A continuum of violence: A gendered analysis of post conflict transformation

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Abstract
This study is a critical exploration of the discursive links between gender and security in war and peace. It takes the idea that the post conflict political context provides an opportunity to transform gender relations, and seeks to identify whether this occurs in practice. Considering the emerging norms on gender and security, and that there exists a sophisticated body of feminist literature that addresses the gender bias inherent in traditional approaches to security, this study argues that one would expect peace building approaches and post conflict reconstruction activities to address gender as a central constituent of all policies.

Using the DRC as an example, this study finds that Security Sector Reform as a peace building tool falls far short of achieving a transformation of gender relations. Indeed, though security sector reform promises the opportunity to be reflexive of security paradigms that take a militarised and state centric view, it has not proffered any radically different ways of theorising about, or practising security. Therefore, it has left unquestioned the gender ideology embedded in security institutions. This has led to the continuation of a construct of security that not only belies the experiences of women, but gives rise to the gender myths and unequal power relationships that cause GBV. Ultimately, we find that when adding gender to this security framework, as in the case of the DRC, post conflict reconstruction activities that claim to transform gender will always fall short of its transformative potential.

1. Introduction
In recent years gender based violence (GBV) in armed conflict has been increasingly recognised as an issue of concern for international peace and security (UN, 2000: preamble). The topic of concern in this study is therefore whether this recognition has been translated into action in post conflict reconstruction policies, namely in the field of security sector reform (SSR).
GBV describes violence “that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2003: 11). As opposed to biological differences, gender refers to attributes that are associated with masculinities and femininities that are socially constructed and culturally defined (Tickner, 1992: 7). These characteristics are learned through social practice, though are often perceived as natural, and define behaviour, roles and activities. For instance, Steans cites the association of women with peacefulness, passivity and submissiveness (2006: 49). As in many societies gender differences are based on inequality (Tickner, 1992: 7), unpacking GBV requires not just examining the individual act of violence, but also relationships of power where “the society, the communal, the interpersonal and the individual levels function together to produce violence that regulate and are regulated by existing social norms and practices” (Shepherd, 2008: 45).

GBV includes acts, or threats of acts, include physical, mental or sexual harm and can happen at various sites; from the home including marital rape; in the community including forced prostitution and sexual harassment at work; to physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State and institutions (UNHCR, 2003: 11). While this study will be referring to GBV against women, we recognise that acts of GBV can be perpetrated against men. Our choice was made for methodological reasons given the dearth of information and research on men's experiences of GBV, and does not purposefully seek to reinforce what has become common practice, where the term gender is used synonymously with women.

This study will use a gender analysis to explore the discursive links between gender, violence, peace and security. Cynthia Cockburn argues that using a gender analysis is essentially a “matter of seeing” (2001: 28) and at its most basic level, is asking how a policy or an event affects men and women differently. However, Cockburn also posits there are number of gender analyses (2001: 28). With this in mind, this study will focus primarily on literature which posits that traditional state centric and systemic approaches to security have precluded women's experiences in security thinking. Whilst we recognise other arguments that a reformed liberal state can serve as a site for contestation and a suitable agent to achieve gender equitable aims (Harrington, 1992: 65-68), nonetheless we feel that these approaches do not go far enough to interrogate the gendered underpinnings of mainstream security thinking, and therefore, are not included in our analysis.
The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been chosen as a case study for two reasons. Firstly because GBV, especially against women, in the DRC has been the focus of sustained advocacy by human rights organisations for several years, it allows for some depth of research material. Secondly, given the move in the last eight years towards a degree of post conflict reconstruction, the DRC provides the opportunity to analyse whether gender has been taken seriously in post conflict conceptualisations of security and peace.

This study is of the view that given a variety of sophisticated feminist literature on security studies and the emerging norms and frameworks on gender and security, one could have expected post conflict reconstruction to include a gender analysis and make gender a constitutive element of all policy decisions. However, this study will argue that security sector reform (SSR), as a post conflict reconstruction tool that promises the opportunity to be reflexive of IR paradigms that take a militarised and state centric view of security, has not led to new ways of practising security.

In the DRC, SSR has failed to proffer any radically different ways of theorising about, or practising security. Therefore, it has left unquestioned the gender ideology embedded in security institutions. This has led to the continuation of a construct of security that not only belies the experiences of women, but gives rise to the gender myths and unequal power relationships that cause GBV. Ultimately, when adding gender to this security framework, as in the case of the DRC, it will always fall short of its transformative potential.

The second chapter will introduce our feminist theoretical framework, with which the case study on the DRC will then be tested against. This framework lends itself to the understanding of GBV as a security issue by problematising the normative assumptions of traditional security paradigms, and its concepts and categories. Subsequently, this study will analyse literature on the gendered underpinnings of war and peace, before examining SSR as a practical application of the discursive relationship between gender and security.

The third chapter will provide an overview of the history of conflict in the Congo, and analyse patterns of GBV during, and in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. A selection of motivational scripts and narratives will also be examined, with the primary aim of underscoring the point made by feminists in our theoretical chapter that discussions of GBV belong firmly in the political realm.
The fourth chapter will consider SSR and gender in the Congo, and will assess whether the reform process has achieved a transformation of gender relations. It will seek to answer the following questions; to what extent has gender been included as a unit of analysis in SSR? To what extent has SSR sought to challenge gender myths? And to what extent has SSR sought to further gender equality?

Finally, the fifth chapter will seek to account for our findings in the fourth chapter, and we shall return to our theoretical framework to see whether SSR has capitalised on the “window of opportunity” that post conflict presents to transform gender relations.

2. Reimagining and gendering security

Identifying what security means, and to whom it applies to is an exercise in social construction (Sheehan, 2005: 43). Feminists, like Shepherd, have drawn attention to the importance of understanding gender violence in relation to security, and demonstrated that theorising about gender violence as a security issue is problematic if the ways in which existing approaches to security have precluded the study of gender are not taken into account (2008: 2- 76). Feminist scholars argue that gender “is conceptually, empirically, and normatively essential to studying international security” (Sjoberg, 2009: 196) and, therefore, have sought to critique the traditional definition of security and advance reformulations (Sjoberg, 2009: 198).

Despite the fact that there is a plethora of sophisticated feminist literature on the subject of security studies, Tickner’s observation that IR has been slow to take gender seriously (1992: 6- 19), remains valid nearly twenty years later. Indeed, little progress has been made to make gender an issue of central concern in security studies and out of more than five thousand articles in the top five security journals over the last twenty years, less than forty explicitly address gender issues as a major substantive theme (Sjoberg, 2009:183-185).

Considering this absence of other research into gender and security, feminist critiques provide some important insights into the gendered dynamics of conflict, peace and security. In seeking to make the security discourse more reflexive of its normative assumptions (Enloe, 2002: 31), feminists have problematised epistemological, “what constitutes knowledge,” and ontological, “the nature of reality” issues (Steans, 2006: 2-25). Thus, part of the feminist project has been to deconstruct the claims of knowledge that
underpin the security paradigm, and demonstrate that they are profoundly gendered, or rather gender biased. It is this gender bias that has served to make women’s experiences and insecurities invisible.

The rest of this chapter will explore the assumptions and theoretical underpinnings of security studies and its links to GBV. Considering that GBV looks at the act of violence at various levels, including the perpetrator, the community that condone it and the legal structure and norms that sustain it (Shepherd, 2008: 45) we shall use this framework to identify the gendered and exclusionary nature of mainstream IR approaches. We shall therefore look at the theories of IR that produce and reproduce instances of GBV, as well as the links between militaristic societies which institutionalise specific masculinities that condone certain violences i.e. looking at national security, militarism and masculinities. Finally, this study will explore the nexus of conflict, peace and gender, before considering how gender is considered in peace building, specifically SSR.

**Gendering IR theories**

Over the last two decades, feminists have questioned the ontological claims of traditional theories of IR, dissatisfied with the constructed reality it perpetuates (Steans, 2006: 23-25). In ‘Gender in International Relations,’ Tickner argues that the symbols and imagery of realism and neo-realism privilege masculinities and, therefore, serve to constrain the security agenda and exclude women’s experiences (1992: 17). Although universal truths of positivist theories claim to be gender neutral, feminists contend they actually identify being objective with a ‘distinctly masculinist way of ‘knowing the world” (Steans, 2006: 25-26). This is evident in the process of state-making, in which the state is associated with rationality, self dependence and order-traitst typically identified as masculine (Tickner, 1992: 18-43). Tickner goes on to add that IR is “such a thoroughly masculinised sphere of activity that women’s voices are considered inauthentic” (1992: 4). Women appear dependant and subordinate, relegated to the private realm (Steans, 2006: 32). In essence Steans argues, the concepts and categories used by realism have become the preserve of men, women and children are noticeably absent, deemed to be “non political and outside of the proper realm of study” (2006: 32-36). As Croft surmises, the production of security has created silences (Croft, 2009: 387).

Feminist critics of realism also argue that where it posits the state as the highest form of authority, it endows the state with the power to regulate what is public and private (Steans,
2006: 38-39), and what violence is considered legitimate and illegitimate. Domestic violence and marital rape are both examples of GBV and both violences have been drawn up as within the private realm under Realism's theoretical boundaries, essentially naturalising them. Therefore, Spike Peterson adds, where the state pursues non-intervention, it is “complicit directly through its selective sanctioning of non-state violence,” and “indirectly though its promotion of masculinist [...] ideologies” expressed though militarised culture (1992: 46). Moreover, in reducing the construction of threat to external violence and military force, realism belies the possibility that threats are constructed depending on context (Shepherd, 2008: 62), or more than direct violence associated with armed conflict. Realism therefore excludes among others threats, global warming and structural violence, which is “violence frozen within structures and culture that legitimates it” (Galtung, 1996 in Cockburn, 2001: 30).

In going beyond the high politics of (realist) military security (Steans, 2006: 63), feminists aim to ‘reveal’ forms of insecurity that have previously been located outside the ‘political’ realm. Rather they aim to broaden and redesign the security agenda and whom it includes, changing the unit of analysis from the nation state to individuals and communities (Sjoberg, 2009: 198-201). Feminists uses a post-positivist lens to demonstrate that the “structural violence of gender [...] – i.e., Women's systemic insecurity- is revealed as an internal and external dimension of state systems” (Spike Peterson, 1992: 32).

While Realism arguably remains an influential theoretical construct, since the end of the Cold War it has become clear that it fails to adequately explain new security threats. The concept of human security has arguably been very influential in the policy making of organisations such as the UN (Diez 2005 in Steans, 2006: 73), and expands the concept of security to include personal, community and political dimensions recognising that individual safety is key to international security (Steans, 2006: 74). Yet though both human security and feminism share a “bottom up” way of analysing security (Tickner, 2001 in Sjolberg, 2009: 206), feminists claim that human security is still gender biased, since it presupposes that all individuals have equal access to resources. Therefore, Tickner and Sjolberg argue that critical theories have been just as slow as post-positivists to embrace feminism (2006 in Sjolberg, 2009: 205). Aside from feminist critiques of the human security agenda, Sheehan has also pointed out that without changing the foundations of security, critical theory may just militarise new areas of social policy. Moreover, he
questions how much the human security approach has transformed the security agenda, given that statist approaches remain dominant (2005: 55-61).

**Masculinities and Militarism**

Approaches to IR that have reduced the construction of threats to military threats have therefore afforded a state’s security institutions a key role in making, maintaining and losing security. This fosters a culture of militarism, which Enloe argues is based on the notions that conflict is natural, armed force assures power and security and in times of conflict, those who are feminine need protection (2002: 22-23). Yet as Eriksson Baaz and Stern observe, these institutions are not gender neutral but foster specific masculinities in culture and in practice “through methods specifically designed to create soldiers who are able (and willing) to kill to protect the state/nation” (2009: 499). In militaristic societies, specific masculinities that are oppressive and exaggerate gender differences are learned through social practice (Cockburn and Žarkov, 2002: 13), where the ideal type of (heterosexual) masculinity in these societies “becomes linked to the ability and willingness to commit violence [...] a] supposed masculinity of protecting, warring and killing” (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009: 499). These specific masculinities may not correspond to any actual real lived experiences of men (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009: 499), but are an amplified version, otherwise known as hegemonic masculinities. These masculinities are problematic in peacetime, where the normal routes to manhood can be blocked, “known as a crisis of masculinity” (Barker and Ricardo, 2005: 24-27) where men act out these violent versions to achieve manhood.

Militarism also creates another understanding of gender, a type of femininity that is associated with protection, dependency or as a sex object (Clarke, 2008: 52). With little control over the terms of their protection (Tickner, 1992: 28), women have often been placed in categories by decision-makers, such as labelling women as victims, which only serve to perpetuate the militarised security paradigm that guarantees inequality (Enloe, 2002: 28). Therefore, as Spike Peterson observes, “where the state does intervene, it typically does so from within a patriarchal ideology that at best 'protects' women, whilst simultaneously reproducing masculinist givens that ensure women's 'need for protection’” (1992: 46). The war in Afghanistan, where women were presented by the media as victims of oppression against their rights and dignity by the Taliban, is a strong practical example, where “victimisation became a powerful reason to go to war” (Steans, 2006: 53).
The impact of militarism, and the gendered hierarchies it institutionalises, on gender relations can be seen as three fold. Firstly, Steans points out that feminist scholarship on nationalism has highlighted the link between “women, sexuality and the family as symbols in the reproduction of the nation and its boundaries” (2006: 39) Where militarism emphasises this link, it leaves women vulnerable to specific types of violence, especially systemic sexual violence as a weapon of warfare (Steans, 2006: 58).

Secondly, Cockburn posits that militarisation is accompanied by high defence expenditure (2001: 32) and thereby diverts funds from healthcare and social services and can have profound gendered consequences. Research has highlighted the necessity of these services to women's security, where civil war has disproportionately impacted on women’s health by the way of disease, poverty and disability (Ghobarah et al 2003: 200). For instance, injuries such as traumatic fistula caused by sexual violence can require specialist long term medical care (Onsrud et al, 2008: 268). Furthermore, an increase in light weaponry affects women's personal security given that it easier for GBV to be committed, and in new forms, when the perpetrator is armed. Indeed, Human Rights Watch (HRW) notes that forced marriage is also easier, quoting a soldier from the FARDC in the DRC as saying “there is a lot of forced marriage, where soldiers will say, ‘if you don’t marry me, I will shoot you” (2009a: 30).

Thirdly, militarism determines whose security needs are listened to during war and peace time, producing gender hierarchies within decision making. Enloe posits that in militarised societies, women's needs are likely to be marginalised in favour of (male) combatants, since they do not have the military credit to speak and are generally perceived to be invisible from conflict (2002: 25).

**Gendered war and gendered peace**

Feminist scholarship has also challenged the binary distinctions that underpin international relations, problematising the concepts of war and peace. Indeed, Grant comments of the gendered nature of these concepts observing that “the female gender role, so conspicuously outside the realm of war, was not considered as a basis for analysing international relations” (1992: 86), but instead, relegated to the “home front” (Pankhurst, 2003: 155). Where feminists have sought to transgress the well defended boundaries of international relations, they have therefore sought to make women's experiences ‘visible,’ in essence showing that it belongs in the political realm. This endeavour has taken place alongside
changes in contemporary conflicts, where the separation between the “war front” and the “home front” has become increasingly blurred (Pankhurst, 2003: 155) as “bodies, homes, communities and livelihoods have become the battlefields of contemporary [intrastate] conflict” (Giles and Hyndman, 2004: 310).

Through feminist explorations of women's experiences in conflict, it is understood that women have served as actors during conflict, assuming diverse roles that include community leaders, fighters and workers (Pankhurst, 2003: 158). However, a gender analyses also 'reveal' that experiences of violence have been profoundly gendered (Giles and Hyndman, 2004: 3), and as Cockburn elaborates, “men and women often die different deaths and are tortured in different ways [...] because of the different means culturally ascribed to the male and female bodies” (2001: 22). For instance, in Carpenter's study on men's experiences of GBV, she identifies that men, especially adolescent males, are often targeted for execution since they are assumed to be potential combatants (2006: 86). One the other hand, women can also be singled out for rape, and during the conflict in Sierra Leone, women and girls were abducted, raped and forced to “marry” combatants (UN, 2009a: 5). In ‘revealing’ GBV, we do not wish to label GBV as a new phenomenon, but rather show that its absence from the political agenda has precluded the study of it as a political phenomenon.

Feminist research has also highlighted the “unboundedness” of war where conflicts have no neat beginnings of endings (Steans, 2006: 58). Rather, following the official cessation of hostilities, violence often continues with “strong continuities with what happened during wars, and with the nature of gender relations in society prior to armed conflicts” (Pankhurst, 2008: 1-6). For example, sexual violence perpetrated by soldiers, policemen and former combatants pre war may intensify during conflict, and continue unabated in the aftermath. Cockburn argues that it is gender that links these acts of violence that women experience at various sites, from the personal to the international, in a “gendered continuum of violence” (2001: 31- 37). Pankhurst is particularly critical of existing peace building activities, arguing that in general, they feature a “backlash against women,” where violence continues at a higher rate than before the conflict, or there is an attack on newly formed women's rights (2008: 3-4). Here, peace is described as a gendered concept, and peace building a gendered activity where women's insecurities are routinely ignored or subordinated, and any changes to gender roles are constructed as a jeopardising peace
This idea draws on Galtung's concept of negative peace, where peace is equated with the absence of armed conflict and, therefore, does not seek to address the underlying root causes of conflict. Where post conflict reconstruction fails to consider other security concerns, such as structural violence, Cockburn and Zarkov neatly surmise that peace building “plays into the existing gender order, [...] reinforced aggressive and predatory forces, and entrenched violent and unstable environments” (2002: 11).

**Post Conflict political context as a “window of opportunity”**

Feminists offer an alternative concept of peace that should be pursued in post conflict situations, defined as “women’s achievement of control over their lives” (Enloe, 1987 in Kelly, 2000: 48). This goes beyond a narrow militarised definition of peace and security, and draws upon Galtung’s idea of “positive peace”, which requires the elimination of factors that cause insecurity, including structural inequalities and poverty. Two factors help make this alternative a realistic goal. Firstly it has been recognised that where conflict results in major changes to the social fabric and men and women assume roles and responsibilities that challenge traditional gender norms, the post conflict political can provide a critical window of opportunity to transform gender relations (Meintjies, Pillay and Turshen, 2001: 10). Certainly the post conflict political circumstances, where the focus is on long term development and governance structures, presents the space to interrogate and reconceptualise ideas of peace and security, and include gendered security needs in the political agenda. Secondly, this window of opportunity has been bolstered by UN Security Council resolution 1325, which lays out a framework to make a gender perspective relevant to peace processes, including peace building (UN, 2000: preamble). Its pursuant 1888 also calls for effective action to be taken against GBV (UN, 2009: article 1). Given this “emergent normative framework” (Tryggestad, 2010: 159) there is a real opportunity to make gender a normative concern of security thinking.

SSR as a peace building tool, presents an opportunity to put this framework into action. Reform of the security sector is important considering that “security institutions are usually those most in need of reform [...] since without adequate personal security (for women and men), it is very difficult to reduce violence, or [...] prevent a return to war” (Pankhurst, 2003: 168). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) definition, SSR describes the “transformation of the security
system” to create a sector that is “more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework” (2005: 20). It includes the reform of the core statuary security actors such as the military forces, police forces, judicial and penal stems and civilian bodies that are mandated to oversee these organisations. It can also include non-statuarv actors, such as foreign forces and civil society, which can also play a role in undermining or providing security (OECD, 2005: 20-21).

The objectives of SSR can be grouped around short-term and long term goals, the former being to establish a professional and non partisan security sector. This may mean dealing with oversized armed forces and a surplus of small arms. SSR’s long term objectives on the other hand, includes creating a security sector that is accountable, under democratic control and consistent with good governance, as well as providing security to the state and its citizens (Mobekk, 2009: 274). These latter goals reflect the inroads the human security agenda has made in security thinking, in that it seeks to change the referent of security from the state to the people. From a gender perspective, the long term objectives have the most potential to transform gender relations, and Clarke suggests that SSR provides the space and opportunity for decision makers and civil society to reflect upon (militarised) security policy and make “fundamental shifts in the ideology of the military and its role in perpetuating militarised masculinities” (2008: 51). However, it is also the long term objectives that are the hardest to put into operation, considering that strategic priorities are often a long way from being focused on the rights and security of its citizens (Chanaa, 2002: 75-76). Instead, there is often “an overwhelming emphasis on building the capacity of security institutions” (Ebo, 2006: 493).

Gender mainstreaming is one of the main strategies for integrating gender into peace building activities, including SSR (Valasek, 2008: 4), and aims to “bring about gender equality [...] by infusing gender analysis, gender-sensitive research, women’s perspectives and gender equality goals into mainstream policies, projects and institutions” (AWID, 2004: 1). This requires asking if policies will affect men and women differently and, subsequently, integrating gender issues into peace building policy processes (Pankhurst, 2003: 171). According to the “the Gender and Security Sector Toolkit” gender must be addressed at the start of policy formulation in order to create “a solid foundation for a gender responsive SSR” (Valasek, 2008: 12), and suggests undertaking gender assessments
of the impact of the proposed policy. This would provide a comprehensive understanding of the context for SSR and priorities for reform ensuring that the planning of SSR policies would address gender (2008: 12-15).

3. The Conflict in the DRC

The proceeding chapter will provide an overview of the conflict in the DRC and examine the nature and patterns of GBV. We shall demonstrate that GBV, especially sexual violence, has been widely perpetrated by armed forces throughout the conflict. These findings underscore feminist arguments, identified in the previous section, that gender should be central to security thinking and in post conflict reconstruction planning processes to ensure policies are representative and effective. After examining the legacy of gendered violence during the conflict, we shall then examine some of the patterns of GBV. As the diverse scripts and differentiated motivational contexts of GBV demonstrate, GBV is part of the public realm and a political issue, and therefore must be addressed in peace building strategies. The diversity of the motivations highlights the need for the reform process to address unequal power relations.

**Overview of conflict and gendered violence**

The history of armed conflict in the DRC is extremely complex and is one where local, national and regional dimensions of violence have become interlinked (Autesserre, 2009: 260). The result has meant that there has been a plethora of actors party to the conflicts at any one time, making for a fluid and unstable politico-military landscape (Hoebeke et al, 2008: 2). The ongoing instability in the Kivu provinces in Eastern Congo also illustrates that there is “no abrupt cut-off between war and post-war” (Cockburn, 2001: 25), and despite successive peace agreements, violence including widespread GBV, has continued.

After gaining independence from Belgium in 1960, politics in the DRC remained turbulent until Mobutu Sésé Seko seized power in a coup d'etat in 1965, creating a dictatorship that lasted for over thirty years. In 1996 Laurent Kabila and the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, supported by Rwanda and Uganda, led a successful rebellion from Eastern Congo overthrowing Mobutu. This relationship between Kabila and his allies proved to be short-lived, and after Kabila ordered all foreign forces out of the country, war ensued between the DRC and its neighbours between 1998-2002. Known as ‘Africa's First World War,’ it is estimated that four million people died as a direct or
indirect consequence of the conflict (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2006 in Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 62-63). All parties to the conflict have been accused of gross human rights abuses, including GBV where abductions and sexual slavery were widely documented in the Eastern provinces. For instance, HRW observed that “soldiers and combatants raped and otherwise abused women and girls as part of their effort to win and maintain control over civilians and the territory they inhabited” (HRW, 2002: 23). Women also participated in the conflict, voluntarily and as a result of coercion, but largely assumed gendered roles. For instance, in 2005 Save the Children estimated that around 40% of child soldiers in the DRC were girls, serving as combatants, but also as support for soldiers and ‘wives’ (2005: 11).

The signing of ‘The Global and All Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo’ ended the conflict in 2002, and laid out a power sharing deal between the main militia groups including the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), as well as the DRC government, led by Joseph Kabila after the assassination of Laurent Kabila in 2001. The peace deal also paved the way for the integration of the militia forces into a newly unified Congolese army, the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC). However, throughout the peace process and the subsequent national elections held in 2006 and won by Kabila, sexual violence continued at a high level (HRW, 2009a: 15).

Moreover, political violence in the Eastern provinces of Ituri, and North and South Kivu continued between 2006-2009, where the National Congress for the Defense of the People (Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple or CNDP) was one of the main sources of insecurity in the region. Led by Laurent Nkunda until 2009 when Bosco Ntanga led a successful coup, the CNDP were a faction of the RCD who were supported by Rwanda and had refused to integrate into the national army following the 2002 peace agreement. The CNDP regularly clashed with the FARDC, and during this time, sexual violence continued at high levels, perpetrated by both forces. For instance, in just two weeks in January 2007 when Nkunda’s forces fought Congolese army troops in North Kivu, 181 cases of rape were registered in Mutanda, Rutshuru territory (HRW, 2007: 25). In March 2009 a peace agreement was signed involving not just the CNDP but also smaller militia and defence groups including the Mai Mai. The result has been the transformation of the CNDP into a political party, and the various militias participating in a “fast track integration process.”
Political violence in the Kivu provinces, driven by micro issues of access to resources and land (Autesserre, 2009: 257) remained a serious problem throughout 2009, of which GBV was a feature. This was worsened by government military offensives and from March 2009, the newly integrated FARDC led two campaigns against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a rebel group who are widely credited with participating in the 1994 Rwanda genocide and have since committed numerous human rights abuses in Eastern DRC. The first campaign, called Umoja Wetu, took place in cooperation with Rwanda and was followed by Kimia II which was supported by the UN mission in the DRC (MONUC), who provided tactical expertise and transport support, as well as food rations and medical support to Congolese soldiers. Both operations subsequently met with strong criticism from various human rights organisations, who documented widespread human rights abuses, including GBV. For instance, it was reported that 7,540 women and girls were raped in North and South Kivu between January to September 2009 (UNFPR in HRW, 2009b: 46) and on one occasion, 40 refugees were abducted to be sex slaves from Shalio hill in Walikale territory, North Kivu (HRWb, 2009: 14). Whilst the FARDC offensives in the East regained control of many areas previously held by the FDLR, military operations in the Kivu's have continued into 2010, with the launching of Amani Leo which aims to restore State authority in recently liberated territory (MONUC, 2010).

Identifying patterns of GBV and motivational contexts

Having identified that GBV perpetrated by security forces was a common feature during the conflict and in its aftermath, we can further analyse the differential motivational contexts of GBV, that is “determine the objectives of the perpetrator as part of larger sociocultural structures or political motives” (Boesten, 2010: 112). Where sexual violence has been a form of GBV against women committed by personnel from the security sector, we identify three scripts of GBV that explain how GBV has been sometimes been legitimised. These include sexual violence as a weapon of war, as war booty, and as a crisis of a particular types of masculinity. All of these three narratives are violent manifestations of unequal gender relations, where instances of GBV is “regulatory and themselves contributing to the very normalising practices through which they are sustained” (Shepherd, 2008: 244).

The importance of identifying the differential motivations is twofold. Firstly Boesten
points out that in unpacking the differentiated forms of GBV, we can determine the social and institutional underpinnings of violence. Ultimately she argues that GBV and its various forms are all systemic and political in nature and, therefore, should not be interpreted as “domestic or otherwise irrelevant to the public sphere” (Boesten, 2010: 113). Secondly, in identifying that GBV cannot be solely reduced to a single script or as an unavoidable outcome of war (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009: 514), we subsequently identify that the “necessary social changes should also be diverse and wide-ranging” (Alder, 1997: 442 in Shepherd, 2008: 43). According to Boesten, where one script of GBV is tackled and the others ignored, the transformative potential of peace building is impeded as it allows for the continuation of some forms of sexual violence (2010: 111). In the DRC, we identify necessary changes to include the structural reform of the military, the deconstruction of masculinities that it institutionalises and construction of an alternative and wider transformation of unequal power relations.

The first script of GBV, sexual violence a *weapon of war*, has been oft cited by observers of the DRC conflict (HRW, 2009a; 2007) and is defined by the UN Security Council as violence used by armed forces to “humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community” (UN, 2008: preamble). As mentioned earlier, where women are seen to symbolise the nation and community (Steans, 2006: 39), GBV can be understood as serving a dual purpose. Firstly, to terrorise the women themselves and secondly, to destabilise the wider community they represent. During ‘Africa’s First World War’, where HRW observed that sexual violence was used, sometimes systematically to “terrorise communities into accepting their control or to punish them for real or supposed aid to opposing forces” (2002: 1). Similarly, during the Umoja Wetu and Kimia II operations, former CNDP affiliated FARDC units were alleged to have attacked civilians and raped women to punish for supposed collaboration with the FDLR (HRW, 2009b: 33), whilst FDLR attackers were reported to have “repeatedly told their victims that they were being raped to ‘punish them’” (HRW, 2009b: 72-92). Considering that many civilians exist in an “uneasily cohabitation with FDLR” (Oxfam, 2009: 1), sexual violence, or the threat thereof, has also served as a means to displace or relocate civilians and prevent them from returning to their homes and fields (HRW, 2005: 23), especially when carried out alongside the destruction of homes, school and health centres. The narrative of rape as a weapon of war lends itself to a specific strategy that includes the need to better civil-military relations, address impunity and lack of
accountability through post conflict justice mechanisms, the need for democratic oversight and vetting procedures.

The “war booty” principle can also serve to partly explain the high of incidence of sexual violence as a form of GBV, described as where “violence against women in the conquered territory is conceded to the victor during the immediate post war period” (Siefert, 1995: 1995: 58 in Cockburn, 2001: 22). According to Merideth Turshen, the idea of women as the “spoils of war” can be refined, given that there is an important difference between seeing women as property, where GBV is a manifestation of cultural practices that treat women as property, and women having property. Turshen maintains that sexual violence against the female enemy can be used as a strategy to wrest personal assets, where the abduction of women to serve as sex slaves, porters and farmers is “perhaps the crudest form of asset transfer in civil war, in this case women's productive labour” (2001: 55-61). Both of these forms have been documented in the DRC. For instance, women and girls have been abducted and forced to provide sexual services and domestic labour (HRW, 2005: 1), but have also had their land seized. In areas of the Kivu's where ethnic tensions and disputes over land and customary rights have not been addressed in the peace process (Austesserre), rape during the Umjola Wetu and Kimia II operations can be seen as a strategy by the former CNDP soldiers to gain control of land for refugees returning from Rwanda. This narrative of rape as war booty underscores the political and economic dimensions of violence, and suggests that some form of accountability and compensation is needed and better command and control.

Lastly, GBV in the DRC can also be linked to the construction, and subsequent crisis of, a particular type of masculinity that is institutionalised by the Congo's security system, and underpinned by a peacetime gender ideology. Eriksson Baaz and Stern's research on masculinities and violence among soldiers in the DRC identifies that soldiers rationalise violence frustration at their failure to inhibit specific heterosexual manhood (2009: 497). Rape here, Eriksson Baaz and Stern argue, is the outcome of a discord between their lived experiences and expectations and “serves as a performative act that functions to reconstitute their masculinity- yet simultaneously symbolises their ultimate failure to do so” (2009: 514). In the DRC, this particular militarised masculinity is intertwined with universalised narratives of violent and aggressive masculinities, but also based on the ability to provide for the family and be a (hetero) sexually potent fighter. Femininity, on
the other hand, is associated with dependants, objects of sexual desire or opportunists (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009: 507).

In the DRC men, or male soldiers are seen to have sexual needs, which must be relieved after brave fighting (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009: 506). Whilst war provides opportunities for sexual relief by empowering soldiers with a gun, it also disrupts the possibility for normal sexual relations, a problem further worsened by the infrequent payment of soldiers’ salaries which prevented soldiers from paying for sex. This can partly explain the high incidence of opportunistic rapes, where women have been raped as soldiers have patrolled the area, referred to the soldiers as “lust rapes” and it draws parallels with Boesten’s research of rape as consumption in Peru, where she writes that sexual violence has been a “desirable and pursued sexual event, albeit one immersed in violence and physical domination” (Boesten, 2010: 119).

This specific masculinity is intimately linked to material wealth (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009: 507), and supports Barker and Ricardo’s research on masculinities in Sub Saharan Africa where they identified that achieving manhood often requires a level of financial independence or income (2005: 5-6). However, where poverty, neglect and hunger means an inability to provide for the family there can be a perception of emasculation (Baaz and Stern, 2009: 510- 51). Unable to achieve the normal route to become ‘real men’, force is used to embody that masculinity (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009, 513- 514). Since most soldiers recognised that rape illegal and against the Military Code, or Règlement Militaire, but legitimised it as morally okay and knowing that they were unlikely to be held accountable (2009: 508- 513), this highlights the need for peace-building efforts to go beyond rule making and deconstruct this particular type of masculinity that is linked to aggressive sexuality.

Importantly all of the different forms of GBV, including those outlined above, are manifestations of unequal power relations embedded in peace time gender ideologies (Boesten, 2010: 119). In Congolese society, both state laws and customary practice, entrench gender roles and differences. For instance, although equality is enshrined in the transition constitution and the final constitution of 2006, Congolese family law effectively makes the husband the protector and the head of the household, to whom the wife must be subservient (Association pour la Promotion, Protection, et Defence de Droits de la Femme, 2001 in Puechguirbal, 2003: 1273). Whilst a revised family law has reached parliament, it
has yet to be passed. Similarly, customary practice and traditions, especially in rural society regulate unequal power relations through customs based on gender bias, for instance patrilochal residence and arranged marriages (UN, 2004: 26-28). Although an absence of research on the subject of sexual violence makes any generalisations problematic, Eriksson Baaz and Stern argue that it did exist (2009: 503), supported by Barker and Ricardo's study of Sub Saharan Africa which finds violence, including forced sex, common features of adult intimate relationships (2005: 22). Furthermore, in some cultures, violence in the private realm is socially sanctioned as an extension of male authority and a means of discipline (Wood and Jewkes, 2001 in Barker and Ricardo, 2005: 22). The conflict, however, has led to substantial changes in gender roles, where 80% of households now owe their survival to women (National Strategy against GBV, 2009: 9). With this in mind, all gender provisions in peace building must address, or at the very least be aware of, structural violence and unequal power relations, otherwise they may very well end up contributing to the conditions that leads to violence in the first place.

4. SSR in the DRC
In the previous chapter, we established that members of armed groups were one of the main perpetrators of GBV in the Congo during the conflict. In this chapter we seek to understand to what extent SSR policies have considered differentiated gender security needs, and what impact SSR has had on gender relations, in particular the gendered continuum of violence. This chapter will proffer that SSR policies have increasingly included a level of gender awareness, but this does not mean that there has been a revision of the militarised framework that guides security policies, nor the inclusion of a gender analysis. Instead, where efforts have been taken to address specific gender needs, it has played into the existing gender ideology and therefore, a transformation of gender relations has not been achieved.

This chapter is divided into three sub sections. The first will provide a brief overview of the security sector in the DRC, detailing some its structural afflictions. The second will analyse SSR policies in relation to what extent they have considered and addressed gender issues, specifically GBV. The third subsection will assess the overall impact that SSR has had on gender relations, examining whether it has sought to change the way security is practised and challenged stereotypical gender roles.
An overview of the security sector and reform thus far

The Congolese security sector has typically served as an instrument to pursue politician’s individual interests, yet decades of mismanagement has meant that the security system has “long been dysfunctional” (Baaz and Stern, 2008: 65). During Belgium’s colonial rule, the Force publique was used to ensure the external security of, and maintain domestic order within the Colony and, therefore, no distinction was made between police and military forces (ICG, 2006: 2). Following independence, Mobutu used divide and rule tactics to maintain control of the armed forces, continuously reshuffling senior positions and purging elements as part of his ruling strategy. For instance, in 1972 the National Police was dissolved, meaning there was no coherent police force until Kabila took power in 1996. The army was also deprofessionalised when it threatened to eclipse Mobutu’s grip on power, and soldiers were subsequently encouraged to fend for themselves through looting of the civilian population, demonstrated in the expression “civil azali bilanga ya militaire, [translated as] the civilian is the corn of the military” (Baaz and Stern, 2009: 502; italics in original). During this time, the judicial sector also lacked independence and was severely underfunded.

By the time of the All Inclusive Peace Agreement in 2002, the cumulated effect of severe mismanagement and war meant pressing problems facing the security sector included; poorly trained and ill equipped forces, poor operational and tactical skills, severe underfunding and salaries irregularly paid (Mobekk, 2009: 275).

Security sector reform: gender sensitive or gender unaware?

From the outset, although SSR may have been identified by international observers as integral to achieving sustainable peace and development (Mobekk, 2009: 274; ICG, 2006: i; ), it is clear that little tangible progress has been made. Indeed, the lack of an overall reform plan has meant SSR activities have been largely undertaken by bilateral donors, though these have lacked coordination, and have focused on short term technical capacity building of the core security actors. Therefore, Mobekk adds, the longer term objectives of civilian oversight, accountability and management structures have tended to be excluded (2009: 277-278)

It is into this framework of reform that gender concerns have been increasingly incorporated. At the beginning of the SSR process, gender aware policies were conspicuously absent and there was no comprehensive strategy for tackling GBV within
SSR. The brassage (integration) process that followed the All Inclusive Peace Agreement of 2002 is the most apt illustration of this, in that it failed to make any provision for the vetting of soldiers for abuses, despite evidence that most parties to the conflict had committed GBV. Since then however, gender issues have been increasingly integrated into SSR, though this has not been a coordinated nor comprehensive effort. Therefore, while the National Strategy against Gender Violence announced in November 2009 presents the most advanced strategy to address GBV in SSR, as the following paragraphs will demonstrate, the overall impact in making the security sector more responsive to the different gender security needs is questionable.

Starting with the military, defence reform was first addressed in the 2002 All Inclusive Peace Agreement, though Onana and Taylor criticise it for being “superficial” since the military remained “politicised, unprofessional and poorly equipped” (2008: 512). The 2009 peace agreement similarly addressed integration of the militia and government forces through a “fast track process,” yet this was also widely criticised for contributing to “the general climate of violence,” in that the incomplete registration process meant that many soldiers were not placed on the payroll, and therefore resorted to looting for food and supplies (Baaz and Stern, 2009: 501). Furthermore, it was not until 2008 that a comprehensive plan for military reform was drawn up (Mobekk, 2009: 277), supplemented in October 2009 by legislation that includes language on the ill discipline of the FARDC, though it still remains unclear the precise roles, responsibilities and capabilities of the force components (UN, 2010: 16).

Where gender has visibly been mainstreamed in reform policies it has largely been in the form of gender training, incorporated in bilateral donor training programmes. To cite the European Union advisory and assistance mission for security reform in the DRC (EUSEC RD Congo) as an example, gender training has been incorporated into military training programmes, which aim to sensitisce forces in gender issues and raise awareness of GBV. For instance, as of 2010 the EUSEC RD Congo has also trained personnel from the 8th Military region in gender awareness, sexual violence and the code of conduct, with the view of them becoming trainers to their units (Council of the European Union, 2010a). In addition the EUSEC RD Congo has also conducted a consensus of FARDC soldiers and started a programme monitoring soldiers pay, with the aim of breaking the chain of
payment from the chain of command to ensure salaries are paid and reduce corruption (Council of the European Union, 2010c).

However Davies questions the impact these policies have had, pointing specifically to the chain of payments programme, where pay remains extremely low and the custom of looting and extorting the population still exists (2009: 18). Moreover Davies adds that while EUSEC RD Congo may have a gender advisor, a gender strategy is yet to be integrated into the mission, “with gender related projects treated somewhat separately” (2009: 29). We would also add that there has been little evaluation of these gender policies thus far.

Turning to reform of the National Police (PNC), progress remained largely ad hoc until October 2009 when the government adopted a long term strategic plan and short term action plan which focused on capacity building (UN, 2010: 11-25). Although some level of basic training in policing skills has been undertaken by bilateral donors, ultimately however, the police remain mostly unvetted and poorly trained. With regards to the inclusion of gender to police reform, gender training has again been the preferred form of action. For instance, the European Union Police Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUPOL RD Congo) has sought to address the threat of sexual violence by training judicial police officers to act as trainers against sexual violence and impunity (Council of the European Union, 2010b). The United Nations peace keeping mission in the DRC (MONUC) has also worked with the PNC to help train 8,625 National Police officers, including 666 women (UN, 2010: 11). At present however, Davies notes that the vast majority of the police force remain “incapable of investigating crime, particularly sexual violence,” and reports of sexual violence perpetrated by police forces remain widespread (2009: 21).

Finally, the reform of the judiciary has arguably received the least attention during the reform process (Mobekk, 2009: 281), despite the fact that a functioning judiciary is essential to an effective police force. Legislation concerning the expansion of the definition of rape, which now includes male rape, in 2006 is perhaps the most significant milestone in gender aware judicial reform, though in July 2009 the government also announced a “zero tolerance” policy for soldiers who commit human rights violations, including GBV. Several points however need to be made about the effectiveness of these policies. Firstly Davies notes that implementation of the new legislation is rare, and the
ability of courts to deliver justice for sexual violence victims is “shockingly low” (2009: 21). Mobekk adds that many cases of GBV continue to be settled by traditional justice mechanisms, where rape is often settled by payment (2009, 282). Secondly, the “zero tolerance” policy is also highly contested by HRW, who argue that the vast majority of crimes go unreported, noting between February and August 2009, the Military Prosecutor’s offices in North and South Kivu prosecuted fewer than 100 cases of sexual violence crimes, none of whom ranked higher than a captain(2009b: 130-131).

The creation of a National Strategy against GBV and action plan in November 2009 however presents the most promising and coordinated effort to prevent GBV, both in terms of its response to, and part in committing, GBV. Importantly, the strategy recognises that GBV in the Congo is rooted in the low status women, and its immediate action plan seeks to introduce accountability and vetting mechanisms as part of a framework for activities to prevent and protect from GBV and end impunity. It also aims to work in conjunction with the newly formed National Gender Policy, to mobilise all government stake holders, including democratic institutions and ministries to integrate gender awareness into their activities (Government of the DRC, 2009: 4-19).

In sum, while the National Strategy is commendable, thus far efforts to make the security sector more responsive to gender security needs have been largely uncoordinated and not altogether very fruitful. The conduct of the FARDC during the Umoja Wetu and Kimia II campaigns is testament to this, demonstrating that there is a long way to go to reduce incidences of GBV.

**SSR: has it transformed gender relations?**

In order to make a formative assessment as to whether SSR has achieved a transformation of gender relations, one can consider the following questions; has the policy sought to challenge gender roles? And has the policy sought to change the way security is practiced?

With regards to the first question, SSR in the Congo has not sought a revision of the existing security framework which precludes women’s security needs from the political agenda, but left it in tact and built upon it. Indeed, the failure to institute a national security plan at the beginning of SSR has meant that no “systemic effort was made to base the new security service on a careful assessment of risks, needs and capabilities” (ICG, 2006: 3). SSR has therefore not challenged the militarised gender ideology and myths institutionalised in the security sector, but instead has added gender concerns into this
framework, playing into stereotypical gender roles. Women have continued to be thought of as dependants through their constructed status as “victims” in need of protection. Young points to UN security council 1325 to illustrate this, arguing it presents the state as the provider of security and therefore reproduces the “gendered logic of the masculine role of protector that constructs a security state that wages war abroad, and expects obedience and loyalty at home” (2003: 2 in Shepherd, 2008: 128).

Gender has therefore been added to the discourse of “high politics”, and used to legitimise national security policies. The military operations of Umjola Wetu and Kimia II demonstrate this, as both were legitimised by reports of human rights violations and GBV by the FDLR and the Lords’ Resistance Army, another rebel group from Rwanda, and but primarily sought to reassert state sovereignty over the Kivus. The gendered consequences of this have been detailed in the previous chapter, and also documented in Oxfam’s report, “Waking the Devil” which noted an increase in violence, and threat of violence, linked to the start of the operations (2009: 1-3).

With regards to assessing whether SSR has sought to change the gendered and hierarchical way of “doing security” institutionalised in the security sector, we argue that politics remains militarised, and gender issues continue to be seen as “soft issues,” often sidelined in favour of “hard” issues of reconstruction (Mazurana, 2005 in Shepherd, 2008: 8). Indeed, whereas the budget of the gender ministry stands at less than one percent of the national budget (UN, 2009c: 29), the defence budget stood at 2% of the Gross National Product in 2007 (SPIRI, 2009), not including donor aid. In general, SSR has arguably contributed to power politics, serving to uphold national or elite interests. For instance, where women’s groups have sought to contribute to SSR through civilian oversight, for instance making complaints about personnel abuses, there have been occasions where women have received intimidation or been assaulted (Amnesty, 2008). In sum, there remains a long way to go to ensure all have equal access to making decisions about security policy.

Ultimately then, SSR can be accused of being directly and indirectly facilitating GBV. In terms of being directly complicit, where SSR has not instituted gender equality nor sought accountability of the practices of the security sector, it has led to the continuation of practices and conditions for GBV. In indirectly contributing to GBV, this is because it has failed to deconstruct the gender roles institutionalised within the security institutions. SSR
can therefore be surmised to have failed to achieve a transformation of gender relations, but has institutionalised a condition of partial and gendered peace. Moreover, since GBV by armed forces is at a higher rate post the peace agreement, exceeding pre-war levels (Baaz and Stern, 2009: 502-503), this certainly this suggests that a “post war backlash” against women (2008: 5-6) has occurred.

5. Accounting for a gender unaware SSR

We have already surmised that SSR in the DRC has fallen short of achieving the level of transformation of gender relations envisaged in the second chapter. Our findings therefore echo other studies on SSR that have found that “the confidence which the objectives of the SSR agenda are proclaimed contrasts [...] with the rather limited nature of reform successes so far” (Chanaa, 2002: 8). Two questions therefore form the subject of this next chapter (i) why has the inclusion of a gender analysis been resisted in SSR in the DRC? and (ii) why has a reform not achieved the level of expected transformation of gender relation?

The first subsection will acknowledge that the operationalisation of SSR policies, not just those that are gender aware also the whole reform agenda, have been partly conditioned by the volatile post conflict political environment. The second subsection, however, will demonstrate that the failure to improve gender relations, first and foremost, resides with the employment of a state centric “frame” to peace building activities. This has conditioned what is seen to be possible and therefore, any peace building activity taken within this frame will never achieve the radical impact envisaged.

Volatile post conflict political environment

According to Melmont, the need for SSR has never been internalised by the Congolese government; on the contrary, it has been perceived as an “imported policy” (2008 in Hoebeke et al, 2008: 4). However considering that between 2003 and 2006 during the transitional phase domestic politics was dominated by competing claims for political legitimacy and externally by fraught relations with the DRC’s neighbours Uganda and Rwanda, it is not surprising that the strategic priorities of the government at the elite have focused on strengthening power bases and the coercive arm of the state, the military.
In this sense, when SSR complements these strategic priorities primarily during capacity building, these proposals have been accepted by the government. On the other hand, where SSR policies have been deemed intrusive to the DRC’s sovereignty, they have been angrily rejected (Davies, 2009: 28). Other policies including structural reforms and downsizing of the military have similarly been resisted, and the integration process following the 2002 peace agreement proceeded extremely slowly, as militia leaders sought to keep their best fighters from the integration process to retain leverage and bargaining power should another round of fighting break out. SSR has, therefore, only received any sense of local ownership in the DRC when it is seen to enhance or guarantee national security, undermining its longer term (and human security) objectives.

Although since the 2006 elections the political environment has become more stable since Kabila’s electoral win, the possibility for fresh political conflict remains on the horizon, seen in early 2010 when the Mai Mai threatened to “use guns to change things in Congo” and obtain their demanded four ministerial seats in Kabila’s government (Clottey, 2010). SSR has therefore only entrenched militarisation, seen when one considers that in the parallel process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, only 3 550 weapons had been handed from 12 000 new recruits to the FARDC by April 2009 (UN, 2009c: 9), and many arms caches remain under the control of former CNDP commanders integrated into the FARDC (UN, 2009d: 45).

A state centric approach to peace building

Turning to what we consider to be the primary reason for SSR’s shortcomings, we argue that it is the consequence of using a state centric frame in peace building. According to Autsesserre, “frames” shape our understanding of peace and violence, establishing priorities and placing conditions on possible actions. Although frames do not cause actions, Auteserre argues that they legitimise certain strategies and, therefore, studying the use of frame gives us some understanding of how some actions are seen as possible, whilst other practices are precluded or resisted (2009: 253). In the DRC, where there has been resistance to a gender analysis in SSR and any revision of the security framework, we argue that these features are constitutive elements of a state centric peace building frame. Arguably this frame has served to establish the conditions of possible actions, excluding gender from the construction of violence and preclude women’s participation in peace building activities. Where gender aware policies are taken within this framework, it is
therefore unsurprising that they do not achieve the level of transformation that is expected, since SSR has fallen short of achieving a feminist revision of security.

A state centric frame is not just evident at the national and international levels which will be discussed shortly, but also within the normative framework used to mainstream gender into peace building activities. In Shepherd's analysis of gender and security in the text of Security Council Resolution 1325, she argues that while feminist scholarship has sought to transgress the borders of the state, Security Council resolution 1325 instead reinforces them. Indeed, in positing the state as the sole form of legitimate authority at the national level (2008: 166-169), it stymies any attempt of thinking of security outside its current rigid boundaries (Shepherd, 2008: 7). When gender mainstreaming is taken within this framework, Shepherd contends, it may open up a debate about gender, but it is subsequently bracketed on how to deal with the issues raised (2008: 125).

At the national level, the existence of a state centric frame can be seen to have constrained government conceptualisations of peace and security, prioritising national security over individual or gendered revisions of security. Peace has been equated with the absence of armed conflict, demonstrative of Galtung's concept of narrow peace outlined in our theoretical framework. Here, the primary aim has been to retain power structures for the sake of short term 'peace.' Though a feminist revision of security would call on the need to critically challenge power relations and gender hierarchy, this has been steadily resisted since it would serve to disrupt the elite power base and sources of income (Davies, 2009: 18).

This idea of seeking to retain the status quo was articulated by the government when it said that “the demands of peace override the traditional needs of justice” (HRW, 2009: 123). Any reforms which may cause a conflict of interests have therefore been avoided, such as downsizing the army, vetting of soldiers and seeking accountability for war crimes. This is aptly illustrated by the government's continued working relationship with CNDP leader Bosco Ntanga, who is wanted on an ICC warrant for war crimes.

At the international level, Autesserre identifies two constitutive elements of what she refers to as a “post conflict peace building frame;” a macro policy approach to peace building and a Hobbesian approach to violence (2009: 263). We would argue that these elements are instead constitutive of a state centric peace building frame. Firstly, Autesserre identifies that international actors have acted almost exclusively at the national and regional levels,
focusing on macro issues and causes of violence, assuming a top down approach (2009: 266). However, feminists have shown that it is at these macro policy levels that women’s participation is most noticeably absent (Pankhurst, 2008: 16). For instance, while women’s groups have actively campaigned for peace at the local level, they were excluded from having access to the 2009 formal peace process, negotiations, delegations and draft text of the peace agreement in 2009 (Women's initiatives for gender justice, 2009). Where women's groups have failed to gain access to the initial decision making stages of SSR planning, a wider range of voices nor gender concerns and needs have not been included in the political agenda. The result has been that women’s security needs have been subordinated in favour of macro policy concerns.

Secondly, according to Autesserre, international actors have also conceptualised violence in Hobbesian terms, perceiving the DRC as a turbulent country where violence is natural even in peace time (2009: 263). Applying this insight to our findings, certain types of violence in the Congo in particular GBV and militarised rape in peace time, have been considered natural and an inevitable consequence of the barbaric nature of African warring (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 57- 59). Similar to the national level, conceptions of peace have tolerated certain forms of gender violence.

Failing a radical reconstitution of security thinking outside of a state- centric framework, it is unsurprising that gender policies taken within this framework have fallen short of feminist ambitions to transform gender relations. Rather gender is considered instrumentally, and only integrated when a related policy wing is seen to benefit in some way (Pankhurst, 2003: 16). Therefore, Clarke argues, gender mainstreaming falls far short of a feminist approach “that would consider deeper transformation of the gender relations that characterise security institutions [...] and address questions of hierarchy and masculinity” (2008: 58- 63). Arguably this has been illustrated throughout the wider project to mainstream gender in peace building activities, where efforts to implement 1325 have been largely stymied for the past decade. Indeed as Suozzi points out, only a faction of member states have developed national action plans to implement 1325 and there is a limited accountability for gender mainstreaming processes and a lack of funding on the ground to implement (Suozzi, 2010).
6. Conclusion

The underlying argument of this study has been that SSR has fallen short of achieving a radical transformation of gender relations. Instead of initiating a reconceptualisation of how to theorise and practice security, the, albeit limited, reform has built onto a security framework which entrenches a gender ideology that conditions recognition of GBV as a security threat, and responses to it. Ultimately, post conflict reconstruction and peace keeping activities, such as SSR, are driven by a state centric peace building frame which limits viewing security to a statist approach, despite sophisticated and long standing feminists arguments that these traditional approaches preclude women's experiences of violence as a security issue.

The first chapter outlined our theoretical framework and undertook a literature review, examining feminist critiques of (realist) state centric IR paradigms. Drawing upon critiques from Spike Peterson and Tickner of the gendered underpinnings of traditional theoretical constructs, we understood that gender issues have typically been relegated outside of the political realm, and indeed the proper realm of IR study (Tickner, 1992, 18-43; Spike Peterson, 1992). Moreover, where Realism accords the state the power to regulate gender differences and the decision as to what type of violence constitutes a security threat or what is natural (Steans, 2006: 38-39), GBV is often placed in the latter category. The human security paradigm was also briefly considered, and we noted criticisms including its inherent gender bias that potential to militarise areas of social life by broadening the security agenda (Sheehan, 2005: 556-561).

We then analysed how state centric theories lend themselves to militaristic cultures that institutionalise a specific gender ideology. Militarism we noted often exaggerates gender differences, where masculinity is equated with aggressiveness and femininity with dependency (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 499; Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002: 13). As feminists, in questioning these associations, we problematised their naturalness and effect on gender relations in war and peace time.

Turning to feminist analyses of war and peace, we acknowledged that women have been experience violence from the home to the battleground, noting Cockburn's assertion that these experiences are linked by gender along a “continuum of violence” (2001: 37). Due attention was also paid to the concept of a “post war backlash” against women, where violence against women can continue following the official declaration of peace, often at a
higher rate than before the war (2008-34).

Finally we considered the assertion that post war political contexts, if accompanied by a change in gender roles, can lead to a transformation of gender relations (Meintjies, Pillay and Turshen, 2001: 10). We considered this in relation to the peace building tool, SSR, and highlighted that its long term objectives complement feminist revisions of peace (see Enloe, 1987 in Kelly, 2001).

The second chapter served to demonstrate and support our claim that GBV was a security threat that must be included on the political agenda. We provided a detailed overview of women's experiences of GBV, especially sexual violence, at the hands of Congolese armed forces (HRW, 2009a; 2009b; 2002). Turning to the motivations of these acts of violence, we further pointed out that though the script of rape as a weapon of warfare held some merit in the DRC, other narratives including war booty and a crisis of masculinities were equally important to address in reconstruction (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2009: 514). Ultimately, GBV argues cannot be considered simplistic or an unavoidable aspect of warring, but is rooted in unequal gender relations of power, meaning a concerted effort to tackle GBV would have to address structural violence.

In the third chapter, we analysed SSR in the DRC to see whether it had served as an instrument to transform the militarised security framework and initiate policies that responded to differentiated gender concerns. Ultimately our concern was with whether it has transformed gender relations. Our findings suggested that though gender concerns has been increasingly integrated into SSR, a gender analysis has not been included and therefore, SSR has failed to question the gendered underpinnings of militaristic security policies that lend women vulnerable to GBV. Instead, SSR has played into existing gender norms and relationships of inequality through capacity building exercises. What impact SSR has had making the security sector more responsive to gender security has been limited at best, though the National Strategy against GBV is the most promising and coordinated effort to address GBV in SSR.

Finally we sought to account for our findings arguing that though the unstable political context has partly determined what can and cannot be done in SSR, it is the use of a state centric “frame” in peace building that proffers the best explanation for the failure to transform gender relations. In this frame, feminist revisions of security have not been included, but instead it organises and prioritises activities of SSR that resist the practice
of security outside a statist framework, and has stymied efforts to take tangible action against GBV. Ultimately, addressing women's experiences of GBV in post conflict reconstruction appear remain hostage to statist conceptions of security, despite a significant and sophisticated feminist literature which suggests an alternative.

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