

MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR  
SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
WORKING PAPERS



MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

WORKING PAPER No. 130

ANITA SCHROVEN

THE (RE-)  
CONCEPTUALISATION OF  
WOMEN IN GENDERED  
INTERNATIONAL  
INTERVENTIONS:  
EXAMPLES FROM  
POST-WAR  
SIERRA LEONE

Halle/Saale 2011  
ISSN 1615-4568

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, PO Box 110351,  
06017 Halle/Saale, Phone: +49 (0)345 2927-0, Fax: +49 (0)345 2927-402,  
<http://www.eth.mpg.de>, e-mail: [workingpaper@eth.mpg.de](mailto:workingpaper@eth.mpg.de)

# The (Re-) Conceptualisation of Women in Gendered International Interventions: examples from post-war Sierra Leone<sup>1</sup>

Anita Schroven<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

International agencies implement programmes to assist the so-called transition of countries from war to peace, applying international policies that aim at social changes. The focus of this paper lies on the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Programme (DDR) as the manifestation of this idea of transition in Sierra Leone. It investigates how global discourses of women and gender are translated into this programme and interact with local constructions of combatants, particularly female fighters, and the gendered conceptualisations of war and peace. As opposed to ‘international’ conceptualisations of women as inherently peaceful, evidence from Sierra Leone reveals that women acted in various ways that do not match the presumably separate spheres of women and men and those of war and peace. This raises questions about the effect of international campaigns to promote women’s participation in war-to-peace transitions as an instrument for peace-building.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fieldwork was financed by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (conducted in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women in 2004) and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology while the author was a PhD student of the Research Group “Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast” in Department I. I wish to thank Jacqueline Knörr, Nina Glick Schiller, Zerrin Özlem Biner for their thoughtful comments on previous drafts.

<sup>2</sup> Anita Schroven is currently a research fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld University, and associated with the Research Group “Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast” in Department I of the MPI for Social Anthropology, e-mail: anita.schroven@uni-bielefeld.de

## Introduction

“Women used to follow the men to the front line. But now, they don’t do nothing. They did not keep their strength, because they were not educated enough in the demobilisation. If they were educated in their rights, they would still continue to work hard for women’s empowerment. (...) Women changed during the war, but now they need encouragement.” (Binta Cissey, Kailahun Town, June 2004)<sup>3</sup>

Two years after the official end of the civil war in Sierra Leone, Binta Cissey, an elderly woman who had been part of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)-led local government of Kailahun during the war, proclaimed her dissatisfaction about women’s lack of empowerment that she had apparently anticipated for the post-war period. In 1989, the RUF entered Sierra Leone here, in the border region to Liberia and Guinea, and pressed towards the country’s interior. Some ten years later, it was here that the rebels maintained a stronghold even though the war had officially ended with the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord. The demobilisation programme conducted under the leadership of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone UNAMSIL, arrived in Kailahun in 2002 and completed its so-called reintegration case-loads throughout 2004.

It is in this timeframe that Binta Cissey experienced a lack of institutional support for women’s empowerment. She is a member of the Kailahun ruling house, the family of paramount chiefs of the district. This entitles her to a leading position in Sande, the women’s sodality into which all girls are supposed to be initiated during puberty. Sande, just like its male counterpart Poro, is a highly political association. Its members participate in local and national politics, and safeguard established power relations and values, particularly those in rural settings. These include negotiating relations between women and men, husbands and wives, as well as youths and elders (cf. Bledsoe 1980, 1984; Ferme 2001; Richards 1973).

This paper examines international post-war interventions and particularly the demobilisation programme<sup>4</sup> as an expression of a hegemonic discourse on women and war, in which two opposing discursive strands are relevant. On the one hand, an equal rights approach manifested in gender mainstreaming policies and instruments influences the policies and their implementation in international interventions. On the other hand, a construction of women as the generic victims of war and as essential community- and peace-builders is perpetuated. I argue that this complex discourse shapes programmes and practices on the national, regional, and local levels, pervading organisations and providing a basis for the conceptualisation of women and men, both throughout and after wars. It pre-supposes possible changes of gender-relations throughout the war and calls for women’s emancipation. At the same time, this discourse is treated as universally applicable in war-to-peace transitions. Here, its implementation will be analysed through the example of the Sierra Leonean DDR programme. The contradictions and challenges of the prominent gender discourses within the mentioned programmes in turn engage international and national institutions as well as the local NGO staff, along with the women and men who participated in the war and who communicated these discourses as well as their inherent values. Their ensuing incorporation into current life has again transformed supposedly universally-applicable policies. In this context, the DDR programme manifests the idea of a war-to-peace transition in the very persons of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Interviews and fieldwork were conducted in Sierra Leone (and Liberia) in 2004 and 2007. They were carried out in English and Krio and in the latter case translated into English by the author. All interviews have been anonymised.

<sup>4</sup> The term ‘demobilisation’ is used here to encompass all three stages of the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Programme.

combatants and can thus be used to investigate the effects of programmes and policies debated by the international community<sup>5</sup> and by the people who engage with these interventions.

In order to analyse the intended and unintended effects of international post-conflict discourses and practices, a short history of the efforts to include women and gender into post-conflict programmes will be highlighted. This will be followed by a full exploration of Sierra Leone's DDR programme and its engagement with gender in general and women in particular.

The programme's main aim is to assist combatants in the transition from war to civilian life. At the same time, it is intended to affect changes regarding the respect of human and civil rights as well as civic duties. After their disarmament and rights education, the ex-combatants usually participate in vocational training, accompanied by so-called psycho-social assistance. The DDR programme has targeted tens of thousands of ex-combatants shortly after the cessation of fighting and has proposed to lay the foundations of the country's transition to peace through disarmament by providing alternative income and life perspectives to troops who were otherwise presumed to become idle and a threat to sustainable peace (Krause and Jütersonke 2007: 8; cf. Berdal 1996).

Because demobilisation has become a central part of the war-to-peace transition programmes both in the context of peace missions' overall budget and evaluation, its applicability as a standardised instrument will be critiqued by investigating women's diverse experiences with the programme and with life throughout and after the Sierra Leonean civil war.

### **Policy Discourses: gender and the war-to-peace transition**

As Enloe (2005) and other authors have argued, a post-war period presents challenges in people's lives just as war does (cf. Moran 2006; Scheper-Hughes et al. 2002; Shaw 2006; Utas 2003). Living through such a 'transition', as the international vocabulary currently terms this period (cf. Abraham 1997; Knight and Özerdem 2004; Shaw 2004), seemingly calls into question assumptions of everyday life. In this context, 'transition' encompasses dealing with the past, coping with the problems of everyday life in the present, as well as facing an unknown and insecure future regarding all aspects of individual and societal life. Thus, it is both a period of perpetuation and one of change that has yet to be defined. The term 'transition' does not define this amorphous period in any way, as the processes of change and their potential aims remain unclear. However, this period has been identified by the international community as a 'window of opportunity' for change (cf. Schroeder 2004; Smet 2009; Tschirgi 2003). This notion defines an imprecise phase of the post-war period – somewhere between the end of the fighting and the beginning of peace and stability – in which decisions can be made and values and norms may be institutionalised by law or in the state administration and are thought to positively affect the reconstruction of society and its further development. The international discourse holds that war "tore apart the very fabric of society" (cf. Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004: Vol.2, Chap.2, Cl.21; Wood 2008) in various ways so that a society is then believed to need reconstruction. For example, young male fighters in the regional wars of West Africa are sometimes referred to as 'loose molecules' whose non-attachment to a larger, stabilising social entity such as conventional understandings of family or rural

---

<sup>5</sup> By 'international community', I refer to an often-used term that is not a community in a classic sociological sense but can be seen as a tight, interdependent network or nexus (cf. Hurwitz and Peake 2004; Plazek 2006; Schneider and Wiesehomeier 2008) of international governance and finance institutions, humanitarian and development agencies, and their policy advisers, located in think tanks, lobbying organisations, or the media. In a more critical tone, the same complex is sometimes referred to as the "development industry" (de Waal 1997).

community could consequently threaten a country's transition to peace (cf. Richards et al. 2003; Utas 2005a). This prominent notion of reconstruction retrospectively attaches to the war a connotation of being exceptional, after which the 'normal' should reign again. When talking about reconstruction, the emphasis appears to be on a return to the non-warlike life, and the basis for this is often sought in memories of pre-war society (cf. Moser 2001; Sideris 2001).

However, a significant segment of the international community wishes to avoid such a return and instead implant different values such as equal rights and opportunities for women. A mere return would consequently be interpreted as a backlash in the context of post-war transition. For example, Bouta et al. explicitly formulate such a perspective for the World Bank's approach to women after war<sup>6</sup>:

“At the minimum, the Bank could support women and men to sustain the roles, positions, skills, and opportunities gained during conflict in the post-conflict phase (...). For gender-related interventions in conflict-affected countries *timing* is crucial. (...) the transition phase from war to peace offers the best moment to sustain gender role changes and to lay the basis for future gender relations. It is here, when women and men have not yet returned to stability, that gender relations are still in the process of being redefined.” (Bouta et al. 2005: 142, emphasis in original)

The authors, just as Binta Cisse's remark that opened the paper, presuppose that changes of gender relations take place throughout wars and should be sustained and/or encouraged during the crucial period of war-to-peace transition, while the 'window of opportunity' is still open. They call for active engagement with a 're-definition' of gender relations through international interventions.

This specific topic is part of a larger discourse on peacekeeping missions. Since the 1990s, multi-dimensional peace missions or so-called 'third-generation peacekeeping' do not merely allow for, but explicitly demand a wide range of political, economic, social, and even 'cultural' issues to be addressed by a UN (or hybrid)<sup>7</sup> post-war mission (Olsson 1999; Slim 1996; UNTAG 2001). This change in approach corresponds to the hoped for integration of emergency aid in longer-term development processes (Betta 2004; Neubert 2004). In this context, 'social engineering', as it has been termed by some practitioners in Sierra Leone and beyond, acknowledges the demand for change in the contemporary policy discourses of war-to-peace transition. The term reflects the institutional focus that dominates the implementation of socio-political targets.<sup>8</sup>

The UN as a key agent in post-war and development work has been addressing women's empowerment and changes of gender relations in many different contexts. Conventions such as CEDAW, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* adopted in 1981 were early attempts to promote women's rights. More recently, gender mainstreaming has become prominent in the programmes of the UN family and its partner organisations. Most often, the following definition is used:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and

<sup>6</sup> For a general critique of the World Bank's gender approach, see Griffin (2007).

<sup>7</sup> Hybrid missions are UN-led or sanctioned peace missions in cooperation with (sub-) regional organisations such as the African Union or the Economic Community of West African States.

<sup>8</sup> Personal communication with staff of different UN organisations, Freetown in February and March 2007; see also Krause and Jütersonke (2007: 11) for the broader employment of the term 'social engineering'.

experiences an integral dimension of (...) policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” (ECOSOC 1997: 28)

This reference for gender mainstreaming within the UN has been widely cited in many policy briefs, handbooks, and programmatic publications, as well as by cooperation or implementation partners of the UN.<sup>9</sup> Formally subscribing to this cause, which (sub-) contracting agencies are obliged to, is not an isolated effort to move forward the actual consideration and implementation of gender mainstreaming in the field of war-to-peace transition. More explicit steps have been taken with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2000, which, according to one commentary,

“marks the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women, recognized the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security.” (PeaceWomen Project 2010)

Eight years later, the significance of addressing women and war conjointly has been further amplified by the Security Council Resolution 1820 on sexual violence in conflict, which some commentators have proclaimed a “historic act”, as it explicitly includes systematic war-time rape into the list of atrocities constituting war crimes punishable by the International Criminal Court. While the reception and impact of Resolution 1325 is regarded as weak by some analysts, expectations with regard to Resolution 1820 are higher due to its more explicit wording of political action needed (Lawson 2009; Steinberg 2008).

Juxtaposing these two resolutions, however, provides insight into a powerful strand of the international discourse on women and war. While Resolution 1325 highlights equal rights and the roles of women in peace and conflict, Resolution 1820 conceptualises women as the primary victims of war and stresses the destructive effects of violence against women on the welfare of the wider community. Both texts argue that women’s rights are central to the peaceful evolution of any society.

Both resolutions also reveal how essentialised images of women are in the context of the international war and peace discourse. They are construed as peaceful and long-term guarantors of peace (cf. United Nations Security Council 2000), and their “inner strength, their stoic struggle to keep their families going, their natural identification with peace” are stressed (Afshar and Eade 2004: x). Following this line of argument, women’s absence in peace talks would compromise the sustainability of any peace while their inclusion would make it more durable. In such an argument, women categorically become ‘peace-building instruments’ themselves and, I argue, cannot be seen as equal parties in societies with conflict, war, and peace.

Thus, beneath the surface of ‘politically correct’ resolutions and publications, substantial parts of the international community’s policy discourse are characterised by an essential dichotomy based on the association of women with peace, healing, and their respective family or community. As a consequence, war and violence are still associated with male characteristics.

---

<sup>9</sup> On interdependencies and financial cycles within UN and partner agencies, see Schroven (2006: 62–63); Krause and Jütersonke (2007: 8).

The two resolutions also contain a conceptual challenge. While on the one hand, the jargon of gender mainstreaming is applied when relating to contexts of armed conflict, on the other hand, specifically women's empowerment is called for in the same breath. Both perspectives are intertwined in their political origins, namely in Western societies' struggle with women's claims for equal rights and opportunities (Daly 2005: 434; Verloo 2001: 4). Therefore, they cannot represent 'naturally' and 'universally' applicable concepts. The two approaches partially contradict each other on their conceptual level. While gender mainstreaming aims at equality and equity, the promotion of women aims at their particular advancement. What unifies both perspectives is their dichotomised and basic perspective of gender, reducing it to the differences between women and men whose fundamental conceptualisations are based on Western ideas.

How these problematic constructs are taking shape will now be explored vis-à-vis the case of the transition from war to peace in Sierra Leone. The focus will be on women's integration both in policy-making and within institutions. This necessitates a better understanding of the war in order to better grasp women's very different experiences during the war and challenges faced afterwards.

### **From Policy to Implementation: (post-war) conceptions of women in Sierra Leone**

Women participated in Sierra Leone's civil war in various ways. They were porters, cooks, nurses, and general service providers in military camps.<sup>10</sup> They were labelled 'camp followers', a notion that conveys the idea of separation from the front line and of non-involvement in the actual fighting, thereby linking women's activities during the war to established gender relations during times of peace (Enloe 2000: 34–36). Following the language of the Security Council Resolution 1820, women's embodiment of their respective family and larger community in the literal sense of the word (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001) obtains a special meaning considering (war-time) rape, forced pregnancies, or abortions with which the honour of the family can intentionally be disgraced as well as the continuity of the community endangered. Such collective images of women as victims lead Lorentzen and Turpin (1998: 15) to claim that "war magnifies already existing gender inequalities and women's subordination", which are embedded in society and pronounced during war time. This perspective highlights the interdependencies of people's lives in war and peace, leaving room for particular Western (feminist) perspectives that identify women as subordinated.

However, the 'camp follower' image does not adequately reflect the realities of women's lives in times of war, even less so in a decade-long civil war like the one in Sierra Leone, where clear front lines did not exist and it was often difficult to distinguish between civilians, soldiers, and other combatants.<sup>11</sup> In Sierra Leone, many reports exist on boys, girls, and young women<sup>12</sup> receiving military training together, with women having access to weapons and fighting alongside their male comrades, killing enemies, pillaging villages, and torturing people to death (Richards 2002: 262; Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004: Vol.3B, Chap.3, Cl.393). While such activities seem untypical for women to perform in Sierra Leonean societies, their surprising effect made these acts

---

<sup>10</sup> For detailed statistics on women's and girls' tasks reported from the Sierra Leone war see Mazurana and Carlson (2004: 12) and McKay and Mazurana (2004).

<sup>11</sup> The concept of a "sobel" as a "soldier by day and rebel by night" has been introduced by Richards (1996: 7).

<sup>12</sup> In this text I do not explicitly differentiate between 'girls' and 'women' as the standard age-line of 18 years does not convey the realities lived by 'teenage girls' or 'young women' in Sierra Leone and neighbouring countries where childhood and adulthood are not differentiated on purely chronological grounds, cf. Nathaniel King (in preparation)..

appear even more horrendous and gave some women fighters a particularly cruel reputation. Other effects linked to gendered stereotypes were also employed during the war. For example, women were preferred for trading across enemy lines, trafficking weapons and ammunition. They were deployed as sex-workers for espionage, in the hope that as women they would be regarded as civilians (Mazurana and Carlson 2004: 16; Schroven 2006: 51–52). Ferme and Hoffman (2004: 87) hint that, in the course of the war, such deployment strategies gave occasion to many rumours about women's particular powers and capabilities.

Coulter (2008) argues that in rural Sierra Leonean societies many constraints are exerted on women to keep the potentially dangerous powers they incorporate under control and sodalities like Poro and Sande play vital roles in safeguarding what is often conceptualised as separated and complementary lives of women and men in rural Sierra Leone (cf. Ferme 2001; Leach 1994). They are perpetuated by such strong institutions, which link a variety of values, norms, and religious beliefs.

The said potentialities, Coulter (2008: 65) argues, were unleashed during the war when women were participating in violence and atrocities. Following this argument, the war actually allowed women to act on their inherent potential that is otherwise also part of social practices in peace-time. Thus, the ostensible transgressions of gendered behaviour are understood differently in local understanding than in the predominantly Western discourse. Just as women are endowed with dangerous potentials in Sierra Leone (cf. Ferme and Hoffman 2004; Ferme 2001), men in Liberia can discard the habitual male clothing and behaviour and thereby claim female powers and particular protection in combat (cf. Moran 1995, 2000, 2006). Therefore, the atrocities committed by women that supposedly upset clear-cut gender constructs can indeed correspond with the local conceptions of (gendered) violence.

Nevertheless, the 're-containment' of these female powers appears to be vital to people after the war. This demand is sometimes also framed in international discourses, leading to contradictory or even opposing reactions, as expressed by Abu Sumah, a young ex-combatant and NGO staff member in Kono:

“Even though there were breakdowns of norms, values, and traditions during the war, now that the war is over, I think that we should go back, we should maintain our culture, our female initiation. (...) We should not forget about it. (...) People still want to live like this.”

Comments such as this reveal that when NGOs translate international models such as women's empowerment into local contexts, they are not unanimously welcomed. Here, the period of the war is portrayed as an exceptional time that enabled the breaking down of norms. Yet after the war, a return to established norms and order is demanded by means of traditional (rural) institutions such as the initiation into the Sande society. Local culture is put forth as an argument against the changes proposed by global agents, potentially in full knowledge that it has an important place in international rights discourse. While the competition among different rights is much debated with regard to the international recognition of the universality of human rights, the contradictions resulting from a combination of various policies in the post-war transition process also pose challenges to the different people involved in such programmes (cf. Abdela 2000; Krause and Jütersonke 2005, 2007). The significance attributed to (local) culture can thus impede the implementation of some international policies.



As Das (2008: 290) points out, transgressions of expected gendered behaviour in conflict have an increasing effect on the perception of the act itself and are therefore employed strategically both by conflict parties and by analysts. Coulter (2008: 64) phrases such stylised representations as sexualised “othering” and points out that it is widely practiced on African women. Along the same lines, I argue that describing women as powerful actors in wars such as in Sierra Leone, imbued with power against a background of violence and suffering, contributes to the further polarisation of the construction of women as either victims or perpetrators (comp. Schroven 2006: 120; Shaw 2002: 19).

In spite of women’s diverse (voluntary or forced) participation in war, profound changes in gender relations within the participating institutions did not occur. Very few women were able to ascend to higher ranks in the military or political groups despite providing essential services to keep institutions, factions, and camps running. Many women were systematically raped or forced into strategic relationships with higher-ranking officers for protection from violent comrades and for the provision of loot, ensuring their or their dependents’ survival. These positions and tasks were not exclusive. Many women negotiated them throughout the war and can thus be simultaneously identified as combatant, camp follower, sex slave, or wife (cf. Coulter 2008; Utas 2005b).

The relationships between these women and their male “partners” are often referred to as “bush marriages” in the Sierra Leonean public, using the negative associations that the term “bush” holds and ascribing, from an urban perspective, notions of inferiority and backwardness (Coulter 2008: 56). At the same time, the term refers to local beliefs about (spiritual) dangers that may lurk in the wilderness outside the village (cf. Ferme 2001; Thayer 1983). “Bush” thus reflects the inferiority or even illegitimacy of such relationships and that of the children born out of them, associating these women and children collectively with “the rebels” even to this day (Richards et al. 2003: 14 ff.). Coulter argues that even if the fact that women were forced into a life with the rebels was acknowledged, the “wild and non-human” associations of the bush would seem to have been transferred onto the women and rendered them difficult to be accepted into rural communities after the war (Coulter 2005: 12; cf. Hoffman 2003: 301).

The term ‘bush wife’ found its way into local NGO programmes as well and subsumes women who had been abducted, raped, and forced to cooperate with a fighting faction. This construction is interdependent with another one, namely the existence of female combatants being negated, while women’s participation in actual fighting is acknowledged by male ex-combatants. Foday Kalon, a local NGO staff member and ex-combatant, explains as follows:

“Women were fighting in the war, they were a big group. But we cannot call them combatants, fighters, it is culturally not accepted, even if people know they fought. So people say that they were abducted, some of them were drugged, so women did not participate out of free will.”

The perspective of women as victims of the war can be seen as a synthesis of two processes of categorisation of women in war. It speaks to a broader Sierra Leonean notion of women as ‘bush wives’ just as it speaks to the images of women in the globalised discourse of gender relations throughout war, categorising women as ‘camp followers’. These two differently motivated, yet in their effects interrelated conceptions of women as victims eased the assumed translation of international models and policies into localised UN- or NGO-programmes in Sierra Leone.

The facilitation of such reproductions is not only the result of easily translatable concepts like the victimisation of women but happens on a policy level as well. War-to-peace transition programmes have been portrayed as being universally applicable in the working dynamics of the post-war industry. Those staff members who design and implement programmes such as DDR quickly move from one peace mission to the next without necessarily having experience with or even much knowledge of the respective countries and their societies and languages. Another important variable for the post-conflict setting is the respective war history. Even though the wars in West African countries were interrelated, they had very different dynamics (cf. Arnaut and Højbjerg 2008; Ero 2002; Hoffman 2004; Richards and Vlassenroot 2002).

This lack of preparation is often caused by the appointments of most of the senior staff of a UN mission being diplomatically motivated rather than based on specific qualifications. Mid-level and junior staff often move to newly available positions and pursue their professional careers in order to move up in the organisational hierarchies rather than pursue their regional expertise (Abdela 2000: 94). During my fieldwork in 2004 and later, I traced the various missions and countries people were moving through and could follow individuals and groups who moved from Mozambique or Kosovo via East Timor to Sierra Leone and Liberia, and further on to Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, or Haiti and, more recently, to Southern Sudan. Moving from one mission to the next, people absorb not only the working structures of the UN and the related NGO system, they also incorporate conflict transformation strategies that result in a homogenising routine. The ensuing experiences are then translated into evaluation reports or 'best practice' documents that serve as the basis for further programme and policy development. Thus, earlier post-conflict scenarios become "blueprints" for new interventions (Krause and Jütersonke 2007: 8).

In this highly mobile working environment, the expectations of the staff are high for them to implement gender mainstreaming according to the directives, namely in "any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels" (ECOSOC 1997: 28). Most of the staff, however, has little or no professional background in this respect. Due to high turnover rates within each institution and the geographical mobility of their staffs, the development of a localised organisational memory is obstructed. As a consequence, even with timely gender training, the interest in the topic and information about it is not sustainable (Puechguirbal 2003: 123). Additionally, the turnover of personnel minimises the chance to engage with local conditions, specifically the circumstances of each given conflict and the relevance of gendered relations during and after the respective war. The "evaluation and checklist culture" that has developed to capture the otherwise elusive measurement of a mission's success (Krause and Jütersonke 2005: 448) further hinders a more intricate connection with these matters.

In discussions on the lack of engagement with gender mainstreaming policies, some members of the UN missions or staff participating in the DDR activities in Sierra Leone (and Liberia) defended the absence of gender components: the mission had not been deployed "to get involved" in the cultural or social lives of the people; it had neither the mandate nor the competence to do so (Schroven 2006: 76–77, 83). These attitudes contradict the system of third-generation peacekeeping operations that are supposed "to get involved" in social and cultural issues of the respective country the mission is sent to. At the same time, the comments highlight how elusive the mandates and goals of peace missions can be for those involved in their implementation (cf. Hazen 2007).

As a consequence of the institutional set-up of peace missions, the implementation of policies and programmes such as the DDR becomes mobile not only through its sites but is indeed carried along by respective staff on their professional journeys from one peace mission to the next.

### **Demobilisation: women's diverse engagements with the implementation of policies**

The problematic perspectives on women in war and particularly the Sierra Leonean civil war have been pointed out on a policy level and on an anthropological level. In the following section, I will explore the effects of the ambivalent conceptualisations of women in war on the women addressed by the post-war projects implemented by (international) NGOs. The latter were characterised by a highly gendered perception of combatants, leading to the exclusion of many women from participation in the DDR programmes. Concurrently, the same gendered images classified women as victims and placed them in post-war programmes for rape-survivors and 'bush wives'.

The Lomé peace agreement of 1999 stipulates various peacekeeping and -building activities for the post-war period that conform to the international community's "menu of policy options" (Krause and Jütersonke 2007: 11). Amongst them is an international peacekeeping mission intended to provide initial security and to bring about the disarmament and demobilisation of all combatants in order to assist them in their transition to civilian life. Demobilisation's basic idea is to jointly disarm and demobilise troops, and then let all participants travel to their respective communities of choice. There, they should receive psycho-social assistance and an apprenticeship of six to nine months that provides them with a regular income. As a result, the former combatants are expected to re-integrate into civilian life more easily.

One of the major challenges the programme faced in Sierra Leone was to identify the combatants who would later be eligible for financial benefits. After a civil war with mostly irregular troops, abductions, forced recruitment, and thousands of child soldiers this was not an easy task. Furthermore, instead of the 45,000 combatants envisioned, the DDR programme faced more than 100,000 participants in the end (UNDDR Sierra Leone 2009), over-stretching the proposed budget and resulting in the shortening of many "soft" aspects of the demobilisation and reintegration parts of the programme such as psycho-social assistance or civil rights training (Ismail 2008: 36). The process of determining who was eligible to participate in the DDR programmes was led by the troop commanders and by UN military observers with the criterion for selection being the possession of a gun. These measures were expected to assure a gender-neutral selection process. Yet, they overlooked the fact that women, who indeed carried and used weapons, often did not have exclusive control over them or that, in many cases, the weapons had been taken away from them after the effective end of fighting. This resulted in many women being unable to hand over a gun at the disarmament site. The other decisive factor that made women opt out of participation in official disarmament was its design as a public process in which women associated with troops, mostly so-called rebels, would have to openly identify themselves as combatants. For many women this was a great deterrent as the political climate had, since the end of the war, turned against the RUF. Therefore, a public self-declaration as bush-wife – and inadvertently 'rebel-wives' would have endangered these women even more (cf. Coulter 2008; Schroven 2006).

The consequences of 'gender neutrality' could be felt at other stages of the DDR as well. The information campaign before the actual start of the programme addressed commanders and troops, which led to the exclusion of women because they were perceived of as 'camp followers' or 'bush

wives' only, not as combatants. Disarmament was a public process with the combatants openly revealing themselves as such. For women, however, disclosing themselves as fighters was more problematic, as they feared prejudice and revenge. Also, many commanders or 'captor-husbands' took the weapons away from women as they did not regard them as part of their troops. The demobilisation camps were badly equipped with respect to women's specific health and security requirements and regarding the needs of their accompanying small children.<sup>13</sup>

In the reintegration programmes that followed disarmament and demobilisation, the respective participants were publicly identified as ex-combatants by the hosting community. This was a problematic situation as women and their children were often ostracised due to their alleged association with the RUF, the faction that had started and in the end lost the war. They were thus declared 'bush wives' and 'rebel children'. The charge generally made against them was that instead of trying to quietly blend in, they were claiming the benefits of the DDR programme as a reward for their participation in the war. These reproaches were less severe to male ex-combatants as their participation in fighting was considered more acceptable in Sierra Leone.

Thus, while 'gender neutrality' was demanded rhetorically, gender as a category implying specific theoretical and political connotations was neither implemented on a programmatic level nor realised as such by the personnel designing or conducting the projects. In the respective documents and during my discussions on women and demobilisation with various staff members, the 'gender neutrality' of the programme was the only reference to the topic and assumed to be a satisfying answer to the UN's demand for gender mainstreaming. This perspective practically disabled further debates on the topic. In their conceptualisation of Sierra Leonean combatants, the staff continued to imply the universal idea of adult, formally recruited soldiers within a clear military hierarchy. The multiple and overlapping tasks that women had during the war did not fit into this clear-cut picture. With these practices, women were inadvertently transposed into beneficiary-categories of 'camp follower' or 'bush wife', catered for by other actors of the post-war industry.

As a result of the wide-spread violence against women, the public image of so-called 'bush wives' had already been shaped during the war (cf. Human Rights Watch 2003; Physicians for Human Rights 2002). Humanitarian organisations responded to this public image by proposing programmes on "sexual and gender-based violence" (SGBV). Social and medical counselling as well as income-generating activities were offered within this framework. These programmes enabled a wide variety of women to benefit from the post-war industry, as long as they were prepared to identify themselves as rape-survivors or, implicitly, as 'bush wives'. In some cases, this decision saved them from turning to other options, as Aisha Turay, a young woman, explained on behalf of her group of women friends:

"We need this project and the income, even if it isn't much. Otherwise we have to be friends with those sugar daddies again. They provide for us, but that means they buy us. And we don't want to do that. But the other option is prostitution; that is even worse."

For the participants, the project design's focus on victims had certain consequences. Fatu Kumba, a local NGO worker, explained her and her colleagues' approach to the participants:

---

<sup>13</sup> For related accounts see also de Watteville (2003), Schroeder (2004), and UNIFEM (2003).

“Most times we pity them (...) they are not responsible (...) they were victims of the circumstances that led to the war. So we say, they are as if they are children that belong to this country, children who have problems.”

The conflation of women and children to ‘womenandchildren’ has been frequent in the post-war context (Afshar and Eade 2004: xi), underlining the particular vulnerability of women and calling for their special protection. Yet this also implies a deliberate limitation of the war-time experiences the women were able to address in such programmes. Fatmata Kamara, a former RUF fighter and now self-declared ‘bush wife’ and participant in such a project, describes the dilemma occurring in counselling sessions:

“They talk to me like a kid at home, like one of their children. But they don’t remember my own children, that I was a wife. (...) They do not talk to me about the war and what happened to me there, what I did there.”

Both the DDR and SGBV programmes implicitly polarised the experiences women had during the war in that they reproduced and worked with stereotyped gender images, differentiating between (male) ex-combatants, on the one hand, and the female victims of atrocities (particularly rape), on the other. In order to benefit from the funds available in post-war Sierra Leone, women had to find ways to negotiate the intertwining and overlapping tasks they had had during the war. Some preferred to opt out and tried to find their own ways of integrating into civilian life. Yet others chose to participate in programmes targeting ‘bush wives’ and associating themselves more with the public image of women as war victims. The active steps these women took reveal their determination in the face of haunting war experiences and limited choices. Some, like Aisha Turay and Fatmata Kamara, opt for the engagement with NGO-projects rather than a return to the rural lives they had previously lived (Schroven 2006: 108; cf. Long 2001).

Such manoeuvring between choices by women in the eastern part of the country has been reflected at another level among the women of the capital-based elite. Some of them engage with the international intervention’s idea of a ‘window of opportunity’ for women’s empowerment. These NGOs and their subsequent political campaigns are funded or prompted by international actors. A well-known example is “The 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone” that was launched with the help of the British Council in 2000 and has since achieved high visibility in the country’s politics by training women candidates and the female electorate (National Democratic Institute 2007a, 2007b). The “50/50 Group” employs, in its own words, women’s international rights to political participation and intends to use the assumed post-war window of opportunity to the fullest.<sup>14</sup>

Kariatu Konomanyi, an elderly peasant woman from the diamond-mining area of Kono, made a reference to “50/50” as a short-hand to various information campaigns for women’s participation in politics during the preparations for the 2004 municipal elections. Kariatu Konomanyi told me:

“Now, after the war, women have the right to do anything (...), we heard this in the talks on 50/50. We women were punished in the war, men were then strong. But now, women are getting stronger. (...) I like that. We women should be proud of what we do, what we achieve. Then we will be strong, we will be happy.”

---

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication with Victoria Robots (Cooperazione Internazionale, Italian NGO) in Koidu, 2004 and Abator Thomas (co-founder of “The 50/50 Group”) in Freetown, 2004 and 2007.

She obviously appreciates the call for women's (political) empowerment. Asking women to be proud of their life achievements, as the "50/50 Group" does, and demand public recognition is contrary to prominent values in rural Sierra Leone, where ordinary women are expected to be ready to be subservient in many areas of life, particularly in public.

Kariatu's comment also reveals the communication between very different groups of Sierra Leonean women: one, capital-based and highly educated women who are part of the country's political elite, and the other, rural-based women with a very different everyday life. Kariatu's wording projects the elite women as leaders of the female cause, whom rural women could or should follow. The juxtaposition of these very different groups of women, who are presumably implicated in the same cause, is happening upon a historic background of urban-rural political, economic, and ethnic divisions that privileged and continues to privilege ethnic Krio, educated, and economically well-off women manifold over their rural counterparts (cf. Knörr 2000). Whether the implied female solidarity across entrenched socio-economic lines shall be possible remains to be seen. However, these considerations highlight how diverse women's lives are in Sierra Leone and how different factors contribute to these variations.

## **Conclusions**

Binta Cisse's comment about the lack of institutional support for women's empowerment that opened this paper appears more complex after the above considerations. The international discourse on changing gender relations through war has been appropriated by local actors like Cisse, who is a leading member of the local secret society that usually guards gendered (and political) spheres of life in rural Sierra Leone. Other actors like the elite women of "The 50/50 Group" pursue related demands, albeit in a very different context, possibly with different political motivations. These actors share the vocabulary of the international debate on women's empowerment through war experience. Their demands show that if international policies and instruments of 'social engineering' are met by powerful local and national interests and find resonance in already existing social practices, their appropriation and manifestation in the public discourse are likely. In such cases, there may be opportunities to affect post-war changes on certain levels of society – particularly legal and institutional ones – and thus employ the idea of a 'window of opportunity'.

However, the analysis of interviews and secondary material raises considerable doubt on whether, in actual fact, gender relations can be altered by wars as such or by international interventions in the aftermath of wars. As I have discussed above, gender relations are far more intertwined with other aspects of social practices than can be foreseen in analysis or 'social engineering'. They show more relevance at times of war than has often been acknowledged. Therefore, the (gendered) construction of people as either victims or perpetrators of war is too polarising a view and does not match the diverse experience of women (and men) living through the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia. As Ferme puts it:

“[t]he fact that women have been the main victims and among the leaders in the wars in this region – both historically and in the present – underscores the extent to which social practices both reproduce and transgress (...) cultural ideas.” (Ferme 2001: 62)

The reproductive capacity of these social practices is remarkable. While it may stabilise people's lives through times of peril it sometimes appears to inhibit change, as interviews and different documentations reveal for rural Sierra Leone (cf. Richards et al 2003; Richards, Bah and Vincent 2004). Linked to considerations of social practices' reproductive capacities is the question of change. Richards (2006: 196) points out that it is difficult to discern whether local or global aspects are prominent in causing change. Often it is indeed impossible to establish clear factors and decide whether they originate from shifts in local conditions or from international discourses and practices.

Women's contemporary experience with international interventions reveals that presumptions of gendered norms and behaviour remain dominant in the implementation of so-called gender-mainstreamed post-war interventions. Contradictions at the level of relevant policies may have impeded potential changes in the implementation of programmes such as the DDR. They perpetuate the stereotyping of women's activities and experiences during the war in terms of their victimhood. This does not match the political aim of promoting women in post-conflict settings beyond their supposed capacities for peace-building and stabilising families and communities.

Criticism of this field of policy and implementation has arisen in many different domains: the mere reference to 'gender' on the policy and institutional level would not suffice to ensure women's equal access to potential benefits (de Watteville 2003; Schroeder 2004). What has (cynically) been termed the "add-women-and-stir approach" (Whanton 2005: 4), would "do little more than reaffirm a 'hegemonic core to which the margins are added without any significant destabilisation of that core'" (Vincent 2003: 10). Beyond the question of women's rights, such critiques speak to the fact that war and peace are indeed not discrete social spheres but share history, people, social practices – and gender relations. Social practices are highly fluid and thus blur the borders of the often separately conceptualised realms of war and peace, women and men.

To conclude, on a policy level, the promotion of women in peace processes is undoubtedly necessary considering equal rights considerations, but not necessarily with regard to global calculations on how to make peace more sustainable. Women's participation in instigating and counteracting armed conflict needs to be better understood, just as the specific conflict dynamics themselves. In many cases, this will reveal that dichotomising gender constructs does not match social practices in peace or in war. Only then can ambitious policies, such as gender mainstreaming in post-war interventions, incorporate the realities of different women and men, in different conflict settings. Otherwise, the essentialised woman as war victim and peace-maker continues to be on the policy agenda.

## Bibliography

Abdela, L. 2000. Kosovo – Missed Opportunities, Lessons for the Future. Unpublished paper, cited with permission of the author.

Abraham, A. 1997. War and Transition to Peace: a study of state conspiracy in perpetuating armed conflict. *Africa Development* 22(3–4): 101–116.

Afshar, H. and D. Eade (eds.). 2004. *Development, Women and War – Feminist Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxfam GB.

Arnaut, K., C. Højbjerg and T. Raeymaekers (eds.). 2008. *Gouverner entre guerre et paix*. Politique Africaine 111. Paris: Karthala.

Basch, L., N. Glick Schiller and C. Szanton Blanc. 1994. *Nations Unbound*. London: Routledge.

Berdal, M. 1996. *Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars*. Adelphi Paper 303. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Betta, A. 2004. *Le Rôle de la Coopération au Développement de l' Union Européenne dans la Consolidation de la Paix des Régions Post-Conflictuelles en Afrique: Une Étude Comparative du Rwanda et du Libéria*. ULPA – University of Leipzig Papers on Africa. Politics and Economics. Leipzig: University of Leipzig.

Bledsoe, C.H. 1980. Stratification and Sande Politics. *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* 1: 143–149.

Bledsoe, C. 1984. The Political Use of Sande Ideology and Symbolism. *American Ethnologist* 11(3): 455–467.

Bouta, T., G. Frerks and I. Bannon. 2005. *Gender, Conflict, and Development*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Coulter, C. 2005. The Post War Moment: female fighters in Sierra Leone. *Forced Migration Studies Programme Working Paper Series No. 22*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Coulter, C. 2008. Female Fighters in the Sierra Leone War: challenging the assumptions? *Feminist Review* 88: 54–73.

Daly, M. 2005. Gender Mainstreaming in Theory and Practice. *Social Politics* 12(3): 433–450.

Das, V. 2008. Violence, Gender, and Subjectivity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37: 283–299.

de Waal, A. 1997. *Famine Crimes: politics and the disaster relief industry in Africa*. African Issues. Oxford: James Currey.

de Watteville, N. 2003. *Demobilization and Reintegration Programs: addressing gender issues*. Washington: The World Bank.

ECOSOC. 1997. Agreed Conclusions. Geneva: United Nations Economic and Social Council. Available online at: [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/main.htm#1](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/main.htm#1) [accessed 02.03.2010]

Enloe, C. 2000. The Laundress, the Soldier, and the State. In: C. Enloe. *Maneuvers: the international politics of militarizing women's lives*. London: University of California Press, pp. 35–48.



- Enloe, C. 2005. What if Patriarchy Is 'the Big Picture'? An Afterword. In: D. Mazurana, A. Raven-Roberts and J. Parpart (eds.). *Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 280–283.
- Ero, C. (ed.). 2002. *Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinée: la régionalisation de la guerre*. Paris: Edition Karthala.
- Ferme, M. and D. Hoffman. 2004. Hunter Militias and the International Human Rights Discourse in Sierra Leone and Beyond. *Africa Today* 50(4): 73–95.
- Ferme, M.C. 2001. *The Underneath of Things: violence, history, and the everyday in Sierra Leone*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Fouron, G. and N. Glick Schiller. 2001. All in the Family: gender, transnational migration and the nation-state. *Identities* 7(4): 539–582.
- Griffin, P. 2007. Neoliberalism and the World Bank: economic discourses and the (re)production of gendered identity(ies). *Policy Futures in Education* 5(2): 226–238.
- Hazen, J. 2007. Can Peacekeepers be Peacebuilders? *International Peacekeeping* 14(3): 323–338.
- Hoffman, D. 2003. Like Beasts in the Bush: synonyms of childhood and youth in Sierra Leone. *Postcolonial Studies* 6(3): 295–308.
- Hoffman, D. 2004. The Civilian Target in Sierra Leone and Liberia: political power, military strategy, and humanitarian intervention. *African Affairs* 103(411): 211–226.
- Human Rights Watch. 2003. *We'll Kill You if You Cry*. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- Hurwitz, A. and G. Peake. 2004. *Strengthening the Security-Development Nexus: assessing international policy and practice since the 1990s*. New York: International Peace Academy.
- Ismail, O. 2008. *The Dynamics of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peace Building in West Africa*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- King, N. in preparation. Contested Spaces in Post-War Society: the 'Devil Business' in Freetown, Sierra Leone. PhD Thesis to be submitted to the Martin Luther University, Halle/Saale.
- Knight, M. and A. Özerdem. 2004. Guns, Camps and Cash: disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion of former combatants in transitions from war to peace. *Journal of Peace Research* 41(4): 499–516.
- Knörr, J. 2000. Female Secret Societies and their Impact on Ethnic and Trans-Ethnic Identities among Migrant Women in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In: J. Knörr and B. Meier (eds.). *Women and Migration*. Frankfurt/Main: Campus, pp. 62–80.
- Krause, K. and O. Jütersonke. 2005. Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments. *Security Dialogue* 36(4): 447–462.
- Krause, K. and O. Jütersonke. 2007. Seeking out the State: fragile states and international governance. *Politörbis. Zeitschrift zur Aussenpolitik* 42(1): 5–12.
- Lawson, T.F. 2009. A Shift Towards Gender Equality in Prosecution: realizing legitimate enforcement of crimes committed against women in municipal and international criminal law. *Southern Illinois University Law Journal* 33(2): 181–215.

- Leach, M. 1994. *Rainforest Relations. Gender and resource use among the Mende of Gola, Sierra Leone*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Long, N. 2001. *Development Sociology – Actor Perspectives*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Lorentzen, L.A. and J. Turpin (eds.). 1998. *The Women and War Reader*. New York: New York University Press.
- Mazurana, D.E. and K.C. Carlson. 2004. *From Combat to Community: women and girls in Sierra Leone*. Cambridge: Policy Commission for the Women Waging Peace Program of Hunt Alternatives Fund.
- McKay, S. and D. Mazurana. 2004. *Where Are the Girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: their lives during and after war*. Montréal: Rights and Democracy.
- Moran, M.H. 1995. Warriors or Soldiers? Masculinity and ritual transvestism in the Liberian civil war. In: C.R. Sutton (ed.). *Feminism, Nationalism and Militarism*. Arlington: American Anthropological Association, pp. 73–88.
- Moran, M.H. 2000. Gender and Aging: are women ‘warriors’ among the Glebo of Liberia? *Liberian Studies Journal* 25: 25–41.
- Moran, M.H. 2006. Iron Ladies, Women in White, and Run-Away Warriors: varieties of gendered activism in post war Liberia. Unpublished paper presented at the conference “Gender and Democratization in Societies at War” at Colgate University, Hamilton on 7th October, 2006.
- Moser, C.O.N. 2001. The Gendered Continuum of Violence and Conflict: an operational framework. In: C.O.N. Moser and F.C. Clark (eds.). *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, armed conflict and political violence*. London: Zed Books, pp. 30–51.
- National Democratic Institute. 2007a. *The 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone: electing and empowering women*. Washington: National Democratic Institute.
- National Democratic Institute. 2007b. *Side by Side: the story of the 50/50 group of Sierra Leone*. Washington: National Democratic Institute.
- Neubert, D. 2004. The ‘Peacemakers’ Dilemma’: the role of NGOs in processes of peace-building in decentralised conflicts. In: M.-C. Foblets and T. von Trotha (eds.). *Healing the Wounds. Essays on the reconstruction of societies after war*. Oxford: Hart, pp. 47–82.
- Olsson, L. 1999. *Gendering UN Peacekeeping: mainstreaming a gender perspective in multidimensional peacekeeping operations*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- PeaceWomen Project. 2010. *Security Council Resolution 1325*. New York: Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. Available online at [www.peacewomen.org/themes\\_theme.php?id=15&subtheme=true](http://www.peacewomen.org/themes_theme.php?id=15&subtheme=true) [accessed 03.03.2010]
- Physicians for Human Rights. 2002. *War-Related Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone*. Boston: Physicians for Human Rights.
- Plazek, D.P. 2006. *Democracies and Foreign Policy, Conflict or Cooperation? The leadership/institutions nexus*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Morgantown: West Virginia University.
- Puechguirbal, N. 2003. Gender Training for Peacekeepers: lessons from the DRC. *International Peacekeeping* 10(4): 113–128.

- Richards, J.V.O. 1973. The Sande and Some of the Forces that Inspired its Creation or Adoption with Some References to the Poro. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 8(1–2): 69–77.
- Richards, P. 1996. *Fighting for the Rainforest. War, youth and resources in Sierra Leone*. London: The International African Institute.
- Richards, P. 2002. Militia Conscription in Sierra Leone: recruitment of young fighters in an African war. *Comparative Social Research* 20: 255–276.
- Richards, P. 2006. Young Men and Gender in War and Postwar Reconstruction: some comparative findings from Liberia and Sierra Leone In: I. Bannon and M. Correia (eds.). *The Other Half of Gender: men's issues in development*. Washington: The World Bank, pp. 195–218.
- Richards, P. and K. Vlassenroot. 2002. Les guerres africaines du type Fleuve Mano. Pour une analyse sociale. *Politique Africaine* 88: 13–26.
- Richards, P., S. Archibald, K. Bah and J. Vincent. 2003. Where Have All the Young People Gone? Transitioning ex-combatants towards community reconstruction after the war in Sierra Leone. Unpublished Draft Report for The World Bank.
- Richards, P., K. Bah and J. Vincent. 2004. *The Social assessment Study: community-driven development and social capital in post-war Sierra Leone*. Washington: The World Bank.
- Scheper-Hughes, N., S.P. Bourgois and P.I. Bourgois (eds.). 2002. *Violence in War and Peace: an anthology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Schneider, G. and N. Wiesehomeier. 2008. Rules that Matter: political institutions and the diversity-conflict nexus. *Journal of Peace Research* 45(2): 183–203.
- Schroeder, E. 2004. A Window of Opportunity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: incorporating a gender perspective in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. *Peace, Conflict and Development* 5: 1–45.
- Schroven, A. 2006. *Women After War. Gender mainstreaming and the social construction of identity in contemporary Sierra Leone*. Berlin: LIT.
- Shaw, R. 2002. *Memories of the Slave Trade. Ritual and the historical imagination in Sierra Leone*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shaw, R. 2004. *Transitional Subjectivities: reconciling ex-combatants in Northern Sierra Leone*. Cambridge: Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.
- Shaw, R. 2006. History and the Post-War Work of Memory: reintegration and the TRC in northern Sierra Leone. Unpublished paper presented at the conference “The Powerful Presence of the Past: historical dimensions of integration and conflict in the Upper Guinea Coast, West Africa” at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale on 19th October, 2006.
- Sideris, T. 2001. Problems of Identity, Solidarity and Reconciliation In: S. Meintjes, A. Pillay and M. Turshen (eds.). *The Aftermath. Women in post-conflict transformation*. London: Zed Books, pp. 46–62.
- Slim, H. 1996. Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping: an agenda for peace? *IDS Bulletin* 27(3): 86–95.
- Smet, S. 2009. A Window of Opportunity – Improving Gender Relations in Post-Conflict Societies: the Sierra Leonean experience. *Journal of Gender Studies* 18(2): 147–163.

- Steinberg, D. 2008. *Beyond Victimhood: engaging women in the pursuit of peace*. Testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs. Washington, DC. Available online at: [www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/speeches/2008/beyond-victimhood-engaging-women-in-the-pursuit-of-peace.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/speeches/2008/beyond-victimhood-engaging-women-in-the-pursuit-of-peace.aspx) [accessed 15.02.2010]
- Thayer, J.S. 1983. Education – Sacred and Secular – in Kukuma, Sierra Leone. *Africana Research Bulletin* 12(1–2): 3–29.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2004. Witness to Truth: report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Freetown: Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Available online at: [www.sierra-leone.org/TRCDocuments.html](http://www.sierra-leone.org/TRCDocuments.html) [accessed 22.01.2011]
- Tschirgi, N. 2003. *Peacebuilding as the Link Between Security and Development: is the window of opportunity closing?* New York: International Peace Academy.
- UNDDR Sierra Leone. 2009. *Country Programme Sierra Leone*. New York: United Nations Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration Resource Centre.
- UNIFEM. 2003. *Gender-Based Needs in the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program*. New York: UNIFEM.
- United Nations Security Council. 2000. *Resolution 1325*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations Security Council. 2008. *Resolution 1820*. New York: United Nations.
- UNTAG. 2001. Windhoek Declaration. *International Peacekeeping* 8(2): 115–120.
- Utas, M. 2003. *Sweet Battlefields. Youth and the Liberian civil war*. Uppsala: Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, Uppsala University.
- Utas, M. 2005a. Building a Future? The reintegration and remarginalisation of youth in Liberia. In: P. Richards (ed.). *No Peace, No War*. Oxford: James Currey, pp. 137–154.
- Utas, M. 2005b. Victimcy, Girlfriending, Soldiering: tactic agency in a young woman's social navigation of the Liberian war zone. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78(2): 403–430.
- Verloo, M. 2001. Another Velvet Revolution? Gender mainstreaming and the politics of implementation. *IWM Working Paper No.5*. Vienna: Institute for Human Sciences.
- Vincent, L. 2003. Current Discourse on the Role of Women in Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation: a critique. *Conflict Trends* 3: 5–10.
- Whanton, A.S. 2005. *The Sociology of Gender. An introduction to theory and research*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wood, E.J. 2008. The Social Processes of Civil War: the wartime transformation of social Networks. *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 539–561.