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Consequences of Sexual Violence During Civil Conflicts for Post-Conflict Democratization

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Countries face large obstacles in the post-civil conflict period, including democratization. The nature of the warfare during the civil conflict may have important implications for the prospects for future democratization. Specifically, the experience of sexual violence during civil conflicts may hinder democratization. I argue that countries that experience prevalent sexual violence during civil conflicts have lower chances for post-conflict democratization than those without. This occurs through the psychological consequences of sexual violence on victims and communities. Sexual violence negatively impacts victims, but it can also have more widespread negative consequences for society. Communities of the victims may collectively respond to wartime sexual violence in ways that can generate increased hostilities, decrease the chances of enemies reaching the cooperation needed for democratization. In this paper, I examine these political consequences with cross-national data of sexual violence in conflicts, and find results that show that increased prevalence of wartime sexual violence is related to lower levels of post-conflict democratization success.

Key Words: Democratization, sexual violence, civil conflict

Do the consequences of sexual violence during civil conflicts have effects on the post-conflict period? Specifically, does wartime sexual violence affect the prospects for post-conflict democratization? During conflict, combatants will use a variety of weapons in order to achieve their goals, including traditional warfare, guerilla tactics, terrorist strategies, human rights abuses, and rape (Collier et al. 2003; Leiby 2009). The use of sexual violence in war has existed since antiquity and, although the international community defines its use as a war crime over twenty years ago, its use continues in many of the conflicts of the contemporary age, including many civil conflicts. The use of sexual violence in conflict has been shown to cause serious physical and psychological damage to the victims, but there has not been any systematic examination of the political impacts of sexual violence on post-conflict communities. Although psychology and sociology literature widely acknowledges that wartime sexual violence causes harm to victims, many questions remain about other consequences. What are the political

consequences of this type of violence for post-conflict societies? Can the physical and psychological effects of wartime sexual violence have negative implications for the ability of surviving communities to reconcile or gain political stability? This paper explicitly asks and seeks to explain: how is the process of democratization in post-civil conflict states affected by wartime sexual violence?

A growing body of literature examines the causes of sexual violence and how it is carried out in civil conflicts. Early work to explain the causes of wartime sexual violence focused mainly on ethnic or identity divisions (Bloom 1999; Plumper and Neumayer 2006). More recent works find that recruitment tactics and intra-troop discipline predict its use and relative degree in war (Cohen 2012, 2013a). Other work notes variations and patterns of intensity in scale, finding that rape occurs across all conflict types (Wood 2008, 2010; Leiby 2009; Cohen, et al. 2013). Although knowing the causes and trends of this practice is essential in developing our understanding of this type of violence during wartime, it is also important to understand the post-conflict impact. Aside from case study evidence, scholars have not examined the specific outcomes of wartime sexual violence, including its political consequences (Sharlach 2000; Liebling-Kalifani et al. 2011; Seifer 1996).

Unlike the recent work on sexual violence, there is a large literature that addresses the prospects for post-conflict democratization. Given significant heterogeneity in democratization trajectories for post-conflict states (Colaresi 2014), many scholars have attempted to understand the factors contributing to success and failure, most focusing on the civil conflict characteristics. Colaresi (2014) and Wantchekon and Neeman (2012) focus on the type of external intervening actors. Gurses and Mason (2008) focus on the nature of the outcome of the civil war, specifically finding that a decisive military victory on one side decreases the probability of post-war democratization. Although many scholars have attempted to identify important conflict characteristics that affect democratization, there is notable empirical ambiguity (Colaresi 2014: 66-67). World Bank reports (2008) and Fortna and Huang (2012) find that there is little empirical evidence to suggest that the traits of civil wars matter for post-conflict trajectories, concluding that post-civil war democratization follows the same patterns as other, more peaceful, contexts. Similarly, there has been inconsistent results concerning the role of ethnic heterogeneity (Fortna 2009) and the role of IOs, like the United Nations (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Pickering and Peceny 2006).

Although there is empirical ambiguity and theoretical disagreements about the factors that affect prospects for post-civil conflict democratization, I argue that one important factor is the prevalence of wartime sexual violence during the conflict. In this paper, I develop a framework to explain the political consequences of wartime sexual violence. Given that the topic of political consequences of sexual violence during conflicts has little existing systematic

work outside of small-N case studies, the framework presented here builds a unique and original foundation for future work for many political outcomes, linking individual victim experiences to the collective experience of communities. After examining the existing literature on post-conflict democratization, the expanding field of wartime sexual violence and its limitations, I offer my theoretical foundation. Beginning with statement of my assumptions, I explicitly lay out the logic of my explanation, and how such assumptions build to my propositions. My foundation explains how individual incidents of wartime sexual violence within a civil conflict context lead to community memories of trauma, which generate mistrust among those within a society. Thus, the skills necessary for conflict resolution, peaceful democratization, and institution-building are damaged. Next, I test the propositions of my theory using the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) dataset recently developed by Cohen and Nordás 2014. I find results that support my hypotheses regarding sexual violence and post-conflict democratization, but results that call for further investigation into post-civil conflict democratization processes. Finally, I discuss the implications of my findings, and avenues for future research building from my presented framework.

DEMOCRATIZATION AS A POST-CIVIL CONFLICT CHALLENGE

There is a wealth of work that examines the consequences of civil conflicts. Due to the specific intensity of civil conflict violence, countries face large scale casualty counts, flight of refugees, and the devastation of social and economic infrastructure (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier et al. 2003). The intentional destruction of a country's social and economic structures during a conflict has serious negative implications for regaining post-conflict stability (Collier 1999; Murdoch and Sandler 2004). The destruction of the economic infrastructure is threatened in the post conflict period when political actors are unable to credibly commit to peace settlements and new institutions (Flores and Noruddin 2009). Ghoborah, Huth and Russett (2003) also find that civil conflicts affect human suffering, even long after conflicts have ended. They demonstrate the long-lasting negative health impacts, including deaths and disabilities, generated by specific diseases and conditions, which disproportionately affect women and children. Post-civil conflict states may face additional challenges of meeting medical treatment needs, having impacts for public health and economic structures.

One important outcome for post-civil conflict states is its chances for democratization, addressed by a major body of work (Hippler 2008; Gurses and Mason 2008; Hartzel and Hoddie 2003; Doyle and Sambanis 2000). The challenges of democratization in post-conflict societies are great; as Roy Licklidert aptly notes, it is difficult to bring 'groups of people who have been killing each other with considerable enthusiasm and success...together to form

a common government” (1995: 681). Much of the work in this vein considers the characteristics of the conflict and its termination. Gurses and Mason (2008) demonstrate that civil conflicts that end in negotiated settlements have higher chances for democratization than those that end in decisive military victories. They also show that previous experience with democracy and non-identity based conflicts have higher probabilities of democratization (Gurses and Mason 2008).

Other work considers the number and type of different actors involved. While some scholars criticize peacekeeping operations for over-simplification, standardization and an institutional focus (Labonte 2003), Doyle and Sambanis (2000) note that these operations improve the chances for durable peace and democracy. Pickering and Peceny (2006) focus on the role of international organizations and military forces, finding that liberal state involvement does not improve the chances of democratization, although United Nations involvement does. Other work from Colaresi (2014) finds that if previous interstate rivals are involved in conflicts, there are disincentives for post-conflict democratization. In a related vein, Wantchekon and Neeman (2012; 2002) find that external interventions increase the chances of post-civil conflict democratization when combined with a heterogeneous population.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN WARFARE: APPROACHES & LIMITATIONS

During conflict, civilians may not only suffer from traditional types of violence with damaging health effects (Ghobarah et al. 2003), but may also experience sexual violence. There are two approaches to understanding this violence, although both acknowledge the specific types of damage it causes. The first approach considers sexual violence as the result of intentional terrorism of civilians. Work using this more traditional approach appeared mostly after the atrocities committed in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, when the international community recognized systematic sexual violence as a punishable crime against humanity (Engle 2005). With this renewed attention, most of the subsequent scholarly studies sought to explain the causes and motivations of combatants. Sharlach (2000) argues that the aim of large scale sexual violence is the destruction of groups by damaging communities and weakening family morale, while others claim that group damage occurs through the normalization of violence against women (Freedman 2011). Leiby (2009) finds that governments and insurgents will use sexual violence in order to fit their strategic needs for deterrence and mobilization. Likewise, Seifer (1996) finds that wartime rape serves a specific and symbolic function in the destruction of society, which harms cultural and collective identities of entire groups. Here, explanations of rape suggest that the motivations of rape in wartime are to inflict permanent and destabilizing damage to communities, through violent physical and psychological trauma to victims and their group members.

The second approach, however, reflects newer research that diverges from previous explanations. With newly developed empirical data, Cohen et al. (2013) argue that sexual violence is neither 'inevitable' nor 'ubiquitous,' and occurs mainly as the result of poorly controlled troop units, not intentional terrorism or destruction of communities. Here, sexual violence reflects a lack of discipline rather than a methodological destruction of society. This approach suggests that sexual violence is not a pre-mediated act, but an unfortunate result of unstable war conditions. This growing literature also offers distinct explanations for the causes of sexual violence in civil war. Cohen (2013a; 2013b) notes that perpetrators are not only members of the armed forces of the state and rebel forces, but also include other civilians and peacekeeping forces, including women. Her findings indicate that gang rape results from attempts to foster intra-troop cohesion in situations where soldiers may have not voluntarily joined the armed forces.

The valuable and recent contributions of wartime sexual violence work seek to explain the causes of such violence. Concerning the consequences of such violence, the literature is largely silent. The existing work has been limited to the case-study qualitative approach. Liebling-Kalifani et al. (2011) conduct an extensive investigation into the physical and psychological consequences of sexual violence and torture on women during war by examining health conditions in post-civil conflict Liberia. Their study finds a wide range of negative health impacts resulting from the widespread killings, physical and psychological torture, sexual assault, forced prostitution and labor, and abductions that occurred during the conflict. These negative health consequences include urgent and unmet gynecological concerns, physical mutilation, infertility, increased prevalence of HIV, higher rates of psychological distress, higher rates of suicide attempts, links to drug and alcohol additions, the breakdown of familial structures, and significant cultural rejection of the victims (Liebling-Kalifani et al. 2011).. The question unanswered, however, is: what is the political impact of wartime sexual violence on post-conflict societies? Specifically, can wartime sexual violence affect victims and their communities in a way that damages their willingness and skills necessary for conflict resolution, and ultimately peaceful democratization? In the next section, I argue that the answer is yes, laying out my assumptions and theoretical links.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN WARFARE & CONSEQUENCES FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

As outlined above, the characteristics of civil conflicts may have implications for the prospects of post-conflict democratization. Further, sexual violence during conflict has serious physical and psychological consequences for survivors. I argue, here, that these potentially disconnected concepts are related. In order to explain how sexual violence during civil conflicts

contributes to challenges of democratization in the post-conflict period, I develop an explicit theory, building from three main assumptions that lead to a major hypothesis tested in the empirical section.

Assumption 1: Negative Consequences of Wartime Sexual Violence for Victims

My first assumption is that wartime sexual violence is a distinct type of sexual violence that creates negative psychological and physical consequences for individual victims. Work from fields outside of political science consistently suggests that sexual violence in non-conflict conditions has long-term negative health consequences for the victims. Studies in psychology find that sexual violence generally creates persistent negative psychological effects for victims within a community (Xu et al. 2013). The persistent effects include psychiatric disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder and drug abuse. This literature also confirms that sexual violence health effects can remain persistent and long lasting, with the severity of outcomes depending upon victims' different socio-psychological environments and abilities, including things like accessibility of treatment (Basile et al. 2007; Mullen et al. 1993; Atkeson et al. 1982; Burnam et al. 1988; Xu et al. 2013).

Unsurprisingly, the negative health consequences of sexual violence extend to and can be exacerbated by instances in conflict settings. As mentioned above, in Liebling-Kalifani et al.'s (2011) case study of post-conflict Liberia, they find evidence of negative physical consequences, including unmet and urgent gynecological concerns, increased sexually transmitted diseases, and mutilation. Liebling-Kalifani et al.'s (2011) case study also finds negative psychological outcomes, like increased suicide rates, addiction problems, and psychological distress.

Beyond this case study, however, there is still evidence that suggests the negative health outcomes of sexual violence during wartime should extend past conflict termination. Farr (2009) finds that injuries inflicted during conflict settings, like cutting, stabbing, or extreme sexual violence involving the use of foreign objects or multiple-perpetrator rape, can have long term implications, including lifelong disabilities. Other scholars note that the conflict situation itself exacerbates health emergencies if individuals have difficulty accessing adequate health services (Bruntland 2003; McInnes and Lee 2006; Ghorbarah et al. 2003). Without medical attention, the immediate injuries can lead to long-term physical disabilities and mental health problems, like PTSD, anxiety disorders, major depression and suicide (Murray et al. 2002; Hoddie and Smith 2009; Bruntland 2003; Xu et al. 2013; Ghorbarah et al. 2003).

Assumption 2: Negative Consequences Extend Beyond Individual Victims

My second assumption is that the negative physical and psychological health effects of sexual violence outlined above do not only affect individuals. Instead, these instances of violence have an impact on families and

communities, including communal memories of extreme events. Although the individual-specific damages inflicted upon sexual violence victims do not extend onto others, their suffering does affect those in their immediate surroundings, families, and communities.

There is work that suggests individual negative experiences can create more broad, community-level harm. In her work on conviction concentration and political participation, Burch (2013; 2014) finds that when neighborhoods have relatively high percentage rates of convictions and imprisonment, they tend to have lower levels of political participation. Here, Burch (2014, p. 186) explains that “concentration effects act as the central mechanism through which individual experiences with criminal justice shape the political activities and attitudes of entire communities.” Her findings confirm that individuals living in communities with high rates of imprisonment and community supervision by police have lower rates of voter turnout, civic and political activities, and volunteering (Burch 2014; 186). For Burch, the mechanisms through which individual experiences affect their neighbors has to do with the lack of ‘politically active role models,’ and the failure to transmit norms through observation of ‘engagement among their family members and peers’ (Burch 2014, 188; Tam-Cho, Gimpel, and Dyck 2006, 156).

Similarly, police policies, such as ‘stop and frisk’ interactions, targeted at individuals can have community effects. Lerman and Weaver (2014) find that some communities experience concentrated policing where individuals witness high rates of police interactions. In instances where these interactions have excessive physical force and are perceived as unjustified, the “concentration and character of policing can have powerful influence on resulting attitudes about law enforcement” (Lerman and Weaver 2014; 205). The instances of ‘police disrespect’ are experienced as ‘community event[s]’ where individuals are publically humiliated in front of onlookers who may be neighbors, friends, and family (Lerman and Weaver 2014; 205). Their findings suggest that concentrated policing not only affects feelings about the police, but feelings about government responsiveness, and in turn, behavioral outcomes like ‘active avoidance of government’ (p. 206; Weaver and Lerman 2010; Lerman and Weaver forthcoming).

The phenomena of individual experiences affecting community levels of political participation and trust of authority figures should not be limited to only negative experiences with the criminal justice system in the United States. Rather, I argue that high rates of sexual violence in wartime can function much as the negative interactions with law enforcement, convictions, searches and imprisonment. When wartime sexual violence affects a large enough proportion of a community, it is likely that neighbors, friends, peers and family may know individual victims and witness their personal struggles. When there is a high prevalence of victims, their traumatic experiences and struggles will be

witnessed and felt by family members, peers, and others in their social networks, sparking feelings of distrust and injustice.

Further, instances of wartime sexual violence can also be seen as 'community events,' that create persistent communal memories of trauma and injustice. For example, during the Japanese invasion of China during World War II and Rape of Nanjing, then Nanking, large numbers of civilians were murdered and, as the name suggests, raped. Although this event occurred more than seventy years ago, the communal memory still serves as an important source of Chinese patriotism and contention with Japan.¹ Today, the site of the rape of Nanjing holds countless politically symbolic spots, numerous mutilated skeletons, and a museum and monuments dedicated to the traumatic past. In media coverage about the event's continued attention, Wagner (14 Dec 2007) reports that the 'slaughter remains vital for the country's cohesion' and the 'aftershocks of the attack can still be felt today in Chinese-Japanese relations' through documentaries, television programs, and accounts of Japanese denial of the historical significance. Even though the wartime sexual violence perpetrated by the Japanese injured and scarred individual Chinese civilians, the events have real political consequences even seventy years later.

I argue that the experiences of individual victims do have community-level impacts. When there are high levels of sexual violence in a civil conflict setting, individual occurrences are unlikely to only be known to the victims themselves. Instead, spouses, children, other family members, loved ones, friends and neighbors witness their psychological and physical distress. When known enemy or government troops commit sexual assaults, members in the victims' social network recognize injustice, violation of human dignities, and the insecurity of other family members and peers. In turn, communities can respond to the distress of a proportion of a population with feelings of emotional distress, insecurity and extreme distrust of known groups of perpetrators.

Assumption 3: Negative Consequences can have Political Implications

My third assumption is that the negative consequences of sexual violence in post-conflict communities may affect the subsequent political outcomes. As outlined above, negative physical and psychological health outcomes of sexual assault affect individual victims, but their suffering extends to include their families and communities. When wartime sexual violence is particularly pervasive, the conflict becomes a distinct type of conflict. It moves from being

¹ Wagner, Wieland. 14 Dec. 2007. "China's Trauma: Seventy Years after the 'Rape of Nanking'. Spiegel Online: International. Retrieved from: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/china-s-trauma-seventy-years-after-the-rape-of-nanking-a-523453.html>.

one that faced challenges of damaged infrastructure and traumas of casualties, to one that must also deal with sexual violence surviving victims, their mental and physical health concerns, as well as community memory of the attacks. For these distinct types of conflicts, the trauma endured by affected communities is not easily forgotten. This community memory and experience of trauma can manifest in a political sense, namely, trust.

These collective memories and distrust resulting from prevalent sexual violence in civil conflicts impedes post-civil conflict democratization. Putnam (1993) argued that community trust was a necessary component of the social capital needed to foster strong democratic values. Trust is an even more important component in post-civil conflict situations. Once previously warring states have agreed to peace, states need to credibly commit to the establishment or re-establishment of democratic institutions. Previously fighting enemies may question one another's commitment and trustworthiness, toward these goals in the wake of civil conflicts. I argue that the effects of high rates of wartime sexual violence exacerbate this challenge.

Distrust of Government & Post-Conflict Democratization

In the post-conflict period, leaders must be able to make credible commitments to post-conflict institutions (Fearon and Laitin 2001; Flores and Nooruddin 2009). Building from this logic, in order for democratization to take place, leaders must be able to make a credible commitment to establishing, or the re-establishment of, stable political institutions and the provision of security. When a large proportion of the population are victims of sexual violence perpetrated by government troops, new government leaders may not be able to credibly commit to renewed security. If communities share memories of traumatic wartime sexual violence, they may not trust the government to protect basic security, provide for their subsequent health consequences, let alone behave according to democratic standards. The lack of trust is confounded when government troops act as perpetrators for such violence. If government forces cannot be trusted to not commit atrocities against civilians, hold troops accountable for sexual violence, or meet security needs of community members, it will be difficult to maintain trust in its democratic governance.

Distrust of Former Enemy Groups & Democratization

The distrust between groups is also problematic for democratization. Post-civil conflict hostilities present large difficulties for democratization between opposing groups. Legacies of fighting and hostilities make it more difficult to come together in a cooperative and tolerant democratic regime (Licklider 1995). When one group acts as perpetrators of sexual violence against another intra-state group, the hostilities will be exacerbated. The communal memories of sexual violence during a civil conflict can lead to

intensified grievances, anger, resentment, and increased hostilities between groups. In these circumstances, cooperative democratic governance is unlikely. As such, I expect that civil conflicts that have prevalent sexual violence will have greater difficulties in post-conflict democratization. Thus, my propositions are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Higher rates of wartime sexual violence should decrease overall democracy levels in the post-conflict period.

Hypothesis 2: Higher rates of wartime sexual violence should decrease the probability of democratization success.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In order to analyze the relationship between sexual violence during civil conflicts and subsequent democratization, my unit of analysis is each civil conflict. Although there are a number of options for data on post-civil conflicts that extend across a long temporal span, this study is concerned only with civil and internationalized civil conflicts on which there is a measure for the main explanatory variable of sexual violence, limiting the time span to 1989-2009. My dataset includes a total of 121 civil conflicts, with start date and termination date information taken from the 2010 UCDP Conflict Termination dataset. Due to the nature of tumultuous context in which wartime sexual violence occurs and cultural norms of shame, there is a lack of reliable resources for large-N, cross-national and cross-time data on such violence. However, the new Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict dataset (SVAC) developed by Cohen and Nordås (2014) presents sexual violence data on all conflicts between 1989 and 2009. This new dataset enables scholars to examine sexual violence across contexts, and contains a wealth of information on the actors involved, types of sexual violence, and a number of variables, including the location, timing and targeting of victims, for intrastate, internationalized internal, and interstate conflicts as defined by Gleditsch et al (2002), and those defined by Harbom, Melander and Wallensteen (2008). The exact coding used in this study is explained below.

Dependent Variable: Coding Democratization

The major dependent variable in this study is the level of democratization achieved after the end of the civil conflict. In order to gauge this concept, I rely on two dependent measures to reflect post-conflict democratization levels using the Polity IV database developed by Marshall, Gurr and Jaggers (2014).

My first measure evaluates the *Polity* scores for years of interest in the post-conflict period: the first, third and fifth year after a conflict has ended.²

My second dependent variable is *Democratization Success*, which is a dichotomous variable that represents whether a country crossed the threshold of a *Polity* score of 6 or above, measured at the intervals of the first, third or fifth year following the end of a conflict.³

Explanatory Variable: Coding Wartime Sexual Violence

The main explanatory variable in this study is the prevalence of sexual violence in civil conflicts. In the SVAC dataset, three different sources are used to obtain information regarding reported levels of sexual abuse: US State Department, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch field reports. The SVAC builds upon the definition of sexual violence from the International Criminal Court and work done by Wood (2009) by including rape, sexual slavery, prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization or abortion, sexual mutilation and sexual torture for either gender (Cohen and Nordås 2014, 419). The unit of analysis for the SVAC is actor-state-year, where each actor is a side or rebel group in a given conflict. To gauge the prevalence of sexual violence in a conflict, they utilize an ordinal scale from 0 to 3 that ‘captures the reported severity of sexual violence perpetration by an armed actor in a given year’ (Cohen and Nordås 2014, 419). A score of 0 represents no reports mentioning abuses of sexual violence. A score of 1 represents ‘isolated’ sexual violence, where it is ‘likely related to conflict’ and a description of 1-25 victims in a given year for each actor was reported. A score of 2 represents ‘numerous’ reports, where sexual violence was described as “widespread’, or ‘common’, ‘commonplace’, ‘extensive’, ‘frequent’, ‘often’, ‘recurring’, a ‘pattern’” for 25-999 victims (Cohen and Nordås 2014, 420). The highest score of 3 represents ‘massive’ sexual violence, wherein the violence is described as “systematic,” and used as a tool for intimidation, control, or a tactic of war for at least 1000 victims.

² The SVAC dataset, which is explained fully in the next section, includes 27 conflicts that are ongoing at the end of the dataset. In order to maintain as many observations from a limited time frame, I decided to include these conflicts and their post-2009 *Democratization Success* and *Polity* information. In the analysis section, I also include an *Ongoing Conflict* control variable in one model, as well as perform separate estimations on both terminated and ongoing conflicts, finding similar significant results in all three. As such, the term ‘post-conflict’ in the analysis refers to post-conflict and post-SVAC conflicts.

³ It should be noted that as a result of ‘interrupted’ regimes, or those states that broke apart into separate countries, a few of the conflict observations drop out of the data, depending on the time frame. As such, subsequent multivariate analyses reflect a total number of observations as lower than 121 conflicts.

In this study, the unit of analysis is one given conflict. Since there is a discrepancy between my coding and the SVAC unit of analysis, the prevalence of sexual violence received significant recoding. First, there are different scores across the three sources. In many instances, one or two of the other sources reported no sexual violence in a given actor-conflict-year, or had missing data for the actor-conflict-year, while the US State Department included a level of 1 or more. For all of the instances where there were discrepancies across the sources, the highest level of reported sexual violence was used to calculate subsequent sexual violence measures. Second, I created two measures of sexual violence to reflect the unit of analysis of each conflict as one observation, collapsing the scores in the SVAC in two ways.

The first sexual violence measure is *Total Sexual Violence*, which reflects the sum of all sexual violence report scores for all years and across all actors of a conflict. The second measure is the *Log of Total Sexual Violence*, which reflects the log values of the *Total Sexual Violence*. Descriptive statistics for both variables are show below in Table 1. I chose to create a log version in order to rescale the original *Total Sexual Violence* measure, which has an extremely large variance. This also produced more normalized residuals from estimation models. As the original measure is an index of observer perceptions of sexual violence during a conflict, the log value is simply a rescaled index of the same values. Table 1 shows that *Total Sexual Violence*, or *TSV*, has a mean of 7.702, and a maximum score of 114 in one single conflict. This measure also has a large standard deviation of 16.046, showing a wide variance of scores across the conflicts in the sample. The *Log of Total Sexual Violence*, or *LTSV*, scores have a mean of 1.231, and a maximum of 4.745. The standard deviation of the *LTSV* is a much smaller 1.297, showing a much lower variance than that of the *TSV* for each conflict.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

	Total Sexual Violence	Log of Total Sexual Violence
Mean	7.702	1.231
Standard Deviation	16.046	1.297
Minimum	0	0
Maximum	114	4.756

Confounding Factors: Control Variables

State Characteristics. The characteristics of the post-conflict state may have an influence on its chances for democratization. As such, I include two relevant factors. First, a country's prior *Experience with Democracy* may influence its chances for subsequent democratization. If a country has previously experienced democracy, it may have existing skills, attitudes, and institutions available that would expedite the process of transition, deepening or consolidation. As such, I include a dichotomous variable that measures whether or not a country experienced democracy at any point in time prior to the conflict. In this study, a Polity IV score of 6 and above is coded as an experience with democracy.

Secondly, since economic development influences democratization, I control for a country's economic level by including a log transformation of *GDP per capita*. Since there are three years of interest in this study, the *GDP per capita* reflects a one year lag of the log transformation of each year of interest. This means that for every post-conflict year of interest, there is a different lagged *GDP per capita* value.

Conflict Characteristics. The characteristics of the civil conflict may have important implications on the prospects for democratization. First, the intensity of the violence may have severe negative consequences on the level of public health. If a country experiences a large number of human casualties, the labor force may be significantly diminished. As such, I include the logged number of *Battle Deaths* from the civil conflict, which is also taken from the Colaresi (2014) data⁴.

Second, there is evidence that the number of factors involved in the civil war may influence the prospects for post-conflict democratization (Wantchekon 2002). To account for the influence of these factors, I include *Actor Count* that reflects the number of actors present in each conflict.

Third, I include a control for the length of the conflict since longer conflicts may have higher rates of sexual violence. As such, *Duration* reflects the number of years a conflict took place.

International Influences. There are a number of international actors that may have an impact on how democratization takes place in post-civil conflict settings. The role of United Nations interventions during civil conflicts may play a role in the prospects for democratization. Forta (2008) and Doyle and Sambanis (2000) argue that these interventions play a positive role in the post-

⁴ To test for the possibility of collinearity between a conflict's intensity and its duration, I checked the correlation between *Battle Deaths* and *Conflict Duration*, finding that it is 0.418, showing a slight correlation. The exclusion of one or the other does not alter the significance of my main findings.

conflict setting, but there is little evidence on its exact implications for democratization. I control for *UN interventions* in my analysis with a dichotomous variable. Information on UN intervention was taken from a variety of places, including Doyle and Sambanis (2000), Fortna (2004), Kathman, Hultman and Shannon (2013) and Kathman (2013).

ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Wartime Sexual Violence & Post-Conflict Democratization: Bivariate Relationship

Initially, I consider the bivariate relationship between sexual prevalence during civil conflicts, and subsequent democratization. To do this, I first consider the *Polity* trends with varying levels of *TSV*. The results of this relationship are presented below in Figure 1. In order to examine the overall trend, I collapsed scores of *TSV* into three categories: Zero (conflicts with zero sexual violence); Low (conflicts with *TSV* scores between 1 and 3); and High (conflicts with *TSV* scores of four and above). Each of the bars in Figure 1 represents a different interval- one year, three years, and five years post-conflict. In all three post-conflict year intervals, those countries with Zero levels of *TSV* have higher mean *Polity* scores than those civil conflicts with Low or High levels of *TSV*. This effect is most pronounced in the first year following the end of a conflict, where the average *Polity* score for zero *TSV* conflicts is 4.4 points higher than those with high levels of *TSV*. This suggests an inverse relationship between post-civil conflict democracy levels and rates of wartime sexual violence. This pattern continues for all three periods of interest.

Figure 1.

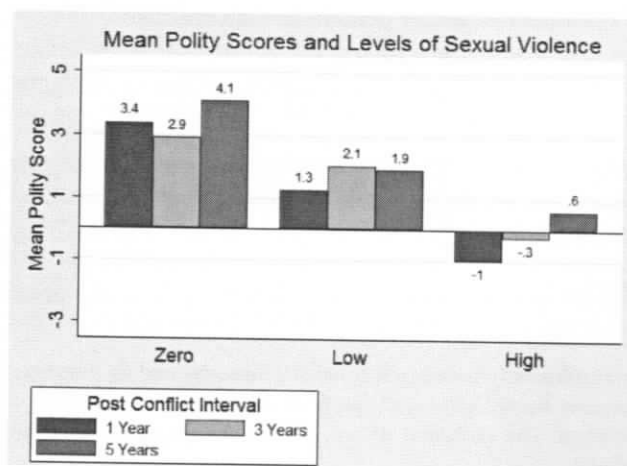


Table 2. Democratization Success across Levels of Sexual Violence

1 Year Post-Conflict	Total Sexual Violence Scores		
	Zero	Low	High
Democracy	47.06% (24)	27.78% (5)	15.38% (8)
Autocracy	52.94% (27)	72.22% (13)	84.62% (44)
Total Column Percentages	100.00% (51)	100.00% (18)	100.00% (52)
Pearson's Chi ² = 12.2467 P= 0.002			
5 Years Post-Conflict	Zero	Low	High
Democracy	58.82% (30)	39.89% (7)	28.85% (15)
Autocracy	41.18% (21)	61.11% (11)	71.15% (37)
Total Column Percentage	100.00% (51)	100.00% (18)	100.00% (52)
Pearson's Chi ² = 9.5856 P=0.008			
**The cell frequencies are reported below the percentages in parentheses.			

To further explore this bivariate relationship, I also considered how *Total Sexual Violence* may affect the prospects for successful democratization, where Polity IV scores of 6 or above are considered a success. Table 2 above presents the relationship between *Total Sexual Violence* and *Democratization Success* for the one and five year post-conflict intervals. Again, *TSV* is collapsed into levels of Zero (no sexual violence reported), Low (total sexual violence prevalence score of 1 to 3 in the SVAC dataset), and High (a score of 4 or above). Each cell reports the percentage and frequency of conflicts with different *TSV* levels that fall into the democracy or autocracy category. In both time periods, more conflicts with high levels of *TSV* fall into the autocratic category than achieve *Democratization Success*. During the first year following the end of a conflict, 47.06% of the conflicts that had Zero levels of sexual violence achieved *Democratization Success*, compared to only 15.38% of the conflicts with High levels of *TSV*. This pattern continues in the next time interval. Five years following conflict termination, 58.82% of conflicts with Zero *TSV* could be considered democracies, while only 28.85% of the High-*TSV* post-conflict states achieved the same level of success. In simple terms, in both time periods,

about half of the post-conflict states with no sexual violence will democratize, while the other half will continue to struggle. Those post-conflict states with high sexual violence, however, have much less success in democratization. Chi-squared tests show that the differences are significant in both time periods. This pattern also suggests an inverse relationship between post-conflict democracy levels and the prevalence of sexual violence during the civil conflict.

Table 3. Bivariate Analysis

	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4
	<i>Polity 1-Year Post- Conflict</i>	<i>Polity 3 Years Post-Conflict</i>	<i>Democratization Success 1-Year Post- Conflict</i>	<i>Democratization Success 3 Years Post-Conflict</i>
<i>Log Total Sexual Violence</i>	-1.621*** (0.405)	-1.622*** (0.421)	-0.487*** (0.126)	-0.489*** (0.118)
<i>Conflict Duration</i>	0.0907 (0.0636)	0.109 (0.0662)	0.0443*** (0.0145)	0.0395*** (0.0146)
Constant	2.427*** (0.726)	3.079*** (0.751)	-0.358** (0.170)	-0.108 (0.166)
Observations	121	121	121	121
R-squared	0.113	0.111		

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

I performed a simple bivariate regression as an additional analysis of relationship between *Log of Total Sexual Violence* and two dependent outcomes of *Polity* scores and *Democratization Success*. The results are presented below in Table IV with robust standard errors. Models 1 and 2 present the result of basic regression *LTSV* on *Polity* scores. In both the first and third year following the end of a conflict, there is a significant and negative effect on the

Polity measure of democracy, even while controlling for *Conflict Duration* since longer conflicts have inherently more opportunities to score higher rates of sexual violence. Models 3 and 4 present the probit estimation of *LTSV* on *Democratization Success* with robust standard errors. Probit estimation is appropriate since the outcome of interest is a dichotomous variable, where 1 represents crossing the *Polity IV* threshold score of 6 for democracy, and 0 represents autocracy. This analysis also shows that *Log of Total Sexual Violence* has a significant and negative impact on *Democratization Success*.

All four of the bivariate tests support my hypotheses that higher rates of sexual violence have a negative impact on post-civil conflict democratization. The patterns reported show an inverse relationship, where higher prevalence of wartime sexual violence is associated with lower levels of post-conflict democracy. Before concluding that sexual violence during civil conflicts inhibits the ability of communities to peacefully come together to build the institutions necessary for democratic success, however, I performed a series of multivariate analyses to control for other confounding factors. This analysis is presented in the next section.

Democratization & Wartime Sexual Violence: Multivariate Analysis

To fully understand the relationship of wartime sexual violence and post-civil conflict democratization, I performed a multivariate regression for *LTSV* on *Polity* scores. The results are presented below in Table IV with robust standard errors. Models 6 and 7 report the results of this estimation for 1 year and 3 years following conflict termination, respectively. In both of these models, *LTSV* has both a negative and significant effect on *Polity*, even while controlling for a state's previous *Experience with Democracy*, *lagged GDP per capita*, the *Number of Actors* present in a conflict, *Conflict Duration*, and conflict intensity in terms of *Battle Deaths*.

One complication in the SVAC's dataset is that many of the conflicts included had not yet terminated in the timeframe of 1989 – 2009 (see endnote ii). To account for this complication, I created a dichotomous variable for *Ongoing Conflicts*. Model 8 reports the regression results of *LTSV* on *Polity* scores in the third year following conflict termination (or, the end of the SVAC dataset's timeframe), while including the additional control for *Ongoing Conflict*. For Model 11, *LTSV* continues to have a significant and negative effect on *Polity* outcomes. Unsurprisingly, *Experience with Democracy* and *Lagged GDP per capita* have a strongly positive and significant effect on *Polity*, as does the dummy variable for *Ongoing Conflict*. The positive effect of *Ongoing Conflicts* on *Polity* scores is an unexpected result, which merits further investigation.

Table 4. Multivariate Regression for Post-Conflict Polity & Sexual Violence

	(1) Model 6 <i>Polity 1-Year Post- Conflict</i>	(2) Model 7 <i>Polity 3 Years Post-Conflict</i>	(3) Model 8 <i>Polity 3 Years Post-Conflict</i>	(4) Model 9 <i>Polity 5 Years Post Conflict</i>
<i>Total Sexual Violence (log)</i>	-1.013** (0.439)	-1.192** (0.455)	-1.292*** (0.444)	-0.583 (0.449)
<i>Conflict Duration</i>	0.0334 (0.0592)	0.0694 (0.0641)	0.0469 (0.0632)	0.00191 (0.0619)
<i>Experience with Democracy</i>	1.691 (1.113)	2.215** (1.059)	2.369** (1.028)	2.347** (1.091)
<i>Battle Deaths</i>	4.22e-05 (4.06e-05)	2.94e-05 (3.98e-05)	2.01e-05 (3.66e-05)	2.01e-05 (4.60e-05)
<i>Number of Actors</i>	-0.137* (0.0692)	-0.0987 (0.0709)	-0.135* (0.0709)	-0.150 (0.0906)
<i>Lagged GDP per capita (log)</i>	1.535*** (0.398)	1.538*** (0.380)	1.472*** (0.364)	1.754*** (0.386)
<i>UN Intervention</i>	-0.248 (0.336)	-0.0113 (0.288)	0.167 (0.309)	-0.0884 (0.271)
<i>Ongoing Conflict</i>			3.113*** (0.935)	1.913* (1.047)
Constant	-8.639*** (2.778)	-8.758*** (2.769)	-9.044*** (2.643)	-10.57*** (2.738)
Observations	113	118	118	112
R-squared	0.253	0.278	0.329	0.291

Robust standard errors in parentheses
 *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Model 9 reports the results for multivariate regression of *Log of Total Sexual Violence* on *Polity* outcomes in the fifth year following the end of the conflict or five years after the end of the SVAC timeframe for all of the conflicts ongoing in 2009. In Model 9, *LTSV* does not have a significant effect on *Polity*. However, *Experience with Democracy* and *Lagged GDP per capita* continue to have strong positive and significant impacts on post-conflict *Polity* scores. The results of these models show support for my hypotheses that wartime sexual violence will result in increased challenges with democratization, although the results of Model 9 suggest that this effect may mollify over time.

To further examine the impact that sexual violence has on prospects for post-civil conflict democratization, I use a probit model to estimate the effect of *Log of Total Sexual Violence* on *Democratization Success*. The results of all of these models are presented below in Table V with robust standard errors. Models 10 and 11 report a negative and significant impact of *Total Sexual Violence* on the likelihood for *Democratization Success* in the three and five year intervals following the end of a conflict, while controlling for a number of conflict and state factors. Like the previous multivariate analysis, *Experience with Democracy* and *Lagged GDP per capita* both have positive and significant effects on the likelihood of *Democratization Success*. I also examine the influence of the *Ongoing Conflicts* in the SVAC dataset. In Model 12, *LTSV* has a negative and significant effect, while *Experience with Democracy* and *Lagged GDP per capita* continue to be positively associated with *Democratization Success*. Model 12 also reports that the dummy variable of an *Ongoing Conflict* achieves a low level of significant for a positive effect on democratization outcomes. For Models 13 and 14, I ran separate models for ongoing conflicts and those that terminated within the SVAC timeframe. Again, *LTSV* remains negative and significant across both types of conflicts. Interestingly, for the 41 ongoing conflicts, the *Lagged GDP per capita*, *Experience with Democracy*, and *Conflict Duration* all have significant and positive impacts. This result, however, may be due to the low number of observations for this specific model. For those conflicts that have terminated, *Experience with Democracy* and *Lagged GDP per capita* have positive and significant effects on *Democratization Success*. Again, this result may be due to a limited number of results.

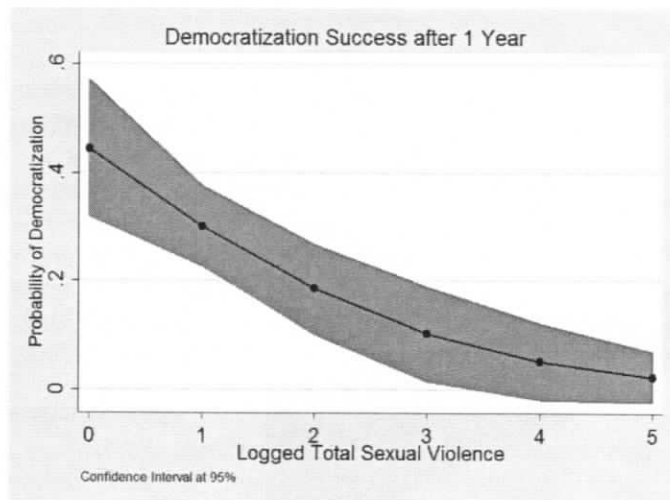
Table 5. Probit Estimation for Democratization Success

Democratization Success	(1) Model 10 3 Years Post- Conflict	(2) Model 11 5 Years Post- Conflict	(3) Model 12 3 Years Post- Conflict	(4) Model 13 Polity 3 Years Post-SVAC [Ongoing conflicts]	(5) Model 14 Polity 3 Years Post-Conflict [Terminated Conflicts]
<i>Total Sexual Violence (Log)</i>	-0.494*** (0.150)	-0.322** (0.132)	-0.511*** (0.160)	-1.008*** (0.266)	-0.327* (0.193)
<i>Conflict Duration</i>	0.0391** (0.0165)	0.0229 (0.0157)	0.0354** (0.0164)	0.0721** (0.0295)	0.0265 (0.0221)
<i>Experience with Democracy</i>	1.124*** (0.338)	1.445*** (0.365)	1.178*** (0.350)	1.363** (0.686)	1.084** (0.443)
<i>Battle Deaths</i>	-9.37e-06 (1.20e-05)	-2.24e-06 (1.50e-05)	-1.51e-05 (1.17e-05)	-2.05e-05 (1.81e-05)	-2.03e-05 (2.32e-05)
<i>Number of Actors</i>	0.0155 (0.0254)	0.00602 (0.0257)	0.0158 (0.0258)	0.0408 (0.0300)	-0.00936 (0.0543)
<i>Lagged GDP per capita (log)</i>	0.333*** (0.103)	0.371*** (0.106)	0.321*** (0.102)	0.434* (0.260)	0.308** (0.120)
<i>UN Intervention</i>	-0.112 (0.117)	-0.192 (0.207)	-0.0616 (0.109)	0.362 (0.597)	-0.0744 (0.116)
<i>Ongoing Conflict</i>			0.589* (0.321)		
Constant	-3.192*** (0.808)	-3.664*** (0.818)	-3.299*** (0.863)	-3.564* (2.093)	-3.112*** (1.019)
Observations	118	113	118	41	77

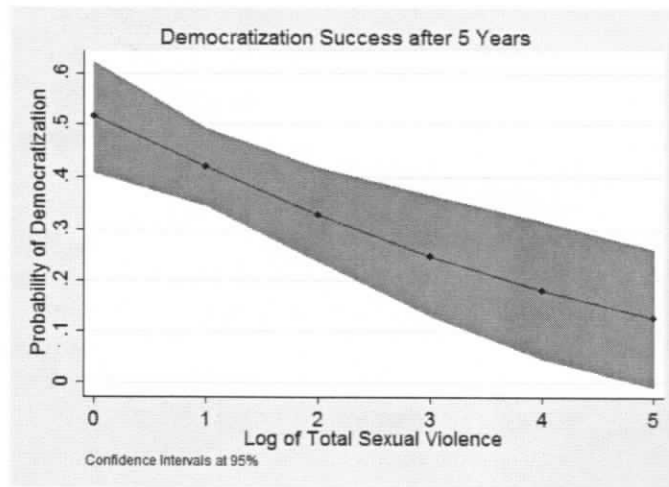
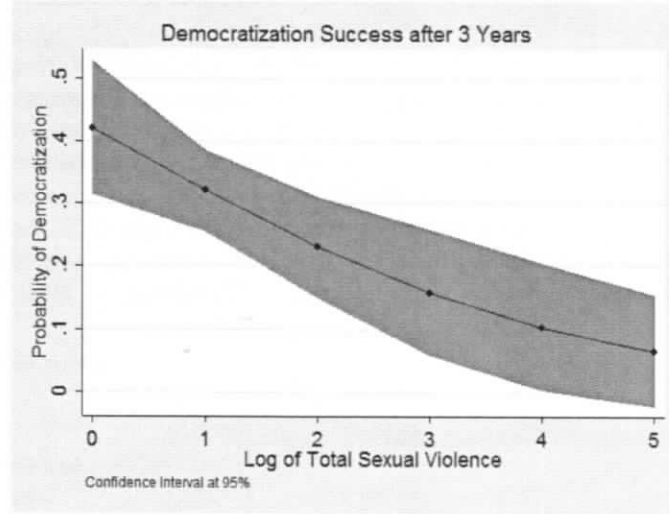
Robust standard errors in parentheses
 *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

To further illustrate the substantive effects of this probit estimation, I created predicted probabilities for *Democratization Success* for the levels of *LTSV* for each of the three years of interest, while holding all other control variables at their means. These substantive effects are shown in Figure 2a-c. The levels of *LTSV* are shown along the x-axis of each graph, while the probability of success ranges from 0 to .6 on the y-axis. In each of three year intervals, conflicts with zero sexual violence have close to a 50% chance of democratizing. However, as the rate of sexual violence goes up, this probability of democratization success decreases dramatically. This pattern holds for each of the three time intervals. The main difference across the three graphs is that as time progresses from 1 year after conflict termination to five years post-conflict, the confidence interval widens, although remains significant.

Figure 2a.



Figures 2b-c.



Both simple bivariate relationship and multivariate estimation analyses support my hypotheses that sexual violence during civil conflicts may have a negative impact on post-conflict democratization. Future empirical work examining the impact of sexual violence on democratization should extend past the time restrictions present in this analysis. Time extensions would contribute to these initial findings in two major ways. First, democratization is a long process, and the challenges faced by polities in the post-civil conflict period are multiple and complex. This limited time frame may not allow for investigation for such a long process. Many of the conflicts in this study, over 40 of the 121 civil conflicts, were either ongoing or recently terminated between 2005 and 2009. These conflicts have less than 10 years of post-conflict reconstruction or democratization time available for analysis. In addition, this limited time period does not leave open the potential for conflict recurrence. Future work should examine the impact of political instability and conflict recurrence in addition to the key components of democratization, like executive power constraints, institution building, and electoral competition. Democratization success depends on the ability of governments to establish credibility for trustworthy institutions. In the post-conflict period, these commitments may not fully be established within five years.

Second, this time frame obviously limits the number of conflicts available for examination. The structure of the data only allow for analysis of democratic and country factors for the geographic location of the civil conflicts. While some of these civil conflicts did not break apart into different autonomous states in the post-conflict period, many such as Yugoslavia, did. Future work should consider how sexual violence during conflicts impacts all of the post-conflict countries' democratization processes.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the results support my hypothesis that high rates of sexual violence during civil conflicts can lead to lower rates of successful democratization efforts. The empirical analysis provides initial evidence for my theoretical foundation for understanding the political consequences of wartime sexual violence. In this case, the empirical analysis demonstrates an inverse relationship between conflicts with high rates of sexual violence and lower levels of democracy in the post-conflict period. While controlling for previous experience with democracy and a number of conflict characteristics, the results suggest that states that experience civil conflicts with high levels of sexual violence may face additional challenges. The challenges for democratization in these states may be the consequence of mistrust and resentment toward a government that failed to protect civilians. The challenges may also stem from hostilities between previous enemy groups, where group contains a large number of victims of sexual violence. Unsurprisingly, these groups may find it

extremely difficult to reconcile and cooperate with another that has committed war crimes on their mothers, daughters, wives, or other loved ones.

The results of this study are promising for future work utilizing the theoretical foundation for wartime sexual violence. Future research can build from my three basic assumptions. If wartime sexual violence harms individual victims, and individual experiences can have community-level effects, then research should explore potential other outcomes. If communities lose generalized trust toward the government and/or toward previous enemy groups, states may have difficulty in preventing conflict recurrence and maintaining political stability. Future work should consider these outcomes in addition to the key components of democratization, like executive power constraints, institution building, and electoral competition. Research should also consider how different conflict contexts may affect the post-conflict outcomes on communities. Further, more in-depth research should study the causal mechanisms at work between individual victims, family members, friends, peers and communities. It is the key assumption in my theoretical foundation, and research should look to explain more fully how whole communities experience such traumatic events.

The empirical findings here should be taken with the acknowledgement of the study's limitations. First, this analysis is based upon a limited time frame between 1989 and 2009. This time restriction brings about a major pitfall. One, democratization is a long and challenging process. A twenty-year time frame may not allow for investigation into such a long process, especially for the most recent conflicts. Future work can improve upon our understanding of how sexual violence affects communities, and ultimately how to prevent such damage.

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