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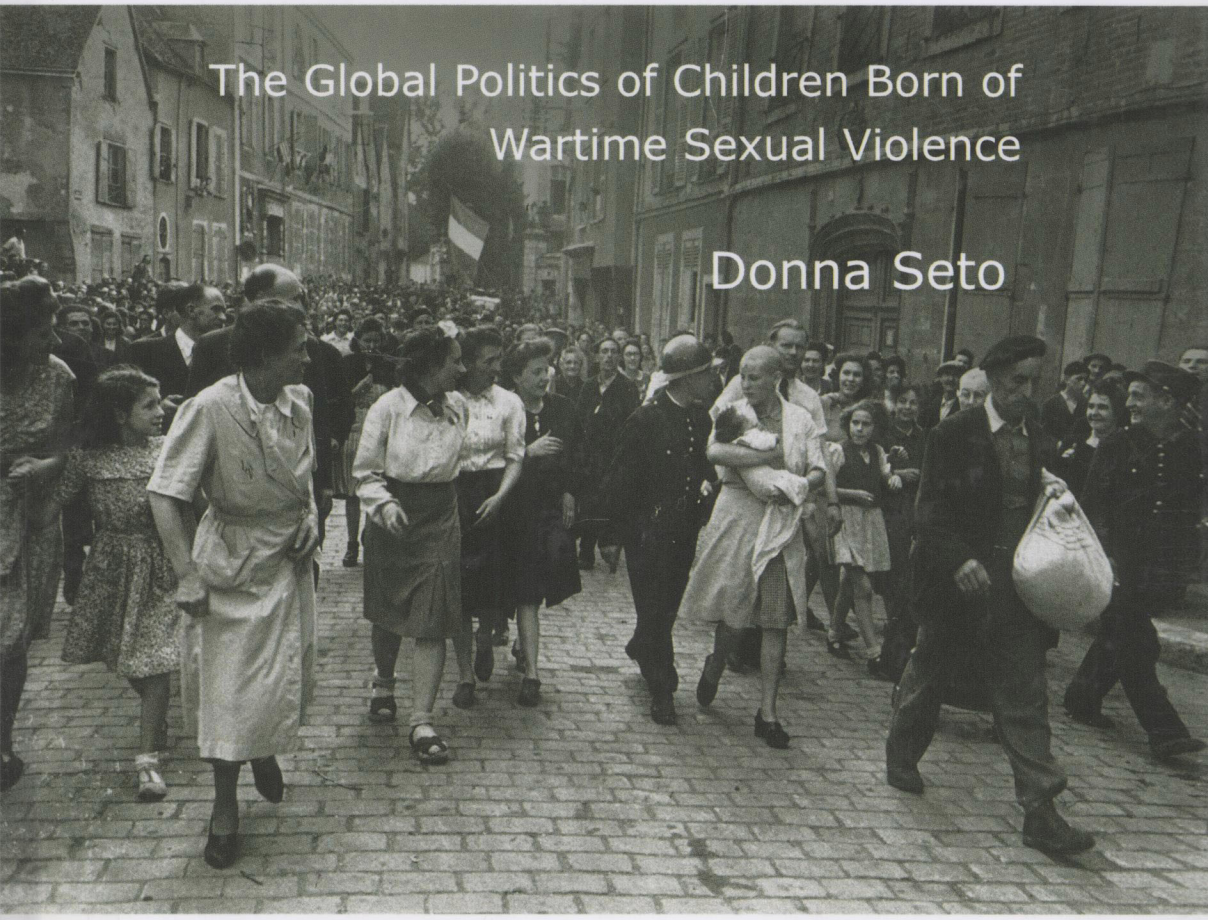
No Place for a War Baby



The Global Politics of Children Born of Wartime Sexual Violence

Donna Seto

GENDER IN A GLOBAL/LOCAL WORLD

No Place for a War Baby

The Global Politics of Children Born of Wartime Sexual Violence

DONNA SETO
Australian National University, Australia

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藏书章

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NO PLACE FOR A WAR BABY

Gender in a Global/Local World

Series Editors: Jane Parpart, Pauline Gardiner Barber
and Marianne H. Marchand

Gender in a Global/Local World critically explores the uneven and often contradictory ways in which global processes and local identities come together. Much has been and is being written about globalization and responses to it but rarely from a critical, historical, gendered perspective. Yet, these processes are profoundly gendered albeit in different ways in particular contexts and times. The changes in social, cultural, economic and political institutions and practices alter the conditions under which women and men make and remake their lives. New spaces have been created – economic, political, social – and previously silent voices are being heard. North-South dichotomies are being undermined as increasing numbers of people and communities are exposed to international processes through migration, travel, and communication, even as marginalization and poverty intensify for many in all parts of the world. The series features monographs and collections which explore the tensions in a "global/local world," and includes contributions from all disciplines in recognition that no single approach can capture these complex processes.

Previous titles are listed at the back of the book

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Preface:
No Place for a War Baby

In this latest volume of the Gender in a Global/Local World series Donna Seto analyzes how children born of sexual violence during wartime are rarely the subject of international relations (IR) theory – in particular feminist IR theory – and existing children's rights regimes. She argues that these children, created from a strategic use of (sexual) violence during war, are highly politicized subjects, yet they continue to be marginalized in humanitarian programs not just in academic literature. Recent examples of such practices of wartime sexual violence abound and include conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (in particular in Bosnia-Herzegovina), Rwanda, and more recently Darfur.

While IR theory has been mostly concerned with issues of war, peace, and security it has predominantly done so from a state-centered perspective. The end of the Cold War provided new openings and "opportunities" to decenter the hitherto state-centric perspective, and re-orient the study of war and security toward a more human-centered approach, as exemplified by critical security studies. Although critical security studies has been criticized by feminist IR for not adequately addressing gender-related security concerns, the "encounters" between the two subfields have resulted in a rich and booming literature on gender and war, peace and security, especially related to post-Cold War conflicts. Contributions by feminists include studying war rape as a strategic weapon in "ethnocide", whereby women are seen as the boundary-ma(r)kers of ethnic groups and their (wartime) rape serves to reduce the group's ethnic integrity. In these analyses women are often constructed as victims. In contrast, other analyses go beyond a "women as victims" approach and address women's active involvement in war, peace and security. Such studies include women as perpetrators of violence, for instance as soldiers and in guerilla movements, but also focus on women as important actors in post-conflict reconstruction and peacemaking. Such a role has been ratified by United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1325 (2000), which underscores women's contributions in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as peace negotiations, peace-building, and peacekeeping, and, finally, in humanitarian aid efforts, as well as in post-conflict reconstruction. As contributions to this series confirm feminists have also been concerned with the constructions of masculinity in war and the military.

Although wartime rape is a topic addressed by feminists, babies born as a result of such rapes have not received much, if any, attention. As Seto shows, even humanitarian programs addressing children's needs in conflict zones do not

recognize war babies as a legitimate subject of attention. While, humanitarian programs are concerned with child soldiers, child refugees and child laborers, war babies are not included in these programs. Seto suggests that the discursive construction of children is based on the assumption of innocence and victimhood. And, while war babies can obviously not be held responsible for their existence, their identity is nonetheless constructed as representative of the enemy (of the community and the nation), which undermines their supposed innocence and makes them highly politicized subjects. As their presence is often rejected or silenced by the community, ethnic group, or nation to which the mother belongs, humanitarian intervention on behalf of these vulnerable children is extremely difficult. In her conclusion, Seto calls for a reconfiguration and redefinition of the identities of these war babies, which would shed them from their enemy-related identification. In other words, she suggests that communities, as part of their post-conflict reconstruction efforts, need to re-visit their rejection of children born of wartime sexual violence.

Hence this volume addresses a very complex and highly politicized issue. Making children born out of wartime sexual violence visible may also inadvertently affect their mothers who have remained silent on the issue because of possible repercussions from within their communities and families. Seto's contribution, however, seeks a delicate balance between the importance of making these children visible and addressing their needs, on the one hand, and respecting the needs and concerns of the women who have been wartime rape victims on the other. With her study, Seto unravels the many layers and complexities surrounding the identity construction of war babies and, in so doing, uncovers an important silence in feminist IR theory and children's rights regimes. As such, *No Place for a War Baby* is an important reading for academics and practitioners alike, and a significant addition to the series.

Marianne H. Marchand
Jane L. Parpart
Pauline Gardiner Barber

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Donna Seto, Vancouver, February 2013

List of Abbreviations

AUD	Australian Dollars
AI	Amnesty International
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AWF	Asian Women's Fund
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IR	International Relations
IUCW	International Union for Child Welfare
LILA	League of Filipina Grandmothers
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SS	*Schutzstaffel* Guards
TWRF	Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WCIP	The War and Children Identity Project
WWI	World War One (1914–1918)
WWII	Second World War (1939–1945)

To war babies everywhere

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Introduction

"Faisal changed my life. Because of him I am sick. Because of him my life is ruined" (Polgreen 2005). These words were uttered by Ashta in 2005, a thirty-year-old mother residing in the Al Riyadh refugee camp located on the border of Chad and Sudan. Until recently, the Janjaweed, literally translated as the "devil on horseback", has ravaged Sudan's south-westerly region of Darfur (Bashir and Lewis 2008, Amnesty International 2004a, 2004b, Matheson 2004). The Janjaweed had subscribed to a campaign of sexual violence as a strategic means of inflicting terror, shame, and long-term suffering on a community that has traditionally protected female chastity. Ashta was raped by members of the Janjaweed as she tried to flee her village. The rape left Ashta pregnant with an unwanted child. She gave birth to Faisal nine months after the assault. Her child is among the hundreds of babies produced by the use of sexual violence in the conflict that plagued Darfur. Anecdotal evidence provided by local midwives and aid organizations has indicated that there were two dozen babies of rape born in Al Riyadh refugee camp in early 2005 (Polgreen 2005).

Darfur is not the only community dealing with the consequence of children born as a result of wartime sexual violence. An orphanage in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, houses the consequences of a systematic campaign of wartime rape and forced impregnation. At face value, these children do not appear to be that different from other children. However, their ages and ethnicities reveal that they were a part of the campaign to produce "Chetnik" children during the 1992–95 Bosnian conflict (Saunders 2006).[1] During the conflict, sexual violence occurred in prison camps, safe houses, and schools that were turned into centers for rape (MacKinnon 1994, Niarchos 1995). Similar to the conflict in Darfur, the rapes were encouraged as a strategy for instilling long-term forms of suffering and social humiliation in the Bosnian community. Some of these children were conceived in state-sanctioned

1 The implication that the Serbian military was responsible for the rape of Bosnian-Muslim women is not to suggest that either ethnicity is solely to blame for the violence that occurred in the former Yugoslavia. Sexual violence was used as a form of intimidation and as a means of instilling terror. Thus, both groups of women were subject to forms of sexual violence. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that men were also subject to sexual or gender-based violence during the 1992–95 conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This discussion of the use of sexual violence is not meant to essentialize the experience or to indicate that a specific ethnic group has been responsible. Rather, it seeks to illustrate the complexity of sexual violence in conflict and the difficulty of explaining it by recourse to simple oppositions.

circumstances under a policy of forced impregnation where the birth of children of the enemy was a strategic method to instill further terror and suffering in the opposing community. Other children who were the result of mass rape understood to be an inevitable consequence of war. Despite the difference between a state-sanctioned case of forced impregnation and individual cases of rape in war, the ill-treatment of children born under such circumstances is similar across the world.

Darfur and Bosnia-Herzegovina are not isolated cases where children were born as a result of militarized sexual violence. The creation of children of war, whether as an accidental by-product or a strategic campaign of violence, has historically accompanied the cycles of war and peace. In a political climate where rape has been used as a strategic method of war, children born of sexual violence have become an increasingly visible issue. In the past two decades, wartime sexual violence has been recognized as a crime against humanity and a war crime (Green 2004, Hansen 2001, Niarchos 1995). Despite the recognition of wartime sexual violence, the international discourse has "so far proved inadequate in formulating a response to the children born as a result of such attacks" (Watson 2008: 1). Available research concerning this particular group of war-affected children suggests that there is a lack of systematic fact-finding or humanitarian programs that adequately addresses the needs of children born of wartime sexual violence on a global scale (Carpenter 2007a, 2010). As a group, children remain under-represented within mainstream explanations of international politics. Yet, more specifically, children born of wartime sexual violence are rarely mentioned at all.

Aim

By positioning children born of sexual violence as a central point of enquiry, this book questions why this specific group of war-affected children has been missing from the study of international politics. This book positions itself at the beginning of questioning where the children born of wartime sexual violence are in the study of International Relations (IR), and more importantly, ask why have these children been missing from the existing studies of wartime rape and children's rights regimes. In doing so, this book takes the reader through a study of some of the main theories within the field of international politics to search for how these children might be considered. The purpose of questioning where these children are provides the impetus to revealing what the exclusion of children born of wartime sexual violence might say about the contemporary methods of understanding warfare.

Created from the strategic use of violence in war, children born of war are cloaked in the intricacies of politics. At the very least, children born of war have come to symbolize the anxiety and complexity of contemporary conflict. They act as symbols of violence where they remind their community and their mothers of what occurred during war. In contrast to children who are directly or indirectly affected by conflict, the detriments experienced by children born of wartime sexual violence cannot be easily defined. Unlike other groups of war-affected children, the

suffering of children born of wartime sexual violence often occurs after conflict has formally ended. Positioned as a postscript of conflict, children born of wartime sexual violence suffer from a long list of abuses that are difficult to summarize through the available discourse on human rights. For instance, the identities of children conceived of wartime sexual violence are constructed based on violent modes of "personalized warfare" such as forced impregnation, sexual violence, and militarized sexual exploitation. These practices employ the psychological and emotional aspects of conflict while also involving complicated issues relating to identity, gendered expectations, and memory (Edkins 2003, Agamben 1999, Ross 2003, Salzman 1998). As a consequence, the suffering experienced by these children is an intrinsic consequence of the climate of conflict and, often, their own identities.

Despite their politicized identities, the discipline of IR has been unable to accommodate these children as subjects of political inquiry. Prided in its study of war, security, and prescriptions of peace, IR's focus on state-behavior has left little room to explore the subject of children born of war. Even within the sub-disciplines of international politics, such as feminist IR, children born of wartime sexual violence remain bystanders to discussions concerning war and sexual violence more specifically (DeLaet 2007, McEvoy-Levy 2007). As a consequence, children who are born as the result of wartime sexual violence have typically remained as ciphers: as instances among many by which to reflect upon the torture, trauma, and humiliation that the war-affected woman had experienced. This discussion has rarely included the experiences and interests of children who are born under such circumstances.

This book also finds that children born of wartime sexual violence are marginalized within the children's rights programs concerning war-affected children. Despite the emerging research concerning child soldiers and refugee children, children born of wartime sexual violence largely remains a non-issue in humanitarian circles. It is questionable whether if more work is to be included on children would they become part of the larger discussion concerning international politics. This exclusion of children born of war from existing studies of war-affected children means that they are left out of the international humanitarian discourse concerning children. Whereas other war-affected children have been discussed in studies of contemporary conflict, the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence has not adequately been addressed (Carpenter 2007b, Watson 2007). On occasion, they surface in the news or humanitarian reports concerned with the disaster of modern warfare. But rarely are the voices and the experiences of this particular group of war-affected children heard in mainstream IR, feminist IR and the children's rights regime. Most often, these children exist on the margins of societies ravaged by war, remaining unheard in circles of child support.[2]

2 The book will consider specific cases of children who have been ostracized, including instances in which children have demonstrated the agency to break out of their marginalized situation. The author argues that although cases exist in which children have been able to grow up without being aware of their origins and live relatively normal lives, their example cannot effectively be isolated from their ill-treatment.

The absence of children born of war from the discipline of International Relations proves curious. This book will explore how these children have fallen between the analytical gaps of two of the most relevant approaches within global politics: feminist International Relations and children's human rights regimes. The purpose of concentrating on feminist contributions to IR as well as children's rights regimes is to highlight if these fields – which have concentrated on war rape and children – can accommodate children born of war as subjects of enquiry. Upon initial speculation, the author finds that children born of wartime sexual violence are often silenced, ignored, and, at best, embedded within the footnotes of feminist academic texts that discuss the occurrence of sexual violence in war. Although feminist efforts have brought international attention to the issue of war rape, it questions why the discourse has ignored the experiences of children born of war. In doing so, this book argues that despite the debates within feminist approaches to IR, the focus has often been on the war-affected woman rather than the child.

Definitions

The topic of children born of wartime sexual violence, an issue that has largely been relegated to the margins, is ambitious. Thus, key terms need to be addressed in order to set the boundaries of this book. At the center of this book are questions concerning ontology and epistemology which help to identify the background of concepts such as women, gender, sexual violence, children, and childhood. Accounting for the realities we define for ourselves and the knowledge we create helps us to understand how issues are formed, why particular topics receive attention whereas others are silenced, and who is behind the frameworks and perspectives that are applied. Understanding the background of concepts and frameworks reveals that they are socially contingent and applied for a political purpose rather than something that can be considered to be natural and unchanging (Alexander 2005, Wibben 2011). This process of interrogating underlying structures suggests that an understanding of a subject is never far removed from the political process that defines it (Cox 1981). In saying this, this book will primarily explore four key terms: ontology, epistemology, sexual violence, and children born of wartime sexual violence.

The study of ontology can be defined as what we understand as knowledge and its relationship to the world. Ontology shapes or categorizes the different criteria that determine how theories come to frame knowledge conceptually (Weldon 2006, Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006). For instance, it shapes how we understand wartime rape, children, and what is important to our theoretical enquiry. Thus, ontology refers to the categories we form in order to map the world intellectually. They are the "starting points" that researchers use to construct knowledge related to a topic (Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006, Steans 2006). This book approaches ontology as a contested state of inquiry. Here, ontology is structured within a historical timeline as a concept, or a set of concepts, that have an origin as well as a purpose. This understanding of ontology also suggests that the way we come to understand the

world is based on a particular perception that is both context-specific and dependent on a particular idea of the world. Thus, ontology cannot be considered as an uncontested truth, rather it fluctuates with history, geography, and time.

Epistemology refers to the study of how theorists go about acquiring knowledge. In short, epistemology is how we know things and come to ask the theoretical questions that accompany research. It is important because it shapes the practice of knowing, how we come to acquire such knowledge, and the methodology used to produce knowledge. In Ann Tickner's words, methodology is thus epistemology in action (Tickner 2006). Epistemology is key to the study of children born of war as their absence from the study of international politics is based on the conceptual neglect of certain studies of international politics. As will be explored in more detail in Chapter Two, positivist methods of enquiry such as those adopted by mainstream IR have excluded subjects that are not compatible with their idea of politics (that is children). Knowledge we develop is fundamentally shaped by the questions we ask (and do not ask), and by what we consider interesting and important (Enloe 2004a, Foucault 2000, Butler 1999, Wibben 2011). Methodology is our approach to developing knowledge. Typically, methodology has been used to question whether the researcher engages in qualitative or quantitative methods, or what particular methods one should use to examine a specific question (Weldon 2006). Bringing epistemology into the light helps to locate the researcher and to suggest that research is never far removed from the subject that is studied. In saying this, it is implied that research is framed through the preferences and the background of those who do the questioning.

The subject of epistemology deals with the creation and dissemination of knowledge that is used in select contexts and areas of theoretical enquiry. Whereas ontology is *what* we know, epistemology is *how* questions shape the practice of knowing. This practice of acquiring knowledge is the basis on which we reason with the understanding of the world (Tickner 2006). It demonstrates that the way in which practitioners do their research is predicated on particular understandings of what concepts are important, what questions are asked, and what are the most appropriate methods of conducting research. An enquiry into how ontological concepts and epistemological approaches are considered allows researchers to understand that there are often different and conflicting modes of questioning (Smith 1996). Ontological and epistemological considerations are central to this book because they determine if and how children born of wartime sexual violence are conceptualized in global politics, and offer the tools with which these children might be re-conceptualized.

This book recognizes that ontology and epistemology fluctuates through the eyes of the researcher. Rather than considered as something that is set in stone and identified as a world truth, epistemology and ontology are understood as maps or guides in which to tell a story. However, like maps, the ideas of ontology and epistemology are created and accepted by a particular group and should not be considered as static-unchanging truths. In saying this, this book recognizes the vulnerable position the researcher positions herself in. As an individual curious

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