Colombian Constitutional Court based on this article as opposed to legislative reform. This is demonstrated by Colombia Diversa's movement from the lobbying of elected representatives to sophisticated strategic litigation that resulted in the CCC's landmark Decision SU214-16 which declared same-sex marriage constitutional (Wilson and Gianella-Malca, 2019, p.149). Furthermore, the CCC recognised the right to unconditional self-determination of gender within the binary in 2015 as well as the right to select a non-binary option in official documents in 2022 (Giménez et al., 2024, p.31). However, it is important to note that while there is an abundance of LGBTQ+ rights enshrined in Colombia law, interview participants highlighted that the transformation of daily practices is less clear:

> "Colombia holds perhaps the most interesting paradox where you have beautiful and fulfilling laws and institutions, but the execution is profoundly lacking. If you look at the Colombian institutions, you'll find that we have a women's secretariat in almost every city. We have a gender approach to every peace accord. We have perhaps one of the most thriving academic communities about gender issues but that is not something that the daily kind of woman or daily queer person benefits from." (Interview with the Colombian civil servant, 2024).

Diaz García highlights the disparity between the legislation and its implementation, noting that although there is robust legal protection for LGBTQ+ rights in the major cities, these measures are inadequately enforced in rural areas (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). Thus, the prevention of violence hinges upon the State's full implementation of the legislation across Colombia as this ensures that perpetrators of violations are held accountable and all LBTQ women can enjoy legal protection.

4.7 Relief and Recovery

To respond to the specific needs of LBTQ women to aid recovery from violence, queering relief and recovery in Colombia necessitates a focus on gender transformative justice and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of LBTQ women former combatants. Furthermore, it is imperative to consider actions that respond to the healthcare needs of LBTQ women in terms of sexual and reproductive rights and mental health.

4.7.1 Gender Transformative Transitional Justice

Colombia is a unique context to explore the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in transitional justice as the 2016 peace agreement established formal transitional justice mechanisms and mandated a gender-based approach. One such mechanism is the Commission for Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition, a temporary and extrajudicial body to uncover the truth regarding the human rights abuses and violations committed during the conflict. Following three years of investigation, the Commission published its final report in 2022 which marked a historical first in the adoption of an intersectional approach to incorporate queer truths in an entire chapter entitled ‘My body is the truth: experiences of women and LGBTIQ+ people in the armed conflict’ (Ritholtz et al., 2023, p.11). Multiple interview participants argue that the recognition of patterns of violence perpetrated against LGBTQ+ people in the armed conflict as well as the clarification of the causes of structural and social violence experienced as a continuum within the report is monumental (Interview Colombian gender specialist, 2024; Interview with Gilmore, 2024). This expansive approach to gender and sexual violence within transitional justice reflects a transformative queering of truth-seeking and transitional justice. To ensure gender-transformative justice, the commission’s recommendations must be implemented, including a public apology and memorialisation of LBTQ women’s experiences of the conflict (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024).

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz, JEP), a judicial transitional justice mechanism that divides its work across 11 ‘macro-cases’, is also identified as groundbreaking due to its focus on the persecution of LGBTQ+ people during the armed conflict (Interview with Mercier, 2024). In particular, Macro Case 03 is considered monumental as it established the JEP as the first tribunal to unequivocally recognise violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity as gender-based persecution amounting to a crime against humanity (Outright International, 2023, p.16). Thus, it is argued that the JEP is transformative in its creation of new standards for prosecutors and tribunals to

account for gender persecution (Outright International, 2023, p.16). Macro Case 11 on 'Sexual Violence, Reproductive Violence and Other Crimes Based on Gender, Sex, and Sexual Identity or Orientation' was opened on September 27 20243. As this judicial process aims to address the root causes of GBV against women and LGBTQ+ people in armed conflict, Sánchez (2024, para.10) argues that it "brings us one step closer to ending impunity and can be a beacon of hope for LGBTQ survivors of gender persecution around the world". However, an interview participant notes that substantial progress in the case is slow due to the lack of information regarding sexual violence and GBV (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). Furthermore, Gilmore highlights that addressing issues of sexual violence during the conflict has been met with resistance from perpetrators as well as reluctance among victims to come forward (Interview with Gilmore, 2024). Therefore, it is recommended that the JEP collaborates with women's and LGBTQ+ organisations that have already established contact with victims to co-organise awareness sessions for LBTQ women on engaging with the jurisdiction and reparations process (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). It is argued that through this macro case, the JEP can transform the heteropatriarchal nature of judicial practices to overcome the obstacles LGBTQ+ and women victims have faced in ordinary justice proceedings in Colombia (Quinn, 2023, p.106).

In terms of queering reparations in Colombia, the 2011 Law 1448 established a differential approach to people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities by affording the right to both individual and collective reparation (Colombia Diversa, 2020b, p.165). Furthermore, a notable gender provision in the Final Accord is the recognition of women's and LGBTQ+ organisations as subjects of collective reparation in the Comprehensive Plans for Collective Reparations (Quinn, 2023, p.103). This challenges traditional notions of reparations as individualistic by recognising that violence against the LGBTQ+ community can have collective impacts that include the dissolution of communal bonds that heal wounds (Colombia Diversa, 2020b, p.17). Furthermore, LGBTQ+ organisations queer reparations by reimagining the notion of kinship in their demands to recognise chosen family members as next of kin instead of blood relatives given the unique familial relationships and support systems within LGBTQ+ communities (Ritholtz et al., 2023, p.12). However, the Kroc Institute notes that the implementation of the gender provisions on reparation measures is significantly slower than other stipulations in Point 5 of the peace agreement (Quinn, 2023, p. 16). As Mercier stresses the timeliness of transitional justice for LBTQ victims is crucial for societal progress, it is important to note that while transitional justice bodies have been quickly established in Colombia, delays in implementing a transformative gender perspective hinder progress in achieving justice.

4.7.2 Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

As the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of women and girl ex-combatants is central to the relief and recovery pillar, LBTQ women's involvement in DDR initiatives are evaluated in this section. While the Santos government's gender approach centred on the reintegration of women former combatants, the current Petro government-initiated measures to reintegrate LGBTQ+ former combatants in collaboration with the UN Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVIC) and the Agency for the Reintegration and Normalisation (ARN) (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). A report by UNVIC published in April 2024 notes that 2,815 accredited former combatant women have been involved in economic reintegration initiatives (United Nations Security Council, 2024, p.7). However, these statistics do not highlight the percentage of LGBTQ+ former combatants. Building on the first national meeting of LGBTQ+ former combatants in November 2023 in which participants contributed to public policy, the ARN is developing a project that specifically focuses on LGBTQ+ former combatants (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). Another notable initiative is the national network of LGBTQ+ former combatants which was established as a means of peer support during the reintegration process (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). For some ex-combatants who were forced to hide their LGBTQ+ identity during their membership in armed groups, reintegration into civilian life provides an opportunity to be their "true-self" and transform their roles, identity and expression (Thylin, 2018, p.101). However, it is imperative to note that there are distinct barriers to DDR for LBTQ women, namely the difficulty in reintegrating in a country where they are exposed to multiple layers of discrimination based on sexuality, gender and class as well as further stigmatisation due to their status as former combatants (Thylin, 2018, p.103; Henshaw, 2020, p,71; Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). As a result of this prevailing prejudice, identifying former combatants to participate in LGBTQ+-specific programmes is challenging as many continue to conceal their sexuality or gender identity (Interview with Colombian gender specialist, 2024). Furthermore, it is important to note the variation in LGBTQ+ former combatants' experiences and attitudes, ranging from individuals who actively advocate for LGBTQ+ rights to those who are discriminatory towards other members of the LGBTQ+ community (Thlyin, 2018). This reflects the need for DDR processes to be designed to address the needs of a diverse group of LGBTQ+ former combatants and consider the intersectional discrimination faced by LBTQ women former combatants (Thylin, 2018, p.107).

4.7.3 Healthcare for LBTQ Women

Interview participant Mercier recognises the exclusion of LBTQ women from health services as a form of symbolic violence in Colombia (Interview with Mercier, 2024). Following the conflict, there was a lack of State psychological and psychosocial support for LGBTQ+ victims despite the immense isolation they experienced (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.497). Furthermore, many victims did not avail of medical services due to the fear of being re-victimised, resulting in their silent endurance of pain (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.506). Transgender women continue to face innumerable barriers to accessing healthcare due to severe discrimination by the State, stigma among health professionals and a lack of quality health services (Bouvier, 2016, p.14; Zapata Mayor and Hoyos Hernández, 2024, p.2). Mercier argues that the humanitarian crisis compounds this limited access to healthcare facilities (Interview with Mercier, 2024). In response to these challenges, Diaz García draws attention to the establishment of a Gender Clinic at Chapinero Hospital in Bogotá (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). This public hospital provides comprehensive healthcare services for the LGBTQ+ population including psychological support, legal guidance regarding name changes as well as sex and transitional procedures including hormonal medication and sex reassignment surgeries at a reduced cost (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). Further necessary reforms identified include the transformation of stereotypes that generate discrimination within the healthcare system as well as the integration of LBTQ women's perspectives to establish evidence-based practices (Zapata, Mayor and Hoyos Hernández, 2024, p.7).

4.8 Conclusion

Queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Colombia has enabled the identification of the central challenges and gaps in the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives as well as significant areas of progress. In terms of the participation pillar, the inclusion of women and LGBTQ+ people in Colombia's peace process, the development of the NAP and decision-making roles highlight significant strides towards substantive inclusion. However, queering participation underscores the systemic challenges that continue to limit LBTQ women's political influence. Thus, reimagining peace and security also involves acknowledging diverse forms of participation and affirming LBTQ women as active agents of change. Queering protection in Colombia explores the expansion of Colombia's protection framework to address all forms of violence experienced by LBTQ women post-conflict, including those that are invisible such as the police's omission of reports of violence. The above

analysis highlights the distinct vulnerability of women in rural areas, transgender women and human rights defenders, reflecting the need for an intersectional approach to protection measures established in Colombia.

To prevent such violence, public policy must be combined with civil society initiatives to challenge discriminatory gender norms. Queering the prevention pillar further reveals that while there is a plethora of legal provisions relating to LGBTQ+ and women's rights established in Colombia, full implementation is necessitated to ensure the prevention of violence against LBTQ women. Colombia's gender transformative approach to transitional justice is expansive, particularly due to the Truth Commission and JEP's historic inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives. Furthermore, the establishment of unique measures to support the DDR of LGBTQ+ former combatants and a Gender Clinic dedicated to healthcare services for the LGBTQ+ population reflects a reimagining of relief and recovery to include LGBTQ+ perspectives. However, queering the pillar also highlights the enduring needs of LBTQ women to recover from the conflict, particularly to address the intersectional discrimination faced by LBTQ women former combatants and barriers to access to healthcare services compounded by the humanitarian crisis.

As the analysis highlights significant challenges in the implementation of the peace agreement, it is imperative to consider Diaz García's argument that the reimagining of peace and security to focus on LGBTQ+ issues is a slow process as there is currently a need to address peace and security issues for all of society (Interview with Diaz García, 2024). Building on these findings, Chapter Five explores the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in the WPS agenda by identifying the overarching challenges and best practices uncovered through the queering of the agenda in the contexts of Northern Ireland and Colombia.

Chapter Five: Enhancing the Inclusion of LGBTQ+ Perspectives in Peace and Security

5.1 Introduction

Queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia has provided valuable insights into the questioning, troubling, and reimagining of the WPS framework through a queer lens. This chapter builds upon these analyses to identify best practices and challenges in including LGBTQ+ perspectives in the implementation of the WPS agenda. By exploring the queering of each WPS pillar, insights into the further transformation of peace and security initiatives in Northern Ireland, Colombia and other conflict-affected contexts are offered.

5.2 Participation

Queering the participation pillar in Northern Ireland and Colombia highlights notable advancements in the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives. While this highlights several best practices, the enduring challenges also indicate the need to further reimagine participation.

5.2.1 Participation of LBTQ Women in Peace Processes

While both peace processes are considered exemplary in their inclusion of women in the negotiations, and LGBTQ+ representatives in the case of Colombia, this progress was hard-won. Initially, a challenge visible in both contexts was the invisibilisation of women and their experiences of conflict through their exclusion in the peace processes. However, the formation of the NIWC and advocacy of Colombian LGBTQ+ and women's organisations underscore women's political agency in asserting their right to participate. This achievement contributes to a broader academic debate on the visibility paradigm as it constructs women and LGBTQ+ people as active agents rather than solely portraying them as victims of conflict. The inclusion of victims' voices in the Colombian peace process through delegation visits is transformative in its further disruption of this binary that portrays women and LGBTQ+ individuals as victims and active agents simultaneously. This exemplifies how peace processes can be reimagined to remove barriers to the inclusion of marginalised voices. Thus, the approaches to participation in Northern Ireland and Colombia serve as examples of how LBTQ women in other conflict-affected contexts can advocate for their participation in the peace process.

The peace agreements in both Northern Ireland and Colombia were considered progressive at the time of their inception. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement marked the first inclusion of a provision based on sexual orientation in a peace agreement and was expansive in its application of a human rights approach. Meanwhile, the 2016 Final Peace Accord is exemplary in its application of mainstreaming gender perspectives throughout the agreement. Both examples illustrate how the inclusion of women and/or LGBTQ+ individuals is central to the development of progressive, inclusive and gender-sensitive peace agreements, establishing a best practice that should be emulated in other contexts. However, queering the WPS agenda also highlights the importance of investing sufficient funding into the implementation of gender provisions in peace agreements to ensure that queer and feminist visions of peace are realised.

5.2.2 LGBTQ+ Participation in the Development of WPS National Action Plans

In developing WPS National Plans, interview participants note that consultations with LBTQ women and other marginalised women are an important best practice. The approach to consultation in Colombia is comprehensive given the participation of over 1,000 diverse women in regional and national forums across Colombia. In particular, the organisation of a forum dedicated to the views of LBTQ women highlights a commitment to an intersectional approach that could be impactful in the development of WPS NAPs in other contexts. However, as the Colombian NAP has not yet been launched, it is difficult to determine the impact of the consultations on the text. As the majority of consultation participants' recommendations were not reflected in the United Kingdom's WPS NAP, it can be argued that reimagining participation involves a rejection of tokenistic 'inclusion' to ensure that diverse perspectives, including those of LBTQ women, are genuinely incorporated. As interview participant Jamie J. Hagen noted, this involves the integration of LGBTQ+ perspectives as opposed to the sole inclusion of the LGBTQ+ acronym (Interview with Hagen, 2024). Finally, the analysis of the United Kingdom's NAP serves as an example for other donor States in including domestic WPS commitments to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the WPS agenda and the enhancement of LBTQ women's participation in their own peace and security initiatives.

5.2.3 Representation of LBTQ Women in Decision Making

The analysis of Northern Ireland and Colombia reflects a positive trend towards the greater inclusion of LBTQ women in elected political positions which is significant given the historic marginalisation of the voices of women and LGBTQ+ people in politics. While the visibility of LBTQ women is important,

queering participation in Northern Ireland highlights that women must be substantively represented in all their diversity to enhance the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives. Furthermore, Edenborg's (2021, p.7) perception of visibility as a double-edged sword is reflected in the enduring discrimination against LBTQ women within the hetero and cisnormative patriarchal political systems of Northern Ireland and Colombia. This reflects the need to reimagine the political sphere to cultivate a safer and more inclusive political environment for LBTQ women by challenging the political and institutional cultures of sexism, misogyny and homophobia used to undermine individuals based on their gender or sexuality (Turner and Swaine, 2022, p.24). Furthermore, the process of queering highlights the need to transcend the notion of traditional electoral politics as the primary mechanism for driving the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights post-conflict. The success of the Love Equality campaign in Northern Ireland and 'Mesa Comunitaría' in Colombia highlights the transformative potential of grassroots initiatives and community-based actions to amplify LBTQ women's voices. Furthermore, this echoes Newby and O'Malley's (2021, p.8) argument that track III initiatives are the most impactful in implementing WPS. Thus, in reshaping the participation pillar to enhance the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives, community-led and grassroots initiatives must receive the necessary support to enable them to meaningfully contribute to decisions regarding peace and security. This can include support through funding and resources, capacity-building programmes and leadership training as well as the commitment to consulting LBTQ women on all policies on women and gender.

5.2.4 Reimagining LBTQ Women's Participation in Peace and Security

Queering the WPS Agenda in Colombia highlights a departure from understandings of peace and security that solely centre on militarisation. The Truth Commission demonstrates best practice in its innovative reimagining of the participation of LGBTQ+ individuals in peace and security through the bodily resistance of control. This analysis highlights the importance of understanding the resistance of LGBTQ+ individuals as a continuum that spans before, during and after conflict as well as recognising LBTQ women as active agents as opposed to solely passive victims of conflict. Thus, the Truth Commission recommends that the media, in their social function and commitment to peace, broadcast content that highlights LGBTQ+ individuals' resistance in the context of armed conflict (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p.580).

5.3 Protection

Queering the protection pillar highlights the differentiated sources of violence for LBTQ women. This section explores the central themes, challenges and best practices visible in the evaluation of measures to address this violence in Northern Ireland and Colombia.

5.3.1 Intersectionality

Queering protection in the contexts of Northern Ireland and Colombia illustrates how intersecting identities exacerbate vulnerability. In both contexts, lesbian and bisexual women experience heightened violence due to the intersection of gender and sexual orientation, with transgender women rendered even more vulnerable due to pervasive transphobia. In Colombia, this vulnerability is further intensified for LBTQ women who are human rights defenders and reside in rural areas. Echoing Basu and Nagar's (2021, p.213) critique of the WPS agenda's failure to include an intersectional perspective, an overarching challenge in both contexts is the failure to address violence against LBT women through an intersectional approach. As distinct approaches to addressing violence against women and violence against LGBTQ+ people in both contexts, the established mechanisms do not centre on the protection of LBTQ women. Despite this criticism, Northern Ireland's seven-year Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls exemplifies best practices in its adoption of intersectionality as a guiding principle and involvement of LGBTQ+ rights organisations in its design. However, to meaningfully integrate an intersectional perspective, such mechanisms must move beyond simply mentioning the LGBTQ+ acronym to fully integrate LGBTQ+ perspectives.

5.3.2 Lack of Comprehensive Data on Violations against LBTQ Women

In both contexts, the underreporting of violations against LBTQ women is identified as a challenge in terms of ensuring protection. In the absence of comprehensive disaggregated data about LBTQ women's victimisation, it is difficult to develop protective mechanisms that accurately respond to their needs. This mirrors a broader issue identified in the literature given Hagen et al.'s (2023, p.24) argument that LGBTQ+ human rights violations are often underreported due to enduring stigmatisation, fear of re-victimisation and a lack of trust in institutions. Given the effectiveness of the Contigo application in increasing the number of reported violations in Colombia, this measure could be replicated in other

contexts to address the issue. Queering protection necessitates the disruption of heteronormativity within reporting mechanisms to address the structural challenges at the root of LBTQ women's underreporting of violence. Through the provision of comprehensive education and training programmes for professionals that address bias and enhance sensitivity within institutions, a safe, inclusive environment for LBTQ women to report violations can be created.

5.3.3 Gender-Based Violence

Queering protection necessitates an expansive focus on protection measures that address gender-based violence in the 'private' sphere given that this space is dangerous for women in both Northern Ireland and Colombia. In Northern Ireland, the approach to addressing GBV centres on violence against women through the seven-year Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women. Similarly, the Office of the Attorney General does not adopt an expansive approach to GBV that includes LGBTQ+ individuals. Thus, protection mechanisms that centre on gender-based violence in both contexts do not extend to violence based on sexual orientation as proposed by Loken and Hagen (2022, p.10) in the literature. Therefore, it can be argued that these mechanisms require further reimagination to address GBV against people with diverse sexual orientations and ensure the relationship between sexual orientation and the gender of the victim can be determined. Furthermore, low rates of prosecution for GBV highlight that impunity is a significant challenge in the protection of LBTQ women. Thus, these gaps in protection must be addressed in Northern Ireland, Colombia and other conflict-affected contexts.

5.3.4 Violence as a Continuum: Invisible Forms of Violence

Interview participants underscored the importance of reimagining protection to address the violence LBTQ women experience as a continuum, underscoring the need to consider invisible forms of violence in the implementation of the WPS framework. This approach is exemplified by the Northern Ireland Executive's expansive focus on addressing online GBV within the Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women. However, it is important to note that many of the measures introduced by this framework centre on reducing victimisation such as the promotion of women and girls' media literacy skills. To fully integrate feminist principles into such strategies, it is essential to implement additional measures that target and sanction perpetrators, thereby shifting the emphasis to the deterrence of acts of online GBV. Other notable practices in Northern Ireland are the commissioning of research on the prevalence of conversion practices as well as political commitment to introducing legislation banning this violence in all its forms. While other States should follow these steps to prohibit this form of

violence that is often rendered invisible, it is also imperative that they adhere to the expansive recommendations of Ashe and Mackle (2024). Establishing a rigorous investigative framework and providing specialised training for law enforcement personnel on conversion practices are essential to addressing this form of violence effectively (Ashe and Mackle, 2024, p.36).

5.3.5 The Role of the State in Protection

The need for the stronger presence of the State and its institutions to guarantee protection is reflected in the analysis of both contexts. In Northern Ireland, it is evident that the enduring absence of a legislature and executive has significantly delayed the development and implementation of important protective mechanisms including the introduction of the Hate Crime Bill and legislation banning conversion practices. Meanwhile, the absence of State presence in rural areas in Colombia is framed as a factor that enables violence against LGBTQ+ human rights defenders. Queering protection in both contexts invokes a questioning of the police's role in protecting citizens in all their diversity in times of conflict and peace. In Northern Ireland, there is a lack of trust in the PSNI amongst the LGBTQ+ community due to the legacy of the violations committed by the police force during the conflict (Lagdon et al., 2023, p.24). Meanwhile in Colombia, the National Police are a distinct source of insecurity for LBTQ women due to the physical and symbolic violence they enact. Thus, queering protection for LBTQ women necessitates profound normative and institutional modifications to dismantle the hetero and cisnormative patriarchal prejudice within the police force. As advocated for by Caribe Afirmativo, strong investigative and punitive measures must be established to sanction police officers for violations against women and the LGBTQ+ community. Drawing upon the exemplary practice demonstrated by Here NI, funding should be allocated to LGBTQ+ organisations to facilitate specialised awareness training for the police service. Meanwhile, it is recommended that external psychological assessments are required for people who aspire to join the police force, including the analysis of prejudice due to gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, ethnicity and other factors that may compromise the rights of the citizens there are obliged to protect (Mesa por la Reforma Policial, 2023, p.10).

5.4 Prevention

In the contexts of Northern Ireland and Colombia, queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda reflects the importance of challenging the structural causes of violence against LBTQ women. Interview participants underscored the importance of dismantling the discriminatory norms, attitudes and behaviours that underpin violence against LBTQ women as well as strengthening legal protections for LGBTQ+ rights to deter violence.

5.4.1 Challenging Discriminatory Gender Norms, Attitudes and Behaviours

In Northern Ireland and Colombia, the intersection between homophobia, transphobia and systemic misogyny intertwines to foster the pervasive discriminatory norms, attitudes and behaviours at the root of violence against LBTQ women. LGBTQ+ and women's rights civil society organisations are recognised as important actors in challenging this entrenched discrimination. Here NI's work with public institutions, workplaces and churches to address prejudice through awareness training and policy change can be considered a best practice. Similarly, Colombia Diversa collaborates directly with religious leaders to challenge prejudices that stem from religion. By underscoring the importance of collaboration, these practices highlight how LGBTQ+ organisations and institutions that are influential in shaping norms can work together to challenge discrimination in other post-conflict contexts. Furthermore, the solidarity between LGTBQ+ and women's rights organisations in Northern Ireland demonstrates how the synergies between feminist and queer approaches to peacebuilding can be leveraged to effectively advocate for the prevention of violence against LBTQ women. Thus, ties between feminist and queer organisations must be strengthened in other contexts to enhance collective efforts to advocate for the specific needs of LBTQ women within all WPS initiatives. An additional best practice identified through the analysis of queering prevention in Colombia is the development of civil society awareness campaigns in conjunction with public policies to accelerate the process of challenging discriminatory norms. Despite the difficulties in the implementation of the Final Peace Accord, the inclusion of provisions on the promotion of tolerance and non-stigmatisation is a best practice that can be replicated in other peace processes to ensure commitment to the elimination of discriminatory norms regarding gender and sexual orientation through the education of citizens.

5.4.2 Strengthening Legal Protection for LGBTQ+ Rights

The importance of advancing legal protection for LGBTQ+ and women's rights to prevent violence post-conflict is reflected in both Northern Ireland and Colombia. The delay in progress on LGBTQ+ rights in Northern Ireland due to political resistance highlights the importance of civil society advocacy to promote inclusivity post-conflict (Ashe and Mackle, 2024, p.5). Furthermore, the impact of Brexit reveals the importance of implementing measures to prevent the rollback of existing rights, whether through the establishment of a bill or rights or by signing international human rights agreements. A key lesson from the queering of prevention in Colombia is that legal provisions must translate into daily practice through full implementation and enforcement. This underscores the importance of continual monitoring by civil society organisations and international human rights bodies. Drawing on Colombia Diversa's impactful approach to advancing LGBTQ+ rights, one interview participant recommends the adoption of a multifaceted strategy including strategic litigation within domestic and regional judicial systems in other post-conflict environments (Interview with a Colombian civil servant, 2024). This approach, they maintain, should be combined with robust communications and advocacy efforts to enhance visibility and awareness.

5.5 Relief and Recovery

Echoing True and Hewitt's (2018, p.179) critique of the ambiguity of relief and recovery, queering the WPS agenda reflects an expansive yet ambiguous pillar. Interview participants had varied interpretations and understandings of what constitutes relief and recovery efforts, reflecting the 'positive' or 'queer' conceptualisation of peace inherent to queering the WPS agenda.

5.5.1 Gender Transformative Transitional Justice

One of the most striking differences between Northern Ireland and Colombia's approaches to peacebuilding lies in their approaches to transitional justice. Colombia has addressed transitional justice in a timely manner through a highly formalised and institutional approach exemplified by the establishment of dedicated mechanisms such as the Truth Commission and Special Jurisdiction for Peace. In contrast, the Good Friday Agreement lacked a comprehensive transitional justice mechanism,

resulting in a more ad hoc and fragmented approach to addressing past human rights violations in Northern Ireland. Thus, queering the relief and recovery pillar in the case of Northern Ireland highlights how transitional justice can be reimagined through expansive community-based approaches in other post-conflict contexts in which formal mechanisms are inadequate. As the focus on LGBTQ+ identity in the memorialisation of the Troubles has been transformative in bridging the two-community divide, this approach serves as a model for other consociational societies to overcome similar divisions. Meanwhile, it can be argued that Colombia's approach sets a precedent for the queering of transitional justice in practice due to its transformative inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in its formal mechanisms. Noting the Colombian Truth Commission's transformative approach, it is recommended that other States follow suit in dedicating the time and resources necessary to seek the truth regarding LGBTQ+ individuals' experience of the conflict. As the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is expansive in its setting of new standards to account for gender persecution in conflict, prosecutors and tribunals must continue to push the boundaries of jurisprudence to ensure justice. The expansive nature of these measures highlights how transitional justice should also be reimagined to include LGBTQ+ perspectives in other conflict-affected contexts.

5.5.2 Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

It is difficult to identify how to better include LGBTQ+ perspectives in DDR given that there is limited research available regarding the experience of former combatants who identify as LGBTQ+ in Northern Ireland and Colombia as many continue to conceal their sexuality and gender identity. This invisibilisation hinders efforts to understand their experiences and develop tailored support programmes. Thus, mechanisms must be developed to safely collect disaggregated data specific to LGBTQ+ former combatants, including LBTQ women in other post-conflict contexts to enable the design of evidence-based policies and programmes that meet their unique and diverse needs. Despite these challenges, a best practice identified in Colombia is the establishment of national meetings and projects that focus specifically on LGBTQ+ former combatants. This approach could be replicated in other post-conflict contexts with a specific focus on LBTQ women former combatants. Furthermore, queering the relief and recovery pillar highlights the need to dismantle the militarised heteropatriarchal norms that result in LGBTQ+ former combatants discriminating against other members of the LGBTQ+ community.

5.5.3 Healthcare

In both Northern Ireland and Colombia, systemic barriers to healthcare persist for LBTQ women, particularly those who are transgender. These challenges manifest as forms of structural violence rooted in the under-resourcing of services and persisting discrimination perpetrated by healthcare professionals. Thus, the Gender Clinic established at Chapinero Hospital in Bogotá is a notable best practice in its provision of comprehensive and affordable healthcare services tailored to the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals. Expanding these services through the establishment of similar clinics in other States is essential to ensuring that LBTQ women can fully enjoy peace in its positive form. In Northern Ireland, queering relief and recovery reflects a reimagining of healthcare that prioritises grassroots LGBTQ+ peer support groups as safe spaces for addressing mental health concerns without fear of stigma. Based on Outcomers' approach, it is advisable to adopt a politically neutral and secular stance to empower the LGBTQ+ community to provide peer support without judgement in other deeply divided societies (Interview with Quinn, 2024). However, it is also important to challenge heteronormative prejudices within the healthcare system through transformative training processes for healthcare professionals (Hagen et al., 2023, p.26). Furthermore, consultation with LBTQ women is essential to establish a safe space and develop evidence-based practices that align with their specific needs.

5.6 Conclusion

Building on the queering of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia, this chapter has explored the best practices and challenges in integrating LGBTQ+ perspectives into the participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery pillars. By troubling, questioning and reimagining the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives, it has highlighted the transformative potential of applying a queer lens to peace and security. While the recommendations outlined in this chapter provide valuable recommendations for advancing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security globally, these must be further tailored to adapt to specificities of local contexts. The enduring challenges in implementing the WPS agenda twenty-six years after the conflict in Northern highlight the importance of sustained long-term efforts to fulfil the needs of LBTW women post-conflict. While the best practices outlined above centre on enhancing LGBTQ+ perspectives in the WPS agenda, queering the WPS framework can have a positive impact on society as a whole. This is echoed in Gilmore's statement: "The biggest problem we have right now is reimagining peace and security for everybody," underscoring the broader implications of this research (Interview

with Gilmore, 2024). The concluding chapter provides a summary of the insights gained through queering the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia while further exploring the contributions of this thesis.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This thesis has evaluated the Women, Peace and Security agenda's inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in Northern Ireland and Colombia. Questioning, troubling, and reimagining the WPS framework through the process of queering has challenged the hetero-cis-normative assumptions that limit gender analysis within peace and security initiatives. This approach has highlighted LBTQ women's experiences of conflict and peacebuilding that are obscured within the current WPS framework. Queering the WPS agenda in Northern Ireland and Colombia has demonstrated how the WPS framework can and must be reimagined. Through the identification of best practices and challenges in incorporating LGBTQ+ perspectives in peacebuilding, the analysis has provided valuable lessons that can be applied globally, including sustained efforts to challenge heteronormative and patriarchal norms, the implementation of intersectional approaches and support for LGBTQ+ civil society and grassroots initiatives. Thus, it can be concluded that this thesis has directly addressed the research question in its demonstration that queering the Women, Peace and Security agenda is intrinsic to enhancing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security initiatives.

6.1 Contribution of the Research

The findings of this research contribute significantly to the field of queer peace studies. Firstly, it addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by exploring the queering of the WPS agenda in both Northern Ireland and Colombia. This thesis provides nuanced empirical insights into the integration of LGBTQ+ perspectives within peace and security frameworks through interviews with professionals working in LGBTQ+ rights, peacebuilding and WPS implementation. Moreover, this research expands the discourse on gender within peace and security by moving beyond the conventional binary framework embedded in the WPS framework. By advocating for a more inclusive approach that recognises diverse gender identities and sexual orientation, the research highlights the importance of adapting theoretical frameworks to better reflect the realities of LGBTQ+ individuals in post-conflict settings.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

There is considerable need for further empirical research in queer feminist peace studies. Firstly, the approach to queering the WPS agenda employed in this thesis could serve as a foundational framework for examining the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in peace and security in other conflict-affected contexts. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research that explores the intersections of LGBTQ+ issues and other marginalised groups within the WPS framework such as ethnic minorities, Indigenous populations and people with disabilities would provide a more nuanced understanding of how multiple layers of discrimination compound in the contexts of conflict and peacebuilding. As this thesis centred on LBTQ women within the WPS framework, future research could broaden this scope to explore the inclusion of all individuals with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions within the WPS agenda.

6.3 Policy Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this research, several policy recommendations can be proposed to national and international policymakers to enhance the inclusion of LGBTQ+ perspectives in the implementation of the WPS agenda and broader peace and security initiatives. Firstly, the adoption of an intersectional approach to the implementation of the WPS agenda and the development of WPS National Action Plans is advised to address the unique needs of women with intersecting identities. States should strive to create conditions in which LGBTQ+ people can enjoy queer notions of peace in which they are free from discrimination and violence in all its forms. To ensure that policies accurately reflect LGBTQ+ perspectives in all their diversity, it is crucial to invite queer peacebuilders, particularly those who are women, to meaningfully contribute to the development of peace and security initiatives. Partnerships must be developed and maintained with LGBTQ+ and feminist civil society organisations to ensure their substantive participation in developing WPS NAPs and briefing the UN Security Council. Peace and security practitioners at all levels should receive training and capacity-building on LGBTQ+ issues to ensure a gender-transformative approach to implementation. These measures will contribute to inclusive and effective peacebuilding efforts, enhancing LGBTQ+ perspectives in (en)gendering peace.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of Interview Participants

Interview Participant	Position	Affiliation	Interview Date
Sophie Nelson	Policy Development Officer	HERe NI (community organisation supporting lesbian and bisexual women in Northern Ireland)	19 April 2024
Jamie Hagen	Lecturer in International Relations	Queen's University Belfast	25 April 2024
Bernardine Quinn	Manager	Outcomers (LGBTQ+ organisation in Dundalk in the Republic of Ireland)	30 April 2024
Gender specialist in Colombia	Not disclosed*	Not disclosed*	9 May 2024
Eamon Gilmore	Special Envoy for the Colombian Peace Process	European Union	13 May 2024
Marcela Diaz García	Local leader of Chía	The Resistance, Colombia	14 May 2024
Nathalie Mercier	Regional Programme Manager	Christian Aid Colombia	7 June 2024
Colombian civil servant	Not disclosed*	Not disclosed*	14 June 2024

*Details regarding participants' positions and affiliations have been omitted to maintain confidentiality, as requested by the interview participant.