Africa Now

Africa Now is an exciting new series, published by Zed Books in association with the internationally respected Nordic Africa Institute. Featuring high-quality, cutting-edge research from leading academics, the series addresses the big issues confronting Africa today. Accessible but in-depth, and wide-ranging in its scope, Africa Now engages with the critical political, economic, sociological and development debates affecting the continent, shedding new light on pressing concerns.

Nordic Africa Institute

The Nordic Africa Institute (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet) is a centre for research, documentation and information on modern Africa. Based in Uppsala, Sweden, the Institute is dedicated to providing timely, critical and alternative research and analysis of Africa and to cooperating with African researchers. As a hub and a meeting place for a growing field of research and analysis, the Institute strives to put knowledge of African issues within reach for scholars, policy-makers, politicians, the media, students and the general public. The Institute is financed jointly by the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden).

www.nai.uu.se

Forthcoming titles

Fantu Cheru and Renu Modi (eds), Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa: The Impact of Chinese, Indian and Brazilian Investments Margaret C. Lee (ed.), World Markets and Trading Regimes in Africa Amanda Hammar (ed.), Displacement Economies in Africa: Paradoxes of Crisis and Creativity

Titles already published

Fantu Cheru and Cyril Obi (eds), The Rise of China and India in Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Critical Interventions

Ilda Lindell (ed.), Africa's Informal Workers: Collective Agency, Alliances and Transnational Organizing in Urban Africa

Iman Hashim and Dorte Thorsen, Child Migration in Africa

Prosper B. Matondi, Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform

Prosper B. Matondi, Kjell Havnevik and Atakilte Beyene (eds), *Biofuels, Land Grabbing and Food Security in Africa*

Cyril Obi and Siri Aas Rustad (eds), Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-violence

Mats Utas (ed.), African Conflict and Informal Power: Big Men and Networks

About the authors

Maria Eriksson Baaz is associate professor at the School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, and a senior researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden. Her research interests are African politics, security and development, post-colonial theory and gender. Recently she has focused on masculinity, militarization and defence reform interventions, with a particular focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She is the author of The Paternalism of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid (2005). She has also contributed to several edited volumes, such as the International Handbook on African Security (2012), and has written numerous policy reports. Additionally, her articles have appeared in leading journals, including International Studies Quarterly, African Affairs, Journal of International Relations and Development, Journal of Modern African Studies and African Security.

Maria Stern is professor of peace and development studies at the School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg. Her research interests are security studies, the security-development nexus, politics of identity, and feminist theory. Recently she has focused on masculinity, militarization and defence reform interventions, with a particular focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Maria co-edited a special issue on the 'Security-development nexus revisited' in Security Dialogue (2010). She is also co-editor of Feminist Methodologies for International Relations (2006) and the author of Naming Security - Constructing Identity (2005). She has contributed to several edited volumes, such as the International Handbook on African Security (2012), and has written numerous policy reports. Additionally, her articles have appeared in leading journals, including African Affairs, Alternatives, International Journal of Peace Studies, International Political Sociology, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of International Relations and Development, Journal of Modern African Studies, Review of International Studies and Security Dialogue.

Sexual violence as a weapon of war?

Perceptions, prescriptions, problems in the Congo and beyond

Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern



Zed Books London | New York Sexual violence as a weapon of war? Perceptions, prescriptions, problems in the Congo and beyond was first published in association with the Nordic Africa Institute, PO Box 1703, SE-751 47 Uppsala, Sweden in 2013 by Zed Books Ltd, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK and Room 400, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA

www.zedbooks.co.uk www.nai.uu.se

Editorial copyright © Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern 2013

The rights of Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern to be identified as the editors of this work have been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988



Set in OurType Arnhem, Monotype Gill Sans Heavy by Ewan Smith, London Index: ed.emery@thefreeuniversity.net Cover design: www.roguefour.co.uk

Printed and bound by CPI (UK) Ltd, Croydon,

Distributed in the USA exclusively by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of St Martin's Press, LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of Zed Books Ltd.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data available

ISBN 978 1 78032 164 6 hb ISBN 978 1 78032 163 9 pb

Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms vi
Acknowledgements vii
Introduction
Sex/gender violence
'Rape as a weapon of war'? 4
The messiness and uncertainty of warring 6.
Post-coloniality, victimcy and humanitarian engagement: being a good global feminist?
Concluding thoughts and unanswered questions 10
Notes 115 Bibliography 135 Index 153

Abbreviations and acronyms

COIN counter-insurgency Democratic Republic of the Congo DRC FAC Forces Armées Congolaises (Armed Forces of Congo) Forces Armées du Peuple Congolais (People's Armed Forces of FAPC Congo) FARDC Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) FMLN Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (El Salvador) **ICTR** International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda **ICTY** International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia INGO international non-governmental organization IR international relations MLC Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of Congo) Médecins sans Frontières MSF NGO non-governmental organization OCHA (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs PRIO Peace Research Institute Oslo RCD Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (Congolese Association for Democracy) Sida Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency SSR security sector reform

Acknowledgements

The bulk of the research for this book was made possible through several generous grants from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). We also received a grant for research assistance from the Gothenburg Centre of Globalization and Development, University of Gothenburg. Chapter 2 of this book emerged from research conducted under the auspices of the project Arms Against a Sea of Troubles at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). We are grateful for this support.

Additionally, we owe many thanks and much appreciation to people within the Congolese security forces, who greatly facilitated our research. We are especially indebted to the soldiers and officers of the Congolese armed forces, who generously shared their experiences and thoughts with us. We also thank members of various organizations working in the DRC, who spoke with us about their experiences and points of view.

Hanna Leonardsson, who acted as research assistant throughout the writing of this book, made the seemingly impossible possible, through her patience, hard work and resourcefulness. Hanna Leonardsson, Maria Malmstöm and Molly MacGregor assisted in collecting various forms of data on the discourse of 'rape as a weapon of war' in policy texts and media. Many thanks!

We also want to extend our gratitude to those who have provided pertinent, insightful and valuable comments on the manuscript: Paul Higate, in particular, earns special thanks. We also thank Mikela Lundahl, Stina Hansson, Véronique Pin-Fat, Kaia Stern, Mats Utas, Judith Verweijen, Marysia Zalewski and members of the Global Gender Studies research group at the School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank the editorial team at Zed Books. In particular, we thank Kika Sroka-Miller for her comments on the manuscript and Ken Barlow for his never-ending patience and belief that we would indeed eventually finish this book.

We dedicate this book to our children: Kiwa and Emmanuel Eriksson; Alexander and Andreas Stern; and bonus children: Oskar, Kåre, Astrid and Ylva Fridell – and to 'mormor' Ingela Eriksson and Erik Fridell, whose support makes our work possible.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF Daniel N. Stern (1934–2012) Svante Eriksson (1944–1995)

Introduction

It has to be understood that this is a security problem, not just men behaving like men. It's not an inevitable consequence of war – it's something that is planned. It can either be commanded, condemned or condoned. We need to say that we can stop it. It's not inevitable. (Margot Wallström, cited in Crossette 2010)

Finally, the international community has recognized conflict-related sexual violence as an important global security problem. Indeed, the notion that rape is a weapon of war that warrants global attention has become commonplace in media reporting and policy analysis. Despite the often horrific violences it documents, the prevailing and now familiar story of wartime rape is a story that fills us with hope. While we may be intermittently confronted with terrible images of rape survivors in ghastly conditions on our television screens or in the newspapers we read, we are nonetheless slightly comforted. After years of silence and neglect, the ills of rape in war are finally being named. Redress for victims of rape has become a high priority, and, we are reassured, the systematic and widespread scourge of sexual violence will someday be halted, or at least seriously hindered. Sexual violence as a weapon of war has at long last begun to receive the attention it warrants, given the suffering its victims endure and the societal harms it occasions. Indeed, we are confident that a crucial key to further understanding and eventually redressing conflict-related sexual violence has been obtained through its being recognized as an acute and serious global security problem, as a 'weapon of war'. Yet, in the midst of our horror over the atrocity of rape, the sense of feminist success that rape and its sufferers are rendered visible, and the relief that something is finally being, or about to be, done, we feel a growing unease. This unease is the subject of this book.

First, let us explain the success. While the history of rape in war is as long as the history of warring itself, until recently it has been largely ignored. Rape was generally treated as if it were an 'unfortunate by-product' of warring (Seifert 1994), warranting little if any attention in the 'high politics' of global and national security. However, after far too many centuries of silence and neglect, the pressing issue of sexual violence in war has now finally been recognized in the wake of the international recognition of the mass rapes during the armed conflicts in both Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia-Herzegovina

(1992–95). Much policy and media attention has since been paid to the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence, particularly the role of sexual violence in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Hence, since 1993 there has been a marked shift in the ways in which sexual violence has been framed in the global policy debate. Dominant understandings have moved from perceiving rape in war (if remarked on at all) as a regrettable but inevitable aspect of warring, to seeing it as a strategy, weapon or tactic of war, which can be prevented. Indeed, several United Nations Security Council Resolutions¹ and the appointment of a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict have confirmed the United Nations' commitment to combating conflict-related sexual violence.

The notion that rape is a (systematic) weapon of war whose use can ultimately be hindered depends upon a narrative or a frame of understanding which assigns particular meanings to rape in war, as well as to rapists and the victims/survivors of rape. The story told and retold about rape and its subjects in the media and policy reports, as well as in much academic writing, makes good sense. Indeed, the compelling and seemingly cohesive narrative of rape as a (gendered) weapon of war is revolutionary in its global appeal and exemplary in its successful call for engagement to redress the harms of rape – especially in the case of the DRC.

Yet this triumph also elicits our concern. Simply put, our fear is that the dominant framework for understanding and addressing wartime rape has become so seemingly coherent, universalizing and established that seeing, hearing and thinking otherwise about wartime rape and its subjects (e.g. perpetrators, victims) is difficult. In other words, this dominant framework reproduces a limited register through which we can hear, feel and attend to the voices and suffering of both those who rape and those who are raped. Despite its progressive appeal, political purchase and success in bringing attention to many who suffer, the newly arrived accomplishment of recognizing rape as a weapon of war thus may also cause harm.

Ours is surely not a unique concern.² On the tails of accomplishments like the UN Resolutions noted above come also a host of problems and dilemmas. Any framework for understanding and redressing complex problems, such as sexual violence in war, is bound to be limited and limiting. That said, in order to move or peek beyond these limits, we need to explore them: how have they been constructed? What purposes do they serve? Indeed, it is the call to explore the limits of the prevailing ways of thinking about sexual violence in war which prompts us to write this book. Our critical inquiry, however, is not intended to be damning, but instead it is offered as a contribution to a healthy and considered reflection of the contemporary politics of framing

sexual violence in war (Butler 2009). Hence, in this book, we critically engage with dominant understandings of, as well as policy solutions aimed at redressing, sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. In short, the book explores the main story of Rape as a Weapon of War: its underlying assumptions, ontologies, composition and limits.

What interests us is the ways in which rape is imbued with meaning in the governing discourse about sexual violence in warfare through certain 'grids of intelligibility'.³ These grids of intelligibility circumscribe what can be said about rape in war, as well as what kinds of subjects can exist in the main storyline of Rape as a Weapon of War. In the global frenzy to frame 'the disaster' of sexual violence in comprehensible terms, we argue, nuance and complexity are sacrificed and violences are both produced and reproduced (Dauphinée 2007; Zizek 2009).

In different ways in the following chapters, we therefore query the seemingly cohesive and certainly compelling narrative of wartime rape, unpack its prevailing logics, explore its limits, and examine its effects. In so doing, we address some of the dilemmas and thorny issues inherent in the success of the 'arrival' of sexual violence on the global security agenda. While the majority of the book (Chapters 1–3) is preoccupied with interrogating and unpacking the dominant narrative about wartime rape as a 'weapon of war' as articulated in academic, policy and media texts, the last chapter also explores some practical interventions that have emerged in light of this narrative. Hence, we not only query how the discourse of Rape as a Weapon of War is constructed through, among other things, the exclusion of potential stories and voices, we also interrogate the ethico-political implications of interventions aimed at combating this violence.

Our critical reading as a whole rests upon explorations in several interwoven, overlapping and related registers. We will return to a description of each chapter below. Here, we first outline the moves the book makes in broad strokes.

The following two chapters are explicitly about the storylines that fill the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse with meaning. We begin our journey by exploring the interconnections between sex, gender and violence as a way of querying the underlying logics, or narratives, upon which the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse rests. In particular, we explore two deeply intertwined, generalized narratives: the story of sexual violence in warring as rooted in nature and biological urges (the 'Sexed' Story, as we call it) and the 'Gendered' Story which has supplanted it in terms of appeal and purchase. As we shall see throughout the book, the 'Gendered' Story explicitly overlaps with and performs important functions in the story of Rape as a Weapon of

War, while the 'Sexed' Story informs the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse through its exclusions and racialized spectres. Indeed, the dominant framing of Rape as a Weapon of War cannot be understood outside the 'Gendered' Story (and, again, the excluded 'Sexed' Story). The 'Gendered' Story will show that it is the gendering of the perpetrators and victims of war which constructs rape as weapon via its power and efficiency. Moreover, the storyline of rape in war as gendered (rather than 'sexed') performs a crucial function in reversing the idea of rape as an unavoidable consequence of war. Importantly, we query the assumptions (or ontologies) that underpin this understanding of sexual violence as gendered (instead of sexed) and ask who and what is silenced or dehumanized?⁴ What other voices whisper in the margins of the central attraction? What stories can we hear and not hear?

Another entry point into our interrogation of the dominant framings of wartime rape is through a more specific unpacking of the discourse of Rape as Weapon of War and the crucial notion of 'strategicness' upon which this discourse rests. The strategic use of rape is often presented as somehow self-explanatory through its implied universalized storyline of gender and warring. What sorts of assumptions are needed to make this claim/explanation possible? And why is this framing of sexual violence so seductive and so prominent? What kinds of subjects does it produce and exclude?

As we argue throughout the book, the pervasive aspect of the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse rests, largely, on its promises of change and the policy implications it offers in writing rape in war as preventable; as an abhorrent condition that can be treated. After years of silence and portrayals of rape as unavoidable, this narrative promises a brighter future for sexually abused women (and men) in conflicts. The Rape as a Weapon of War discourse is decidedly policy friendly, lending itself to the necessary reductionism for arriving at viable policy goals, which can also be placed in a results-based framework. Hence, in the urgency to redress sexual violence within global security policy, a framework for understanding that is seemingly cohesive and universal emerges that - more often than not - poorly reflects the realities of the complex warscapes⁶ in which it is applied. Furthermore, through its universalizing narrative, the discourse may conceal and exclude subjects and accounts that could improve understanding of or add additional knowledge about how and why sexual violence in warring occurs, as well as what it may mean to those who are subjected to it.

As is apparent from the preceding discussion, this book explores stories, or ways of framing rape, rather than offering explanations for why sexual violence constitutes a common act of violence in many conflict settings. However, while we unpack dominant understandings (rather than provide

explanations for why rape takes place), we also invite the reader to consider some alternative understandings of sexual violence. By highlighting that which is excluded and silenced in the prevailing storyline - by revealing its lacunae and its limits - we draw attention to additional ways of understanding sexual violence that are relevant in warring contexts but have been excluded by the dominant discourse. Drawing upon insights collected from the sociology of violence and the military, as well as research conducted in the DRC (see below), we highlight frameworks for understanding violence, as well as aspects of military structures that are silenced in the dominant story of rape. In some contexts, such as the conflict in Bosnia, sexual violence in war seems to be best understood as a conscious strategy to fulfil political and military goals; in some military structures, orders are effectively enforced down the chain of command so that such a strategy is (more or less) effectively implemented. However, we discuss how sexual violence can also reflect the opposite: the breakdown of chains of command; indiscipline, rather than discipline; commanders' lack of control, rather than their power; the micro-dynamics of violent score-settling, rather than decisions of military and political leaders engaged in defeating the enemy.

As noted above, our exploration into the underlying logics and scaffolding of the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse emerges out of a concern with the ways in which a generalized story of rape in war limits our abilities to analyse and redress instances of sexual violence in specific warscapes, as well as to attend to the people whose lives are circumscribed by such violence. We therefore also contemplate the politics of humanitarian engagement. In particular, we consider the ethics and dilemmas of trying to combat sexual violence and to alleviate the plights of the victims of sexual violence and ask the following questions: What does the new-won attention to wartime sexual violence fail to deliver to women (and men) in post-conflict settings (in this case the DRC)? What relations of power are concealed in the politics of solidarity and humanitarian work? And finally, what are the politics of applying such a critique in such a highly charged setting, where lives are highly vulnerable and precarious?

Learning from the DRC: the so-called 'rape capital of the world'7

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), long known by many as 'the heart of darkness' (Conrad 1990 [1902]), has been redubbed the 'rape capital of the world'. Indeed, the DRC has become infamous globally through reports on the alarmingly vast amount of sexual violence that has accompanied devastating armed conflicts. While other forms of violence have also been committed on a massive scale, it is sexual violence which has attracted the lion's share of

attention, especially among 'outside' observers. This *singular focus* on sexual violence has been reflected in the number of reports, articles, news clips, appeals and documentaries dealing specifically with the issue of rape. Other forms of violence – mass killings, systematic torture, forced recruitment, forced labour and property violations, etc. – are committed on a massive scale but receive far less attention and resources. Sexual violence has been described as the 'monstrosity of the century' (Li Reviews 2008), 'femicide', a 'systematic pattern of destruction toward the female species' (Eve Ensler, cited in Kort 2007), 'incomprehensible' (Nzwili 2009), the 'worst in the world' (Gettleman 2007), etc. Numerous journalists, activists and representatives of diverse international organizations and governments have made pilgrimages to the DRC to meet and listen to survivors first hand. Arguably, with this attention, 'rape tourism' has been added to what has come to be known as 'war zone tourism' (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010).

While this book explores broad questions, fears and concerns about the framing of sexual violence in warring more generally, it is grounded in extensive first-hand research in the DRC warscape. Throughout the book, we therefore draw upon the site of the DRC as examples of, or points from which to pose questions about, the more general renditions of wartime rape. We want to emphasize, however, that our intent here is not to offer a comprehensive understanding of wartime rape in the DRC. Our analysis draws upon - and problematizes - our knowledge of the DRC warscape, but goes beyond the DRC as a case. It is therefore relevant for understanding the framing of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings more generally. Furthermore, the considerable attention paid to sexual violence in the DRC, which is reflected in the interventions of various international actors, renders the DRC a particularly good case from which to learn. Our knowledge of the workings of the armed forces and the problematics of sexual violence in the DRC therefore provides a fruitful point of departure from which questions can be posed both in general terms and in relation to other specific conflict settings.

The references to the DRC that appear throughout this book emerge from several interrelated research projects that we have conducted. In particular, we draw from a research project exploring gender in the military, which is based on interviews with soldiers and officers in the Congolese national armed forces (FARDC).¹⁰ The interviews addressed how the soldiers themselves saw their role in the armed forces, as well as in relation to civil–military relations. We asked them about their understandings of what it meant to be a 'good soldier', and of masculinity and femininity in relation to soldiering. In particular, we focused on the reasons that soldiers gave for why rape occurs and on what they told us rape is or means. We did so in order to query some of

the governing discourses, and the subject positions designated through the workings of these discourses (e.g. what it means to be a 'soldier' or a 'man' within the FARDC), which were reflected, reproduced and renegotiated in their narratives. Indeed, our extensive experiences researching wartime sexual violence in the DRC, and importantly the questions we have subsequently posed concerning our own research process and results, are the impetus behind the writing of this book. Let us explain further.

By attending to the voices of the soldiers who speak about perpetrating rape, we had hoped to find a venue other than that commonly traversed for understanding the occurrence of (sexual) violence in the DRC. Yet, when we attempted to complicate and disrupt the main storyline of rape that we had been conditioned to hear and to tell, we were thwarted by its strong hold. The grids of intelligibility available to us as practised scholars, well versed in IR feminist theory and participants in public political debate, left us bereft of a lexicon for properly hearing and writing about rape differently - in a way that did justice to the stories the soldiers told us. Indeed, as scholars thinking, writing and teaching on gender and war, we have participated in reproducing these storylines (see Stern and Zalewski 2009). Surely, our intended story of rape was precluded by the assumptions about ethics, subjectivity and violence that framed our question of 'why soldiers rape?' in the first place. We continued nonetheless to bang our heads against the limits of possible imaginings, and were frustrated in our inevitable failings and complicity in violent reproductions of rape, rapists and victimhood.

We also draw upon a smaller research project entitled 'Gender-based violence: understanding change and the transformation of gendered discourses'. This project was based on interviews with national and local organizations in the DRC, working in the area of women's rights, with the aim of examining how their understanding of sexual violence and gender relates to that of international actors in the field. Again, in making sense of women's and NGOs' stories about their fears, needs and survival strategies, we sometimes found ourselves adrift without a comfortable language for listening to or writing about their concerns.

Some additional notes on theory and methodology

Theoretically and methodologically, this book is a bit unruly. In addition to drawing on diverse research areas, it also draws on scholarship that rarely meets but instead tends largely to ignore each other's writings. While the book can be situated in feminist theory, it reads both with and against feminist analyses of the interconnections between gender, warring, violence and militarization. One aspect of 'reading against' is that we draw upon literature

that seldom features in feminist texts: military sociology. Through a seeming 'guilt by association' logic (where citing military sociology implies that one is associated with militaristic goals), military sociology has been largely ignored in much feminist research.¹³ While there certainly are some valid grounds for this exclusion, we believe that this body of research can provide important insights that are otherwise neglected in the dominant story of wartime rape. Particularly, much work within military sociology highlights and seeks to arrive at remedies for the failures of military institutions, often aiming at increasing their efficiency. Consequently, and in contrast to the dominant story of wartime rape, this literature tends to establish and explore the incompleteness of military structures. Often such literature, as we shall see, points to the failings of military organizations to work according to the ideals of discipline, hierarchy and control. By neglecting this literature and by not acknowledging these 'failures' (but instead portraying the military institution as the rational war machine it aspires to be), the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse, in a twist of irony, tends to mimic the adulating self-image cultivated by its rejected militaristic Other.

Moreover, the book also draws upon post-colonial theory. While post-colonial theory offers vital insights into the general story of rape in war, it is (unfortunately) indispensable in grasping the framing of sexual violence in the so-called 'rape capital of the world'.

The book is eclectic also in terms of methods. Chapters 1 and 2 are based on discourse analysis (i.e. focus on the construction of meaning), although Chapter 1 is written in a much looser exploratory analytical form than Chapter 2, which follows a stricter form of discourse analysis. In Chapters 3 and 4, we offer a literature overview and analysis; in addition we present data on events, processes and consequences of interventions in the DRC warscape, as well as the workings of military structures.

Before we offer a brief synopsis of each chapter, let us pause to clarify what we mean when speaking of the Rape as a Weapon of War narrative as a discourse. Analysing the dominant narrative of wartime rape through the tools of discourse analysis helps us to unpack and make sense of the ways in which the storyline has reproduced knowledge about rape, as well as its subjects (e.g. perpetrators and victims, as well as policy practitioners and researchers/experts). We understand discourses to be historically, socially and institutionally specific structures of representations, and partial, temporary closures of meaning (see Eriksson Baaz 2005). Importantly, discourses function by giving a semblance of cohesion, order and closure. They make *sense*.¹⁴

Discursive structures can be understood as a system of differences in which the identity/meaning of the elements is purely relational. ¹⁵ Understood in this

way, a discourse does not contain a given stable definitive content, but requires that which it excludes (and which threatens its hegemony over meaning/ identity) as integral to its structure in order for it to make sense.¹⁶ Further, 'any seemingly coherent representation is always an unstable configuration insofar as "it" is constituted by, and indeed haunted by, that which is excluded. These hauntings, or constitutive outsides, are forever present' (Pin-Fat and Stern 2005: 29; Pin-Fat 2000). This is what we mean when we refer to the 'hauntings' of excluded stories or subjects throughout the book. Furthermore, there are many competing discourses at play in any discursive field; within any discourse, traces of other competing discourses persist. Consequently, discourses (even dominant ones) are merely temporary fixations, which, by necessity, are never complete, although they often masquerade as a universal totality. Instead, discourses are always inherently unstable, because of their relation to other discourses and their being constituted through difference and exclusion. Discourses therefore demand continual reinforcement because of the inevitable contestations they incite (Weldes et al. 1999: 9). They therefore can never fully succeed in hegemonizing meaning. Therein lies the continual possibility for contestation of dominant discourses and the ideologies or logics that underwrite them - a possibility which we embrace and explore in the different chapters of this book. Hence, using our methodological toolbox of discourse analysis, we are thus able to better glimpse how meaning is being produced in the discourse of Rape as a Weapon of War and the 'Gendered' Story of rape upon which this discourse rests.

Outline of the book

In Chapter 1, 'Sex/gender violence', we depart from our experiences of researching rape in the DRC and argue that the dominant and seemingly progressive frame of seeing, listening to and understanding wartime rape, when probed, reveals a host of unexamined effects. We set the stage for the subsequent analysis (particularly in both the remainder of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2) by offering a reading of the dominant narratives that frame possible understandings of sexual violence: first the 'Sexed' Story of wartime rape, followed by the 'Gendered' Story, which has seemingly replaced it. The chapter then explores how the 'Gendered' Story (and the 'Sexed' Story that haunts it) produces sexual violence as both normal and 'abnormal', and fundamentally different from and outside of other forms of violence, which are presumed to be ungendered. Both of these moves (rendering sexual violence normal and abnormal simultaneously), we argue, ultimately contribute to dehumanizing those who rape and also ultimately those who are raped. It is therewith difficult to see and hear those who are subject to sexual violence in ways that

we do not expect. We therefore briefly explore some of the uncomfortable subjects, who/which do not neatly fit into the dominant framing. In light of these 'uncomfortable subjects' we reflect on the ethico-political implications of writing about those who rape in the DRC, instead of about their victims. We explore the conundrum of complicity in researching violence and those who commit violence and explore the thorny questions of the ethics, dilemmas and fears that arise when attempting to understand how rape becomes possible from the perspective of those who commit these acts.

Chapter 2, 'Rape as a weapon of war?', offers a critical reading of the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse in order to make it visible and study its scaffolding (against the backdrop of our analysis in Chapter 1). In so doing, we identify four nodal points¹⁷ that are central to producing meaning and coherence: strategicness, gender, guilt/culpability and avoidability. What sorts of assumptions are needed to make the claim that rape is a weapon or strategy of war? And why is this framing of sexual violence so seductive and so prominent? We ask these questions in order to better understand its appeal in the face of the violence of widespread and brutal conflict-related rape. This appeal, we suggest, resides in its inchoate promise that: the bestial violent sex evoked in the 'Sexed' Story and (ironically) reproduced in the 'Gendered' Story can be hampered; criminals will come to justice; wartime rape can be eradicated, or at least largely prevented or avoided; and sexual violence can be controlled, managed and depoliticized.

Chapter 3, 'The messiness and uncertainty of warring', is of a slightly different character to the preceding ones. Here we attend more specifically to the nodal point of strategicness in the story of Rape as a Weapon of War. Drawing upon insights collected from the sociology of violence and the military, as well as our (and others') research in the DRC, we explore the notion of rape as inherently strategic in warring. The aim of this chapter is to highlight some aspects of military organizations and warring that tend to be rendered invisible in the story of the strategicness of rape. We address three aspects in particular. First, we attend to the discursive nature of strategy and demonstrate the ways in which notions of military strategicness, including the strategicness of sexual violence, vary depending on military contexts. Secondly, we turn to the workings of military institutions and highlight the fact that military institutions rarely embody their ideals of discipline, hierarchy and control. Rather than reflecting strategic action, sexual violence in war can also reflect the fragility of military structures and hierarchies. Thirdly, we discuss how the 'messy' realities of warring trouble notions of rape in war as a strategic weapon of war by attending to the micro-dynamics of warring.

In Chapter 4, 'Post-coloniality, victimey and humanitarian engagement:

being a good global feminist?', we shift our focus on to the politics and ethics of (international, external) engagement for redressing the harms of wartime sexual violence. We do so by providing a post-colonial reading of the global battle to alleviate the suffering of the raped women in the DRC. Specifically, we argue that the massive engagement in the plight of Congolese rape survivors offers an illuminating example of the re-enacting of the white wo/man's burden to 'sav[e] brown women from brown men' (Spivak 1988: 297).¹⁸ In this chapter we also discuss some of the unintended consequences of the interventions designed to combat the so-called 'rape epidemic' and attend to its victims. We explore how a singular focus on sexual violence within a very wide repertoire of human rights abuses occasions selective listening and blinded seeing, as well as, more concretely, a 'commercialization of rape'. However, as the interventions themselves are problematic, so also is the critique of these interventions; in whose interest is this critique really articulated? What are the potential consequences/possibilities/risks of such critical interventions? How is the dominant story of wartime rape manifested in practical interventions aimed at redressing sexual violence? And with what consequences? In sum, we find that there is indeed ample cause for hope beyond the Rape as a Weapon of War discourse.

In Chapter 5, 'Concluding thoughts and unanswered questions', we recap our main points of analysis and further reflect on the ethico-politics of research and humanitarian engagement on rape in armed conflict settings. Importantly, we also address our own complicity in relation to the discourses and practices that we have queried (and criticized) in this book and discuss the pitfalls and possibilities of critique. In short, we 'attempt[s] to look around the corner, to see ourselves as others would see us' (Spivak 1999: xii–xiii).