Lund University
Department of Political Science
Bachelor's Thesis

LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Tactic or Tragedy?

An analysis of UN discourse on sexual violence with regard to the "rape as a weapon of war" framing

FKVK02, Spring 2025
Author: Isabella Öst
Supervisor: Annika Björkdahl

Abstract

Throughout history, rape and sexual violence has been regarded as a "spoil of war", an unfortunate consequence of conflict. It was not until the 1990s that this notion was challenged by the emergence of the "rape as a weapon of war" framing of sexual violence, through which there was a global outcry to stop systematic violence against women in conflict. After having been recognised judicially through the ICTY, ICTR, and the ICC, the weapon of war framing was politically solidified through the UNSCR 1820 in 2008 which recognised systematic sexual violence as a tactic of war.

By means of discourse analysis, the present study aims to examine whether this solidification of the weapon of war framing of sexual violence in conflict has affected subsequent UN discourse on such violence. Through the comparison of UN resolutions on the issue of sexual violence or violence against women adopted before and after 2008, it is found that between the years of 2003 and 2013, there has been modernisation of UN discourse on gendered violence and that the strategic aspect of sexual violence has become continuously recognised through subsequent UNSC resolutions. The actual impact of UNSCR 1820, however, is difficult to determine.

Key words: UN, resolutions, discourse, sexual violence, "weapon of war"
Word count (excluding acknowledgements and references): 9994

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

The author wants to acknowledge that when the issue of sexual violence and violence against women is discussed within an academic format, such as in this text, the *absolute atrocity* that is sexual violence and violence against women can become momentarily overlooked. The author thus encourages the reader to bear this in mind.

The author wants to thank her supervisor, Annika Björkdahl, for her continuous support and encouragement throughout this project[1].

[1] With regard to scientific transparency, it should be duly noted that AI in the form of ChatGPT has been used in this text as a tool for finding synonyms, to verify spelling, and for sentence construction.

1. Introduction

Rape and sexual violence has been synonymous with conflict since the begining of humanity. Throughout the history of war, rape and sexual abuse of women and girls has been treated as a reward for “weary” soldiers or for entire armed groups who had caputerd a new village or area. The general understanding of sexual violence has consequently been that it constitutes an unfortunate and inevitable by-product of war. (Ayiera, 2010:8; Goldstoff, 2010:491)

Through a whole new level of media coverage, the raging conflicts during the mid-1990s in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and the horrible atrocities that followed them, put the previously disregarded issue of sexual violence in conflict on the international agenda. This also caused a shift in the perception of sexual violence from being among the spoils of war to being regarded as a tactic of war (Crawford, 2013:506). The 1990’s atrocities caused global outrage, especially in the Global North, and led to a demand for action to be taken to put an end to sexual violence in conflict. The first documents to recognise mass rape as a crime against humanity where the the 1993 and 1994 statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal in Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Court in Rwanda (ICTR). In 1998, through the statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), it was established that rape is a war crime, as well as that it can constitute a crime against humanity and an act of genocide (Ayiera, 2010:10).

The atrocities in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda also caused the emergence of the “weapon of war” framing of rape and sexual violence. According to Crawford (2013:507), to “frame” something means “to cast it within language and symbolism that allows it to resonate with the intended audience to spark collective action”. “Rape as a weapon of war”, consequently, referrs to “sexual violence as having a systematic, pervasive, or officially orchestrated aspect” (ibid:510), used primarily with the intention of humiliating, intimidating, torturing, or otherwise destroying the enemy. The effectiveness of this weapon is furthermore due to underlying gender norms and power structures between women and men. As a result of the weapon of war frame, which gained a lot of tracktion also among policymakers, sexual violence in conflict was established as an international security issue (ibid:511). This, in turn, was enabled through the logic behind the weapon of war framing, namely that when sexual violence is understood to be used as a weapon, it, like any other weapon, gets attention.

Crawford (2017:97) states that the perception of sexual violence that was created through the weapon of war frame, where sexual violence was tied more closely to other weapons in conflict and less to social gender structures, was crucial to achieve increased state attention and support for the elimination of sexual violence in conflict.

Through the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1820, passed in June of 2008, the Security Council (UNSC), and thereby the UN, solidified and institutionalised the weapon of war frame (Crawford, 2013:510). The Resolution stresses:

> that sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security, *affirms* in this regard that effective steps to prevent and respond to such acts of sexual violence can significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and *expresses its readiness*, when considering situations on the agenda of the Council, to, where necessary, adopt appropriate steps to address widespread or systematic sexual violence
>
> UNSCR 1820, §1.

This is the first time that rape was classified as a tactic of war, as well as a threat to international security (Goldstoff, 2010:511). UNSCR 1820 thus represents a turning point for the international discourse on sexual violence in conflict where such violence is now consistently referred to as a weapon and a security issue.

1.1 Research Question and Aim

This study will be based on the following research question:

> *How has the 2008 framing of sexual violence as a "weapon of war" influenced the UN's discourse on sexual violence in conflict?*

The aim of this study is to examine the discourse on sexual violence in UN resolutions before and after 2008, i.e when UNSCR 1820 was passed, in order to determin whether the the weapon of war framing of sexual violence in conflict has affected this discourse. This aim, in turn, stems from the belief that sexual violence in conflict needs to be completely eradicated and that the needs of all victims must be kept a main priority in this endeavor. And, if this goal is to be achieved, it is important to examine the way sexual violence (in conflict) is addressed from multiple different angles. Such angles, furthermore, include how sexual violence is understood discoursively within the UN, as this understanding consequently affects how the UN, as well as other actors, approach the issue of sexual violence. The introduction of the weapon of war frame to UN discourse thus becomes important to study.

1.2 Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to this study that are worth mentioning. Firstly, this study will not look into, nor analyse, *who* has written the resolutions, focusing solely on the actual texts of the resolutions. Similarly, this study will not put weight on which institutions are responsible for the different resolutions under study. This is due to the aim of the study, which is to examine the UN discourse on sexual violence at large. As will be later discussed, and with regard to the institutions, there is however a notable difference in the amount of resolutions produced and adopted on the subject of sexual violence *in conflict* between the periods of 2003-2007 and 2009-2013. This, of course, has impacts on the subsequent analysis.

2. Literature Review

There is a vast field of academic literature concerning women in conflict and WPS (women, peace, and security), sexual violence in conflict, and the framing of rape as a weapon of war. When doing research on these subjects, many scholars also turn to discursive theory and/or analysis.

Firstly, regarding WPS and discourse, Shepherd (2010), through a discourse-theoretical perspective, analyses how the concepts of (international) security and (gendered) violence are discursively constituted within UNSCR 1325. By identifying the articulation of central concepts, Shepherd explores the relationship between the discourse on security and the discourse on violence, thereby investigating the implications of the resolution. Similarly, Shepherd (2011) also uses UNSCR 1325 as a platform for the analysis of other UNSC resolutions on WPS, including UNSCR 1820. The focus of the analysis is put on expectations of and pressure on (some) women within peace and security, and how this could be alleviated through a discursive change in certain attitudes. Shepherd also argues that the Security Council is slowly beginning to recognise women as agential subjects, even though the representation of women remains fragmented.

Shifting the attention towards sexual violence in conflict, Ayiera (2010) argues that international discourse deals with sexual violence as an independent or isolated phenomenon that emerges from conflict, causing the problem to be simplified and to be met with simplistic solutions, failing to acknowledge the normalisation of patriarchal order, viewing sexual violence as an anomaly to an otherwise functioning system. Ayiera highlights how sexual violence is feminised, that it happens to women becuase they are female, and that femininity is linked to passivity, weakness and the yeilding to (masculine) power. These social constructions have, furthermore, failed to be problematised by UN and NGO discourse. Lastly, Ayiera observes that there is a growing phraseology around sexual violence in conflict which, through creating a competition on which conflict situation is to be deemed the “worst” or “most forgotten”, has the effect of glorifying conflict situations that turn more and more extreme. This competition, in turn, is necessary for the generation of international attention and support. Similarly, Anholt (2016) argues that the general understanding of sexual violence in conflict has been watered down, thereby impeding humanitarian action.

When discussing sexual violence in conflict, many scholars turn to the weapon of war framing - either using it as a concept, explaining the framing, or putting it under a critical lense. Johnson-Freese (2023) for example, describes different situations in which rape and sexual violence has been strategically and tactically used in warfare. These situations include the conflict in former Yugoslavia where rape was used systematically, partly through the use of "rape camps", with the purpose of ethnic cleanising. Smilarly, sexual violence with the aim of destroying an ethnic group was also carried out in Rwanda during the genocide. Other aims of the use of sexual violence have included population displacement, as seen in Bosnia; fostering bonding and loyalty within armed groups; and as a tool for recruitment and control, exemplified among others by ISIS's use of sexual slavery. Other scholars that examine the strategical use of sexual violence in conflict include Peltola (2018) who studies the purpose of sexual violence in genocidal campaigns, as well as how international courts have responded to genocidal rape; and Stark and Wessells (2012) who discuss the use and consequences of sexual violence as a weapon in conflict.

Lastly, there are some scholars who, in line with this study, are critical towards the weapon of war framing. The following contributions will thus prove particularly valuable. First, Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013), while recognising the success of the weapon of war framing/narrative in bringing international attention to certain atrocities, are concerned that this framework has become overly coherent, universalising and established, meaning that it can become a struggle to think about the problem of sexual violence from different perspectives. The scholars argue that the notion of trying to frame sexual violence in a comprehensible way leads to a lack of nuance and complexity, as well as the (re)production of violences.

Crawford (2013) continues this thought by discussing the cost and problems of this narrow weapon of war frame. The most prevalent argument is that the framework impedes the recognition of the whole spectrum of sexual and gender related violence in conflict and, furthermore, causes certain victims and perpetrators to be overlooked by the international community. Other problems, Crawford argues, include the difficulty to define cases of rape as a "weapon" in active conflict, in turn leading to inaction, and that the focus on systematic sexual violence can cause the simplification of other abuses and challenges for civilians. Crawford (2017) also mentions how the deeper roots of sexual and gendered violence become eclipsed when a concept is simplified in this way.

As a final note, Buss (2009) suggests that the absence of complexity in the weapon of war frame or, in this case, "rape as an instrument", has the consequence of depicting sexual

violence in genocide as natural, inevitable or "always available" for the conflicting sides to use. Buss similarly mentions the "rape script" that became visbile during the trials in the ICTR, where certain identities (females, males, Hutu, Tutsi) where placed in certain positions within the script. The script, in turn, had the effect if reducing all sexual violence to (male) Hutu violence against Tutsi women, leading to sexual violence during the genocide being recognised as a relatively uniform phenomenon.

3. Theory

With the interest of examining how the framing of sexual violence as a weapon of war affects, in this case, the UN's understanding of sexual violence in conflict, this study will primarily turn to discourse theory. Broadly, discourse theory is the study of different aspects of language and communication, excluding those pertaining to linguistic structure. Most discourse theories, however, are concerned with the relationship between language and structure (Paz, 2013:191), as well as between language and power. There are a multitude of discourse-theoretical approaches, stemming among others from Foucault (1969), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Fairclough (1989), and Derrida (1967). Based on their relevance and in order to create a well rounded theoretical framework, the present study will use concepts and ideas from poststructuralist discourse theory, critical discourse analysis, feminist critical discourse analysis and feminist poststructuralism.

Poststructuralist discourse theory (PSDT) perceives discourse and discursive practices as constitutive of the social (Angermuller, 2020:243). Through this way of thinking, PSD theorists doubt that one could ever establish meaning with reference to a "real world" outside of discourse (Burnett, 2024:362), thus problematising the social as a stable and given order outside of language. In this way, poststructuralists emphasise how certain representations are made "real" through discourse (Angermuller, 2020:243). Ideas on language, meaning, reality, knowledge, and identity thus become important for poststructuralist theorists (Kolankiewicz et al., 2024:17).

Poststructuralism emphasises the constant, ongoing construction of an incomplete society. Given this, the principle of *articulation* becomes central to poststructuralist thinking. Articulation is the idea that, through combining and connecting certain words, ideas, objects, and concepts in different ways when acting or speaking, people give meaning to the world around them. Thus, when there is repetition of such combinations or connections, these patterns (or discourses) start to form specific, stable structures which, consequently, become recognised as the social world (Jacobs, 2018:298). These practices, in turn, are most often seen as unintentional (Angermuller, 2020:243).

Jacobs (2018:309-311) states that it can be difficult to operationalise the ontological framework of PSDT, as it is considered too abstract and general when being applied to a case

study. This has led to PSDT being used in a "thin" fashion in many studies. Often, PSDT is used in combination with other theories, leading to sacrifices of theoretical coherence and coherence between the theoretical framework, method, and analysis. However, such use also tends to make the understanding of the object of study more tangible (ibid:311).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as the name suggests, is rooted in critical theory (Hidalgo Tenorio, 2011:187). Critical theory seeks to understand and explain social phenomena, as well as critique the social world through bringing underlying structures and ideological forces to the surface. It thus offers a reflexive perspective on society. Critical theory puts emphasis on the historical and social context, and the connection between theory and practice. Society is viewed as dynamic and complex, characterised by struggle and contradictions (Fuchs, 2021:23-25).

CDA, in turn, focuses on the abuse of social power and inequality, and how these things are (re)produced, legitimated, and resisted through speech and text. Through having this focus, CD analysts take an explicit stance in wanting to understand, expose and challenge power asymmetries and social inequality. CDA thus offers a critical perspective that can be used in all areas of discourse studies. Most core tenets of CDA are based on the role of discourse, namely: discourse constitutes society; power relations are discursive; discourse is historical; there is mediation between text and society; discourse is a form of social action; and, discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory (Van Dijk, 2015-466-468; Hidalgo Tenorio, 2011:187-188). CDA also puts emphasis on absences and silence in discourse, referring to that which goes unsaid or remains unrepresented in text and thus rendering certain discourses unseen or hidden (Slemon, 2025:2-3).

Feminist CDA, finally, has the aim of bringing to light the complex, subtle, or indeed blatant ways in which gendered assumptions and power relations are produced, negotiated, sustained, and challenged discursively in different communities and contexts. Feminist CDA provides a feminist perspective on discursive practices, which entails the examination of the relationships between power, ideology, and gender in discourse. As a form of analytical activism, the task of Feminist CDA is not only to study how dominance is (re)produced through textual or spoken representations of gendered social practices, but also to address issues of (women's) access to discursive forums (Lazar, 2007:142-149).

In a similar vein, *feminist poststructuralism* concentrates on how gendered linguistic manifestations empower the masculine, while marginalising the feminine. Such linguistic manifestations are often gendered dichotomies, such as strong/weak, public/private, and rational/emotional (Sjoberg, 2009:188). Feminist poststructuralists, furthermore, problematise

unitary, universally valid notions of truth by pointing out that truth is relative to context (Wibben, 2011:19).

With regards to the aforementioned theories and perspectives, one can draw the following theoretical assumptions: the social world, and what we consider to be true or real, is constituted by discourse; discourse impacts how we understand the social world by the means of articulation; power relations are discursive; there is importance in silence/non-speech; and, gendered language favours the masculine over the feminine, thus upholding gendered structures and giving certain discourses more power and space than others.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

There is a need to translate the above discussed theoretical positions into a concrete theoretical framework that corresponds to the aims of this study. For a visual overview of the framework, see Model 3.1.

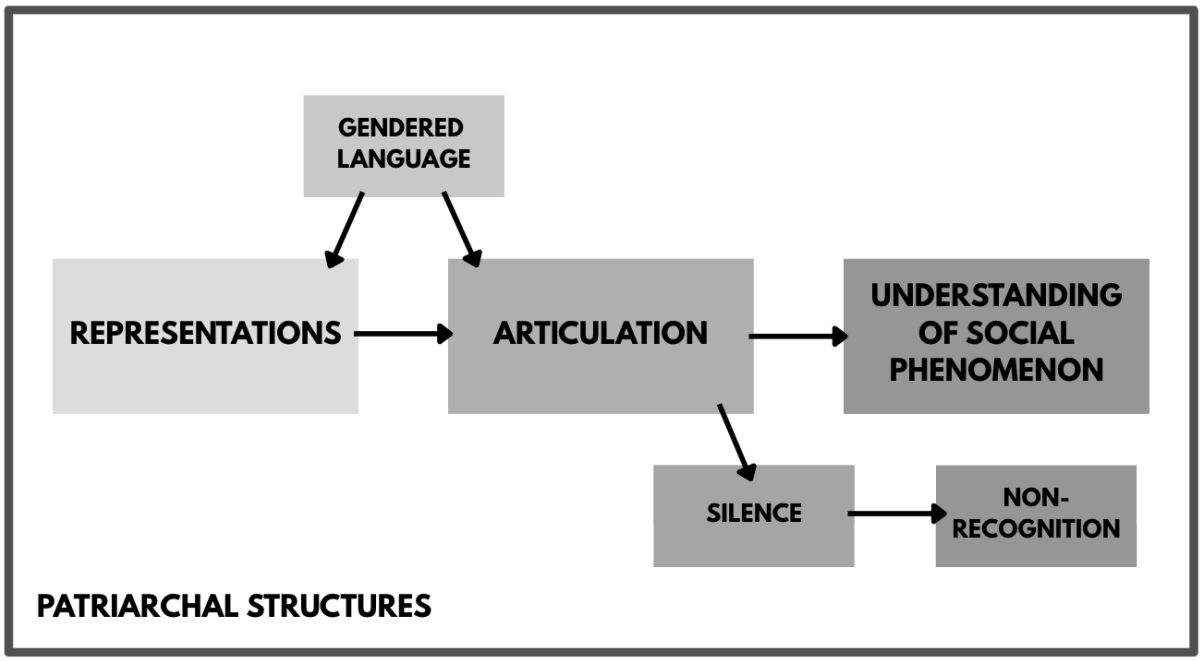
The aim of this framework is to explain how representations of certain social phenomena influence our broader understanding of these phenomena. In line with the works of Walby (1989), among others, it will be assumed that this process takes place within a patriarchal system, with patriarchal structures and mindsets, where the masculine, as a rule, is favored over the feminin.

The word or concept of *representation* means “to describe or depict [something], to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination” (Hall, 2021:74). Representation thus entails how something is described and presented. The description of something, in turn, leads into a state of articulation where words, concepts, and ideas that correspond to the representation start to become combined and connected in repetitive discursive patterns. As previously stated, such patterns then form different, although specific, structures. Such structures, consequently, make up the social reality - i.e. “the consensus of attitudes, opinions, and beliefs held by members of a group or society” (APA) - and our understanding of certain phenomena. Different representations will thus give rise to different understandings of the same phenomenon.

Furthermore, when recognising the arena for this process as patriarchal and inherently gendered, the process will inevitably be influenced by gendered language, meaning that

certain words and concepts are connected to masculinity while others are connected to femininity. During this process, moreover, in order to make room for the dominant discursive patterns, certain aspects or concepts will fall out of the process - leading to silence and then non-recognition. This can happen either intentionally or unintentionally. The weapon of war frame, for example, constitutes a new discursive pattern introduced to UN discourse which may affect or cause other discursive patterns to fall out from the general discourse.

Model 3.1



4. Research Design

This study constitutes a comparative discourse analysis of UN resolutions before and after 2008. The discourse-analytical method has been chosen because of its relevance to the present study, with the aim of seeing the effects of the "rape as a weapon of war" frame on UN discourse on sexual violence. The comparative element of the analysis, furthermore, allows for similarities and differences between the chosen material to be highlighted and, in turn, interpreted in order to effectively answer the research question. The method, relevant tools, and the material will be discussed below.

4.1 Method

The goals of a discourse analysis generally include being able to explore the relationship between discourse and reality, as well as examine the effects of discourse on meaning-production and fixing, and (re)production of knowledge. A typical hypothesis for a discourse analysis to take on concerns a co-variation or association between a certain discourse and a given context, where the analyst chooses a specific body of text to analyse, for example UNSC resolutions. When examining the meaning-producing effects of discourse, in turn, the analyst seeks to delineate this process through deploying different analytical tools, such as articulation and critical scrutiny (Halperin & Heath, 2017:339-343; Shepherd, 2017:20, 26). This study will consequently attempt to highlight the relationship between UN *discourse* on sexual violence and UN *understanding* of sexual violence in conflict, and see how the process of meaning-production in this context takes its shape.

To begin the analytical process, the discourse and the nodal points around which the discourse is organised must be identified. *Nodal points* are words or concepts that constitute the center of a discourse in relation to which other words and concepts can be temporarily tied to create meaning. For this study, examples of nodal points include *violence* and *women*. By unpacking nodal points, their relationships to other concepts, and their connotations, one can come to understand how and why different discourses are established, and what they

contest and legitimise. Furthermore, analysis allows for the exploration of the ways nodal points are ordered within texts and to disrupt the texts' coherence in order to see internal antagonism. (Ostermann & Sjöstedt, 2023:106; Shepherd, 2008:29-30)

As a second step to the analysis, one needs to examine how discourse comes to constitute social reality. This can be done through analysis of predication and articulation. *Predication* entails the assignment of qualities to different subjects and objects by connecting them to certain adjectives and adverbs. Predication, in turn, can have a great influence on how people perceive the subject or object in question. An example of predication would be to call the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022 "Putin's war", indicating that the Russian people are unaccountable (Ostermann & Sjöstedt, 2023:105-106). Another example of predication is to refer to violence against women as "sexual violence", where the word "sexual" instantly affects how the violence in question is perceived. *Articulation*, again referring to the process of meaning being produced and fixed through connections between different concepts and words being repeated, coming to describe reality, can furthermore be investigated through identifying the main elements, or nodal points, of the discourse and how they are connected and articulated in relation to each other (Halperin & Heath, 2017:343).

Deconstruction, lastly, comes naturally as a third and final step to the analytical process. Deconstruction is a discourse-analytical tool coined by Derrida (1967) through which one is able to dismantle, unveil and reassemble the subject under study in order to expose established knowledge, truth and power structures. That is, through deconstruction of conventional structures which make up our social reality, one tries to show how our way of organising the world is a result of discursive processes. Deconstruction is done through close reading of the chosen texts as well as through identifying what is taken for granted, unspoken truths, and preconceived notions of knowledge and identity, *and* through placing these assumptions in a greater context to show their social construction (Eriksson, 2024:438). Deconstruction, instead of a separate analytical tool, can also be thought of as a result of using other analytical strategies (Shepherd, 2008:26).

Finally, a strategy for analysing absences and silence in discourse is the examination of what is actually "said". This, instead of trying to map silence alone, is effective because when one determines what is *in* a statement, one can also determine what is *outside* of that statement. Therefore, what is in fact said governs the location and boundaries of what is not said. This is called exploration of the *negative space*. (Slemon, 2025:5)

4.2 Material

This study will be based on a selection of UN resolutions pertaining to the issue of sexual violence and violence against women. Ten resolutions have been chosen and divided into two groups: five resolutions adopted between 2003 and 2007 (pre-2008) and five resolutions adopted between 2009 and 2013 (post-2008), creating a timespan of ten years. For an overview of all the resolutions, please refer to Table 4.2.

The selection of resolutions was made based on the criteria that the primary focus of the resolutions should be sexual violence or violence against women. This means that multiple of the resolutions under study, especially among the pre-2008 resolutions, do not address sexual violence in conflict specifically, but instead violence against women at large. While this lack of focus on conflict related sexual violence is not completely in line with the aims and research question of this study, it does however constitute an analytically interesting pattern. There are, for example, no UNSC resolutions on the subject of WPS or sexual violence between the years of 2001 and 2007, whereas multiple such UNSC resolutions were adopted during and after 2008.

The subsequent lack of UNSC resolutions before 2008 makes necessary the use of other UN institutions and departments than the UNSC and the General Assembly (GA) as sources of relevant resolutions. One resolution each from the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) were thus used. Between 2009 and 2013, in contrast, three UNSC resolutions on the topic of sexual violence in conflict were adopted, all of which will be used in this study.

Table 4.2. Resolutions			
Institution	**Resolution**	**Title**	**Year**
General Assembly	57/181	Elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"	2003
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	2005/41	Elimination of violence against women	2005
General Assembly	61/143	Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women	2006
Human Rights Council	2006/18	Systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery.like practices during armed conflict	2006
General Assembly	62/134	Eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including in conflict and related situations	2007
Security Council	1888	Resolution 1888	2009
Security Council	1960	Resolution 1960	2010
General Assembly	65/187	Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women	2010
General Assembly	65/228	Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women	2010
Security Council	2106	Resolution 2106	2013

5. Analysis of UN Discourse

The analysis will be divided into two parts, before and after 2008 - the year when UNSCR 1820 was adopted - and its structure will be based on the nodal points, or occasionally the main concepts, that have been identified in the resolutions. A comparison will consequently be made between the analytical findings.

5.1 UN Discourse Before 2008

Violence

The two main nodal points that can be identified within the UN resolutions on violence against women are, as suggested by their focus, *violence* and *women*. This section will thus concentrate on the resolutions' understanding of violence, while the next section centers on the understanding of women.

The most frequently used terms when referring to violence against women throughout the resolutions are "violence against women (and girls)" and "all forms of violence against women (and girls)". GA resolutions 61/143 and 57/181 are largely confined to these phrases and make little use of alternative wordings. Both of the resolutions, while largely keeping to the more monotonous language, broaden the understanding of violence against women by having a section each where they describe more closely what "violence against women" entails. Whereas GA Res. 61/143 provides a broad definition, GA Res. 57/181 presents a list of different offences in one of its paragraphs. None of these sections, nor the resolutions in their entirety, except for when referring to crimes included in the Rome Statute of the ICC, include the words "rape" or "sexual violence" explicitly. The GA Res. 61/143 definition is as follows:

> *Stresses* that "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or

> suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life
>
> GA Res. 61/143, §6.

Based on this, one can make two analytical observations. Firstly, when the concept of violence against women is presented and repeated, or articulated, in this monotonous manner, the concept of violence against women also becomes monotone. All of the different offences and situations that "violence against women" entails become bundled together and hidden behind the "violence against women" title. This also leads to the concept of violence against women becoming trivialised, easy and unproblematic to use, and understood as less complex than it actually is. This is of course problematic when such an understanding begins to take hold in the social world. Secondly, when the phrasing around violence against women is restricted to "violence against women (and girls)" or "all forms of violence against women (and girls)", the perpetrator is constantly distant from the discussion as they are not mentioned. This, in turn, conveys to our understanding that violence against women is the women's problem and that women need to be protected, which comes back to patriarchal structures.

The remaining resolutions, namely OHCHR Res. 2005/41, GA Res. 62/134, and HRC Res. 2006/18, are more varied when referring to violence against women and do not shy away from using words such as "rape", "sexual violence", "sexual slavery", "traficking", or "forced pregnancy". These resolutions also create, in a much clearer way than the previously mentioned resolutions, a connection between rape or sexual violence and war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide while pointing to the ICC. When using a more varied and emotionally charged language in this manner, one is able to visualise the problem on different levels, in different settings and situations, as well as become more attuned to its seriousness. The word "violence" becomes connected to multiple other words and concepts and the repeated articulation thus becomes much broader, giving rise to a broader understanding of what violence entails. Referring to violence against women as "sexual violence" is also an example of predication, which in turn shifts our perception of the violence in question.

Women

When examining the resolutions from a feminist poststructuralist perspective, it becomes evident that the word *women* is primarily and continuously connected with the word *victims*

and to the concepts of having to be protected and empowered. While the general effect of these connections is the reaffirmation of women's position, and thereby women themselves, as weak and with lacking agency, there are also multiple paragraphs in the resolutions in which women to some extent come across as responsible for the violence that is subjected upon them.

> … women's poverty and lack of empowerment, as well as their marginalization resulting from their exclusion from social policies and from the benefits of sustainable development, can place them at increased risk of violence
>
> GA Res. 61/143, pp. 2

> To empower women, particularly poor women [...] in order to reduce their vulnerability to violence
>
> GA Res. 61/143, §8e

> … ensure that women can exercise their right to have control over, and decide freely and responsibly on, matters related to their sexuality in order to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection, including their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence
>
> GA Res. 61/143, §8k

> To take all measures to empower women and strengthen their economic independence, and to protect and promote the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to allow women and girls to protect themselves better against violence
>
> OHCHR Res. 2005/41, §17c

These excerpts are problematic in two ways. Firstly, the focus on the problem of violence against women is shifted from the acts of the perpetrators to women's "vulnerability" and societal position. This, in turn, naturalises the connection between (poor) women and violence against them while the perpetrator is less acknowledged. This leads to the second problem, namely the understanding that violence against women is due to the situation of women, not male violence. Violence thus becomes something that affects women, not something that is actively done to women, and the problem is thereby placed on the women

who are assigned the task of protecting themselves. Throughout all the resolutions, it is only once explicitly stated that torture, rape and violence against women is not an integral part of conflict. This finding is supported by Ayiera's (2010) observation that sexual violence is feminised, that it happens to women becuase they are female, and that the UN has failed to problematise this aspect in its discourse.

Women are quite consistently referred to as one group of people within the resolutions, and different groups of women, for example indigenous, stateless, or women belonging to minority groups, are mentioned only occasionally when they identify or highlight which groups of women are the most vulnerable in certain situations. When discussing violence against women, the resolutions indicate that violence affects women *collectively*, not as individuals. In fact, only rarely is the subject brought to the individual level, and on these occasions the message is still quite vague. Consequently, while violence does indeed affect women collectively, there are consequences to the conversation being away from the individual level. Primarily, when focusing solely on women as one large group, the different needs and situations of individual women go unrecognised. This, in turn, leads to a less complex understanding of the problem of violence against women and all that it entails. There is also a further loss of female individuality. In contrast, when one is actually introduced to the individual level, one is also brought closer to the problem at hand. While it is difficult to imagine or understand a problem that comes across as elusive when it is generalised at a group level, it is much easier to do so when the problem can be anchored in real and specific situations and people. In this way, the problem also comes to be understood as more complex and severe.

(In)equality

(In)equality is discussed at length in the pre-2008 resolutions, thus enabling the concept(s) to constitute a separate nodal point. The resolutions provide a general understanding of the fact that societal structures based on inequality and discrimination towards women contribute greatly to violence against women and that their abolition is crucial for the elimination of this violence. When focusing on the structural causes of violence against women, thus repeating the link between the concepts of violence and inequality, little room remains for the perpetrator to be noticed. It constitutes a neat box within which the relationship between societal structures and violence against women fits well, without leaving room for other causes of violence against women. The causes of violence against women thus become generalised.

Except for GA Res. 57/181, all resolutions address how the problems of discriminatory and unequal societal structures should be solved. Repeated solutions include gender sensitive education, training programmes, ensuring women's full and equal participation in society, and the "empowerment" of women. States are also encouraged to provide protection and aid to victims, as well as to prosecute and punish perpetrators, which will be discussed in the next section. This, in turn, generates an impression of there being a multitude of solutions to societal inequality, and thus also to violence against women. These solutions however, are not very situation-specific.

Only one out of the five pre-2008 resolutions, OHCHR Res. 2005/41, contains sections where focus is put directly and explicitly on the role and responsibility of men and boys in the elimination of violence against women:

> *Urges* Governments to design and implement programmes to encourage and enable men and adolescent boys to adopt safe, informed and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour
>
> OHCHR Res. 2005/41, §13

> To encourage and support men and boys to take an active part in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence, and especially gender-based violence, including in the context of HIV/AIDS, and to increase awareness of men's and boys' responsibility in ending the cycle of violence, inter alia through the promotion of attitudinal and behavioural change, integrated education and training that prioritize the safety of women and children, prosecution and rehabilitation of perpetrators, and support for survivors
>
> OHCHR Res. 2005/41, §17o

Attention is thereby directed towards the group comprising the majority of perpetrators. However, the notion represented in these quotes is not consistently repeated either in OHCHR Res. 2005/41 or in the remaining resolutions. The responsibility of men and boys to contribute to the elimination of violence against women, thereby, does not come to constitute a central understanding of the issue of violence against women, as the understanding of creating structural equality has.

Perpetrator

As previously mentioned, the discourse of the resolutions puts little direct focus on the perpetrator. The word "perpetrator", constituting a nodal point, is primarily embedded into the pattern of articulation on the representation of violence against women as something that should be persecuted and punished. This, in turn, establishes a clear understanding of the necessity of holding perpetrators accountable. However, the word "perpetrator" also occasionally escapes this pattern, creating the vague understanding that it is rather violence against women in its entirety that should be punished. When these understandings merge, the first-mentioned understanding becomes less clear.

The perpetrators of violence against women are never referred to as something other than "perpetrators", and the word "perpetrator" is never systematically connected to a certain group of people, actors, or to certain traits. This differs significantly from the clear connection established between the concepts of *woman* and *victim*. Subsequently, this entails that there are no specific groups or actors upon which blame is assigned. It furthermore leads to the explicit idea that *all* perpetrators should be punished. The notion of *all* or *everyone*, however, is diffuse. There is thus a negative space, meaning that when *all* perpetrators are pointed out, no one specific is identified.

Strategy

The pre-2008 resolutions, bearing in mind that some of them do not focus on situations of armed conflict, do not go into depth regarding the strategic aspect of violence against women. Except for GA Res. 57/181, however, there is recognition in all resolutions that there are strategic elements to violence against women in conflict. GA Res. 62/134 and HRC Res. 2006/18 are the most prominent in terms of presenting the strategic aspect of sexual violence in conflict. GA Res. 62/134 presents the aspect by using the words "systematic", "achieving [...] objectives", "target", and "calculated". However, these words are not systematically connected to create a pattern, leading to a general lack of repetition of this representation. Gendered violence being strategic, therefore, does not come to constitute a leading understanding. Moreover, while there is repetition of the word "systematic" in HRC Res. 2006/18, this resolution fails to create a broader understanding of the strategic aspect sexual violence, since it only uses the word "systematic" and not any other relevant words or concepts. The word "systematic" can still however be thought of as an important predication, creating an understanding of sexual violence happening in a large scale as part of a certain

objective. No resolutions, finally, mention that sexual violence constitutes a strategy, weapon or tactic of war or conflict.

State security

The resolutions slightly touch upon the concept of state security related to violence against women. The focus is mostly put on the consequences of gendered violence on social and economic development of states and on durable peace and post-conflict reconstruction. Again, however, there is no real articulation or repetition of this notion, causing it to remain largely unacknowledged.

5.2 UN Discourse After 2008

Violence

The representation of the *violence* nodal point in the post-2008 resolutions is varied and multiple different phrases are used to describe instances and acts of sexual violence and violence against women. Among the UNSC resolutions, the most used term is "sexual violence". However, the resolutions are not confined to this wording, but also use more specific terms, such as "sexual exploitation and abuse", "killing and maiming", "gender based violence", and "rape and other sexual violence". The two General Assembly resolutions, in which the term "violence against women" is preferred, similarly diversify their language through the occasional use of these same terms, as well as the terms "sexual assault", "gential mutilation", "trafficking", and "murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy".

As a result of this, while some phrases are used more frequently, the concept of violence is still consistently tied to different, specific types of violence. Consequently, even though linguistic repetition is limited to the phrases "sexual violence" and "violence against women", the notion of there being different dimensions to violence is also repeated, thus creating a similar understanding. When violence is understood as multidimensional, it becomes more difficult to overlook and thus requires more attention. The use of more specific and, sometimes, emotionally charged words is also more effective for visualising the problem and heightens its level of severity. Similarly, in GA Res. 65/187, violence against

women is referred to as a "global pandemic". This, in turn, is an effective way of conveying the scale and severity of the problem.

Along the same lines, UNSCR 1960 states that in conflicts where sexual violence has become systematic and widespread, the violence has reached "appalling levels of brutality". This is the only occasion throughout all ten resolutions under study that such a sentiment is expressed in this manner, with this level of revulsion, not preceded by a watered down resolution verb (e.g "condemns", "underlines", or "reiterates"). Consequently, the phrase sticks out and leaves a big impression. The phrase also constitutes a kind of predication as it describes the issue in question as well as greatly impacts how the issue of violence against women in conflict is perceived. UNSCR 2106 also, finally, sticks out by calling the notion of sexual violence being a "cultural phenomenon or inevitable consequence of war" a myth.

Women

There are attempts in the post-2008 resolutions to broaden the concept of *the victim* to be more all-encompassing while still putting focus on women and girls. These attempts include simply referring to the people affected by violence as "victims", "affected civilians", or "all persons", often followed by "particularly women and children" or "including women and girls". Furthermore, the term "survivors" is introduced and occasionally used instead of "victims". Even though a survivor is a victim, and a victim often a survivor, these two words differ greatly in what they convey since the language is gendered. While a victim needs to be pitied and protected, a survivor should be celebrated for their strength in overcoming and surviving what they have been through. Based on this, as well as the somewhat less frequent use of the terms "vulnerable" or "vulnerability", the nodal point *women* comes to be less restricted by its connection to *the victim* which, in turn, allows for a broader conception of women.

(In)equality

Within all the post-2008 resolutions, the *(in)equality* nodal point is at the center of a more diversified net of words and concepts than solely the empowerment of women. The notion of women needing to be empowered socially and economically as well as be given equal rights and status, and that this can be done primarily through gender sensitive education and the abolishment of discriminatory laws, traditions or customs, is expressed at length in the GA resolutions 65/187 and 65/288. However, in these resolutions, and in the UNSC resolutions, the understanding of the problem of inequality seems to be more in tune with the situation of

women, as well as more welcoming of women's abilities. Firstly, GA Res. 65/288 indicates that it is important to consider the multifaceted nature of violence and the diverse situations of women:

> The multifaceted nature of violence against women necessitates different strategies to respond to the diverse manifestations of violence and the various settings in which it occurs, both in private and in public life, whether committed in the home, the workplace, educational and training institutions, the community or society, in custody or in situations of armed conflict or natural disaster
>
> GA Res. 65/288, Annex §1.

> *Also calls upon* Member States to develop and implement crime prevention policies and programmes to promote the safety of women in the home and in society at large in a manner that reflects the realities of women's lives and addresses their distinct needs
>
> GA Res. 65/288, §8.

Since recommended or demanded solutions and approaches in eliminating violence against women constitute a considerable part of all the resolutions, this message, which is not conveyed at length or repeatedly, disappears behind a sea of demands and calls for change which are more overarching and general. In the post-2008 resolutions, however, the recommendations and demands themselves are more varied, as well as more specific to certain situations, than only focusing on women's empowerment in society. Examples of such recommendations include the use of effective vetting processes for security-sectors and predeployment and in-mission training of military troops on gender-based violence. This not only shows an understanding of violence against women as multidimensional, but also that there are a multitude of solutions to this problem, of which some are more appropriate than others in certain situations. This causes the issue of gendered violence to be understood as more complex.

The abilities of women, or women themselves, furthermore, are increasingly described as needed rather than hindered by violence. This can be found in the following excerpts:

> *Encourages* Member States to deploy greater numbers of female military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations
>
> UNSCR 1960, §15.

> *Urges* the Secretary General, Member States and the heads of regional organizations to take measures to increase the representation of women in mediation processes and decision-making processes with regard to conflict resolution and peacebuilding
>
> UNSCR 1888, §16.

> *stresses* women's participation as essential to any prevention and protection response
>
> UNSCR 2106, §1.

> *Reaffirms* the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in promoting inclusive gender-based approaches to reducing instability in post-conflict situations, noting the important role of women in rebuilding society
>
> UNSCR 1888, §18.

Here, it is necessary to reflect upon the difference of stating that women need to be ensured equal participation and stating that the participation of women is essential. Even though both statements are equally true, the latter assumes that women are active agents with capacity to make important contributions, while the former reinforces the notion of women having to be helped out of their unfortunate social position.

Responsibility

The post-2008 resolutions incorporate a discussion on the *responsibility* of different actors in relation to violence against women, thus creating a new nodal point. The main actors that are given responsibility are civilian and military leaders:

> *Encourages* leaders at the national and local level, including traditional leaders where they exist and religious leaders, to play a more active role in sensitizing communities on sexual violence to avoid marginalization and stigmatization of

> victims, to assist with their social reintegration, and to combat a culture of impunity for these crimes
>
> UNSCR 1888, §15.

> *Reiterating* the need for civilian and military leaders, consistent with the principle of command responsibility, to demonstrate commitment and political will to prevent sexual violence and to combat impunity and enforce accountability, and that inaction can send a message that the incidence of sexual violence in conflicts is tolerated
>
> UNSCR 1960, pp. 1.

Responsibility is also assigned to "the family", as well as men and boys:

> *Recognizing* the important role of the family in preventing and combating violence against women and girls and the need to support its capacity to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls
>
> GA Res. 65/187, pp. 3.

> *Recognizing* also the important role of the community, in particular men and boys, as well as civil society, in particular women's organizations, in the efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women
>
> GA Res. 65/187, pp. 3.

These thoughts are brought up quite consistently throughout four of the five resolutions, and words and concepts including "leaders", "responsible", "command responsibility", "chain of command", "important role of", and "zero tolerance" create a pattern which becomes articulated and repeated. In this way, attention and responsibility is brought to the local level and specific groups that are important to the prevention of violence against women. Moreover, this creates an understanding of these particular groups, i.e armed groups, men and boys, and civil society at large, as key actors for the prevention of violence against women without placing direct blame on them. The lack of assigned blame, which was previously touched upon, can furthermore be described as a negative space where no perpetrator is explicitly pointed out as belonging to a certain group, or certain *groups* of people.

Perpetrator

The general conversation on the perpetrators of violence against women and how they should be dealt with can be exemplified through this excerpt:

> … relieving the suffering of, women and girls living in such situations and to ensure that, where violence is committed against them, all perpetrators of such violence are duly investigated and, as appropriate, prosecuted and punished in order to end impunity, while stressing the need to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law
>
> GA Res. 65/187, §10.

There is a clear pattern of articulation throughout all the resolutions where the *perpetrator* nodal point is strongly connected to certain words, including "prosecution", "punish", "impunity", "law", "responsible", and "committed". This articulation pattern is continuously repeated, more or less explicitly, in multiple of the demands and recommendations stated in the resolutions. This, even though the word "perpetrators" is occasionally replaced by "sexual violence" or "acts of violence against women", upholds the understanding that perpetrators of sexual violence should be prosecuted and punished, as well as that national laws should work to criminalise all acts of sexual violence and violence against women.

Perpetrators remain to be referred to as "perpetrators", or very occasionally "individuals" or "nationals", and thus continue to go undefined in terms of traits and group affiliations. This, again, leads to the understanding that *all* perpetrators must be punished, which due to its vagueness may lead to the creation of vague and possibly less effective solutions.

Tactic of war

The notion of sexual violence being used as a "tactic of war" is brought up in all three UNSC resolutions and constitutes a noticeably distinct side to the discussion on sexual violence at large, making it fit to be considered a separate nodal point. As is also the case in UNSCR 1820, it is described as follows:

> *Reaffirms* that sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic

> attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security
>
> UNSCR 1888, §1

In UNSCR 2106, the expression is furthermore developed to state "a *method* or tactic of war" (emphasis added). While there is clear representation of sexual violence in conflict as something that is systematic and deliberately used, repetition of the fact is quite limited. The most frequently used words to describe the notion are "widespread" and "systematic", which appear two to three times in each UNSCR. Even though these words accurately describe the usage of sexual violence in conflict, it can be argued that they fail to capture some aspects of the reality. The words "widespread" and "systematic" describe the situations from a more detached perspective, while words and phrases such as "deliberately", "tactic", "calculated", or "to achieve military objectives", better capture the aspect of *intention* of the perpetrator. "Widespread" is furthermore a vague term which does not allow for complete understanding of the extensiveness of sexual violence in conflict.

Based on the quite limited pattern of articulation, as well as the limited repetition of this pattern, the notion of sexual violence as a tactic of war does not come to constitute a main understanding throughout the resolutions. Systematic violence is mentioned, as in the quote above, but throughout the resolutions the strategic aspect disappears because it is not continuously incorporated. The two General Assembly resolutions, moreover, do not mention the systematic dimension in any significant way, meaning that the issue goes largely unrecognised. This observation, in turn, stands in contrast to the argument of Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013), who are concerned with the weapon of war framing becoming to established and causing a lack of complexity in the discourse on sexual violence.

Throughout all five resolutions, there is a general representation, often in direct connection with the systematic aspect, of sexual violence as an issue of international *peace and security*. The relationship between sexual violence and peace and security is not elaborated upon at lenght, except for the fact that sexual violence is an impediment to peace and security and that it can prolong situations of armed conflict. The relationship, however, comes to be part of the articulation of the *tactic of war* nodal point, which in turn gives the nodal point another dimension. Sexual violence being negatively connected with international peace and security causes sexual violence to be perceived as more important for someone with an outside perspective. This, consequently, is crucial since different types of aid from external actors often are necessary to end conflict situations where sexual violence occurs.

6. Comparison of UN Discourse Over Time

The analytical results indicate that there are similarities as well as differences between the discourses of the pre- and post-2008 UN resolutions. This section will offer a comparison of these findings.

Violence, as a nodal point, firstly, is differently represented and thus differently understood within certain resolutions of the pre-2008 group, setting them apart from all other resolutions under study. In GA resolutions 61/143 and 57/181, there is a tendency for violence against women to be repeatedly represented as just that, "violence against women". Only rarely are other words used to describe such violence, leading to a narrow and restricted pattern of articulation, and in turn providing a trivialised understanding of violence against women. The actual perpetrator and the *act* of (sexual) violence also lose visibility.

The other pre-2008, however, along with all the post-2008 resolutions, use a more varied representation of sexual violence and violence against women. This creates a broader pattern of articulation, and thus a broader, more dimensional understanding of violence against women. This multilayered understanding allows for the visualisation of violence against women in different situations and context, and the use of a more emotive language also has an effect on how such violence is perceived.

Secondly, the articulation of the *women* nodal point differs between the two groups of resolutions. This is due to the fact that the connections of the nodal point to the concept of *the victim* are not equally strong, and also because the post-2008 resolutions offer new perspectives on women in general. Whereas the pre-2008 resolutions represent women primarily as victims which due to their social status are vulnerable and in need of assistance, the post-2008 resolutions broaden the concept of *the victim*, introduce the word *survivor*, and promote women as important, active agents. This discursive difference is furthermore supported by Shepherd's (2011) argument that the UNSC increasingly recognises women as agential subjects. There is no notable difference between the analysed groups regarding which people are recognised as "women" and both pre- and post-2008 resolutions mention different groups of women that are particularly affected by violence.

There are, furthermore, both similarities and differences regarding the discourse on *(in)equality* between the pre- and post-2008 resolutions. Within the pre-2008 resolutions,

considerable focus is put on societal structures as a cause of sexual violence and violence against women, leading to a generalised understanding of such violence. And, while many demands and solutions are stated, these are for the most part focused on the empowerment of women in society and few of them are directed towards more specific situations and circumstances. The post-2008 resolutions, however, provide an understanding that is more attuned to the different circumstances of affected people, as well as provide more varied and specific solutions to sexual violence and violence against women which, consequently, gives rise to the understanding that the problem is more complex.

The post-2008 resolutions, in addition, introduce another nodal point, namely *responsibility*. By assigning responsibility to certain groups, primarily armed groups and men and boys, attention is brought to the local level where sexual violence and violence against women occurs. These groups, moreover, come to be understood as key actors in the elimination of violence against women. Being able to pinpoint key actors, which the general discourse of the UN resolutions only occasionally allows, is furthermore important for the deeper understanding of the issue of sexual violence in its entirety and how to deal with this problem. Among the pre-2008 resolutions, only one brings attention to the responsibility and role of men and boys in this way and the aspect was thus not given much attention, leading to it not being part of the other main understandings.

Regarding the *perpetrator* nodal point, the discourse remains largely the same between the two groups of resolutions. Arising from this discourse is a kind of non-understanding of *the perpetrator* as an undefined "all" with a tendency to escape blame. The discourse also, in large part, remains the same on the subject of *state security* before and after 2008. In both discourses, it is established that violence against women is an impediment to social and economic development. Yet, this aspect is not elaborated upon. The topic of state security, as well as that of international security, is however connected to the *tactic of war* nodal point that emerges in the post-2008 resolutions, providing a further sense of importance to the issue of sexual violence in conflict.

The *tactic of war* nodal point, finally, emerges in the post-2008 resolutions as a new and distinct part of the UN discourse on sexual violence in conflict. While the strategic aspect of sexual violence had been brought up previous to the year of 2008 through the occasional use of words such as "systematic" or "target", as explained in the beginning of this text however, UNSCR 1820 constituted a turning point for the way in which sexual violence in conflict is described and understood. This description, in turn, has been used continuously throughout post-2008 resolutions on the topic of sexual violence in conflict. It, furthermore,

becomes important to highlight the difference between the pre-2008 acknowledgement of the strategic or systematic aspect of sexual violence and the actual recognition of sexual violence as a tactic of war within the UN system. However, due to the impact and importance of UNSCR 1820, namely the solidification of the weapon of war framing of sexual violence and the influence it surely had on subsequent UNSC resolutions, the limited and non-expansive mentions and expressions of the *tactic of war* nodal point in the post-2008 resolutions become noteworthy.

7. Conclusion

As this project comes to a close, a reminder of the initial research question becomes appropriate - this question being: *How has the 2008 framing of sexual violence as a "weapon of war" influenced the UN:s discourse on sexual violence in conflict?*

Through the analysis, it becomes evident that there are differences to the UN discourse on sexual violence - and the understanding of sexual violence and violence against women that this discourse produces - before and after 2008. However, and importantly, it is difficult to tie most of these differences directly to the weapon of war framing established in UNSCR 1820.

What primarily can be noted based on the analysis is a tendency of modernisation in UN discourse between the years of 2003 and 2013. Modernisation in this case refers to the developed understanding of women from primarily being thought of as victims to also being seen as important contributors; to the development of a more diverse and specific set of solutions to the problem of sexual violence; to the pointing out of armed groups and men and boys as key actors in the elimination of gendered violence; and to the developed understanding that violence against women can take many forms. The question thus becomes whether this modernisation is due to similar external factors of modernisation throughout the years under study, or indeed the weapon of war frame. This, furthermore, would be an interesting topic for future research.

The analysis shows that UNSCR 1820 and its recognition of sexual violence as a "tactic of war" has had an impact on subsequent UNSC resolutions as they continue to reafirm this notion. This impact is however relatively limited as the notion is only marginally developed in these resolutions - one example being UNSCR 2106 referring to sexual violence as "a method or tactic of war". Noteworthy however, is the wave of UNSC resolutions adopted after 2008 and the contrast it constitutes to the drought of such resolutions between 2001 and 2007. This too would be an interesting topic for future research.

To conclude, there are difference between UN discourse on sexual violence and violence against women before and after the adoption of UNSCR 1820. The actual impact of the weapon of war framing that UNSCR 1820 solidified is however difficult to determine.

Still, whether due to the Resolution or other factors, UN discourse has an taken an important turn towards the elimination of all sexual violence in conflict.

References

Angermuller, Johannes (2020), "Poststructuralist Discourse Studies: From Structure to Practice" in De Fina, Anna & Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Discourse Studies*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 235-254.

Anholt, Rosanne Marrit (2016), "Understanding sexual violence in armed conflict: cutting ourselves with Occam's razor", Journal of International Humanitarian Action, 1:6.

APA - American Psychological Association (n.d.), "social reality", retrieved 1 May 2025, from https://dictionary.apa.org/social-reality.

Ayiera, Eve (2010), "Sexual violence in conflict: A problematic international discourse", *Feminist Africa*, No. 14, pp. 7-20.

Burnett, Scott (2024), "Kritisk diskursanalys som feministisk metod" in Kolankiewicz, Marta; Liinason, Mia & Sager, Maja (eds.), *Genusvetenskapliga forskningsmetoder*, Nordic Academic Press, Lund, pp. 359-378.

Buss, Doris E. (2009), "Rethinking 'Rape as a Weapon of War'", *Fem Leg Stud*, Vol. 17, pp. 145-163.

Crawford, Kerry F. (2013), "From spoils to weapons: framing wartime sexual violence", *Gender & Development*, Vol. 21:3, 505-517.

Crawford, Kerry F. (2017), *Wartime Sexual Violence: From Silence to Condemnation of a Weapon of War*, Georgetown University Press.

Derrida, Jacques (1967), *Speech and Phenomena*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston.

Eriksson, Mia (2024), "Konsten att analysera en känsla" in Kolankiewicz, Marta; Liinason, Mia & Sager, Maja (eds.), *Genusvetenskapliga forskningsmetoder*, Nordic Academic Press, Lund, pp. 429-444.

Eriksson Baaz, Maria & Stern, Maria (2013), Se*xual violence as a weapon of war? Perceptions, prescriptions, problems in the Congo and beyond*, Zed Books, London, New York.

Fairclough, Norman (1898), *Language and Power*, Longman Inc., New York.

Foucault, Michel (1969), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Éditions Gallimard, France.

Fuchs, Christian (2021), *Foundations of Critical Theory*, Routledge, London.

Goldstoff, Melissa Goldenberg (2010), "Security Council Resolution 1820: An Imperfect but Necessary Resolution to Protect Civilians from Rape in War Zones", *Cardozo Journal of Law & Gender*, Vol. 16:3, pp. 491-518.

Hall, Stuart (2021), "The work of representation", in Prentki, Tim & Abraham, Nicola (eds.) *The Applied Theatre Reader*, Routledge, New York.

Halperin, Sandra & Heath, Oliver (2017), *Political research. Methods and practical skills*, Oxford University Press, Glasgow.

Hidalgo Tenorio, Encarnacion (2011), "Critical Discourse Analysis, An overview", *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, pp. 183-210.

Jacobs, Thomas (2018), "The Dislocated Universe of Laclau and Mouffe: An Introduction to Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory", *Critical Review*, 30:3-4, pp. 294-315.

Johnson-Freese, Joan (2023), *Women, Peace and Security - An Introduction*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London.

Kolankiewicz, Marta; Liinason, Mia & Sager, Maja (eds.), "Inledning" in *Genusvetenskapliga forskningsmetoder*, Nordic Academic Press, Lund, pp. 11-27.

Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso, London.

Lazar, Michelle M. (2007), "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis", *Critical Discourse Studies*, 4(2), pp. 141-164.

Ostermann, Falk & Sjöstedt, Roxanna (2023), "Discourse Analysis and Discourse Theories" in Mello, Patrik A & Ostermann, Falk (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Foreign Policy Analysis Methods*, Routledge, London, pp. 101-116.

Paz, Alejandro I. (2013), "Discourse Theory" in McGee, Jon R. & Warms, Richard L. (eds.), *Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia*, Sage Publications, pp. 191-196.

Peltola, Larissa (2018), "Rape and Sexual Violence Used as a Weapon of War and Genocide", CMC Senior Theses.

Shepherd, Laura J. (2008), *Gender, Violence and Security: Discourse As Practice*, Zed Books, London & New York.

Shepherd, Laura J. (2010) "Women, armed conflict and language – Gender, violence and discourse", *International Review of the Red Cross,* Vol. 92 No. 877, pp. 143-160.

Shepherd, Laura J. (2011), "Sex, Security and Superhero(in)es: From 1325 to 1820 and Beyond", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 13:4, pp. 504-521.

Shepherd, Laura J. (2017), *Gender, UN Peacebuilding, and the Politics of Space: Locating Legitimacy*, Oxford University Press.

Sjoberg, Laura (2007), "Introduction to Security Studies: Feminist Contributions", *Security Studies*, 18:183-213.

Slemon, Allie (2025), "Absences and Silences in Critical Discourse Analysis: Methodological Reflections", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 24, pp. 1-10.

Stark, Lindsey & Wessells, Mike (2012), "Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War" *JAMA*, 308(7), pp. 677-678.

Van Dijk, Teun A., (2015) "Critical Discourse Analysis" in Tannen, Deborah; Hamilton, Heidi E. & Schiffrin, Deborah (red.), T*he Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Wiley Blackwell, pp. 466-485.

Walby, Sylvia (1989), "Theorising Patriarchy", *Sociology*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 213-234.

Wibben, Annick T. R. (2011), *Feminist security studies: a narrative approach*, Routledge, London, New York.

Resolutions:

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2005), Resolution 2005/41, adopted on 19 April 2005. UN Doc. E/CN.4/RES/2005/41.

United Nations General Assembly (2003), Resolution 57/181, adopted on 4 February 2003. UN Doc. A/RES/57/181.

United Nations General Assembly (2006), Resolution 61/143, adopted on 19 December 2006. UN Doc. A/RES/61/143.

United Nations General Assembly (2007), Resolution 62/134, adopted on 18 December 2007. UN Doc. A/RES/62/134.

United Nations General Assembly (2010), Resolution 65/187, adopted on 21 December 2010. UN Doc. A/RES/65/187.

United Nations General Assembly (2010), Resolution 65/288, adopted on 21 December 2010. UN Doc. A/RES/65/288.

United Nations Human Rights Council (2006), Resolution 2006/18, adopted on 24 August 2006. UN Doc. A/HRC/Sub.1/58/36.

United Nations Security Council (2008), Resolution 1820, adopted on 19 June 2008. UN Doc. S/RES/1820 .

United Nations Security Council (2009), Resolution 1888, adopted on 30 September 2009. UN Doc. S/RES/1888.

United Nations Security Council (2010), Resolution 1960, adopted on 16 December 2010. UN Doc. S/RES/2010.

United Nations Security Council (2013), Resolution 2106, adopted on 24 June 2013. UN Doc. S/RES/2106.