Title: (Mis)understanding in youth peacebuilding: a textual analysis of variation in the objectives of the United Nations Security Council's Youth Peace and Security Agenda and grass-roots youth peace organisations.

Imogen Fraser

Department of Political Science

McGill University, Montréal

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Abstracts

English: *This thesis explores the (mis)understanding in youth peacebuilding by analysing the objectives of the United Nations Security Council's Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda and those of grassroots youth peace organisations. Through an interpretative content analysis of UNSC resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), and 2535 (2020), and intertextual comparison with documents from 65 member organisations of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), the study uncovers fundamental differences in the framing and implementation of YPS objectives. While the UNSC focuses on youth as key agents in overcoming global security issues, grassroots organisations emphasise building everyday, durable peace that benefits both youth and their communities. This divide highlights contrasting approaches: the institutional inclusion advocated by the UNSC versus the localised, youth-led peacebuilding efforts of grassroots organisations.*

Français: *Cette thèse explore la (mauvaise) compréhension de la construction de la paix par les jeunes en analysant les objectifs de l'agenda du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies pour la jeunesse, la paix et la sécurité (JPS) et ceux des organisations de base pour la paix des jeunes. Grâce à une analyse interprétative du contenu des résolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) et 2535 (2020) du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies et à une comparaison intertextuelle avec les documents de 65 organisations membres du Réseau uni des jeunes bâtisseurs de paix (UNOY), l'étude met en évidence des différences fondamentales dans la formulation et la mise en œuvre des objectifs de l'agenda JPS. Alors que le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU se concentre sur les jeunes en tant qu'agents clés pour surmonter les problèmes de sécurité mondiale, les organisations de base mettent l'accent sur la construction d'une paix quotidienne et durable qui bénéficie à la fois aux jeunes et à leurs communautés. Ce clivage met en évidence des approches différentes : l'inclusion institutionnelle prônée par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU et les efforts de construction de la paix localisés et menés par les jeunes des organisations de base.*

<u>List of Abbreviations</u>

CSO   Civil society organisation

EU   European Union

GCYPS   Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security

IANYD   UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development

INGO   International non-governmental organisation

NAP   National action plan

NGO   Non-governmental organisations

PBSO   Peacebuilding Support Office

SFGC   Search for Common Ground

TAN   Transnational Advocacy network

UNOY   United Network of Youth Peacebuilders

UNSC   United Nations Security Council

UNSCR   United Nations Security Council Resolution

WG-YPB   Working Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

WPS   Women Peace and Security

YPS   Youth Peace and Security

<u>1. Introduction</u>

The Youth Peace and Security (YPS) agenda was established by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015). It marked a shift in the organisation's attention to young people as key agents in global governance. The first of its kind, YPS is a thematic agenda that gives specific focus to the issues that youthful populations are affected by and concerned with. Although the agenda emerged from significant advocacy work by youth-centred organisations, the passing of S/RES/2250 (2015)[1] is significant, as it signals the beginning of an institutionalised approach in championing the role of young people in efforts towards peace and security. In the near decade since its inception, it has encouraged the development of policy that both takes account of the needs of young people in conflict and peacebuilding environments, and considers the youth perspective, allowing for their more meaningful contribution in addressing questions of global peace and security.

The agenda calls for youth-centric work at the international, regional, national and local level, with particular focus on the establishment of National Action Plans (NAPs) that intentionally involve youth and youth priorities in states' peace and security policy. It also calls for more funding and facilitation of initiatives that seek to give a voice to young people with experience and expertise in dealing with conflict and fostering successful peacebuilding; this recognises that the assumption that young people are 'waiting in the curtains' does not reflect the reality of the contemporary peace and security landscape. Where youth have largely been seen as either victims or perpetrators of armed conflict, this new agenda seeks to reposition them in the institutional discourse as integral to the establishment and maintenance of positive security and peacebuilding processes.

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[1] From here on, the three YPS resolutions S/RES/2250 (2015), S/RES/2419 (2018) and S/RES/2535 (2020) will be referred to as 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) respectively.

Nine years on, there has been progress in the implementation of YPS globally. Four nations - Finland (2021), Nigeria (2021), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2022) and the Philippines (2023) - have established YPS NAPs. Other mechanisms, including building coalitions between governments and youth groups or the development of roadmaps, are more widespread, with 23 countries currently boosting one or both of these.[2] Alternatively, some countries have pledged the inclusion of youth language and focus within other peace and security policies. Most recently, Lebanon and Somalia have incorporated YPS into their broader national security policies while Burundi, Chad, Georgia, Ireland and Sri Lanka now refer to YPS within their pre-existing Women Peace and Security (WPS) protocols (S/2024/207). In Canada, the 3rd National Action Plan on WPS - 'Foundations for Peace' - launched in 2024 makes two explicit references to creating partnership with YPS actors and broadening participation, particularly for young women (Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security 2024). Above all, the non-governmental and localised efforts to further enhance young people's positions are also as active and diverse as ever. Young people remain at the forefront of work to increase their voice in peacebuilding at all levels. This will be a key focus of this thesis.

Despite this, a couple of consistent warnings continue to be cited in both scholarship and policy discussions when lauding the successes of the YPS agenda. The first is that it remains the case that not enough is being done. Four national action plans, and 23 countries with even less substantial action suggests there is still a long way to go before YPS can be considered a universal agenda. In terms of peace and security, the involvement of young people remains a low priority for most states and many of the policies implemented, such as those in Nigeria

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[2] Data retrieved from the YPS Monitor: https://ypsmonitor.com/

and the Philippines, are heavily government focused, thus continuing to exclude young people from decision-making (Upadhyay, 2023). Calls from advocacy groups towards the UNSC continue to highlight the issue with this form of tokenism in government policy (Leclerc, 2021). At the intergovernmental level the problem of stagnation exists too. The UNSC itself recognised in its most recent progress report on YPS that, in 2023, mentions of young people in its resolutions had fallen to its lowest frequency since 2018 (S/2024/207). This reflects the situation for on the ground peacebuilding efforts. As Ostheimer (2020) reports, only 24% of peace missions mandate renewals (2015-2019) included references to the role of young people and only three out of 13 blue helmet peacekeeping missions had someone appointed to a YPS liaison role. Similarly, even initiatives that explicitly lend themself towards youth inclusion are showing a disregard for the YPS agenda. The most recent draft of the 'pact for the future', which will be presented at the UN's landmark Summit for the Future in September 2024 has removed its explicit reference to YPS, which was present in the zero draft. This omission indicates a deprioritization of, or at least lack of concern for, the agenda. It does not show a positive direction as the agenda moves towards its 10 year mark.

There have also been warnings about some of the marginalising effects of the increasing institutionalisation of the work done by and for young people in conflict zones. For example, the close links between YPS and global anti-terror frameworks have led to reports that the agenda is a vehicle for a heightened securitisation of youth (Altiok, 2020). Issues have also been highlighted about the misrepresentation of young women's agency in post-conflict environments (Ensor, 2020). Furthermore, a milestone report - the 'The Missing Peace' (2018) - commissioned by the UN drew particular attention to the continued exclusion faced by youth in formal practices, and the resulting mistrust of young people of powerful

institutions and structures (Simpson, 2018, p.12). The 2024 progress report only shows that this mistrust heightened, citing it as one of the most serious barriers to the agenda's success at present (S/2024/207). These issues force us to ask whether institutionalisation of the agenda is a move in the right direction for the young people that have and continue to work to foster peace both within their communities and globally?

The tensions that arise when a highly institutionalised organisation like the UN extends its prerogative into traditionally grassroots activity are interesting and worthy of study in this context. While this tension is not exclusive to YPS, there is a lack of comprehensive study of how and where this issue might play out with this agenda. My thesis seeks to rectify this by examining the similarities and differences between the UNSC's YPS objectives and those of a range of non-governmental organisations who work at the local and national level to advance the youth peace and security space. The primary question I ask in order to conduct this analysis is '**How does the framing of youth involvement in peace differ between the UNSC and grassroots peacebuilding movements, and what does this indicate about the status of YPS?'**. In attending to this puzzle, I also speak to various supplementary questions:

1. What does the discursive content of the UNSC resolutions on YPS reveal about the institutional understanding of young people in global peace and security?

2. To what extent is this institutionalised understanding of YPS reflected in the aims of youth peacebuilding organisations?

3. Where do the objectives of youth organisations extend beyond the institutional framing?

4. What can we learn from these findings about the relationship between top-down and bottom up work in the youth peace and security space?

5. What does this relationship indicate about the efficacy of the YPS agenda and issues of youth engagement and trust at the institutional level?

By addressing these questions the thesis will contribute to a growing field of critical peace and conflict studies, analysing the extent to which the YPS agenda makes the UNSC as a key actor in the movement of youth peacebuilding. In order to achieve this, I will conduct a multi-step textual analysis that analyses the content of the three existing UNSCR on YPS - 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) - to decipher in detail how the UNSC understands YPS and what it should be achieving. By examining these documents, I am able to use the Security Council's discursive output to best explain its objective with the agenda. With the official UNSC rhetoric properly understood, I will then be able to make meaningful comparisons with the aims and objectives of youth peacebuilding grass-roots organisations. Here, I will carry out a similar analysis of textual data parsed from the websites of a range of grass-roots organisations, applying both the codes developed from the YPS resolutions - as a measure of similarity - as well as identifying significant themes that arise across this data which are absent from resolutions. This second aim will allow for an understanding of where grassroots efforts diverge from the UNSC's objectives, and provide an explanation as to how the disconnect between top-down and bottom-up initiatives materialises.

By putting these findings into the context of both wider commentary of tensions between levels of governance and more specifically criticisms that have been waged at the YPS agenda, I seek to contribute to an ongoing attempt to understand where and how YPS can become a more inclusive and therefore successful agenda. One view of the Security Council's adoption of YPS is that while it appears an attempt to broaden the scope of its work to be more inclusive of 'human security' issues, it is really 'driven by moral panics over the

purportedly growing threat of radicalization of globally connected but marginalised youth' (Ensor, 2020, p.1). With this in mind, it is important to consider whether the YPS agenda could be co-opting the global youth peacebuilding movement to ensure that it aligns with the UNSC's wider aims in peace and security. For this reason, an assessment of inclusiveness stands as an important measure of success for the YPS agenda. Understanding this requires an analysis of which aims of youth peacebuilding are champions by different actors. In doing this, a question is raised regarding the ultimate aim of youth peacebuilding: should it be striving to collaborate with a wider peace and security agenda or instead working to de - and re-construct it?

The thesis is structured as follows. I first review the literature on YPS before outlining some of the key conceptual frameworks that are important to the study - youth as a social category, inclusion in global governance and the peacebuilding landscape - before providing a contextual history of YPS, looking at developments within the UN, as well as significant advocacy work, and how they laid the foundations for the adoption of the first resolution. I then set out the research design before the findings of the content analysis are presented alongside broader discussion about context and issues with UNSC versus grassroots framing of YPS.

Through this study, I find that a fundamental divide exists between the two groups, and their different interpretations of the YPS agenda is evidence of this. Where the UNSC seems to be focused on how youth can play a role in overcoming issues of global security, grassroots organisations prioritise building everyday, durable peace that will benefit youth now and in the future, as well as the affected community as a whole.[3]

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[3] Throughout the thesis, I discuss the two groups - the UNSC and the UNOY organisations - as singular entities. I recognise the importance and am aware of the diversity that exists within grassroots organisations. Where the UNSC is more easily understood as possessing a singular, coherent agenda, there are inevitably contextual

2. Understanding youth, peace and security as a developing global project

My study builds from the small but emerging literature on YPS itself. Young people play a key role in thinking about and practising peace, in multiple and complex ways (Berents and McEvoy-Levy, 2015). For the purpose of this study, it is appropriate to address the literature in two parts, pre- and post-YPS agenda. This allows for understanding of a) how youth peacebuilding has been understood more generally and b) the reaction to and analysis of the onset of youth peacebuilding as a global project.

2.1 Pre-YPS: scholarly optimism for institutionalising YPS

Much of the pre-YPS literature on youth peacebuilding assesses the different ways in which the phenomenon has positively engaged young people in a range of peacebuilding efforts. The general agreement is that youth have a positive impact on peace (Carey, 2007), though not without attention to the necessary caveats and nuance needed when discussing involvement in conflict and peace. Beyond this, there are various streams within the literature. Many look at how youth are involved at the micro-level or in specific moments, for example in post-accord peacebuilding (McEvoy-Levy, 2006). Heavy focus also falls on escaping the stereotype of the 'dangerous or vulnerable' youth dichotomy when it comes to issues of peace and security. This literature has proliferated in the 21st century, and works to counterbalance the pervasive assumptions about youth and insecurity brought about by securitisation. Instead, young people are noted for various peacebuilding capacities, including peace leadership, work in reconciliation and reconstruction, roles in grassroots peace and community building, particularly across political, religious and ethnic divides. Above all

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considerations that make it more difficult to do this with the youth-led organisations. However, in conducting this study I have seen enough overlap to treat them as a coherent political entity, and find that what makes them an interesting site of analysis is that they hold various things in common in spite of, or perhaps owing to, their diversity.

they are viewed as willing to be active participants in both formal and informal peacebuilding. These remarks are almost always accompanied by a demand from international organisations, national governments, donors and aid groups to recognise the agency of young people and invest in their peacebuilding activity (Drummond-Mundal and Cave, 2007; Felice and Wisler, 2007; Ungerleider, 2012; Micinski, 2016). There has also been some acknowledgment of the unique way in which young people conceptualise peace, as related to solidarity and mutual care, and how this is reflected in their efforts at building it (Sacipa et al. 2006) through music and dance, art and sport (Pruitt, 2008; Thorpe, 2016). A substantive section of this literature is also case specific. It examines how youth are integral peacebuilders in their own communities, helping members of their own demographic as well as in the establishment of peace more generally (Peters, 2007 on Sierra Leone; Dwyer, 2015 on Bali; Berents, 2018 on Columbia; Grizelj, 2016 on Myanmar).

2.2 Post-YPS: scholarly celebration or scepticism?

As Ensor (2020) notes in the introduction to a major contribution on YPS - 'Securitizing Youth: Young People's Role in the Global Peace and Security Agenda' - the post-agenda literature is growing but has mainly been driven by policy-oriented actors who produce research with the purpose of highlighting a key project or issue areas. In doing so, Ensor (2020, p.10) claims it is 'often [seeking] to advance a particular agenda'. In other words, more scholarly analysis of the significance of YPS is needed.

Much of the YPS specific literature remains limited to celebrating the success of its adoption. It outlines the explicit work done by advocacy networks in getting the resolution to exist in the first place (Berents and Prelis 2020; Ostheimer 2020) or showing how the it represents an important step towards positive youth recognition in the international community, putting

increased onus on regional policy makers to support and incorporate youth in response to resolution 2250 (Williams, 2016; Altiok and Grizelj, 2019). It has also been suggested that the YPS agenda offers young people an opportunity to resist the power of the political elite within the UNSC to set security agendas, finding that youth movements are successful in using YPS for their own advantage at the local, national and transnational level (Altiok, 2020). This can also be done through young people challenging the epistemological power of the elite. Leclerc and Rouhshahbaz (2021) note the importance of youth in knowledge creation, seeing them as key actors in creating and administering peace in their own communities. This knowledge can be transferred to support wider shifts in the methodology of peacebuilding, and for Leclerc and Rouhshahbaz (2021), YPS should offer space for this to happen. They label this as a shift from the Scholarship of Discovery to a Scholarship of Engagement. This involves listening to those involved in everyday peacebuilding, in this case youth, and taking their ideas seriously as valid sources of knowledge for both policy and academia. Leclerc and Rouhshahbaz (2021) contend that YPS has the potential to be integral in this shift. However, they rightly question the extent to which this has happened to date.

Others draw attention to both the pitfalls and possible dangers of the enactment and instrumentalisation of YPS. There is a risk that, by working within instead of against institutions, youth movements will be used to bolster wider national security priorities, particularly those that target young people such as prevention of violent extremism. Altiok (2020), like others, draws attention to the close link between YPS and the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) framework. In fact, in the first lines of Resolution 2250, it stresses the 'recalling' of previous resolutions on Countering Terrorism in the implementation of YPS. Similarly, Berents and Mollica (2021) warn that it is important to respect and champion youth initiatives whose work pre-exists, and operates successfully outside of, YPS while

recognising the advantages that come from working in the institutionalised global environment. To be successful, the UNSC must pay attention to how much the YPS agenda regulates youth peace activism and, instead, attempt to work in meaningful partnerships with young people, as suggested in Simpson's (2018) report. They offer warnings about what 'inclusive peace' actually looks like.

Perhaps the most stringent criticism of YPS comes from Sukarieh and Tannock (2018). They argue that YPS has only intensified the securitisation of youth, detracting attention from, and instrumentalising, the positive work young people do in peace building. They make it especially clear that YPS is a method to bring youth on board with the hegemonic social and economic order, and provide space for both the state and private actors to collaborate in governing the lives of young people. The liberal peacebuilding model has, they argue, essentialized and narrowed understandings of peace and peacebuilding to make it both attractive to donors and 'build and maintain ideological support for a neoliberal global order that... serves the interests of national and global elites' (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2018, p.861). Sukarieh and Tannock's comment on the maintenance of the neoliberal global order is echoed in Simpson's report about the importance of allowing youth into institutional governance mechanisms 'without being subjected to co-option, manipulation or control (2018, p.12) and also on decoupling access and opportunity from the supposed security threat of unemployed youth. However, Sukarieh and Tannock are more overtly critical in their claims.

Izzi makes a complementary point in her analysis of the 'youth employment for peacebuilding' mantra which is supported by the majority donors and international agencies despite the lack of evidence based findings that employment is key to keeping youth from the effects of exclusion and marginalisation (2020, p.95). She infers that these preferences are a

result of the fear mongering associated with the youth bulge and by ideological motivations that see youth as an 'untapped resource' in the global market. This makes youth employment schemes widely celebrated as moving youth away from idle to active participants in a peaceful society but 'the key elements of the securitization of youth employment linger in these celebratory accounts' (Izzi 2020, 106). More nuance is called for in understanding the importance of youth employment for the individuals and societies it helps alongside better awareness that this should happen on the terms of these individuals and communities, and not to conform with global security agendas.

Finally, it is damning that Sukarieh and Tannock warn young people to address peace and security in a way that 'address[es] and work[s] to radically transform the fundamental injustices and inequalities of these institutions' rather than working to be included in 'current social and economic institutions' as this (2018, p.865). They warn that in the 'absence of a careful and sustained critique of the global youth, peace and security agenda', young people could risk having a strategy that supposedly champions them being 'directed at the global youth themselves' (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2018, p.865).

How then can these ideas be extended to critically place the YPS agenda into the wider context of youth peacebuilding? While the literature has highlighted issues with the rhetoric of inclusion and participation, there is an absence of research that assesses how well the aims and messaging in the institutional YPS agenda reflect those of youth peacebuilding organisations. This study works to rectify this, seeking to understand if YPS has successfully matched the expansive objectives of youth working for peace globally. In doing so, I question the compatibility of the two 'sides' in their claims about YPS, asking if we can really 'use the master's tools to transform the master's house' (Staudt, 1998)?

3. The conceptual background of YPS: Who are the youth? What is inclusion? and the divide in the peacebuilding landscape

We must first, however, clarify the meaning and significance of some key concepts. This helps to situate the study of YPS within certain disciplinary contexts.

3.1 Youth as a social category

It is important to establish how the UNSC, and international community more generally, has viewed this transitional group of political actors. Youth holds a unique role as a transitional demographic that is constantly in flux. In other words, people are constantly 'becoming' youth while others age out of the categorisation. It is a dynamic, socially constructed category and is neither homogeneous nor constrained by a single definition or categorisation. However, Özerderm and Podder (2015) identify three helpful types which dominate the study of youth. They are 1) an 'age-defined' group; 2) have a distinct relational situatedness to other generations, and 3) are in a physiologically transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. These attributes are recognised in literature across a range of disciplines, not only children's studies but also scholarship in sociology, anthropology, history, and comparative politics and area studies. International relations trails many of these other disciplines in its study of youth due to its central focus on macro or state level structures. However, this is changing; a shift of attention towards a focus on human security and the role of individuals in global politics has made space for these issues.

Key discussions on youth focus on perception and agency. How are young people perceived by those around them, particularly those in positions of power, and what role is granted to them as actors who can participate in and challenge dominant structures of authority?

Recognising that there can be a wide-range of positions on this, it seems youth are often perceived to present a difficult and unique challenge to traditional power structures. Young people's transition, or liminal status makes them unpredictable and a threat to the status quo. This is due to their often tumultuous experience of transitioning away from childhood, but having not yet achieved the freedom and clarity of adulthood. This has led to the creation of a malign-benign binary in understandings of youth. Globally, they have been seen either as a threat to authority or in need of protection and safeguarding from its realities. In the framing of peace and security specifically, this has been described as the 'victim-perpetrator dichotomy' (Drummond-Mundal and Cave, 2007, p.64). In cases of conflict, the youthful demographic are grouped as a cause of insecurity and barrier to peace, or as those negatively and passively impacted by it. Either way, they were traditionally kept separate from decision-making processes, viewed as a group to be acted upon rather than agents to work with.

The main explanatory theory used in international relations to explain this framing of young people is the 'youth bulge' theory. The theory assumes that countries with a bottom-heavy demographic pyramid, in which the population of young people aged between 15-29 is disproportionate to the rest of the population, experience higher levels of political violence (Weber, 2019). The theory is often tested in developing countries (Hvistendahl, 2001; LaGraffe, 2012) and finds that the instability associated with this transitional life stage brings about a threat to both national and international security. As is often the case with theory in political science, the theory holds normative weight and its transmission from theory to practice has led to an exacerbation in discourse positing youth as a threat. Awareness of these demographic patterns has been met in policy and governance spaces with a fear about the security threat young people might pose when left unemployed and disillusioned (Lin, 2012).

The moral panic this created about risks of radicalisation, and social and political instability that jeopardises global security, has gained an increasing influence on the international community's conception of young people (Ensor, 2020). This fear has gained particular purchase since the beginning of the war on terror (Altiok, 2020).

In parallel with this, young people have traditionally lacked formal agency, being absent from high level political decision-making. However, this does not mean that they lacked desire to participate in social and political processes. In fact, the idea of young people holding an exceptional position as agents of change 'has become a type of mantra within social science' (Jeffrey, 2012, p.245). Youth are thought to hold a unique position as challengers of the status quo, bringing new and distinct perspectives and ideas into the social realm. Jeffrey (2012) argues that we must take this seriously and recognise the way in which young people navigate and disrupt structures of power. While some of these accounts of young people as an idealised modern citizen have perhaps been overstated - they can fall into the trap of homogenising or fetishing youth activity - they offer a different conception from the perpetrator-victim account, challenging associations of youth as purely instigators of violence (Kennelly, 2011). Seeing young people as agents, who have a more complex relationship with peace and security, provides an alternative third descriptive, as creators, not simply recipients, of peace (Howana and Boeck, 2005). This addition allows for important recognition that young people's interactions with politics and peace are as heterogeneous as the category of youth itself (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005).

There is then consensus that young people represent a vocal part of the international community, and while they have often been left out of discussions of peace and security, they are willing and can be meaningful participants in these processes. The shift towards a

multi-fold understanding of the concept of youth has been a key issue for youth-centric activism and as such has informed much of the YPS agenda through its development and implementation. For this reason, this complex definition of youth is central to the discussions that follow in this thesis.

3.2 Inclusion and exclusion in global governance

At its core, the discussion in this thesis is an example of the issues related to inclusion and exclusion in global governance. The UNSC perception of young people, and the types of spaces they therefore give over for participation in peace and security, is representative of the wider debate of how the elite actors in global governance view inclusion.

Inclusion refers to how groups that have traditionally been marginalised from a certain space come to be involved within it. In global governance, inclusion is usually discussed in terms of inclusion through representation, inclusion in decision making and inclusion in policy implementation (OECD, 2020). As such, it involves a change of attitude, or the creation of a new norm, in regards to who can have a say on how the issues of governing in world politics are dealt with. Given that multilateral institutions - the UN in particular - remain central to practice of global governance, it is inevitable that their approach to inclusion comes to define what kind of inclusion happens and how it takes place. On the face of it, the increasing attention to and involvement of NGOs, CSOs and other non-state actors in global governance implies a widening of the net of inclusion. The new opportunities available for these actors to influence the policy and direction of a given global issue is significant. In fact, it is acknowledged that there is now a norm of inclusion in global governance that has emerged as a result of the political struggle and activism from outside of the orthodox governance structures (Pouliot and Thérien 2015). However, given that the governance elite continues to

set the standards for what inclusion looks like, labelling the shift towards an 'inclusivity norm' as a success would be misguided.

In fact, the proliferation of 'inclusion' in global governance is not linear, and it has actually highlighted and produced exclusions. The two things are not mutually exclusive. Due to the nature of politics in global governance, and power politics in particular, the inclusion of certain actors and practices often rests upon the continued or further exclusion of others (Pouliot and Thérien, 2018). In fact 'a practice allowing new forms of agency may simultaneously entail dynamics of cooptation and domination. Global governance practices are infused with power dynamics that often point in opposite directions' (Pouliot and Thérien, 2018, p.164). At the core of the issues on this topic is that inclusion can be interpreted differently, both in terms of what counts as inclusion and what counts as acceptable or 'enough' inclusion.

This inevitably creates tensions between different stakeholders. Where a multilateral organisation like the UN has opened up attendance at a summit to a non-state stakeholders, and considers this form of participation - a place for that particular group to make their perspective on an issue heard by a global audience - to be inclusive, for others this is not seen this way. One problem is accusations of tokenism, seeing the invite to the table as purely a performative move in which a select group or individual from a wider and diverse marginalised demographic are included (Dalkiliç and Yilmaz, 2019). This naturally excludes other members of that group, including those whose objectives and aims differ. There is an argument that in many cases, this inclusion, and subsequent exclusion, is more than a consequence of tokenism but is in fact intentional and targeted. In order to maintain the status quo while advancing the inclusion norm, elites often permit what they see as 'necessary' and

'acceptable' inclusions, perhaps of members of a marginalised group who they think will not attempt to disrupt but instead contribute to pre-existing policy and practices. The former group remains excluded. It is in this way that the inclusion-exclusion dynamic continues to reinforce or create unequal power relations in global governance (Pouliot and Thérien, 2018). Others also feel that what the elite group sees as inclusion, involvement at a summit for example, is not meaningful inclusion and does not create any significant change. For them, inclusion should involve power over decision making on a given issue being put directly under their jurisdiction, rather than it continuing to be set from the top down, with potential input from local or non-state actors.

In the context of the UNSC and YPS, this provides an interesting frame. Where the UN professes inclusion and participation for young people through the agenda, much of the literature has highlighted issues with this. This thesis works to assess these criticisms by looking at how the claims about inclusion by the UNSC stand up against other conceptions of inclusion. It puts the dominant discourse about youth inclusion up against a different context, grassroots youth organisations, to understand whether what one group might see as an inclusion is actually creating other forms of exclusion. By auditing youth inclusion, the UNSC is at risk of creating a situation in which certain forms of youth peace and security become further marginalised. It is therefore important to consider where YPS sits under the inclusion-exclusion dynamic in global governance. Does it provide example of the complications of orthodox inclusion of heterodox actors?

3.3 A changing peacebuilding landscape

These dynamics of 'limited inclusion' in global governance are reflected within the range of mandates of the security council. This includes the peacebuilding landscape. Thus, in order to

further understand the context in which YPS has emerged, the discursive terrain of peacebuilding - a central form of governance - must also be understood. To do this I emulate Laura Shepherd's discussion on the production of Resolution 1325 on WPS in which she stresses the 'importance of paying analytical attention to the discursive terrain' that surrounds the agenda (2008, p.383). Contextualising YPS in a similar way allows for understanding of some of the reasoning and rationale behind the agenda, as well as the political and normative contexts in which both the agenda and the grass-roots youth organisations exist. This requires a discussion of the concept of peacebuilding, and the different forms it can take.

'Peacebuilding has become a fix in the policy and academic worlds' (Mac Ginty, 2013, p.2). While the idea of reconstruction and re-establishing order in post-conflict zones is as old as conflict itself, the globalised recognisable form of phenomenon became mainstream after it was cited in the UN's 1992 'Agenda for Peace' (Ryan, 2013). Since then, peacebuilding practice and research has proliferated with the result that a large amount of money, infrastructure, organisations and stakeholders have been invested in fostering long term-stability in post- or protracted conflict zones. This proliferation has also led to a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives on the phenomenon, some of which come to hold more weight in the world of governance than others.

The 1990s saw a shift in the narrative around conflict with the emergence of: 'new wars' theory (Kaldor, 2012); the human security discourse, which expanded thinking about global vulnerability beyond simply state insecurity, and the security-development nexus where domestic poverty and violence become an issue for international security and the promotion of development an integral strategy for security policy (Duffield, 2001). These changes all align with post-Cold War liberal interventionism and the idea that principles of democratic

freedoms, human rights, the rule of law and in many cases liberalised economies should be implemented in conflict zones and are vital to establishing peaceful societies (Pugh, 2018). As a result, Mac Ginter argues that 'the most significant ideologies that shape contemporary peacebuilding are related to a liberal optimism' (2013, pp.2-3). Similarly, Ryan states that 'by the end of the twentieth century it is not unreasonable to think of [liberal peace] as the dominant peace theory' (2013, p.27). This has an inevitable knock on effect on both peacebuilding practice and research. Ideas around liberal peace have created a specific framework in which initiatives for peace should happen. These have been built from a set assumption about what peace looks like, how it should be implemented and by who, and what it should achieve.

This form of peacebuilding is top-down and heavily bureaucratised. It focuses on (re)constructing stable political, financial and judicial institutions, usually modelled on those in established democracies, which will be run by national, and often international, bodies. It is through these institutions that rights and civil liberties will be provided and protected, therefore creating a conflict free society. There is an explicitly neoliberal element to this method of peacebuilding: it 'privileges private over public goods, while at the same time attempting to reconcile communities on the basis of a modern version of Adam Smith's 'hidden hand', the aggregation of private needs and goods' (Pugh et al,. 2008, p 4). The new institutions bring with them the possibility of economic prosperity, which is a precondition for the prevention of conflict. Implied, sometimes implicitly, by this conceptualisation of peace is that the alternative, or absence of these principles, is the antagonist to successful peacebuilding. For this reason, liberal conceptions of peacebuilding work in parallel with other phenomena, notably the security-development nexus. Issues of underdevelopment - such as poverty, unemployment, limited access to education and weak law enforcement and

judicial structures - are all seen as root causes or insecurity, which can materialise in the form of terrorism and violent extremism, civil wars or interstate conflict. Top-down liberal peacebuilding works by the logic that overcoming these root causes through the implementation neoliberal institutions is the most effective form of peacebuilding.

The UN has become a central actor in the practice of liberal peacebuilding. It has, as Zaum points out, 'continued to emphatically embrace democracy as a central element in ending civil conflicts' (2013, p.113) Some argue that in the organisation, peacebuilding has always been seen as an expansive agenda that could include a range of 'political, legal, institutional, military, humanitarian, human rights-related, environmental, economic and social, cultural or demographic action' (Berdal, 2014, p.366). This has the effect of creating a 'melange of goals, conservative and ambitious, short- and long-term, that remain relatively undifferentiated, let alone considered in strategic relationship with one another' (Cousens et al., 2001, p.10). However, on the whole, the organisation has become a vehicle for the practice of liberal peacebuilding. It has organised peacebuilding around four main ideas: security, development, democratisation and human rights, as is apparent from the documents it has issued (Chetail, 2009). The UN increasingly recognises some of the shortcomings of this approach, and the need for greater civil society involvement (Ryan, 2013), and is also aware of shifts in the world order away from liberal hegemony, and the need to reflect and balance different state interests. But much of the UN's approach remains heavily influenced by the underlying assumptions that necessitate top-down, elite-led peacebuilding. In fact, it is considered to be one of the main forces contributing to the staying power of the liberal order, with attempts to diversify its approach to peacebuilding repeatedly seen as tokenistic (Connolly and Stanley, 2024).

In response to the dominance of the liberal approach in policy and academia, a field of critical peacebuilding studies has emerged which both highlights issues with the dominant practices and proposes alternative conceptualisations of peace. At the centre of the criticism of conventional ideas of peacebuilding is that they serve to reinforce the status quo by constructing a version of peace that aligns with a liberal-capitalist world order (Pugh, 2018). Two observations emerge from this critique, one theoretical and the other focusing on practical failures. Much of the former criticism comes from post-colonialist thought, criticising liberal peacebuilding as a form of neocolonial global governance, in which ideas about 'good' and 'successful' peace are imposed from the outside, and privileged over local systems of peacebuilding. The issue is well summarised here:

> 'The vast majority of peacebuilding initiatives occur in the global south but are designed, directed and funded from the global north. This is hugely significant. It means that for many people, peacebuilding is something that is 'done' to them. It is imposed as part of a wider set of power relations in which actors from the global north, and elites in their own country, hold many of the top cards' (Mac Ginty, 2013, p.3).

Part of the issue with liberal peacebuilding stems from problems of epistemological power. Knowledge and ideas on how to create and maintain peace are being developed away from the centres of conflict that they hope to affect. Furthermore, this knowledge is implemented with the intention of creating or maintaining certain norms, regardless of whether this corresponds with the demands for peace in a given society.

The second critique focuses on the material failures of this approach to peacebuilding. It finds that the kind of liberal interventionist peacebuilding carried out by Western states and organisations have failed to produce the promised results (Steinberg, 2013). In fact, Steinberg argues that 'the creation of stable democratic institutions and accompanying political cultures based on pluralism and tolerance has proven very illusive' and explains this as the

dual impact of an overestimation of the potential outcomes of these approaches and an underestimation of the obstacles to their success (2013, p.37). Autesserre offers direct criticism of the UN when noting the failure of conventional peacebuilding: 'The larger problem, however, is a fundamental misunderstanding about what makes for a sustained peace. The UN's strategy favors top-down deals struck with elites and fixates on elections' (2019, p.102.). It also uses what she describes as a 'cookie cutter' approach to peacebuilding which disregards local context in favour of international best practice. She instead calls for more recognition of bottom-up strategies which are centred around local knowledge about peace and community cohesion, strategies which the UN continues to dismiss as a 'sideshow' (Autesserre, 2019, p.114).

While liberal peacebuilding has dominated the field, these critiques bring focus onto alternative visions of how successful inclusive and meaningful peace can look. This is often labelled the 'local turn' in peacebuilding. It prioritises taking local ideas and solutions into account when building a programme for peace, which can be done exclusively at the local level or include national and international stakeholders, who follow the lead of the local actors. It involves local communities developing their own conceptions and measures of peace and implementing these through participatory methods (Wolff, 2022). Severine Autesserre has written extensively on this subject, basing her study on her experience as part of UN peace missions in Central Africa (Autesserre, 2008; 2019; 2021). She argues the issues identified can be overcome by switching the direction in which peace is administered, building cultures and strategies of peace from inside communities affected by conflict and associated economic, social and political tensions. This can be achieved both through giving sole responsibilities to locals to build peace efforts, or through hybrid efforts in which the

UN, for example, is present but values local actors and strategies on the same level as its own agenda and personnel.

Grassroots peacebuilding also addresses the epistemic power issue that liberal peacebuilding creates as it helps to overcome the dominance of Western thought in both theorising and the practice of international peacebuilding (Wolff, 2022). The more attention given to experiences and strategies developed in conflict zones, which disproportionately occur in the Global South, the more diversity that emerges in peacebuilding strategies, helping to overcome the 'cookie cutter' approach. There is still some concern about the fact that the literature on everyday, or local, peacebuilding is typically produced in the Global North by western scholars (Mac Ginty, 2011). However, there is recognition that the relocation of power, particularly in the practice of peacebuilding, has been a key achievement of the local turn in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). Mac Ginty and Richmond make this evident in noting that 'the local turn is seen as an affront to the 'liberal peace', a betrayal of Marxist-derived understandings of social justice, and certainly a rejection of the 'natural' right of the North to intervene in the political formations of the South' (2013, p.764). It is clear that everyday peacebuilding comes to be seen as an alternative to the more conventional forms, and that it is increasingly championed for the more inclusive methods it offers.

Despite being a proponent of this peacebuilding framework, Mac Ginty (2008) rightfully warns of the temptation to romanticise local forms of peacebuilding given their association with community support and inclusion which juxtaposes the more bureaucratic, hardline peacebuilding that comes out of elite institutions. The austere nature of reforms often required by the neoliberal route to peace reinforces this view. However, local, or 'indigenous peacebuilding efforts remain at risk of perpetuating entrenched power dynamics, and can

create inter-community exclusions, particularly along gendered or ethnic lines. This can be mitigated by holding these types of local initiatives to account, scrutinising and testing whether they are fit for purpose and how they serve different areas of a society experiencing conflict (Mac Ginty, 2008).[4] It is certainly the case that grass-roots youth peacebuilding is easy to romanticise, with the dual effect of infantilization of youth, which brings as assumption of innocence, and idealist ideas about young people as the 'hope for the future'. I will be attentive to these risks in the present study. . Nevertheless, they should not be used to discount often overlooked qualities of 'everyday peace'.

3.4 Locating youth in the peacebuilding landscape

The evolution of peacebuilding has created a dual experience for young people. In some ways the expansion of liberal peace and security has afforded youth new opportunities to participate and be taken seriously in peace processes. YPS marks a key recognition of this fact. However, it is evidence of limited inclusion at work. The liberal peacebuilding zeitgeist has also brought with it exacerbated fears about the security threat posed by young people, especially given the association between economic exclusion and violence. This heightening of stereotypes has had a particular effect on young men (Pruitt et al., 2018). A body of literature has been written on how the shift to liberal peacebuilding has been consequential for youth. One key area of focus is the proliferation of a particular type of peace education, which has normalised certain understandings of violence and peace as universally applicable and stigmatised other more culturally specific forms in a way that corresponds with hegemonic or status quo peacebuilding agendas (Gur-Ze'ev, 2001; Zembylas and Bekerman, 2013). Another is the link between youth employment and peace, in which formal employment is seen to alleviate the threats of the youth bulge and social exclusion. This is a

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[4] This is done through initiatives such as https://www.everydaypeaceindicators.org/

key part of the YPS agenda, but was nonetheless being forwarded prior to it. However, as Sukarieh and Tannock (2008) find the 'marketing tool' of youth employment is used to serve the neoliberal ideological agenda of extending market practices and ensuring elite business interests. They stress the danger of youth demands surrounding peace being co-opted to serve wider economic priorities, particularly given the fact that in international economic development discourse, youth have been seen as 'assets and resources to be harnessed and invested in for economic growth and stability (Altiok et al., 2020, p.435). McEvoy-Levy highlights a similar criticism, noting that 'youth-targeted capacity-building programs of economic development, health care, and conflict resolution training are, like other aspects of the 'liberal' peace project, potentially subject to dynamics of orientalism and neo-imperialism' (2013, p.297)

On the other hand, the local turn in peacebuilding seeks to centre youth in peace, albeit in different ways. The focus on community-led initiatives lends itself to youth voices as part of a broader trend of increased inclusivity and participatory peace processes. Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015) theorisation of this kind of peace puts youth at the centre, seeing them as engaged in various acts of everyday peace as they build resilience to conflict and find creative and unconventional ways of creating peace spaces. They take issue with the victim-perpetrator dynamic and instead see youth multi-faceted actors in peace:

> 'The 'innocent', 'damaged', 'victimised' youth is a powerful rhetorical tool that operates in conflict and post-conflict and obfuscates the lived experience of youth in these circumstances. While it cannot be denied that young people suffer and are victims of conflict and violence, this conceptualisation erases and denies the multiple experiences of youth as peacebuilders who negotiate complex systems of risk and oppression to act for peace at local, national, and international levels' (Berents and McEvoy-Levy, 2015, p.122).

Autesserre (2019) finds this to be the case in the example of local peacebuilding she studies, in Lake Kivu in Eastern Congo. The numerous grass-roots cases studied in this thesis will

provide further evidence of this. In all, this debate in the peacebuilding landscape has been highlighted to stress the political context into which YPS emerged, reinforcing the need to understand in what ways the agenda does and doesn't not serve the demands of youth in peace.

4. Tracing the emergence of YPS: establishing historical context

Before proceeding with the analysis, and having established the academic context from which this thesis builds, the historical context surrounding YPS requires some explanation. This section works to establish how the UN came to a place of establishing the agenda as well as setting out a timeline of the third-sector work that occurred concurrently, and ultimately provided the pressure for the UNSC to act.

The UN has become gradually more concerned with the status of young people in global politics since its inception, seen firstly through the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965). Perhaps more significantly, in 1992, the UN created the Major Group for Children and Youth as a formal mechanism for the younger generation to engage with the organisation's processes and policies. However, this space was broad and did not target specific inclusion within UN bodies. With the Security Council being arguably the most traditionally hierarchical assembly within the organisation, this move did little to signify that the UN saw young people as significant actors in peace. Nor did it create space for youth participation in the Council. Simultaneously, the Children and Armed Conflict mandate was established in 1996 by Graça Machel, Mozambique's former Minister of Education, calling for more international attention on the situations faced by child and youth victims of conflict (Ostheimer, 2020). Together, these changes signalled the beginning of an era in which the UN

recognised that young people hold unique positions as both the victims of global issues and actors in overcoming them.

The next significant marker of progress therefore required a shift in the outlook of the Security Council. It came through both the introduction of the 'protection of civilians in armed conflict' mandate in 1999 (S/RES/1265) and the establishment of the Women Peace and Security agenda in October 2000 (S/RES/1325). These thematic agendas marked the beginning of a move away from a sole focus on hard security towards more awareness of human security issues. This came in recognition of the changing nature of global warfare, the international security environment and the increased scope of understanding of the concept of security itself (Tryggestad, 2009, p.542). Accordingly, there was an increasing requirement to listen to and involve the types of people disproportionately affected by these forms of conflict. The shifts in the demands and methods of governing global security forced the UNSC to take seriously the contribution that systematically marginalised demographics could make to issues of peace and security. Through the WPS agenda specifically, women were seen within the council not only as victims of conflict but experts in overcoming its challenges and building peace. Put simply, they came to be seen as agents in peace and security, and were granted representation, protection and inclusion. The gendered perspective on peace and security operations and policy was also adopted as part of this agenda (Tryggestad, 2009). Important here is recognition that through the establishment of the agenda 'a formal barrier was broken in terms of acknowledging a link between the promotion of women's rights and international peace and security, between traditionally soft sociopolitical issues and hard security.' (Tryggestad, 2009, p.541). It provided a precedent from which youth peace advocates could build towards an agenda that included young people in similar ways.

Young people have had a long-standing role in shaping wider movements and processes in global politics, both positively and negatively. Attention to this phenomenon in academia begins in the late twentieth century; little can be found that looks at any kind of consistent youth organisation before then. Jobs and Pomfret (2015) put this down to the effects of industrial modernity. Prior to that, short life expectancies meant that youth was a quick transition, and not a stage of life long enough to warrant study. Their work, alongside others, looks at how youth emerge as a transnational force that has a tangible impact on all aspects of society (Jobs and Pomfret, 2015; Laqua and Papadogiannis, 2023). However, there is limited scholarship on the historical nature of youth contribution to peace. Some work touches on the involvement of youth within wider pacifist discourse, for example on transnational student engagement with the League of Nations in the interwar period, due to its explicit establishment of a new peaceful world order (Laqua, 2017). Others look at specific bilateral peace and reconciliation projects such as the Anglo-German youth hosteling movement in the middle of the 20th Century (Cunningham and Constantine, 2020). This sparse literature seems then to be picked up again in the 1990s when the discourse surrounding peace and security in the post-modern era develops, and the research on young people's position proliferates (Altiok et al., 2020).

This coincides with the beginning of activism for increased youth peace participation. Berents and Prelis (2020) note that the ten year period of 2002-2012 saw a slow increase of both workshops and academic research on youth peacebuilding, which culminated in the formation of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding (WG-YPB) in January 2012.[5] This group emerged as part of the wider UN initiative for

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[5] The working group was renamed the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (GCYPS) in 2018, and will be referred to as this more often in this thesis.

Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) and for the first time made space for collaboration between civil society organisations (CSOs) and the UN, through their Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). As it developed, this coalition was spearheaded by the INGO Search for Common Ground (SFCG) as well as the more subject-specific United Network of Youth Peacebuilders (UNOY). Importantly, it created a formal structure for youth peacebuilding advocacy, giving young people and those that supported them more bargaining power towards the Security Council. In the following three years, young people gained a new level of access to the spaces and people with influence over global peacebuilding policy, allowing them, with the support of governance bodies at different levels, to put forward a well constructed case for the institutionalisation of youth peace and security. As a result, they achieved recognition at the highest level of both the unique issues they face in conflict zones and the important role they play in overcoming them. The GCYPS acted as a channel between the UNSC and grassroots youth organisations, aiming to create an equal working partnership between the organisation and the young people at the centre of the activism with the common goal of moving towards the establishment of resolution 2250 (2015). In doing so, the coalition kept a central commitment of '*nothing about youth without youth*' (Berents and Prelis, 2020, p.5, emphasis in original).

The following three years also saw an increase in collaboration, including the appointment of the first UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth and the release of a youth-led report, supported by the UNOY, on the 'Agreed Language by UN Security Council on Youth, Peace and Security' (UNOY, 2013). Perhaps the next important staging post is the introduction of the 'Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding' in April 2014. The nine suggestions set out in this document act as the foundation for a resolution and in the following year they were endorsed by youth ministers in the Africa, Asia and Caribbean

Region Commonwealths and at the EU's Annual Action Programme for 'Stability and Peace - Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Crisis Preparedness'. It is commonly cited, however, that the Kingdom of Jordan's attention to the growing agenda is most significant in its eventual adoption. In April 2015, their Crown Prince chaired an open debate at the UNSC on 'the role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace'.This brought calls for increasing youth participation in peace and security directly in front of the Council's member states for the first time. The Kingdom of Jordan then hosted the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security in Amman in August, bringing multi-stake holders ranging from UN entities and donors to youth activists and NGOs. It took place in the context of an increasingly united campaign by activists, including the use of the online platform #Youth4Peace, in which for the first time since 2012, the possibility of seeing change within the Security Council seemed achievable. The meeting of over 600 participants - 200 of them young people from 80 different countries - culminated in the adoption of the Amman Youth Declaration which sought to change the narrative on youth in conflict (Upadhyay, 2023) and, in so doing, formalise a roadmap towards YPS (Berents and Prelis, 2020). The declaration offered material evidence of the joint progress of institutional efforts and youth lobbying, and was followed in December by the passing of 2250 (2015)

Many key elements of the original resolution are worth noting in order to understand how the Security Council intended to make its mark on the world of youth peacebuilding. First of all, the resolution makes direct reference to Women, Peace and Security (2000) and the recent resolutions on countering terrorism (2014). The implication here is that both of these initiatives, in terms of how their practices, for the former, and aims, for the latter, are integral to how youth should be coordinated. For the Kingdom of Jordan, the issue of youth in conflict was inextricably linked to the geopolitical significance of the rise of the Islamic State

in its region and the role that young people played in both acts of violent extremism and the success of prevention and counter terror. For Ostheimer (2020), this explains their decision to lead the formalised campaign for the establishment of YPS. The document also defines youth as aged between 18-30. However, it is widely acknowledged that age is a subjective label, due to its transitional and context dependent nature, and that age limits differ. For example, in contexts outside of the Security Council, the UN has taken youth to be persons between 15-24 for the purpose of statistical consistency.

The resolution consists of five key pillars that, when implemented, should guarantee meaningful action for and by young people in conflict resolution. They are as follows:[6]

- Participation: 'tak[ing] youth´s participation and views into account in decision-making processes, from negotiation and prevention of violence to peace agreements'.

- Protection: Ensur[ing] the protection of young civilians' lives and human rights and investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes perpetrated against them'.

- Prevention: 'support[ing] young people in preventing violence and in promoting a culture of tolerance and intercultural dialogue'.

- Partnership: 'engaging young people during and after conflict when developing peacebuilding strategies along with community actors and United Nations bodies'.

- Disengagement, and reintegration: 'invest[ing] in youth affected by armed conflict through employment opportunities, inclusive labour policies, and education promoting a culture of peace.

Through these five core pillars, the resolution stresses the importance of member states committing to establishing these principles at all levels, while also recognising the need for implementation within the Council itself (UNSCR, 2015, p.3). It also makes clear that youth must be taken seriously as victims and perpetrators of violence and conflict as well as agents

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[6] As set out in: Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022) "Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials". Accessed via:
https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/YPS-guide-for-public-officials-1.pdf

in overcoming these issues. Given the complexity of conflict, young people may also need to be addressed as members of multiple of these categorisations.

The passing of 2250 (2015) marked the start of an ongoing development of this agenda. As earlier stated, it has been followed up with two further resolutions: 2419 (2018) which re-emphasises the call for meaningful inclusion and 2535 (2020) which offers more direction on the operationalisation of the agenda, particularly for the UN's state members. However, perhaps the most significant follow up to the original resolution in Simpson's (2018) commissioned report 'The Missing Piece' which offers both harsh criticism on inaction surrounding the agenda and more acute recommendations for its implementation by both the UN and other concerned actors. The report builds on the input of 4,230 youth from 153 countries through a range of focus groups as well as regional, national and online consultations over two years. It reaffirms the need to use education and employment in positive ways for peace, and in particular notes the importance of being gender aware and inclusive when designing and implementing policy. Perhaps most interesting is the general warning that comes in the report about taking youth seriously, with importance given to allowing partnerships and initiatives to be bottom-up and youth lead. It seems to suggest that the UNSC and other related parties should be advocates and overseers but not dictate what YPS is and how it takes effect.

5. The theory of a method: hybrid textual analysis

To answer my research question, and make a meaningful contribution to the growing literature on YPS, I conduct an interpretative content analysis of a range of YPS related documents. In the following section I offer a brief theory of the textual analysis method to describe the process through which this research design was established and then carried out.

This justification of my chosen methodological approach explains how each decision is appropriate for what I am trying to understand about YPS discourse. The section also outlines why certain choices have been made in terms of data use and availability.

5.1 Examining hybridity in textual analysis

Textual analysis allows researchers to make sense of a phenomenon based on already existing textual data, whether that be official documents, archival data or online text. Two forms of textual data analysis have gained prominence in political science: content analysis, which can be qualitative or quantitative and looks at the contents of the text itself, and discourse analysis, a solely qualitative analysis technique which studies the social meaning behind texts and their position within the environments in which they are produced (Halperin and Heath, 2020). This thesis employs interpretative content analysis to make sense of how YPS is framed by different actors; however, it spends some time discussing discourse when looking at the significance of this framing in the broader peace and security context.

Content analysis understands text as raw data, and is used to explain the significance of a text in and of itself. In its quantitative form this involves producing statistical findings on the presence of a certain theme, argument or even word. For this reason it is most useful when employed to calculate word frequency - what words or patterns of text appear repeatedly and how often. In its qualitative form, it is used to interpret this frequency, asking what certain textual choices reveal about the objectives of those who created it (Halperin and Heath, 2020). The former is useful for making and justifying more positivist hypotheses in social science, analysing complicated, numerical data in a systematic way, often by converting it into a numerical form. It also enables the researcher to analyse large amounts of text,

simplifying its patterns and trends so that observations and comparisons can be made about them.

The latter focuses instead on reading between the lines of the content in a text, exploring in depth the meaning that is embedded within it and what this tells us about the priorities and intentions of those who produce these texts. Here social, political, historical and cultural contexts are important, allowing the researcher to interpret textual data based on a pre-established conception of the language used. It also allows for researchers to reveal the structures and assumptions underlying a text which are not apparent when focusing on the text in isolation. (McKee, 2003). This might involve attention to language which holds particular discursive weight as well as analysis of the choice to include and exclude certain terminology in a text.

Content analysis can also be used to look at the relationship between texts, studying how they interact with and inform each other. This is the study of intertextuality. In looking at these elements of textual data, the researcher is able to decipher how the content and discourses that emerge in one text are reflected in another. Intertextual significance is often explained by looking at similarities between texts. This can be done by looking at the frequency in which the same words, textual patterns or themes occur across two or more documents. This kind of analysis allows the researcher to understand how texts influence one another and often explain how power is reflected in language use. It involves understanding the contexts in which the collection of texts emerged (Bazerman, 2003).

This thesis uses a hybrid approach in order to make various observations about YPS documents and text. By first understanding the frequency in which certain themes occur in

UNSC documentation, I assess the priorities of the institutions in YPS activity. Comparisons can then be drawn with the frequency in which these same themes occur in grassroots peace organisations. In both cases, observations can be made about the significance of these frequencies, and what they tell us about the different contexts in which youth peacebuilding is thought about.

5.2 Research design: the importance of a three stage analysis

My research has been carried out in three main stages. In short, I first conduct a content analysis of the three YPS resolutions - 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) - and in doing so I create a coding scheme from these documents that is used to carry out an intertextual comparison with textual data collected from 65 member organisations of the UNOY. I also separately analyse these 65 documents to decipher what key themes they possess that are absent from the resolutions. I have used a qualitative data analysis software - Atlas.ti - in order to code, organise and interpret the data used. This has been important for standardising my analysis and allowing for the development of my own codes as well as the application of these codes across documents.

I have made two key choices when it comes to the textual data used. The YPS resolutions provide the most direct and unmediated view of the UNSC's objectives, making the decision to use them as the basis for my analysis easy. The decision over data that represents grass-roots youth peacebuilding aims and objectives was less straightforward, as more possibilities were available in terms of both the organisations I choose to look at and the kind of textual data I collected from them. Ultimately, the decision to use online statements of aims from member organisations of the UNOY was based on a combination of both suitability and accessibility.

In conducting this content analysis, I am able to pinpoint exactly what it is that the UNSC envisions for the YPS agenda, and place this into context of the wider peacebuilding landscape. The resolutions are seen as guiding principles for what youth-centred peace and security work should look like and therefore studying its substances offers clear evidence into how the UNSC understands the agenda, and importantly how it wants it to be interpreted and implemented by others. Given that the resolutions are the most precise and unbiased representation of how the UNSC understands the purpose of YPS, with little space within them for interpretation or opinion, they present intention and necessary considerations for implementation. The focus on implementation within the three resolutions is strong, indicating that they were meant to act as manuals from which to base YPS activity.

I recognise the argument to say that interviews and or collecting speeches of those who work on YPS, both within and outside the UN, would have allowed me to gain a 'behind closed doors' insight into what the real intentions of the UNSC with YPS are and how well they align with what certain youth peacebuilders are trying to achieve. However, I have not conducted my research in this way for three reasons. The first is practical. For this project, I did not have the time or access to resources to carry out the kind of interviews that would be needed. This is especially the case given the difficulty of access to the local youth peacebuilding groups that work within their communities in a range of, often remote, locations around the world. This is made harder by the relative newness of the YPS research agenda, meaning that contacts and networks for setting up these kinds of interviews are still narrow and a database that provides access to a big enough set of speeches does not exist.

Second, textual analysis is an unobtrusive way of understanding intentions and objectives of a given actor or set of actors. This helps to reduce potential bias and the issue of 'social acceptability', where the subjects of research provide answers that fit within social norms or seem desirable to the researcher, that come when conducting interviews of participant observation (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p.374). This is especially important when the objective of a study is to gain insight into purpose and intent.

Third, I also felt that doing interviews with certain actors would be limiting given that I am trying to establish a holistic view of how YPS is being framed and and whether this matches up with on-the-ground implementation. It feels to me that centering the discourse provides the best perspective on this question. I came to the conclusion that interview-based research might make for important future work, to extend and further validate the findings in this thesis, but that the textual analysis I carry out is first needed to establish a comprehensive understanding.

In regards to the second decision, the UNOY provides a suitable site to access grass-roots peace movements globally. As a transnational advocacy network (TAN), it acts as an intermediary through which different youth-centred organisations can access assistance in implementing YPS and connect with like organisations. In its efforts to support a wide variety of groups, UNOY operates according to five key values: inclusivity, solidarity, creativity, nonviolence and authenticity. Established in 1989, it was an integral part of the lobby for establishing of YPS and remains co-chair of the WG-YPB along with the PBSO and SFGC. However, as the only youth-specific organisation of the three and with a unique role as an assemblage network for grass-roots peacebuilders, it is the most appropriate focal point for further investigation into the work of youth peace movements. As well as representing youth

peacebuilding as an organisation itself, it is practically useful as a directory. It is through their member list I found the most comprehensive list of youth organisations working on YPS in all regions of the world.

The UNOY has 132 member organisations, with varying amounts of information available on the work that they do and their wider aims and objectives. This information all comes from self-styled websites that are linked through UNOY and can range from information on the history, values and mission statements of the organisation to more detailed descriptions of projects and what they aim to achieve. I was able to access information from 65 organisations in total. This number is disaggregated by UNOY regions as follows: Americas (4), Asia (10), East and Southern Africa (11), Europe (18), Middle East and North Africa (9), and West and Central Africa (13). Other organisations either had not provided a functioning website or had information that could not be correctly translated. From the 65 with available information, I selected data from each website that best represented overall aims and objectives, creating text documents for each which could be used to analyse the data in Atlas.ti. This approach inevitably presents issues that needed addressing. It is likely that the organisations with websites and translatable information are the more institutionalised which might skew my findings to show more similarity with the UNSC agenda. This potentially explains the overrepresentation of European organisations in my sample. In societies with more developed institutions, there is more architecture and funding available to support civil action. It is also likely for the case of youth, more established democratic infrastructure creates an environment in which young people feel more emboldened to participate in such activity. However, I believe that even after the exclusions, a sample size of 65 offers space for sufficient diversity to be expressed between the organisations. It is also important to acknowledge that online statements can be performative and do not always accurately

represent the on-the-ground intentions of a given organisation. Here, however, I feel that the range of data collected from the websites varies enough - from mission statements to specific project aims and outlooks - that it provides successful insight into what each organisation sets out to do. It is this, the intention related to YPS rather than what is actually carried out and how successfully this is done, that is important for my study.

5.3 Design implementation: a comprehensive study of variation in YPS objectives

In many ways, my design is structured as an hourglass. It begins by looking expansively at the UNSC resolutions, working to understand their content as a whole and in doing so identifying the key contextual environments in which they exist. It then zooms in on the content of these documents, creating a coding scheme that allows for analysis of their sentiment and hierarchy of priorities. This same scheme is then applied to the textual data from the grass-roots organisation to gauge similarity of their specific content in direct relation to the YPS resolutions, before I look at these documents holistically to understand the ways in which they exist in a different contextual space than the UN agenda. This structure allows for assessment of both sets of data in their own right as well as in relation to each other.

In order to look at the resolutions for their overall thematic tone, I utilised Atlas.ti analytics tools to produce word clouds of each of the three resolutions separately as well as together. These word clouds focus on adjectives and nouns within the documents as these indicate who and what the resolution attends to and what descriptions are assigned to them.[7] In producing both the aggregated and disaggregated versions, I found that little variation across the three resolutions in terms of word patterns and frequency. For this reason, only the aggregated

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[7] Inevitably, the most frequently occuring words across the documents are the foundational words of the resolution - 'youth', 'peace' and 'security' - as well as words found commonly across UNSC resolutions such as 'united', 'international' 'relevant', 'council' and 'member'. These have been excluded from the final word cloud to allow for a centering of more thematic words.

version is presented in the analysis. The final word cloud does not allow for precise claims about the contents of the resolutions but it does provide a useful visual representation and allow broad observation to be made about the resolution overall intentions.

This representation also acts as an entrance into the closer textual analysis. After producing them, I first read through the three resolutions and developed broad categories to further understand the sentiment and main themes. From here, I conducted the more rigid inductive coding of the three documents, creating four categories of codes, which all consist of between two to five subcodes. This left me with a total of 13 codes which I believe, in combination, sufficiently cover both the content and sentiment of the three resolutions. The codes show that given the scope of what this thesis aims to understand, I was not able to isolate my study to only thematic areas and needed to interrogate the directional focus and attitudes towards two main 'buzzwords' for youth politics: inclusion and participation. I also required codes that look at how the UNSC addresses youth specifically, seeing them as a distinct demographic and political actor. The 13 codes are listed alongside examples from the text in Table 1.

Having established these coding schemes, I worked again through each resolution and categorised the passages into one of more of the subcodes. There are some important caveats here. It was appropriate that phrases within the text often applied to more than one of the codes, and often fell under two or more subcodes. I find that rather than devaluing the strength of the codes, acknowledging this overlap is important for measuring the frequency and strength of different themes. Equally, as is common in UNSC resolutions which build from one another, some passages are repeated through the three documents. Acknowledging this is important for representing the emphasis and significance of certain objectives. These

repeated phrases were therefore re-coded and are cumulatively counted in the frequency count for each code. I also recognise the complexity of the codes could bring criticism. A comparable study has been done with more simplicity, coding according to the five key pillars of the resolution (Anderson, 2019). However, I think that doing this masks certain things in the intentions and objectives of the UNSC, focusing on how they intended for the document to be perceived. More issue-based coding allows for better critical understanding of the discursive context in which the resolutions exist.

Codes	Quotations from text
Directional emphasis: Bottom-up initiatives (support for)	'Measures that support local youth peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve youth in the implementation mechanisms of peace agreements' 'Recognizes that youth and youth-led civil society can also play an important role in efforts to peacebuilding and sustaining peace'
Directional emphasis: Top-down implementation	'Acknowledging the on-going work of national governments and regional and international organisations to engage youth in building and maintaining peace' 'Reaffirming the importance of national ownership and leadership inpeacebuilding, whereby the responsibility for sustaining peace is broadly shared by the Government and all other national stakeholders'
Thematic issues: Access to education	'Urges Member States to support, as appropriate, quality education for peace that equips youth with the ability to engage constructively in civic structures and inclusive political processes' 'Calls upon Member States, to protect educational institutions as spaces free from all forms of violence, and to ensure that they are accessible to all youth, including marginalized youth, and take steps to address young women's equal enjoyment of their right to education'
Thematic issues: Ensuring economic prosperity	'Stresses the importance of creating policies for youth that would positively contribute to peacebuilding efforts, including social and economic development, supporting projects designed to grow local economies' 'Recognizing that... a large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity if inclusive policies are in place
Thematic issues: Gender discrimination and inclusion	'Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take the necessary measures to protect civilians, including those who are youth, from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence' 'Recognizing that core challenges still remain, including structural barriers that limit the participation and capacity of young people, especially young women, to influence decision making'
Thematic issues: Prevention of violent extremism	'Recognizing that the rise of radicalization to violence and violent extremism, especially among youth, threatens stability and development, and can often derail peacebuilding efforts and foment conflict, and stressing the importance of addressing conditions and factors leading to the rise of radicalization to violence and violent extremism among youth, which can be conducive to terrorism' 'Noting the important role youth can play further as positive role models in preventing and countering violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, and fuels conflict, inhibits socioeconomic development and fosters regional and international insecurity'
Thematic issues: Youth employment opportunities	'Expressing concern that among civilians, youth account for many of those adversely affected by armed conflict... and that the disruption of youth's access to education and economic opportunities has a dramatic impact on durable peace and reconciliation' 'Evidence-based and gender-sensitive youth employment opportunities, inclusive labour policies, national youth employment action plans in partnership with the private sector, developed in partnership with youth and recognising the interrelated role of education, employment and training in preventing the marginalisation of youth'
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Civilian victims of conflict	'Recognizing that today's generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known and that young people often form the majority of the population of countries affected by armed conflict' 'Calls on Member States to take appropriate measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of young survivors of armed conflict'
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Distinct role of youth as positive contributors to peace	'Affirming the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts' 'Expresses its intention, where appropriate, to invite civil society including youth-led organizations to brief the Council in country-specific considerations and relevant thematic areas'
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Vulnerability to radicalisation/mobilisation into conflict	'Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the needs of youth affected by armed conflict' 'Expressing concern over the increased use, in a globalized society, by terrorists and their supporters of new information and communication technologies, in particular the Internet, for the purposes of recruitment and incitement of youth to commit terrorist acts'
Youth participation and inclusion: Inclusion to combat exclusion (and related issues)	'Stresses the importance of providing opportunities for young people to strengthen resilience against radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment by creating policies for youth' 'Calls on all relevant actors, to consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth for the prevention and resolution of conflict..., recognizing that their marginalization is detrimental to building sustainable peace'
Youth participation and inclusion: Leading contributors to peace in local communities)	'Calls on all relevant actors, including when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to take into account, as appropriate, the participation and views of youth..., including, inter alia, such specific aspects as: Measures that support local youth peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve youth in the implementation mechanisms of peace agreements' 'Encourages Member States, regional and subregional organizations to develop and implement policies and programs for youth and to facilitate their constructive engagement, including through dedicated local, national and regional roadmaps on youth, peace and security'
Youth participation and inclusion: Participation and inclusion in formal peace processes (above community level)	'Reiterates the importance of Security Council missions taking into account youth-related considerations including, as appropriate, through consultation with local and international youth groups' 'Recommends the Peacebuilding Commission to include in its discussions and advice, ways to engage youth meaningfully in national efforts to build and sustain peace'

Table 1. Coding scheme for YPS resolutions with quotation examples.

Having developed this coding scheme, I then carried out deductive coding of the data from the 65 UNOY member organisations. This manual coding process involved individually parsing through the text document for each organisation and noting the presence of detail relating to certain codes. Due to the nature of this data, with varying repetition of certain details and themes in this data does not present the same utility as it does with the resolutions. The data is more 'messy' given the different formats of each organisation's website. As a result, noting frequency would not reflect anything beyond website differentiation. Instead, each code is noted only once per document allowing for an understanding of frequency across the collection of data related to grassroots peacebuilding. With this data, comparisons are made about code frequency occurrence within the UNSC resolutions and grassroots organisations.

The final stage of my data analysis involves repeating the inductive coding process, in a similar fashion to that done with the three resolutions originally, for the 65 UNOY member organisations. This allows for any understanding of the themes and sentiments that run through this data that are not represented by the coding scheme developing based on the UNSC's agenda. This was again a manual process that involved noting down broad categories while parsing through each document and then condensing them into more precise observable themes.

6. Explaining variation in YPS objectives: the differences between UNSC institutional inclusion and grassroots localised peacebuilding

For the purposes of attending to my research questions, and understanding how framing of YPS objectives aligns and differs between UNSC YPS and grassroots YPS intentions, the

explanation of the data analysis as well as wider interpretation are done concurrently. Each section of the analysis is dealt with and discussed individually before the broader final conclusions are made about the efficacy of the YPS agenda given its level of compatibility with global grassroots youth peace work.

While I assess all the codes and findings, there are some key conclusions that require emphasis. The UNSC consistently stresses that YPS must be elite-led, with inclusion meaning bringing youth into these spaces. They do this with the aim of having young people as an involved stakeholder in ongoing efforts to establish and maintain global security. The UNOY organisations on the other hand have objectives that focus on using different tools, for example education or employment to improve the lives of young people. They see this as the root to peaceful transformation in society. For them, youth inclusion should be led by youth and done to allow young people to enact change for themselves and society more broadly.

6.1 Zooming out on the resolutions: the UNSC's interpretation of YPS

The word cloud below shows word frequency cumulatively across the three resolutions (see Figure 1). There are certain words, and groupings of words, that are worth honing in on to gain a broad understanding of the UNSC's YPS agenda. Both 'participation' and 'inclusive' feature towards the centre of the cloud. They have 29 and 17 mentions respectively. This is perhaps not surprising when bearing in mind that this kind of thematic agenda's primary purpose has been to extend involvement in matters of peace and security to groups who have been systematically excluded from decision making. However, this is accompanied by the word 'sustainable' and 'meaningful' appearing only at the periphery, with seven mentions each. This suggests that while participation and inclusivity are mentioned, the intention to make them long standing and impactful commitment is lacking. This finding aligns with

criticism that has been wielded at the UNSC for its tokenism and passivity in creating room for youth to be able to enact change at different levels of governance, as opposed to just being given a performative seat at the table.

Secondly, the terms 'education', 'protection' and 'development' feature centrally in the graphic, with 20, 16 and 15 respective mentions. This indicates some of the key priorities the UNSC has for creating a more peaceful and secure world for and with young people. It is clear that it sees investing in programmes that enhance these three elements of peacebuilding as central to its mission. While 'protection' signifies youth victimhood, the other two terms imply an investment in social initiatives that would improve livelihood and future opportunity for youth. However, the term development is potentially a signifier of the 'issue' of youth and underdevelopment, and the securitisation of young people (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2018). This issue is compounded by the presence of the terms 'terrorism/terrorist', violence/violent' and 'extremism/extremist' which have cumulative mentions of 27, 29 and 14. This not only makes clear that the countering and prevention of violent extremism is the key form of conflict YPS aims to deal with, but also suggests that YPS documents work to reinforce assumptions regarding the 'youth bulge' and youth involvement in threatening global security.

Figure 1. Word cloud for showing word frequency for UNSCR 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020).

This analysis provides a broad overview of what institutionalising YPS means and what it hopes to achieve. It serves to reinforce pre-existing statements and criticisms about the agenda through evidencing patterns in word frequency. However, more in-depth analysis of the documents' contents is required to not only offer further insight into these patterns but importantly to allow for direct comparisons with grassroots peacebuilding.

6.2 Findings from YPS resolutions: elite-led participation for maintaining global security

Coding the three resolutions according to the 13 codes reveals a wide but varying extent of frequency. The results can be found in Figure 2 below.

The most commonly occurring theme, with 41 mentions, is 'Distinct role of youth as positive contributors to peace'. It is clear that nominally, the UNSC sees YPS as a tool through which to acknowledge and advance the role of youth in matters of peace and security. This does not subvert expectation, through the formation of the agenda, both the UNSC and those from other levels of governance and civil society advocating for its creation have stressed that the agenda marks an important acknowledgement. With regards to the other two subcodes in this grouping, youth victimhood is still significant with the third highest occurrence across all codes while vulnerability to radicalisation is also present but to a lesser extent. The former finding is also not unexpected given the prominence and durability of the discourse surrounding youth victimhood. The low frequency of the latter, which surrounds mentions of youth as perpetrators of violence, suggests that the agenda seeks to have an overall positive sentiment. It would directly undermine the way that the UNSC wants to present itself as an advocate for youth if in the same document it explicitly honed in on the danger that youth pose.
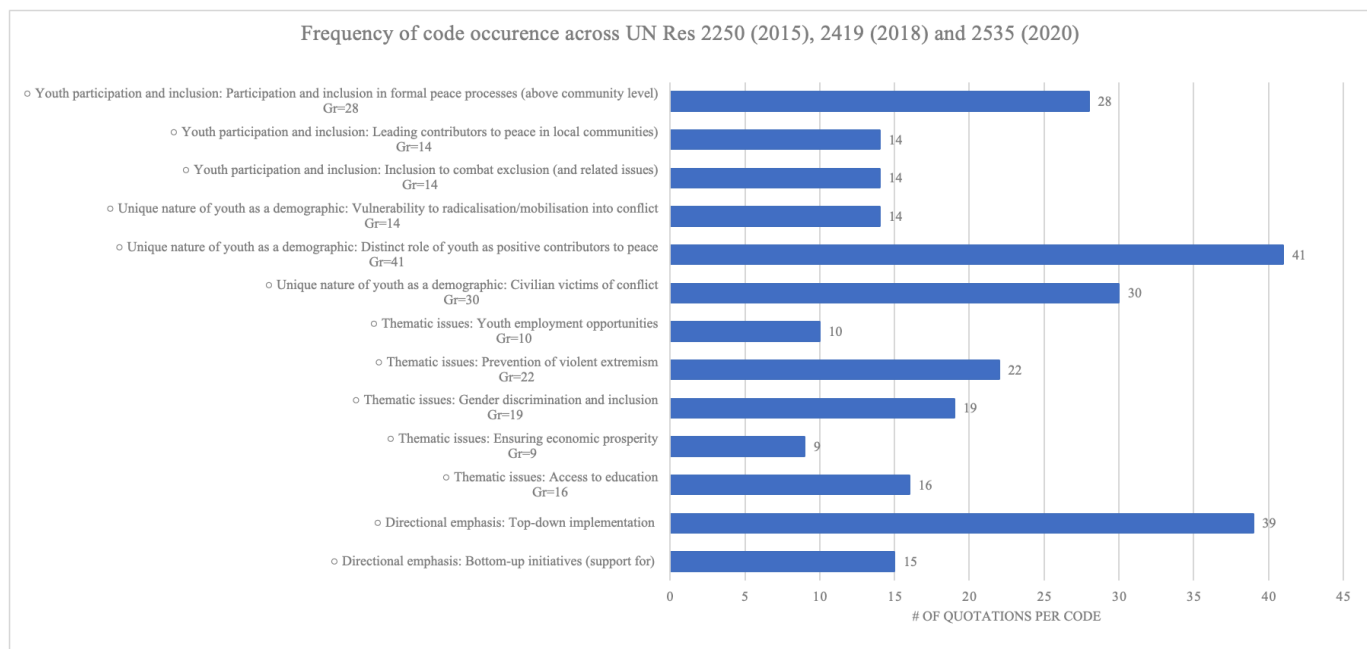

Figure 2. Bar chart showing code frequency across UNSCR 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020)

Top down- directional emphasis also presents with high frequency - 39 mentions - across the three resolutions. This code denotes passages of text that refer to the UNSC holding primary responsibility for global peace and security and calls for the delegation of YPS programming to national governments. The high frequency of this code is made more prominent by the low frequency of its counter-code - mention of and support for bottom-up initiatives - which have only 15 references. This shows that the UNSC disproportionately sees itself and its members as the main actors in implementing YPS, and does not see supporting pre-existing or emerging youth peace movements as key to the success of the initiative.

The way in which the UNSC envisions youth inclusion in peacebuilding is also made apparent through this analysis, and further reinforces the idea that the UNSC is more focused on what it can do at the elite level for and about young people than supporting youth-led peace action. With 28 mentions, the UNSC is clearly more focused on bringing youth into the formal peace processes than supporting other forms of community or holistic inclusion techniques. This is an important form of participation and shows that the UNSC takes youth seriously as peace actors. Across the resolutions, there are calls for relevant actors 'to take into account, as appropriate, the participation and views of youth, recognising that their marginalisation is detrimental to building sustainable peace in all societies' (S/RES/2250, 2018, 3) and 'develop internal mechanisms within the United Nations system to broaden the participation of youth, within the work of the United Nations' (S/RES/2535, 2020, 2).

However, as indicated above, there are good grounds for remaining sceptical about how meaningful this formal participation is. There are half as many references to the other subcodes in this group: forms of inclusion that encourage youth leadership in building peace

in their communities and secondary forms of inclusion to combat exclusion, such as reintegration programmes. This reinforces the disparity throughout the document between top-down and bottom up objectives for YPS. Both of these coding groups, and the frequency differences, indicate that the UNSC prioritises what it can do at the elite level, where it remains legitimate and maintains authority.

In terms of the five purely thematic focuses identified within the resolutions, the spread is more even. Occurrence frequency is as follows: prevention of violent extremism (22), gender discrimination and inclusion (19), access to education (16), employment opportunities (10) and economic prosperity (9). The emphasis on violent extremism is perhaps expected given the backdrop in which the agenda emerges - as referenced in chapter 2 - and therefore the resolutions can be seen as texts that reinforce the link the UNSC sees between young people and global security. Perhaps it is surprising that education and employment opportunities occur less frequently. However, the difference is not stark enough to label them as overlooked. More likely they are seen as the root causes, and again, the UNSC is more focused on what it does at elite level instead of what it can create within societies, seeing this as outside its prerogative.

6.3 Education with differing aims: combating violent extremism vs societal transformation

The application of the 13 original codes to the textual data from the 65 UNOY member organisations reveals interesting variation. The results are found in Figure 3.
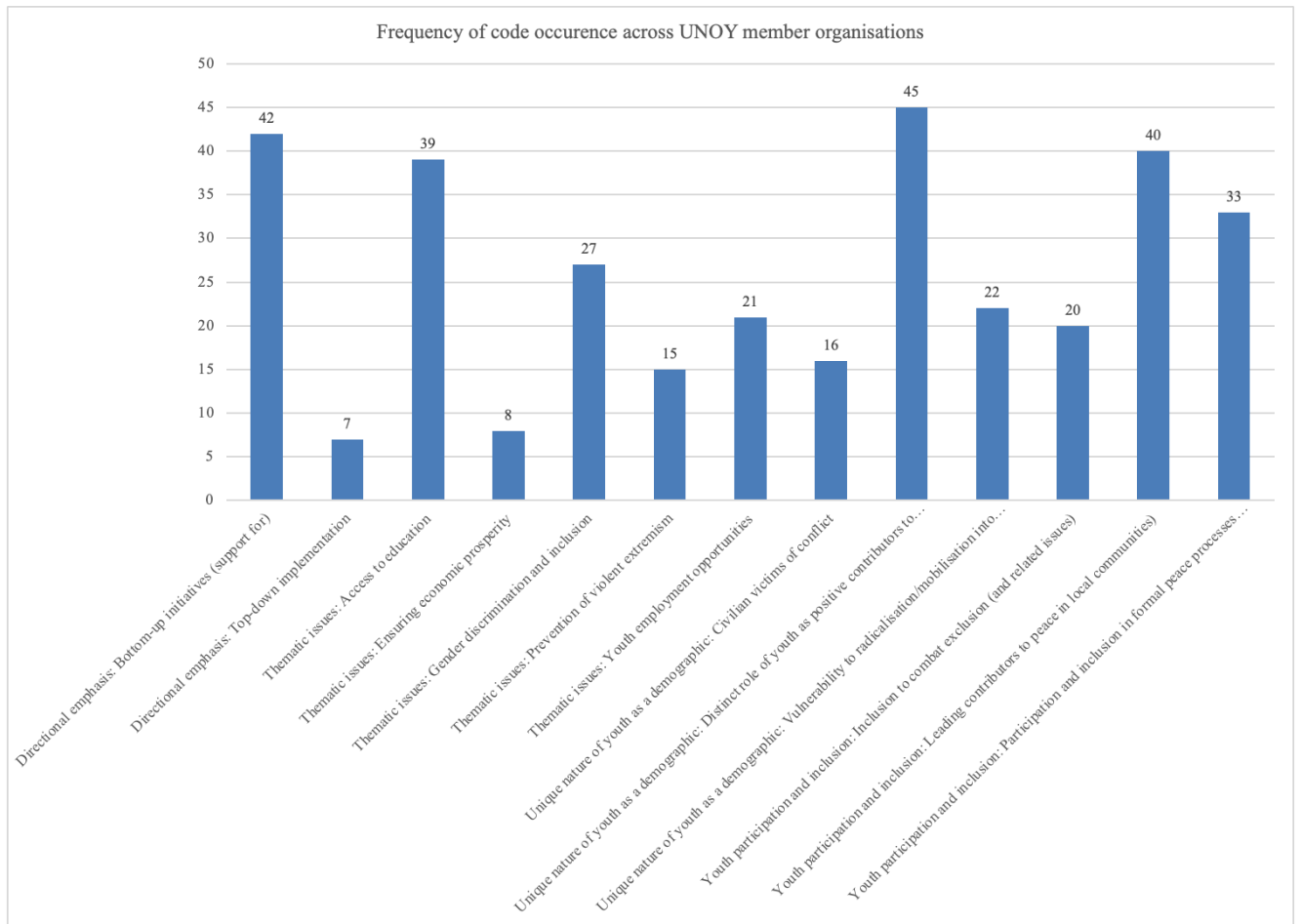
Figure 3. Bar chart showing code frequency across UNOY organisation texts

These findings first allow for analysis of the code frequency rankings for both sets of texts, which is taken as a macro indicator for similarity (Appendix 1 and 2). The highest frequency code for both sets of data is 'Distinct role of youth as positive contributors to peace'. This suggests that for both sides, the essential mission of YPS is the same: increasing recognition and advocating for the role that youth can and do have in maintaining peace and security. Albeit in different ways, both interpretations of the agenda maintain that working for and with youth to further youth involvement is a central principle, and should be incorporated into any action taken under the premise of YPS.

One of the starkest contrasts in frequency is in the directional emphasis of the texts. Top-down components occur in some UNOY organisations who work with a government or are part of programmes being run by a wider organisation. Take the Syrian Youth Assembly for example. This is an organisation run day-to-day by Syrian youth in Germany but whose administration and bureaucracy is administered by a German INGO.[8] However, the majority of member organisations make explicit reference to being run by youth for youth, and operating through a bottom-up mechanism, even if their aims are to reach and influence the elite level. The difference in frequency is clear in the code occurrence numbers, with UNSC resolutions having 39 top-down references and 15 bottom up against UNOY organisations seven to 42. There is of course some inevitability here explained by the positions in the global governance ecosystem. Both the UNSC and the grass-roots organisation are bound to focus on promoting the kind of work that falls under their prerogative, and which they have the power to enact.

Yet there remains a sharp disconnect in how YPS is interpreted and seen to operate. The UNSC uses the YPS resolutions as both a reminder that they hold 'primary responsibility' for the 'maintenance of peace and security' (S/RES/2419, 2018, 1) and to stress 'importance of national ownership and leadership in peacebuilding'(S/RES/2419, 2018, 2). The choice of wording makes clear that they intend for YPS to be directed and organised at the elite-level for young people. The UNOY organisations, by contrast, stress the need for youth-led decision making on peace. This is how they interpret the unique and positive role that young people can have. For example, the Association des Jeunes pour la Citoyenneté Active et la Democratie in Mali describes how they see 'the living conditions of each citizen are improved and where young people get involved through responsible participation'.[9]

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[8] Textual data taken from website: https://www.syrian-youth.org/
[9] Textual data taken from website: www.ajcadmali.org

Similarly, the Youth Advocacy Team who work in Uganda and South Sudan highlight 'the gap between NGOs and refugee youth in the communities has to be bridged in a conflict sensitive manner, where youth are recognized as potential partners for peace'.[10] Grass-roots youth peacebuilding organisations see the YPS agenda as a way to create youth leaders in peace and security and open up channels for youth collaboration at all levels of governance.

In terms of format of participation, there is less disparity in UNOY member organisations between formal youth participation and community level participation than seen in the YPS resolutions. Both forms appear important ways for youth to work under the YPS umbrella and contribute to peacebuilding. However, the slightly higher figure for community work might indicate that this is seen as the most meaningful and accessible way for young people to enact positive and peaceful change. This aligns with the findings regarding top-down versus bottom-up emphasis. For formal representation at the top table of peace and security policy, more input and administration from the elite level is usually required. There is disparity in how frequently 'Youth participation and inclusion: Leading contributors to peace in local communities' occurs compared to its low priority in YPS, where it is the joint third least mentioned theme. This code acts as a marker for local, or everyday peacebuilding, showing that this form of peacebuilding is the preferred peacebuilding framework for UNOY member organisations.

Examples from their websites support this claim. The Centre for Democracy and Development in Malawi states its aim is 'bringing together individual youth and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. Young people have been empowered to take an active role in their communities and organizations and advocate for community

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[10] Textual data taken from website: https://youthsat.org/

change and development'.[11] In the same vein, Deepening Awareness and Restoring Bridges in Turkey claims it 'operates as a platform for sharing experiences and resources, empowering individuals and communities to take active roles in creating a common space for development and peaceful coexistence', while Juventud Unida en Acción in Venuzuela shows similar language in laying out their efforts 'to train, educate and empower young people in their leading role in society so that they detect the problems that affect society and serve as agents of change by providing viable, effective and efficient solutions'.[12] This peacebuilding philosophy is not isolated to countries and communities actively involved in conflict. The CCYPS explicitly states that 'in Canada, young people often don't see themselves as peacebuilders'. This is something they aim to change, seeing YPS as a platform to get youth 'engaging in domestic issues of peace, security & social justice'.[13] It is clear that community-centred peace practices are fundamental to the achievement and realisation of YPS.

On thematic issues, education comes out as the most frequent theme across the UNOY organisations, with 39 mentions. The next closest, with 27 mentions, is gender sensitivity. This compares interestingly with the frequency for the resolutions, where prevention of violent extremism occurs most often. This is an interesting tension. The numbers do not suggest a big enough difference to indicate that education is not a priority for the UNSC agenda, but it seems secondary or complementary to the wider goal of combating insecurity. In fact the resolutions make explicit reference to seeing education as a tool for addressing the root causes of extremist mobilisation among young people (S/RES/2250, 2015, p.5). By comparison, education is a recurring theme across UNOY member organisations, making up the core of many of their youth-for-peace strategies. This is reflective of the close link

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[11] Textual data taken from website: https://centrefordemocracyanddevelopment.wordpress.com/
[12] Textual data taken from website: https://juenaong.wixsite.com/juena
[13] Textual data taken from website: https://www.canadayps.org/

between youth and peace education. For example, one organisation - 'Éducation Citoyenne et Changement' sets out its main aim to 'educate young people about peace, tolerance, civic-mindedness and living together'. As scholars have noted, as both recipients and advocates, young people see education as both a way not only of overcoming the root causes of insecurity but also in building peace-driven societies (Kester, 2012; Cardozo and Scotto, 2017). Whereas the thematic aim of YPS is to target violent extremism through youth engagement, at grassroots level, young people take a more holistic approach, focusing on broader societal transformations for peace.

Finally, it is interesting to look at which codes are relatively less populated, such as youth victimhood and prevention of violent extremism. Where the UNSC makes these key priorities in its view of YPS, it seems that youth working on the ground are less concerned by these aims, likely rejecting the way in which they jointly reinforce the victim-perpetrator stereotype and instead focusing on championing the positive role they can play. This does not negate the issues of youth victims and involvement in extremism, nor make them unimportant, but it does indicate that the purpose of the YPS agenda is perceived differently, evidencing a disconnect between these different stakeholders.

It is important here to make a point also about the inclusion of gender. Where other scholars focus on the gendered dynamics to YPS and the need for recognition of the different experience of young men and women in peace and security, this has not been the explicit focus of this study. As such, while the coding of both sets of texts indicates middle range frequency in reference to gender discrimination and inclusion, this should not be taken as evidence to suggest these are the main intentions of YPS, or that more does not need to be done to gender the agenda. It is clear that the links between WPS and YPS are recognised by

both the UNSC and UNOY members, but no threshold or standard has been set to measure sufficient attention. There are continued calls for more attention to the gendered experiences of youthhood in conflict however (Simpson, 2018). Therefore, I think this frequency more likely reflects the institutional format of the resolutions which sees them refer to pre-existing similar agendas.

6.4 Youth-centric peacebuilding as a form of everyday peace

While not coded to the same extent as the main set of 13, it is important to look beyond the differences in the two agendas identified solely by this scheme in order to fully understand the departure, and potential tensions, between them. I have therefore identified various themes that are observed across the UNOY member organisations website that are not embodied within the YPS resolutions. This will allow for progression into the broader conclusions I make about the suitability of institutionalisation of a traditionally grassroots movement. The themes are as follows:

- Identity-based toleration and cultural understanding among youth, with particular reference to ethnic and religious tolerance.

- Inter-organisational networks and solidarity: building intercultural and community relations as well as alliances between organisations locally, nationally, and globally.

- Creation of spaces for empathy and open dialogue among youth.

- Promotion of more informal forms of peacebuilding and peace education, with focus on peace learning rather than merely preventing violence. Involves inclusion of alternative peacebuilding activities such as sports, arts, etc.

- Attention to broader issues for human security such as human trafficking, health concerns (malnutrition, HIV, water contamination), and displaced peoples.

- Emphasis on social responsibility, mentorship, and inter-community support, including intergenerational networks.

Many of the grassroots organisations exclusive themes stem from those codes with high frequency occurrence in the original coding scheme, however they reveal a more specific view of youth peace and security that is inclusive, dialogue focused and attentive to the holistic societal change needed to achieve peace. A key aspect of this is the broader focus. For the UNOY member organisations, peace and security involves more than the conventional view of global security associated with the dominant liberal idea of the concept. They focus more on what processes and practices are involved in creating peace, rather than peace itself being the prerequisite for security. This is signalled by the emphasis across the UNOY texts on community, solidarity, cultural sensitivity, and empathy in dialogue. One group profess having a 'mission is to ensure sustainable community development by creating opportunities for quality engagement of civil society'[14]. The Solidarity Youth Voluntary Organization in Somaliland was set up in recognition of the way protracted conflict has negatively impacted education across the society. In response, 'a group of youth took the burden upon themselves and participated in peace-making and reconciliation activities aimed at resolving the Somaliland clan conflicts. They organized symposiums for bringing together different youth groups for information sharing, trust building, conflict prevention and awareness raising activities'.[15] It is clear that youth-led peacebuilding seems more attentive to what is required for building lasting peace, and the everyday considerations that are needed to make this happen.

The UNOY organisations also have a more expansive view of what peaceful existence means. While the UNSC agenda focuses on prevention, resolution and peace agreements, the grassroots organisations put emphasis on broader barriers to peace. They see peace in their communities as more than just freedom from conflict. Many of the organisation's aims and

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[14] Textual data taken from website: https://cid.mk/
[15] Textual data taken from website: https://www.soyvo.org/

projects focus around issues of health and human insecurity, making it clear that for young people, peace is expansive and requires changes across communities and societies. One example of this is the Denis Miki Foundation in Cameroon, who see hygiene and sanitation as central to the establishment of peace for the future generation.[16] Their participation in grassroots organisations aims to connect youth with the objectives of everyday peacebuilding. This more expansive view manifests in how peace is practised. Rather than focusing on participation in formal peace processes, many UNOY members' projects see inclusion in informal activity as just as important indicators of youth peacebuilding success. This involves informal peace education as well as recreational activities such as art projects, sports tournaments and youth clubs. One example of this is the Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre in Armenia. They have established 'language clubs, workshops, local and international exchange programs, camps, training courses, study visits' as well as setting up two youth centres for recreation between youth.[17] These types of peacebuilding do not necessarily lead to directly institutional peace agreements or accords, but nonetheless, for young people experiencing the adverse effects of ongoing conflict, participation in this kind of peacebuilding seems to serve an equal, if not more important, purpose. If this is the case, these informal, non-governmental practices demand better recognition within the agenda.

Another key emphasis is on networks. Where the UNSC agenda is hierarchical, and describes YPS operating from the international level, down through national governments to youth and civil society, many of the UNOY organisations look to build horizontal connections across conflict divides as well as with like minded organisations across national boundaries. The Generation Peace Youth Network works across Asia with a focus 'Networking and Linkaging' with the aim of 'shaping the discourse and mainstreaming peace, localization and

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[16] Textual data taken from website: https://denismikifoundation.org/
[17] Textual data taken from website: https://yic.am/

engaging multi-stakeholders'.[18] This indicator of the need for global connections between young peacebuilders, calls into question whether the YPS agenda should focus more on encouraging inter-stakeholder collaboration rather than exclusive and separate NAPs. While context is important, and the varying demands of peace in different countries must be acknowledged, when it comes to YPS it seems that more network building is a priority.

7. Conclusion: the contrasting status of YPS in the two spaces

Where do these findings leave the UNSC agenda? The broad understandings of the important role that youth have in peace and security, including the unique contributions they make to peace are aligned between the two understandings of YPS. However beyond this, ideas about what the purpose of the agenda is, and how it should be practised and implemented, are different. I argue that it is this tension that is perpetuating the mistrust between youth in peace and the UNSC. Where the UNSC seems to be focused on how youth can play a role in overcoming issues of global security, grassroots organisations prioritise building everyday, durable peace that will benefit youth now and in the future, as well as the affected community as a whole. For this reason, young people have reason to feel that YPS in its current form does not represent their interests. The criticisms that come out of the progress reports go so far in highlighting some of these things but the issue runs deeper. The types of peace the two groups are aiming to achieve are incompatible, or at least have different priorities. This creates a tension when it comes to youth inclusion and participation. Practices that the UNSC sees as inclusionary do not represent well the demands of youth, and their more transformational conception of peacebuilding. This is evidence of the inclusion-exclusion dynamic at play. Certain young people are brought to the table to represent youth as a category. However, this creates oversight of the diverse demands and ideas of peace for

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[18] Textual data taken from website: https://youthpeacenetwork.wordpress.com/

young people, meaning that the more heterodox are excluded from the institutional version of YPS. Without recognition of this, the efficacy of the UNSC's YPS will continue to be limited, no matter the extent it goes to bring youth to the top table. This is often the case when bottom-up, advocacy based politics interacts with mainstream policy actors and yet this does not make the recurring issues in YPS less salient.

This thesis has carried out an in depth study of the differing ways youth involvement in peace and security is conceptualised by actors at the top and bottom of global governance. It explores both how the UNSC and grassroots peace organisations are connected as well as the ways in which their objectives for YPS diverge. I find that while both entities share a common goal of integrating youth into peacebuilding processes, their approaches and underlying motivations differ significantly. The UNSC's YPS agenda emphasises the institutional inclusion of youth as a means to counter violent extremism and promote international security. This agenda frames youth both as potential threats and as critical agents in the peacebuilding process, aiming to incorporate their voices while simultaneously addressing global security concerns. By contrast, grassroots youth organisations focus more on creating durable, everyday peace within their communities. They prioritise local needs and the immediate impacts of peacebuilding efforts, often extending beyond the institutional frameworks set by the UNSC.

It is clear that a fundamental divide in how youth peacebuilding is conceptualised, and this has the potential to create and exacerbate disconnect and mistrust between the two groups. This disconnect highlights the challenges in harmonising top-down and bottom-up efforts in global governance. The institutionalisation of youth peacebuilding by the UNSC, though a

significant step towards recognizing youth as vital stakeholders, risks exacerbating the exclusion of grassroots movements in peace and security agendas.

Appendix 1. Table showing relative code frequency for both the UNSC YPS and UNOY member texts.

Code label	UNSC Res.	UNOY member orgs.
Directional emphasis: Bottom-up initiatives (support for)	5.54%	12.54%
Directional emphasis: Top-down implementation	14.39%	2.09%
Thematic issues: Access to education	5.90%	11.64%
Thematic issues: Ensuring economic prosperity	3.32%	2.39%
Thematic issues: Gender discrimination and inclusion	7.01%	8.06%
Thematic issues: Prevention of violent extremism	8.12%	4.48%
Thematic issues: Youth employment opportunities	3.69%	6.27%
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Civilian victims of conflict	11.07%	4.78%
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Distinct role of youth as positive contributors to peace	15.13%	13.43%
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Vulnerability to radicalisation/mobilisation into conflict	5.17%	6.57%
Youth participation and inclusion: Inclusion to combat exclusion (and related issues)	5.17%	5.97%

Youth participation and inclusion: Leading contributors to peace in local communities	5.17%	11.94%
Youth participation and inclusion: Participation and inclusion in formal peace processes (above community level)	10.33%	9.85%

Appendix 2. Table showing overall code frequency for both the UNSC YPS and UNOY member texts.

Code label	UNSC Res.	UNOY member orgs.
Directional emphasis: Bottom-up initiatives (support for)	15	42
Directional emphasis: Top-down implementation	39	7
Thematic issues: Access to education	16	39
Thematic issues: Ensuring economic prosperity	9	8
Thematic issues: Gender discrimination and inclusion	19	27
Thematic issues: Prevention of violent extremism	22	15
Thematic issues: Youth employment opportunities	10	21
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Civilian victims of conflict	30	16
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Distinct role of youth as positive contributors to peace	41	45
Unique nature of youth as a demographic: Vulnerability to radicalisation/mobilisation into conflict	14	22
Youth participation and inclusion: Inclusion to combat exclusion (and related issues)	14	20

Youth participation and inclusion: Leading contributors to peace in local communities)	14	40
Youth participation and inclusion: Participation and inclusion in formal peace processes (above community level)	28	33
Total	271	335

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